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The CALVIN FORUM

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THE CALVIN FORUM * * *  NOVEMBER, 1947
Dangerous Preaching Methods

IT IS not my purpose to criticize the motives or the content of the preaching of those to whom the following may be applicable.

For some time I have wondered whether the methods employed by many well-meaning preachers and evangelists are not in conflict with the seriousness and dignity of the profession of one who witnesses for the Christ. This concern of mine was reawakened recently when I read an article on the subject “Religion on the Bandwagon.” I do not share the theological views of the writer, but I think that his remarks are to the point. The article was written by Mr. Seidenspinner and appeared in The Christian Century of September 24. I want to add my testimony to his.

Beware of hawking the Gospel. Hawkers are found at carnivals selling their patent medicines and other articles of dubious value. They are also found on street corners usually offering some worthless gadget to a gullible public. Reliable goods are usually sold at reliable department stores. One cannot imagine Jesus hawking the Gospel on the streets of Jerusalem. St. Paul was no peddler of quackery on the streets of Athens. They just presented their goods. That is all. The minister needs but to present the Gospel in all its fullness. No part of it should be hidden, as is often done by clever salesmen in the sale of their goods. Let the full counsel of God be presented and let it be examined ever so carefully.

Be chary about the methods of advertisement. Advertising church services in a colorful fashion is not as modern as some may think. Dr. Howard Ward Beecher used questionable methods of advertising even in his day. To advertise that the sermon will be on the subject “Religion on the Bandwagon” —and in smaller type—“because one does not take time to be holy” may be a clever device that may fool some of the people for a time, but they will soon tire of that sort of advertising. To announce that the subject for next Sunday will be on “The Philistian Barber” may suggest Delilah to those acquainted with the Bible, but it is not a frank declaration as to the topic. Why not be straightforward in one’s announcements? Why not say in intelligent terms precisely what the sermon is going to be about? Clever subjects that hide the real content of the sermon have developed in the minds of the people the same idea that they have of cheap advertising. “It is only an advertisement,” they remark. A couple of years ago a correspondent from St. Paul, Minnesota, wrote: “The problem of church advertisements is with us afresh. The itinerant and more or less established evangelists display their stock in trade on the Saturday church page in the latest streamlined fashion. Purveyors of eschatological platitudes peer aggressively or defensively at innocent readers from expensive, high-pressure ads. A modest, dignified announcement of a simple service of worship is lost in the welter of cheap vulgarity masquerading as an introduction to religion. Even the newspapers are becoming irked by it. Let us not ape the theatre page. Let’s be done with aping entirely. If the church desires to go into advertising, let her be an example of honest and dignified presentation.”

Let us shun exhibitionism in presenting the Gospel. Aimee MacPherson was a past master at this game. She generally put on a good show. I was quite sure that with the passing of Sister Aimee the exhibitionistic methods would subside. But read this: “One of the schemes which is now often used is the great rally, which is often held in the biggest auditorium in town or in an out-of-doors stadium. Sometimes the rally begins with a parade. A recent parade of this nature which I witnessed was headed by a color guard with flags flying. It was followed by some baton twirlers or majorettes with bare legs and with skirts about as short as the laws allows. Since the meeting and the parade had been announced as ‘one of the greatest testimonies to Jesus Christ this section has ever seen’, the three powerful appeals of religion, patriotism and sex were combined from the start.” Such exhibitionism would seem to have little place in the gospel which teaches the virtues of modesty, meekness, humility and lowliness.

Let us not follow the methods of the commercial artist. Respectable Christian business men will urge their pastor to SELL his goods. But the minister has nothing to sell. The Gospel is freely given to him who has the grace to accept it. Selling is a process in which one attempts to give value for value received. This does not apply in the field of the Gospel at all. The commercial men present their articles to their prospective customers for inspection, handling and sampling. The ministers present eternal and spiritual things that cannot be seen. They should therefore be infinitely more honest. They can fool the people more easily and too often do. There has been a world-wide com-
plaint that the church is dying. That is not surprising as long as the church cheapens preaching by bringing it down to the level of selling dry goods and hardware. Avoid petty argumentation. It usually consists of talking endlessly about some inconsequential topic. "Prove to me," said a prospective candidate for conversion, "that God can make a thing go backward and forward at the same time, and I will give Him my allegiance." The missionary, of course, argued in vain. He forgot that the Christ never commissioned anybody to do that. God Himself does not in the Scriptures prove His existence. He assumes it.

Finally do not cheapen the contents of the Gospel by bringing the message down to the level of the people. This is frequently done in the so-called revival meetings. The sermons are filled with all sorts of slang expressions which outside of the meeting would be called blasphemy. This method is akin to that of the carnival hawkers who good-naturedly exchange pleasantries with the gullible crowd round about. The people are then much more easily duped into buying the wares. Don't cheapen the Gospel. Bring the people up to a bit higher ground where they can have fellowship with Jesus. Do not stoop to the secular and the vulgar. Let the preaching be in accord with the seriousness and dignity of the message. Let the Gospel be brought with all the earnestness and sincerity of which the preacher is capable. Let it be the full Gospel. What is more than this deserves to be carefully reexamined.

H. S.

The Church and Education

BY THE Church I do not mean merely the body of Christ as it manifests itself in various organized groups, but the sum total of all those who are labeled Christians. This church, outside of the Lutherans and Catholic membership and a few minor groups, has not taken the cause of religious training seriously. The reasons for this are said to be two-fold. First, protestantism in general has placed a tremendous burden on what it has called conversion. This single experience was expected to erase all the wrong and to sanctify that which is neutral or which is bad. Somehow it was forgotten that God works through means, and the means are not simply limited to praying about it. Every sincere prayer is accompanied by a sincere effort on the part of the petitioner to achieve what he considers prayer-worthy. The second reason is the confidence that protestantism has placed in public education. But public education continued to be a growing disappointment. Then it thought that Christians could meet the situation by means of sermons and by a Sunday School staffed by laymen meeting once a week. This was found to be insufficient. Then recourse was taken to "released time", secured from the public school program. Some denominations have been paying more attention to higher education, while others have stressed more religious training in the home.

There is now an increasing number of leaders among protestant clergymen who have finally discerned that all these devices have not stayed the tide of secularism and that the church is doomed if a more positive and integrated system of education is not provided. Consequently Christian day schools are springing up throughout the land in a very encouraging fashion. Indeed, there has been organized recently a National Association of Christian schools, with offices in Chicago. This organization is not to be confused with the National Union of Christian Schools, supported chiefly by the people of Reformed persuasion and their like-minded friends.

Whether the new group has a promise of life depends primarily upon the purpose of its organization. If the organization is no more than a protest against the public school as it functions today, it will, at best, live only until such a time as the public school is able to correct some of its more glaring deficiencies. If this is true, the movement has no abiding life in it. A purely negative motivation is not enough. There must be a deep realization that the public school system, however much good may be said about it, is wrong in its basic educational philosophy. If that conviction does not grip men, they will not be able and should not be able to inaugurate a commendable separate school system. If the objection to the public school system is not basic, then every individual who calls himself an American must remain in the system to help eradicate the objections that may be lodged against it.

Furthermore, the Christians who are forming organizations for a separate school system must be basically agreed among themselves. A certain general agreement in the field of orthodoxy is insufficient. They must be agreed on their educational philosophy. Principles must count. One can water down the basic philosophy or theology so much that it may amount to no more than a general working agreement by means of which the church has already in the past vainly attempted to establish a sort of economic unity. It is the duty of those interested in establishing a separate educational system to see eye to eye on such fundamentals as the sovereignty of God, the covenantal conception of the children, the unity of Christian knowledge and the pervasiveness of the principles of Christianity. If they fail in this, I predict an early disintegration of the movement.

H. S.

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • NOVEMBER, 1947
Is Our Economy Mature?

MATURITY ordinarily suggests not merely “coming of age” and the development which that implies, but also, in the case of the individual, experience, strength, wisdom, control over resources and ability to give direction to them. But when this word is used to describe our economic order, it is frequently used to suggest that the process of growth has come to an end, that the order is now in the process of decay, that it cannot long survive. Those who believe our economic system to be “mature” characterize the living representatives and defenders of this order as lacking in knowledge and insight, as incapable of seeing the need of making adjustments, and unwilling to make those that the critics think necessary.

Whatever truth there may be in this characterization of our order, it cannot with much justice be said that our system is old. Modern capitalism, if the term is meant to imply the widespread use of large sum of capital in the carrying on of trade and commerce, does not go as far back as the Middle Ages. Modern industrialism, involving large-scale production of standardized goods, is little more than one hundred and fifty years old. Industrialism, as we know it in this country, if it is mature, is still vigorous enough to produce the necessities of life for the people of this country and for those of much of the rest of the world.

Instead of considering our present economic system as having come to the end of its days it would seem more correct to regard it and those who give the direction to it as not yet mature enough. American industrialism revealed great possibilities in the period before 1929. What happened at that time might well be regarded as evidence of the lack of wisdom that should come with maturity. We were capable enough in the use of our organization to make ourselves wonderfully productive, but not wise enough to anticipate the troubles ahead, not wise enough to be aware of the weaknesses that would bring on the troubles or to take measures that would prevent them from arising.

This lack of maturity characterizes both labor and capital. Our system has demonstrated marvelous efficiency in production. We should be wise enough in our struggles not to check this dynamic energy of our economy. We should be smart enough, it would seem, to have learned that we must know how this wonderful system works. We should have sense enough to know that it will not work if labor and capital work at cross purposes in trying to use it. We should know by this time that if we are misled by slogans, by half truths, or by untruths we shall fail in our use of it, and it will indeed be dead. We do know that if we go too far in “soaking the rich” and confiscating their capital, we may go so far as to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs. From European experience and from our recent experience, we are more than ever convinced that freedom, freedom of enterprise also, is necessary to the life of a nation.

There is danger that our minds may be so completely occupied with the thought that our system is right, that they may be closed to the idea that the system must change. Our wonderful production has brought higher standards of living to all classes. We are likely, therefore, to be misled by the idea that all that is necessary today is that we should produce. “Let men go back to work and produce,” is management’s reply when labor stops work to make its many-sided demands. This is too easy a solution to our current problems, and those who advocate it should know better. Certainly, men must get back to work, stop their loafing, stop trying to get something for nothing if our economy is to slip into high gear and stay there. But men have worked hard and produced in the past, and the troubles they are now trying to avoid came anyway. Besides men worked hard in the past and nevertheless saw the nature of their jobs change before their eyes. They worked hard and produced a new world of goods and comforts, a world in which they themselves wish to share more fully now that it has been made possible for them.

In determining the methods and the rewards of production men have not given sufficient consideration to the physical, the psychological, the social, and the spiritual aspects of the worker’s job. If labor and management can do this cooperatively and constructively, they will prove that our economy is coming of age and prove that it is mature in the living sense of the term. If they cannot, our economy has reached the end of the road, is mature in the sense that radicals use the term today.

H. J. R.

Dutch Comment on the Van Raalte Settlement

IT HAS been apparent throughout the year that the Reformed element in The Netherlands has taken almost as lively an interest in the Centennial of the Van Raalte-Scholte settlements as the Reformed element in the United States. A further token of that interest appears in the form of an abstract of a lecture delivered at the Annual Conference of the ministers of the Gereformeerde Kerken held in April at Utrecht. The lecture was read by Mr. P. J. Risseeuw, the author of the novel Landverhuizers (reviewed in last month’s issue of The Calvin Forum, page 55). Mr. Risseeuw’s careful researches into the older documents
bearing on the migrations and settlements of 1846-47, and his authorship of the novel, qualified him admirably for speaking at Centennial celebrations in The Netherlands. “Since January of this year,” he writes, as of April, “I have been giving lectures throughout the country concerning the emigration of 1847; there is uncommon interest in that event.”

Some of the more important notes which Mr. Risseeuw chose to stress in his lectures are the following:

“The main cause of the emigration was unmistakably the economic situation in which Europe in general and The Netherlands in particular then found themselves. But a second cause as certainly was political and ecclesiastical intolerance over-against the Separatists. The aftermath of the French domination, the still unresolved conflict between Holland and Belgium, the advent of the machine, and the failure in 1845 of the potato crop—these were the social influences which fed into a flame the passion for emigration which blew into The Netherlands from Germany. No wonder that precisely the harassed Separatists were susceptible to these influences. And as for that second cause, there is no need for opening up the sluice gates of sentimentality in connection with the uncivil treatment of the Separatists by both State and Church. Those who doubt whether this treatment was really so bad as it is reputed to have been have only to read the Officieele Stukken. These offer abundant evidence of the cooperation between Synodical Rule and the Government in making the lives of the Separatists intolerable. Today the Reformed (Hervormde) and the Christian Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches in The Netherlands anew with the history of the separation of 1834, it is to be hoped that renewed historical investigation from both sides will lead to new ecclesiastical correspondence. The spiritual renascence within the Reformed (Hervormde) Church gives every opportunity for this. The remarkable overture, for instance, from certain ministers of the Reformed Church to its Synod requesting that Hendrik De Cock be rehabilitated serves well to this end. Honorable ecclesiastical rehabilitation of De Cock and Van Raalte by the Reformed Church, and a chivalrous acknowledgment by the Christian Reformed (Gereformeerde) Church that the Separation in some of its manifestations and personalities sank to the level of sectarianism, would, it seems to me, be a desirable step towards reconstituting interchurch correspondence.

“Now, a century after 1847, not only a few but forty per cent of the Dutch population are looking wistfully to finding a livelihood elsewhere in the world. It is to be hoped that the Government may give good counsel and aid in this matter, and that the churches in America, Canada, and Africa may be quick to receive them.”

Those, translated of course and only from an abstract of his lecture, were some of the points Mr. Risseeuw emphasized in his Centennial speaking tour of Holland. Now that the celebrations among us are waning, his voice gives encouragement and challenge to Calvinistic effort in America.

H. Z.
We Know

At a public meeting a famous professor in philosophy had delivered a lecture, and opportunity for discussion was given. Naturally the remarks centered around the matter of an adequate philosophy of life. A young Calvinist diffidently arose and asked the speaker whether he did not think that Calvinism had the answer to the great questions of life.

Replied the brilliant speaker: “I do not think I know.”

The young questioner never forgot and later told some of us about this.

It may serve to introduce this brief article.

If this great philosopher, who would not be counted a Calvinist by us, knew that Calvinism has the answer to the world’s needs, how much the more ought we to be convinced of it. One of our number who in recent years has made some close contacts with the world around us in a brief talk of late told us how much more he has come to feel that by his experiences.

Then our Calvin College and Seminary must be of great importance. They have a contribution to make which is outstanding. With modesty, but also with confidence, we make bold to say it.

Then we must see to it that our college, for instance, has the necessary space and equipment for doing this big job. At present it does not have this. We have lagged far behind in necessary buildings and books and equipment. When one sees what our faculty has to work with to educate almost 1400 young people, it is simply pathetic. Somehow we have failed to realize that we no longer have just a little school but an institution that is getting big and needs big things.

But we are waking up!

Synod has authorized that million-dollar campaign for new buildings for Calvin. Plans are shaping up and the outlook is encouraging indeed.

This is a word particularly to our ministers!

* * *

Brethren, we know your loyalty to Calvin. We owe so much to our Alma Mater and we are not going to fail her in the hour of need. We love our church and the ideals for which it stands. We realize the strategic position of our college. We marvel at the opportunities God in His providence puts before us and we just cannot but make the most of them.

So we are banking on your full co-operation!

At times we ministers may be inclined to think: “It does not make much difference what I say. People go their own way.” At times it may look that way. Yet, those who have experience with campaigns among our people, know that the minister is the key man in the congregation. His word does carry weight. Let our leadership be positive, and tactful withal, and our people will follow our guidance.

Yes, there are many campaigns going on. There are local projects calling for our support. But let us not because of local needs turn aside the needs of our college, which is the concern of us all. The more when the amount asked of us is so small—one dollar per month, not per week, but per month, for three years. Surely no one of any means at all can complain that this is asking too much. It gives us all an opportunity. That is the beauty of it. In this way all our people can have a share in this great project.

How our God has blessed us as a people in this great land of ours! Only a short time ago we were an immigrant people, almost complete strangers in this country. Since then God has blessed us wonderfully. Today He is putting before us open doors, as if He is saying to us: “You have talked so much about being a blessing in America, and that you have the message which it needs. Now here you are. Go to it, and make the most of it”. This is the thought which thrills me over and over. I hope you see it that way.

Possibly you are getting a bit weary of being urged to help along in this campaign. Well, you know how that goes. We set up a campaign, and we are so very eager to have it succeed. So we put into it all we have. And we may like it or not, but we all know that in carrying on the Lord’s work we need money and a lot of it. It is inspiring to see how much some of our men are willing to put into this, of their time and talent, without getting a penny out of it for themselves. Most of them have no sons or daughters at Calvin, yet are willing to work for the cause. That is the kind of spirit we need. If you think the propaganda might be a little heavy just remember that this is a big undertaking, the biggest we have ever attempted for Calvin, and we are just so eager to see it go over the top.

God bless our Calvin and make it an ever bigger power in our beloved land.

NOTE: Rev. J. Gritter is secretary of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary and has written this appeal to the Christian Reformed ministers at the request of the CALVIN FORUM Editorial Committee.
The Relation Between Christian and Philosophic Ethics

As doubtless most of you know, a single unified philosophic ethics does not exist. There are many schools of philosophy, and each has many variations. The ontological theories of some of these schools occasionally seem to imply this or that moral theory. Usually, however, moral theory is the result of method rather than the implication of ontology. This is particularly true in modern and contemporary philosophy. It is assumed that as a matter of history any cultural group has an ethic (custom, mores) before it acquires a religious or philosophic rationalization of it. Consequently, it is further assumed that one can deal with the facts of ethics in much the same way as one deals with the facts of, say, physics. No immediate reference to a fundamental view of life is involved. This is called the positivistic or scientific approach.

Secular Moral Philosophy

Accordingly, secular moral theorists begin with the facts of positive morality, i.e., that body of customs and rules actually doing the work of social control for the time being within this or that cultural group. Inasmuch as these customs, rules, and principles are based upon precedent, expediency, the fortunes of war, and so on, they are more or less inconsistent. The moral philosopher examines all this and, by means of analysis and hypothesis, attempts to arrive at a more or less consistent theory. Such a theory may involve either a radical transvaluation of accepted moral values or, as is more frequently the case, a mere change in the accepted order of these values. Almost invariably it involves a weeding out of all superstitious and religious preconceptions, often with a cavalier disregard of the distinction between superstition and religion. In fact it may involve the reduction of what we call the distinctively moral to something else, such as rationality (Kant), or desire (Russell), or expedience (Machiavelli), or common convenience (Utilitarianism). Furthermore, few contemporary moralists are free from an evolutionistic bias. They assume, openly or covertly, that as time goes on the race progresses, morally and otherwise. All agree to the fundamental distinction between tabu and reflective morality; and, incidentally, most of them agree that much in Christian ethics represents mere tabu morality.

Two Representative Views

Which of the various schools of secular moral philosophy one regards as most adequate depends, of course, upon one's point of view. Thus a Calvinist, naturally, will have more sympathy for Kant than for Bertrand Russell. The former seems, to the Calvinist, to be more rational. But the fact remains that both Kant and Russell believe that they can find adequate grounds within human reason alone for their radically different points of view. Anyway, one has to admit that some of the reasons Russell gives for calling certain acts moral are no more ridiculous than some of the reasons Kant gives for calling them immoral. In this respect, about the only difference between the two is that Russell does occasionally break down and admit that his doctrine may be wholly absurd. Kant, unfortunately, seems to have lacked Russell's sense of humor.

For examples of modern philosophic ethics I shall in the main confine myself to the humanist tradition introduced by Kant, and to the naturalistic tradition represented by Russell. My reason is that from the Christian point of view the former represents about the best to be found in modern secular ethics, and the latter, about the worst. Kant in his ethical thinking is never far removed from the impressions of his Pietist youth, so that whenever he reflects upon the problem of moral philosophy he is primarily concerned with the authority, for human reasons, of the Decalogue. Russell, on the other hand, may be said to represent contemporary antitheism at its most radical. He refuses to consider any philosophic speculation or moral belief as intellectually respectable unless it is based more or less directly upon scientifically verifiable facts. Consequently, he holds that all ethical propositions should be expressed in the optative mood. Note, however, that both Kant and Russell represent a rejection of the Christian moral consciousness. Kant represents an absolute reliance on human reason in the form of the traditional dialec-
tic; Russell represents an absolute reliance on human reason in the form of the logic of scientific method. Kant, on the basis of ingenious argument, concludes that we may postulate God as a demand of the practical reason; Russell, with equal ingenuity concludes that if a world which is partially evil may have been created by a wholly benevolent God, then a world which is partially good may have been created by a wholly malevolent Devil. Neither, he says, seems likely, but from the point of view of human reason, the one is as likely as the other.

Of course, Kant is not as brutally antagonistic toward the Christian moral tradition as is Russell, but that hardly warrants the impression that Kant is defending it. Kant may have been convinced of the fundamental rightness of the Decalogue, but it can hardly be said that he regarded its religious ground as authoritative. The Christian moral consciousness happened to be correct, not because it was Christian, but because, so he thought, it could be rationally demonstrated. In other words, for Kant a principle of moral action is right if ultimately it does not contravene the law of non-contradiction. Now for Russell this is so much nonsense. Any so-called principle of moral action, so he believes, is ultimately based upon desire. Thus whenever we say that men ought to be honest with one another, we are saying in effect, Would that all men were honest with one another! This statement cannot be expressed in the form of a scientific proposition. No theoretical arguments about it are possible. In the field of physics, for example, we can show evidence why we consider one view right and another wrong, or why we consider both views wrong, or why we consider the evidence insufficient for any view at all. Not so in the field of ethics, where we are concerned entirely with desires and matters of taste, and where oratory is as legitimate as logic.

The Kantian View
Not Christian

Which of these views is more rational? About all we can say is that Kant, by an expert use of human reason, concludes that morality is ultimately a matter of reason; and that Russell, by an equally expert use of human reason, concludes that it is ultimately a matter of desire. However much we may prefer the Kantian view, it is by no means identical with the Christian view. This should be evident when we consider the fact that it is impossible to live the Christian ethic without living the Christian religion. For example, in the discourse of I Cor. 13 we find a statement of the more immediate content of the Christian moral consciousness—"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity . . ."

Here the significance of the enumerated virtues, flowing from the grace of charity, lies in the fact that they constitute the believer's assurance of the work of the Holy Spirit in his life—"no chosen race without a holy nation." Furthermore, these virtues have a peculiar content. Longsuffering has value because of the hope laid before us; good faith with respect to others has value because it is based upon the rule of love within the household of God; courage and endurance have value in so far as they signify the assurance of faith; and humility has value if it stems from the conviction that Christ died for our sins and arose for our justification. The spectacular virtues arising out of knowledge, tongues, and prophecy may return the creature to his own vomit. The grace of charity, on the other hand, represents the nearest a man can approach to a perfect reflection of the image of God in this life. Only by way of the spirit of charity can the believer's love of God enable him to regard a man—any man—as a bearer of God's image and, therefore, as a being who can be uniquely the object of God's love, because in Him there can be holiness. Now this peculiar attitude toward men is of the essence of Christian morality.

Referring to Kant's attempt to provide a basis in human reason itself for the Decalogue, some Christians will ask this question. Would it not be a victory for Christian apologetics if we could show that God's moral law is implied in the very dictates of unregenerate human reason itself? The answer is that, of course, it would be a victory, but the question is, Can it be done? We may remind ourselves that Kant did not, after all, actually demonstrate that God, freedom, and immortality were reasonable postulates. Even though he had, God would still remain a mere postulate of the human practical reason. Now assuming the existence of God as a postulate of the practical reason is not the same as demonstrating God as a fact. Then there remains this question. Just to whose practical reason is God demonstrated as a postulate? Certainly not to Russell's, nor to that considerable host of positivists and pragmatists and critical realists among whom we live today.

The Scholastics and Rational Demonstration

Now that we are on the subject of rational demonstration, we may as well face the fact that if by a rational demonstration we mean that the evidence is so obvious, or that the argument from accepted premises is so conclusive, that any one in his right mind must accept it as a matter of intellectual honesty, then there are no rational demonstrations of the existence of God, or the necessity of a supernatural revelation, or any other of the so-called preambles to faith of which our
Scholastic friends speak. And granted that there were, that would not help us Christians very much, for they would be equally valid for the moral consciousness of the Deist, the Mohammedan, the Christian Scientist, and the contemporary Modernist.

Basing their argument upon Aristotle's four causes, the Scholastics attempt what they call a rational demonstration of God as the uncaused Cause. Of course, even so radical a Protestant as a Calvinist must respect them for making the attempt. The trouble with the Scholastic, however, is that he remains persistently unaware of his failure. Also he assumes an air as though any who disagree with him must do so either because of an irrational prejudice against the Catholic Church or because they are not quite bright. Now, obviously, common experience does not attest to an uncaused cause. Consequently, whenever we human beings speak of an uncaused cause we employ a term to which the human imagination can give no real content. If the term is used to refer to God as the Creator, it evidently includes in its connotation much more than cause in the scientific sense of the word. It is questionable, therefore, whether we can reason from causes as commonly experienced to cause in the sense of absolute and unconditioned origination.

In answer to this the Scholastics argue that in their rational demonstration they are reasoning analogically, apparently not realizing that their conclusion goes far beyond what is logically permissible in an argument from analogy. In other words, it is still to be demonstrated that, beginning with commonly observable facts and with human reason, we inevitably arrive at the preambles of faith, and that the peculiar content of Christian theology is the only one that will fit the preambles. Now unless one begins with commonly observable facts and with human reason, one demonstrates nothing to human beings.

Incidentally, the Scholastic arguments serve admirably to illustrate the truth that the Christian thinker sooner or later is bound to become involved in matters of revelation and faith, and that, in the words of Duns Scotus, rational demonstrations demonstrate nothing worth demonstrating in Christian theology. In this respect Duns may be regarded as a forerunner of the Reformation. Far from being an irrationalist, Duns correctly observed that Mediaeval subtlety had failed to demonstrate, by means of human reason, the fact of God as Creator, to say nothing of the fact of God as Savior. In so doing he inadvertently pointed to two problems before which every philosophy stands mute, viz., the problem of origins and the problems of evil.

Formal Analogy

Since the content of Christian ethics appears to differ significantly from that of secular philosophic ethics, is there any relation between the two at all? In answer we may say that there is, but that it is wholly confined to certain analogues of form. For example, the Socratic ethics is primarily concerned with consistent value judgments. Thoughtless evaluations, according to Socratic ethics, may be inaccurate; hence, philosophic ethics may help us in articulating our evaluations. Again, thoughtless evaluations may be momentary; hence, philosophic ethics examines them as to whether they are consistent with our usual evaluations. Finally, thoughtless evaluations may mistake means for ends; and hence philosophic ethics examines them for the purpose of ordering them, subordinating less worthy ends to worthier ones. Now, obviously, no Christian objects to the proposal that we make our moral judgments clear, consistent, and systematic. Formally, therefore, the Christian ethic has something in common with the Socratic. But the really important question is this: What is the specific content of our usual evaluations? And patently those of Socrates and Plato would not be those of St. Paul. Socrates may have refuted the Sophists by replacing individual whim with the concept of universal man adorned with the virtues of wisdom, courage, and temperance; but in so doing he did little more than delineate his conception of a good Greek. Justice, loyalty, temperance, sincerity, and so on are things to which everybody, no matter what his view of life, gives theoretical assent, but to which not everybody gives the same content.

Thus animals are in a sense courageous, temperate, and devoted. In fact, if we may believe John Milton in his Paradise Lost, the Devil himself appears to have certain high moral qualities, such as courage, sincerity, and loyal devotion to a cause. Apparently, therefore, the ethical question is not, Are you sincere and devoted to a cause? but rather, What are you sincere about, and what is the cause that elicits your devotion? In other words, the Socratic virtue of temperance is one thing; that of holiness, quite another. From the Christian point of view, not courage, but complete assurance and confidence; not justice, but charity and a passion for righteousness; not the wisdom of this world, but the fear of the Lord are the fundamental virtues. Now from the point of view of human motivation and human reason these contrasted virtues represent altogether different worlds. Ethics, therefore, is incomplete without something beyond ethics, whether that be religion or ontology. But, once we invoke religion and ontology, we go beyond ethics, beyond science, and, I am afraid, beyond any authoritative demonstration. For a
thorough-going philosophic account of our place in
the universe and the moral duties that flow from
it, would involve a solution of the problem of evil
and the problem of origins. Incidentally, it is per­
haps for this reason that most moral philosophers
are positivistic.

Other examples of analogues of form are to be
found in Kant's moral philosophy. Kant's three
maxims, viz., of universality, of rational beings as
ends in themselves, and of morality as self-imposed,
are supposed to be logically equivalent. Whether
they are, it is clear that, taken together, they state
that moral law is something that originates with
man as a rational being. There is no reason for
the categorical imperatives other than the reason
that man finds within himself. He imposes duties
upon himself because of his own creative sense of
rightness. The end of man is to be self-ruled.
Accordingly, all rational beings, including oneself, are
to be treated as ends in themselves. Incidentally,
although Kant may be regarded as the pathfinder
of the brilliant idealist tradition of the nineteenth
century, there is a contrast between the humanism
of Kant and the absolutism of the idealist tradi­
tion. Kant begins with the moral demands of a
rational being and ends with the doctrine of the
categorical imperatives—to which he finally ap­
pends the idea of God as a postulate of the prac­
tical reason. The Absolute Idealist, on the other
hand, begins with the Absolute itself, something
that swallows both God and man. But, however
different the preliminaries, both in the end in­
volve the irrelevance for morals of the concept of
God. Both are antitheistic.

The analogues of form in the case of Kant’s doc­
trines are fairly obvious. If we ask, What is there
about Kant's moral philosophy that appeals to the
Christian? the answer is fairly definite. After all,
Kant does insist that the moral law takes the form
of imperatives, that it is objective, and that, in
the words of the Apostle Paul, "the Gentiles . . .
do by nature the things contained in the law, these,
not having the law, are a law unto themselves.
Which shew the work of the law written in their
hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and
their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else ex­
cusing one another". (Romans 2:14, 15.) In fact,
the Christian moral consciousness can go to the
extent of agreeing that the moral law is self-im­
posed, provided the meaning be this, viz., that
human thoughts and actions flow from man's na­
ture as a created being; that inasmuch as man is
a member of an objective moral order, he can no
more break the moral order than he can the physi­
cal. Now because the moral order is an aspect of
the ontological order, man reaches his true destiny
only by submitting to God's moral ordinances.
Moral law, then, is rooted in the constitution and
order of the universe itself, and since man is a
member of that order, the moral law is not foreign
to his nature. In a way, therefore, the law of na­
ture and the moral law are inseparable. In this
sense the moral law is not imposed from without,
but is integral to man and to his well-being.

On the other hand, if we consider the specific
content of the moral law, and if we consider the
question of why it takes the form of imperatives,
it is clear that the Christian moral consciousness
and the Kantian are far apart, if for no other reason
than that for Kant God is a mere postulate of the
practical reason. Kant begins with man; the Chris­
tian must begin with God. Now here, again, the
thought persistently arises, But suppose we could,
if only we could, begin with man and show by
rational demonstration that the implications of
man as a moral and rational creature dialectically
lead to the concept of God! If we finally un­
derstood "the flower in the crannied wall", wouldn't
we know God? The answer is that Kant failed to
reach God even by way of man, let alone by way
of the flower in the crannied wall. Furthermore,
the Christian must put the proposition the other
way around: If only we could comprehend God,
we would finally understand the flower in the cran­
nied wall.

Note: This article will be followed by another in next
month's issue in which the Christian view of ethics is compared
with the moral theories of the 19th and 20th century philosophic
thought. The two together form a paper delivered at the June
meeting of the Michigan Calvinistic Philosophy Club.
A Mind and Heart to Work

Henry Van Zyl, Jr.
Professor of Education
Calvin College

"... for the people had a mind to work."
"... for the joy of the Lord is your strength."
NEHEMIAH 4:6; 8:10.

God is always present in His Word of Revelation to teach us the way that we should go. "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and I shall give you rest." "Cast your burden upon the Lord and He shall bring it to pass." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I shall deliver Thee."

God is present in these invitations and commands. But man’s closed heart, or hardened heart, or uncircumcised heart, or desperately wicked is unresponsive. Deep-seated illusions such as complete confidence in the all-sufficiency of clear thinking on the part of man make the Word of God even with God Himself present of no effect.

Joad in his book, Guide to Philosophy, makes the pertinent observation, "There is a sense in which the heart and still more the spirit of man may have reasons of their own of which the reason knows nothing."

Startling Paradoxes

Since the deepest things of life are deeper than the intellect, the Bible often shocks and startles us with real or apparent paradoxes in order thus to shake us out of our smug complacency and to shatter the mental barriers and human criteria we in our self-sufficiency set up. This very autonomy must be surrendered—a surrender belonging to the category of imperatives: First things first.

God wants to get at deep-seated illusions. Thus the Word of God actually shocks us by the command to glory in a type of weakness and a specific brand of foolishness. God hath indeed chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.

And so one paradox follows another. Strength is made perfect in weakness. The foolishness of God wiser than men. The weakness of God stronger than men. The cynic’s mouth is stopped forthwith by the Scriptural declaration on the worth and dignity of man as extolled in Psalm 8. The babblings of the sentimental and liberal in their views on the goodness of man are likewise brushed aside by Jeremiah’s unequivocal pronouncement that man’s heart is desperately wicked—an overflowing fountain of misery.

The children of light are warned not to glory in a spirit of complacency that they possess the light but to be diligent students of life, for the children of this world in their generation are wiser than the children of light, Luke 16:8. When the Jews, true to their social-religious patterns, asked for a sign, God gave the cross as a startling answer. When the Greeks in harmony with their prime concern wanted wisdom that same cross gave humiliation as a shocking reply to their pride. Paul held before them not a truth, nor a principle, but a man, the God-man.

A Christian by the grace of God dares accept all these real or apparent paradoxes and is ready in true piety to hold to the riddles of man’s responsibility and God’s sovereignty and to the paradox of man’s spiritual freedom and God’s eternal decrees. He accepts in full awareness of paradoxes the conclusion: Man proposes, but God disposes.

The Paradox of ‘Feeble Jews’

In Nehemiah 4:6 we face another paradox—"for the people had a mind to work." They were a brand of Jews returned from Babylon under the able leadership of Nehemiah and Ezrah. All had a mind—a heart—to work. They all labored for the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem: the bearers of burdens, the rulers, the nobles, the servants, the guards, the builders, the trumpeters—all bound together by one glorious purpose. All worked with their trowels, hammers, and swords.

In fifty-two days the wall was finished. That feat was such a remarkable accomplishment that all the enemies and the heathen round about hearing of this unique and unbelievable achievement amidst so much danger perceived that this work was wrought by the God of the Jews.

Though the odds had been against them these so-called feeble Jews had a mind to work. Three ordinarily paralyzing conditions might have frustrated them completely.

There were in the first place the physical ruins of all these seventy years. What a sorry sight of what once was their holy city. It was destroyed, the walls were broken down and the gates burned down. The Jews—the poorest of all—who had...
escaped captivity were in great affliction and reproach. There were also the enemies without mocking them and doing their utmost to make the rebuilding of the walls an utter impossibility. Arabians. Ammonites, and Ashdodites—all conspired against the Hebrews. Then there were the social evils in their own midst. Many Jews with large families had been forced to borrow money to mortgage their lands, vineyards, and houses—and some even had given their sons and daughters in bondage to the rulers and nobles of their own group. Nehemiah saw the intense poverty and the social evils, which as so many festering sores afflicted their covenant communities. He prevailed upon all these private bankers of that day to restore lands, vineyards and houses to their original owners, to cancel debts, and to set free all those in bondage.

When this restitution was complete all the congregation said, “Amen” and praised the Lord.

The Secret of the Paradox

In spite of what seemed insurmountable obstacles—physical ruins, enemies without, and social evils within—at the darkest hour the paradox prevailed: these so-called feeble Jews had a mind to work. The miracle is found in the inward conviction possessing their souls amidst shocking conditions around them. That miracle Nehemiah pointed out—after the people had their first feast of tabernacles for seven days—in the memorable words, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” These words are the key to the paradox, “The people had a mind to work” in spite of all the odds against them. That joy was the secret power changing ruins to a restored city, beating of the enemies, and removing the social evils in their own midst. Faith is basic here. Our judgment is set aside. Logic is of no avail. Scientific method is helpless here. Faith is the victory here.

Calvin College and the Paradox

That basic motive—the joy of the Lord—we, too, at Calvin should crave to cultivate as our own abiding conviction. The cards are stacked against us also at Calvin College.

With twenty-five or more million of boys and girls in the public schools and only a mere two or three million in Christian institutions, the public might well be inclined to reproach and mock us with the rhetorical question, “What do these feeble Jews?” With fifty thousand or more students in the public colleges of our State, we with a thousand plus students here might give up in despair. With the Hebrew-Christian and Greek contributions to our civilization in ruins as far as the basic philosophy of public education is concerned, we might ask the sensible question, “What can a little Calvin College accomplish?” With the bulk of denominational colleges no longer true to the faith of their founders, we might well ask, “Watchman! What of the night?” With the general indifference to and actual scorn for a Calvinistic philosophy even in orthodox circles we might be filled with misgivings, particularly when we remember that in our own U.S. the separation of Church and State often leads so readily to a divorce between religion and life so much so that the average American often fails to see the social implications of Christianity.

The Solution

Yet in spite of it all, Jehovah from His throne on high wants us to practice the apparent paradox: to have a mind (heart) to work for Him. It is He who wants us to wrap our personalities and our program of actions around the motto: “The joy of the Lord is your strength”.

We thank God for so many of our students gripped by the Christian dynamic—having a mind to work for the King. We thank God for a faculty having such a heart to work. We thank God for the faith present here to build on the paradoxes of God’s Revelation. The joy of the Lord is to be the secret of having a mind to work. We cannot give it. Only God’s grace can impart it.

As long as we insist on maintaining man’s autonomy we cannot share that joy. It is a gift of God. It is a Christian dynamic of the highest order. That joy of the Lord is the power that makes the soul say in deep humility; The glory of God is my all-consuming aim.

Our prayer should be ever more; “O send out Thy Light and Thy truth. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy.” “They had a mind to work.” “The joy of the Lord was their strength.” They had a vision of the glory of God. They had cosmic dimensions in their souls Calvin College will not prosper without these and similar dimensions including all paradoxes.
That we find ourselves today in the midst of a major crisis in world history, in human relations, and in the human enterprise in general, is the consensus of opinion among the keenest and even the most conservative observers of our day. It is only the most naive mind that can take it in stride and live by the day. But the mind enlightened by history and the trends evident therefrom finds no such easy mode of adjustment.

Some would react in the comparatively light vein according to the words of L. E. Nelson in Dreamer’s Gold,

It’s fun to sit
On a powder keg
And wonder
Which will fly higher
An arm or a leg.

Others, like B. C. Clausen in The Time Capsule, search penetratingly for a deeper meaning of the confusion apparent everywhere. Says he,

We could build a tower with a million glistening lights,
But could find no formula for simple human rights.

Rudolph Euken’s characterization of a naturalistic culture in Can We Still Be Christians? is likewise pertinent today,

Outward greatness with inward pettiness, wealth and diversity of achievement with hollow emptiness of spirit—such is the mark of a merely naturalistic culture. It cannot prevent small-mindedness from intruding itself into all the situations of life and enmeshing and degrading even work itself.

And we note that one of our leading physicists responsible for atomic research has been touring this country lecturing on the subject, I Am a Frightened Man.

As crises in the life of the individual are in direct proportion to the readjustments he must make, so the history of mankind records periods of major adjustment and readjustment. Nationally and internationally colossal upheavals have taken place. Two major world wars with an almost devastating economic depression in between have left the world nearly in ruins. National and foreign policies have been modified greatly to meet the new issues. We face a new world which in travel, communication, and in economic relations is essentially one, but which in ideals and interests is divided against itself.

A Way Out

How shall we meet this crisis? Proposals and counterproposals are many and varied. Of the making of overtures there is no end. Nearly every proposal is predicated on the bias of a vested interest. Those few which are not so biased are interpreted to be such.

Through all the overtures there appears a common note, education. Universal education for all citizens has gotten hold upon the nations. Can it be that here we find a common interest free from inhibitive and destructive bias? The United Nations Organization has recognized this possibility and has encouraged the organization of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Those responsible for this organization look for no immediate utopia through education, but they are convinced that world tension can be relieved through education, culture, and science. It is in these spheres, it is believed, peoples can draw closer together in mutual appreciation and cooperation.

The Christian and The Crisis

Where do we as Christians stand with reference to the world scene? We thank God for the subjective certainty of our faith which in the face of an apparently imminent collapse remains firm because it is grounded in evidence which the shaking foundations of the time-space order cannot disturb. This certainty has weathered crises in the lives of individuals and in the church of the living God throughout the ages. It will survive civilization’s ruin today.

But this subjective certainty built on the Rock of Ages does not detach us from the world scene. We are in this world, and Jesus prayed in His intercessory prayer, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.” We as Christians too are geared to the world scene, though we are not of this world but born of God. But precisely because we are of God’s household we have a new relevancy to this world.

As Christians, and particularly as Christians of Reformed persuasion, or Christians of the great
Calvinistic tradition, we applaud the emphasis upon education as a medium for greater understanding among the peoples of this world. It has always been of the genius of the Calvinistic tradition to promote education and to give it a foremost place in human endeavor. Some well-meaning, but misguided Christians have heaped abuse upon Calvinism for what the former in their limited perspective called humanism. When the Puritan fathers, Calvinists as they were, set their feet upon our shores, one of their first moves was to establish schools. By the middle of the seventeenth century universal education had progressed among them to a degree matched only two hundred years later in our national life. Our Reformed ancestors who migrated to this land in the nineteenth century established Christian schools as soon as conditions permitted. For the Calvinist religion and education belong together. Hence the school soon followed the church as an integral part of every community. In keeping with our great tradition, therefore, we applaud the proposed extension of educational opportunity and the desired transformation of education to bring peoples of this world into sympathetic understanding of each other.

From this enthusiasm for education and its relevancy to the human problem one should not conclude, however, that we as a Reformed people should now be ready to endorse the educational ideals and the educational program in the making. Quite on the contrary, the red flag was waved in our faces recently when the leadership of UNESCO was announced. And when we read who are formulating its policies, we become justly alarmed. Our endorsement and cooperation must be predicated upon essentially two things: first, upon a true analysis of the crisis education is trying to meet; and second, upon the correct and true orientation of the education proposed.

Let us examine, then, the crisis we are trying to meet, and the education being proposed to meet it.

Nature of the Crisis

On the surface this crisis is rather obvious. The atomic bomb hangs over our heads with all its omens of destruction and horror. Nations are spending more on armaments than they did in 1939, prior to the opening of the latest war. Communism is raising its ugly head and penetrating the nations of Europe. At home communism is boring from within as a fifth column. Europe lies in ruins, and we must feed a starving continent to prevent it from falling an easy prey to the unrest upon which communism thrives. England, which in spite of all its failings throughout history, stands for a measure of justice among men and for the dignity and freedom of the individual, is now a fifth-or sixth-rate nation, poor, and disintegrating. The mighty lion which once stood watch over so great a part of the world is emaciated, and its former glory has departed. In our foreign policy we have shifted from a New Deal policy of appeasement with Russia to one of firm resolve to stand our ground, and even make aggressive moves to forestall further communist infiltration. The wars fought for democracy have licked democracy, as if war could ever hope to save democracy or make the world safe for democracy.

In the economic field likewise we face some stark realities. Many economists observe that a major economic depression is inevitable, and that the extent of the depression will be in proportion to the public debt. When we stop to think that when the former depression struck us we had a national debt of about twelve billion, and now we have a debt of more than two hundred fifty billion, we must get the historical perspective to appreciate what has really come over us the last decades.

In general it may be said that we find ourselves in a major move of liberation. In the ancient world mind, body, and soul were enslaved to forces inimical to the welfare of the individual. One could call nothing his own. In ignorance and superstition man bowed before the gods of his own creation, born of the fear of forces he did not understand. In the social and economic spheres he was subject to traditions and mores which regimented all his actions. Emperors and overlords kept individuals chained to the empires they dreamed of building. War, disease, and famine ravaged large areas taking lives by the thousands in a short space of time.

Early Christianity

When Christianity entered the western world there appeared hope for the liberation of man held in chains these many centuries. First persecuted because it threatened the institutions of the time, its rapid extension compelled the Roman empire to tolerate it, and to recognize it as a major force in the culture of that day. Under Constantinian control, Christianity rose to supremacy in the Roman empire. Constantine employed it, however,
to reconstitute the crumbling foundations of the Romanitas. What Constantine failed to accomplish, Theodosius tried to consummate after an intervening period of pagan supremacy. Christianity as a movement for human liberation suffered its first great setback in the Constantinian-Theodosian policies of making earthly power the end.

The Roman Catholic Church

Following the fall of the Roman Empire, the church began to monopolize the life of the individual. Rather than serving the world as a light to penetrate the darkness of paganism, and to set man free spiritually, the church assumed for itself in a crumbling western world the authority to legislate on all things and to exercise earthly power. Intellectually and spiritually the church held the individual in bondage, and physically, socially, and economically feudal estates with their droves and workers sanctioned by the church regimented the individual.

The Renaissance

Out of the institutional regimentation which had grown with the centuries arose the movement known as the Renaissance, the New Birth. In the Renaissance the dogmatism and authoritarianism of an arbitrary church and of the static past lost their hold upon the thought life of man. Legitimate as was the demand for creative thought and endeavor of the individual, there was incipient, latent in the movement a potential revolt against all normative regulation of human life. Historically we may recognize three periods in the development of the Renaissance: (1) the classicism and humanism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; (2) the rationalism and empiricism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and (3) the scientism, secularism, and atheism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Commencing as a rebirth or liberalizing of the human spirit, the Renaissance has led to a complete mass movement away from supernaturalism in religion and away from all authority of an extra-experiential nature. The state, based on Rousseau's general will, is taking the place of the supernatural in individual and social discipline. Democracy and science occupy the place that religion once occupied in the life of man.

The Reformation

Why has not the Reformation, one may ask, been able to halt the progress of the Renaissance in the direction of despiritualization and secularization of our culture? Out of the Reformation came some significant and influential revivals of the Christianity of the early Christian Church and of the great church fathers. But the Reformation went to seed by internal conflict and hopeless divisions in the Christian church. In the ascetic movements that followed, the culture of the time remained untouched, and an otherworldly pietism resulted. In the humanistic movements which were revived Christianity was taken up as a cultural achievement of man. A positive Christianity normative for the newly gained creative endeavors of man in science, literature, and art was slow in forming, and present in the Calvinistic movement only. But even this movement did not sound a clear note. Furthermore in Constantinian and Theodosian fashion the worldly powers seized the opportunity to use a revived Christianity to support their earthly endeavors. Modern capitalism has claimed Christianity for its supporting basis in the Christian teaching of private property and the freedom of the individual. National governments have used the Church's missionary endeavor as a tool for commercial enterprises and exploitation.

The Modern Liberal

The liberalizing endeavor of the Renaissance continues. It has swallowed up for the greater part the Christianity in our western civilization. Thought and life are thoroughly secularized. Until comparatively recently the Christian ethic was still upheld in human relations. But even this is rejected today as a product of early taboos from which a self-directed man must be delivered in our enlightened age.

And how do our liberalizers and secularists explain the confusion to which we are subject today and the threats of self-destruction that are evident everywhere? This is a period of major readjustment, they point out. It took some centuries to awaken the masses to the latent power in their own bosoms. One can expect adequate controls for these unawakened, latent forces to lag. Controls based on earlier hypostatizations cannot be revived, nor do we want them revived. It is now Man Against Myth in the language of Barrows Dunham's recent book by this title. The danger is that the individual will let the opportunities for fuller self-realization slip from his grasp again, by failing to socialize his individual rights. Such failure will result in a complete relapse from which the human race may not be able to extricate itself for centuries to come.

What Hope is Held Before the World?

We must recognize that ostrich policies and dreams of clearing after the storm are futile. Two
world wars and the threatened aftermath of chaos following the latest war have tended to dispel all theories of inevitable progress. Old loyalties, it is observed, are gone. Former sanctions have disappeared. It is well that this be so, for antecedent being on which former loyalties and sanctions rested heretofore were only fictions to compensate for man’s feeling of inadequacy to meet the realities of experience.

Self-discipline must come from another source than the authoritative past. Modern thought has evolved a new instrument, more in keeping with the dignity of man’s autonomy. The laboratory scientist has pointed the way to legitimate and effective self-restraint as well as creative endeavor and expression. The methodology of science has shown how the agony of suspended judgment promotes the conditions for training in self-control. In the place of former taboos, customs, and mores, and all further extraneous sources of control, we should develop in the individual the attitude of the laboratory scientist. He acts upon hypotheses subject to further verification, and is willing and capable of suspending judgment until the facts justify a conclusion. He permits the contingencies of his observation to qualify the principles upon which he acts. Likewise the individual must learn to act intelligently in the light of conditioning factors. The former dualism of principle and conduct must be resolved. Rather than learn the principles that should delineate our action—which principles rarely did—we must permit principles to be born of action.

Scientific methodology, the modern mind advocates, must replace the old absolutes. We have entered upon a state in our knowledge of the universe that indicates clearly that activity, events, and change are primary. It is in the coordination and sequence of events that we find the meaning of life. The forces that disturb the equilibrium of change must be counteracted by forces that seek to equalize things. Human intelligence is the greatest tool nature has devised to the present that can advantageously serve man in these adjustments.

The Function of Education

How shall we universalize scientific methodology that all men may be conditioned to its proper use? Universal educational opportunity is the answer. When formal education was limited to the select few, the uneducated and illiterate had no alternative than to act uncritically in accordance with the leadership and coercion of others. Knowledge was handed down in finished form, committed to memory and stored for some hypothetical future use. Social progress today depends upon the collective intelligence of all. We acknowledge what nature has long ago sought to teach us, that intelligence is not the monopoly of a few. All men can and must be taught to think creatively in terms of facts which are our common possession and the interpretations available, so that men can arrive at judgments independently and scientifically. Forming judgments by the slow process of evaluating data disciplines personality. Therefore, this methodology must be employed from the time the child begins to make judgments and continued through formal education into adult life.

Education is being given a large order! It is expected to accomplish for the individual and for society the stability until comparatively recently achieved by man’s voluntary or involuntary recognition of external authority and a corresponding responsibility. When antecedent being, either as divine and the creator of all that is, or as present in our cumulative culture, was still recognized as having priority in the life of the individual, education consisted largely in the apprehension of this antecedent reality that one might conform thereto. Education was largely transmissive; the creative aspect of education was subdued. Creative thinking belonged to the few who were the prophets of the human race. We must now discard this static education and turn to the creative adjustment of every individual to the flux of events. Ready-made ideals and patterns of behavior will leave the individual unequal to the changing phenomena of life.

Philosophies of Education

Current philosophies of education vary greatly among themselves, but they speak one language with regard to the autonomy of man. Some find in human values the evidence of the divine, and if not the deeper spiritual verities, the comparative constancy of these values. Others see in human values the creative ingenuity of man’s intelligence in making necessary adjustments for the well of all concerned. Still others, though they regard human values but incidents in the natural realm fictitiously conceived as distinctively human, accept such values as directive in the adjustment of man to the continuum in which he finds himself. Collectively they represent the secularism and scientism of our day.

Sir Richard Livingstone, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, would offer in his Education for a World Adrift a clue to educational reform for our day. “Standards, right values, the science of good and evil—to impart these is an essential part of education,” says Sir Richard. But whence the standards, Sir Richard? Out of the
life of a Christian culture, is the answer. A conservative thinker of our day holds before us the autonomous man.

Alexander Meiklejohn in his *Education Between Two Worlds* criticized education for its slow transition from an arm of the church to the arm of the state. Education must become the responsibility of a world state. Man is at best a political animal, and his education must be predicated on this fact. Education by an autonomous world-state

for the autonomous individual as a co-operative member of the social whole, is here advocated.

Conservative and radical alike interpret education as a process the ideals and content of which are defined by man and valued according to his needs and interests.

[Note — This article is the first half of a paper read by Dr. Jaarsma at the Christian Reformed Ministers Conference held at Calvin Seminary in June. The second part of the paper will follow next month under the title, "Christian Theism and Education"]

**The Voice of our Readers**

*Dear Sirs:*  
The enclosed Two Dollars are for the renewal of my subscription. It is a pleasure to read a magazine which keeps one abreast of significant events and trends in the field of art, letters, and religion.

Very truly yours,  
RICHARD POST.

*Dear Brother:*  
From time to time you have something to say about Roman Catholicism in your articles in *The Calvin Forum*, and I think those articles were to the point. Now a sister in Chicago mailed us the enclosed leaflet on "Catholics Do Not Believe." It reveals one of their clever methods of making propaganda. Since she sent several copies, I am mailing one to various editors and also one to you, so that you also may make use of it at some convenient day.

Receive our best wishes for God's choicest blessing on your very important Church and Kingdom work.

Fraternally yours,

JOHN M. DYKSTRA.

*Dear Editor:*  
Rev. Ring Star's article, "The Prayers of the Unregenerate," in the August-September issue did not impress this writer as sounding very convincing. He cannot conceive of the manner of Scripture interpretation running through the article as being in harmony with the one he has always regarded as Reformed. However, instead of touching upon all its controversial points—conclusions drawn from its major premise—we would rather confine our criticism to the latter.

Rev. Star writes: "When Jesus prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!' He was not asking for forgiveness only for those who were God's elect among His crucifiers, but for His enemies in general, namely, for all those who were guilty of the crucifixion." Then, further on, the brother argues that Christ's intercession on Calvary concerned the entire unregenerated world. Once more, we have serious objections against all this, and therefore would raise some questions with reference thereto.

Do not the Scriptures clearly state that Christ does not pray for the world, but for those whom the Father has given Him? Is not this statement, in substance, Jesus' very own? Furthermore, can we conceive of such a thing (in the light

of Scripture, of course) as Christ having died for those who are ultimately lost, even though He have died for only one of their sins? Is not a sin forgiven a sin suffered for, paid for, by Christ? "For without blood there is no remission of sins." Yet, suppose we concede one sin of everyone of the non-elect forgiven (for so runs the brother's argument, since the principle would be the same were only one member concerned), what could prevent us from concluding that likely more sins were forgiven them? Why not? Is not every sin virtually a crucifying of the Christ? And where would this line of reasoning ultimately lead us?

Byron Center, Mich.

P. AUREMA.

*Dear Dr. Bouma:*  
Enclosed check for $2.00 in payment for my subscription to *The Calvin Forum*. It continues to give me great joy. Those of us who have never had any academic training may have a little difficulty from time to time in trying to follow some of the articles, but by and large most of the articles are within our reach. May it continue to enlarge our insight into the Reformed world and life view.

Fraternally yours,

PETER DE LEEUW, SR.

*Dear Dr. Bouma:*  
I wish to thank you and your staff for the stimulation and inspiration that I have received from the splendid editorials and articles that your Publication contained during the past year.

Leota, Minnesota.

GERRIT H. RIETJES.

*Dear Sirs:*  
I have greatly enjoyed *The Forum* and look upon it as my "Christian Century of the Reformed Faith."

CHARLES G. SCHAUFFLE,  
Orthodox Presbyterian Church

National City, Calif.
From Our Correspondents

OUR DUTCH CORRESPONDENT IN AMERICA

Chicago, Ill.,
August 30, 1947.

Dear Dr. Bouma and All Readers:

It just happens that the date to write my letter for THE CALVIN FORUM falls during my stay in America. The day for which I was longing, namely, to see America with my own eyes, has come to my amazement. The occasion for my journey to America was the Centennial at Holland, Michigan, on the 13th of August and following days. I attended several meetings in connection with this celebration. At one of them I spoke the following, in which you, no doubt, will be interested:

"I am very glad to meet you all. We were in high air, and in high spirits, too, when we travelled across the ocean and above your continent. But first of all I will ask you to pardon me for all my mistakes, because it is 27 years ago that I learned my English in high school. Now I will try to brush it up a little.

"I once read about a circus giraffe thrusting his bean-pole neck through the top of his special crate car. Since he was three inches too tall to pass under, he held up a trainload of animals at an overhead bridge. The baffled conductor phoned headquarters. It was a new problem, but the freight clearance expert was equal to it. 'Drop a carrot into the giraffe's crate,' he advised. The carrot was dropped. The giraffe ducked to get it... and the train could go on!

"So there was once a man—not a train conductor, but a conductor of people. His name was Adolf Hitler. He was baffled by the stiffness of our Dutch people and concluded: I will make them to be hungry and starving... and I will let them eat carrots. Then they will bow their necks quite willingly! But the difference was that they did not bow. Instead they held their heads up only more straight and higher!

"From these Dutch people, from whose ancestors you are the descendants, I have the privilege of bringing congratulations to you. And I would hereby express the hope that you, Americans, will hold up your heads against every tyrant who would make the world to bow to him, by whatever means. I will tell you openheartedly that our power was not from ourselves. Our own heart was often afraid and full of fear. But our strength came from heaven, from Almighty God, just as was the case with your ancestors who settled here a century ago. Be like them, and you will live in the happy possession of your freedom in the centuries to come.

"Our witness is the spirit of Albertus Christiana Van Raalte, a man who also derived all his strength from a hearty trust and faith in God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. You, my American friends, enjoy your freedom and democracy, but do not forget that the only sound roots of freedom are the words of the Bible and the true belief in Holy Scripture! Van Raalte, if he could now speak a few words to us, would undoubtedly say: Go on in the strictest fidelity to the Bible and to Christ, our Savior and Redeemer—as did your forefathers! That fidelity is the backbone of your strength. The loss of this faith would be suicidal for the descendants of our pioneer settlers. You would lose all your achievements and would be brought to abject powerlessness.

"Allow me in closing to bring tribute to you, descendants of our pioneers and early settlers, Christian believers, hard workers, founders of your town and district. God bless you all! This is my wish, also in the name of our Churches in the Netherlands. I will finish with one of your nice slogans: Hats off for the past, coats off for the future!"

These words I spoke on that occasion, and I was glad that I could do so. Now I will not try to tell you all the impressions I have received of your beautiful country. But I must say: How friendly and hospitable your people are everywhere! In a later letter I hope to tell you more about my impressions and experiences in your country. I will only say in closing: How richly your country is blessed!

With hearty greetings, Yours,

PIETER PRINS.

MICHIGAN CALVINISTIC PHILOSOPHY CLUB

The Club had three meetings since our last report. On Friday, April 25, 1947, there was a discussion of Prof. Van Andel's paper on Calvin's Contributions to Philosophy. The speaker read the first half of a shorter paper prepared for publication. There was a lively discussion on the following topics: Logic and Christianity, Technique and Christianity, Trinitarian Transcendentalists, Matter and Form as Transcendentalists, Kant's Twelve Categories, and Volkening's Fourteen Aspects, Regeneration and Christian Philosophy, Calvin's and Hepp's Ideas of Common Grace, Degrees of Total Depravity in Religion, Morality and Culture, Total and Utter Depravity.

On Friday, June 27, the Club had its sixteenth meeting. Prof. Cecil De Boer of the University of Arkansas gave a thorough paper—which will be published in our CALVIN FORUM—on Philosophical and Christian Ethics.

The speaker took Kant and Bertrand Russell as examples, the one of the more conservative, and the other of the most radical representatives of modern ethics. Kant is a rationalist, and, therefore, proceeds from reason. Russell is a naturalist, and, therefore, proceeds from desire. Kant wants to establish the Decalogue, Russell not at all. Kant believes in an eternal moral law, leading to God, but philosophically only a postulate of practical reason. Russell believes in a changing morality without a God.

Between Kant and Russell we find the Evolutionists. First the Absolute Idealists who still hold on to norms, but developing towards God, whom they identify with man. Then the Pragmatists who contend that moral law is only the best of public opinion. But all so-called philosophical ethics is unchristian, for the Christian alone begins with God and His eternal law as revealed in the Scriptures.

The ethics of Christians and unbelievers agree only on some analogues of form: Man is a moral being, and he ought to act ethically, but he falls short. But in naturalistic ethics we can hardly say that there is any formal similarity left. Christian ethics insists on a different motivation, and on a different content in ethical acts. The highest motive of philosophical ethics seems to be the refusal to violate one's self-respect. The highest motive for Christian ethics is real love for God and for one's neighbor.

A very interesting discussion followed on the following questions:

1. Do the Old and the New Testaments have a difference of moral law, or of moral standards?
2. Is the highest motive for an unbeliever only his self-interest, or is there perhaps some love for his neighbor?
3. Is the contribution of philosophical ethics only a criticism of preceding movements, or does it make any positive contributions to Christian ethics?
4. Have believers and unbelievers any fundamental common notions of right and wrong, or is the similarity only external?
At the meeting of September 26 our speaker was Professor G. Brillenburg Wurth of Kampen, who read a paper on Faith and Suggestion. The speaker first mentioned the use of suggestion by revivalists and mystics from Suvanarola to Moody and Sankey, and Blumhardt. Then he pointed out several schools of thought which had tried to explain faith as the psychological phenomenon of suggestion; e.g., Freud, Couté and Baudouin, and recently Strauss under the influence of Heidegger's Existentialism. In his criticism he pointed out that all these movements make the mistake of trying to explain the supernatural as the natural. Faith is a supernatural gift, according to the Bible, and, therefore, unbelief cannot gradually grow into belief. Suggestion may guide and direct the incipient faith, but God must be the Originator.

Several questions were discussed: The difference between suggestion and hypnosis, the technique of suggestion in religion, erotics and religion, the use made of suggestion by the Youth for Christ movement, the danger of starting with suggestion in preaching and evangelizing, the suggestive power of education and environment.

We had a very stimulating meeting.

The Rev. F. C. Meyster of Rotterdam, co-delegate with Professor Wurth to the Holland Centennial of last summer closed our meeting with prayer. It was a great pleasure to have these brethren in our midst.

The secretary,
HENRY J. VAN ANDEL.

CALVINISM IN NORTHERLAND

Dear Dr. Bouma:

COMMENCE this letter by referring to a pamphlet recently issued by the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church and the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland. The pamphlet is entitled, "Agreed Statements on Matters of Doctrine and Polity." The joint committees on co-operation met at different times during the years from 1937 to 1945. This pamphlet, according to the preface, "is a statement of the reports as received by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the Conference of the Methodist Church, and published by their direction." The reports, however, are not final, as the preface concludes thus—"These reports were received by the Assembly and the Conference as preliminary statements to which general approval was given without prejudice to future modifications." We feel that such words detract from the value of the pamphlet as an index to the Doctrine and Polity of the above-mentioned Churches.


Under the first head the two Churches recognize each other as "within the Fellowship of the Church of Christ"; the validity of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as celebrated in both Churches; they agree to accept members of either Church as Communicants; to exchange pulpits and, where expedient, to hold joint-services conducted by a Methodist or Presbyterian minister.

Under the second head we read that these two Churches "accept the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation..." (italics mine). Knowing, as we do, that the text-books set by both Churches are thoroughly modernistic, there is only one way that we can interpret the above statement. I am reminded of some words I read recently—"The Bible is the Word of God. The Book judges man. The Bible contains the word of God. Man judges the book." Some parts of this section appear orthodox, but when we read that it was approved in 1939 as a statement "that might fairly be accepted in a preliminary way without prejudice to a fuller statement in the future" (italics mine), we do not feel so sure of our ground.

The last section (dealing with ordination) contains some statements which are alarming, and which show us how this pamphlet is to be treated in general. It states that "the Presbyterian Church subscription is required to the Manual of Laws, page 14. On the same page we read this:

As much as a preliminary statement on Doctrine was provisionally accepted by the General Assembly and the Methodist Conference in 1941, the present doctrinal basis of the Westminister Confession of Faith and Wesley's Forty-four Standard Sermons in his Notes on the New Testament. The sense in which this declaration is to be understood is set forth in the Manual of Laws, page 14.

It is very clear from this that these two Churches tolerate their present standards as the best in the meantime, but if they succeed in uniting then their respective standards will be "superseded" (i.e. scrapped). Even John Wesley's Arminianism is too strong for his present-day followers. And what about the Calvinism of the Irish Presbyterian Church? The attempted union would be a union of unbelief, a union of modernism; a union which would discard the present standards of these two bodies and set up a standard of its own. Not only would the standards referred to be "superseded," but the pamphlet under consideration would also have to give way to a "statement of Doctrine in its full and final form." Therefore we feel this pamphlet is not worth the paper it is printed on. It will deceive the unthinking in both these big Churches, and so fulfil its purpose as a piece of 'eye-wash,' but those who are acquainted with modernistic tactics will not be deceived. It is a sad state of affairs when professing Calvinists wish to unite with Arminians. The Irish Presbyterian Church has departed from historical Calvinism, but the Irish Methodist Church is avowedly Arminian. The position of the Irish Evangelical Church, which stands for historic Calvinism, is becoming more and more justified as year succeeds year.

Visit of Dr. Stanford Reid

As I write we are looking forward to a visit from Dr. Stanford Reid of the Canadian Presbyterian Church. We expect to have him with us in a few days' time. Dr. Reid is no stranger to the Calvin Forum, for he is stated of any link with other Calvinists whether in Canada, U.S.A., or elsewhere. Dr. Reid will preach (D. V.) in two of our Belfast Churches on Sabbath, August 17.

Prayer Requested

You in America are watching us in the British Isles, in particular our government. You behold us in serious difficulties, yet our leaders seem to have forgotten God. Our present social-government has little regard for historic Christianity or for the keeping of the Lord's Day. As a nation, along with other nations, we have sinned in the past. Now God's hand is heavily upon us—yet the nation as a whole refuses to see God's hand of punishment. The Calvinists of these Islands are on the whole awake or beginning to awake to the present spiritual position of our nation. "Crisis" is becoming a commonplace word with us. Railway accidents are becoming more frequent. Infantile Paralysis is spreading. We are facing a blacker winter than usual. The "man-in-the-street" over here shrugs his shoulders and carries on. Will the people of these Islands awake? Will they turn to God? We are praying in our churches that they will. We believe that God will hear the prayer of the faithful few. We request your prayers for our nation.

With greetings from Irish Calvinists,
Yours through Sovereign Grace,
FRED S. LEAHY.

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THE CALVIN FORUM * * * NOVEMBER, 1947

DEAR DR. BOUMA:

I have looked for some comments on the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to appear in the recent issues of THE CALVIN FORUM, as some of your correspondents in Canada belong to that denomination. As nothing has appeared on this rather important meeting; I shall take the liberty to send you a few lines on the subject, feeling justified to do so in view of the fact that the Assembly met in our province, at Calgary, 200 miles to the south of our city.

I regret that I was not able to attend any of the meetings in person, although I had made up my mind to do so if at all possible. That's why these notes are largely drawn from other periodicals "The Presbyterian Record," "Bible Christianity," and "The Contender"—all Presbyterian but of a different hue.

The "Presbyterian Record" opined that "the 73rd General Assembly was a fine cross-section of our church," and noted that many classed it as "A good assembly." In the same paper Dr. Frank Scott Mackenzie expressed his great satisfaction with the action taken on an overture calling for a clear declaration of the position of the Presbyterian church in Canada in the matter of its relation to other Christian communions and to various forms of co-operative effort in meeting the demands of the present time. Wrote he: "It is a matter for profound thankfulness and a source of great encouragement that our church now stands on record, through this Assembly announcement, as repudiating utterly the designation of a mere isolated sect, and declaring in such emphatic terms its position as a constituent part of the holy, catholic and apostolic church of Christ in the world ..."

There appears to have been a marked unanimity at that Calgary meeting. Presbyterians appear to be well satisfied with its work,—but not all of them, and certainly not the Rev. R. Allan Killen, of the First Bible Presbyterian church recently organized at Edmonton.

The Rev. Mr. Killen is a leading writer in "The Contender," a periodical which clearly advocates a break with the Presbyterian church in Canada, and the organization of "Bible Presbyterian" churches which will carry on the old and true Presbyterian tradition. Brother Killen reports extensively on the assembly in "The Contender" of July '47. The heading of his "Report" tells the story. It is: "A Great Church Fails."

In his conclusion the Rev. Killen makes the following suggestions to those "who find themselves within the Presbyterian church today":

(1) That some Presbyterian inaugurate a case in the civil courts asking for an injunction against the use of funds for the propagation of Modernism, pleading that the Church has departed from the Faith and therefore is following a "divisive course."

(2) That Born-again, saved, Presbyterians withhold all givings from the budget, for to give to it is to feed modernistic Theological Colleges and missions. A reduced budget will bring the modernists and the Church to time faster than anything. The income for last year was only $378,000, while expenditure was about $414,000. The Church must have $438,000 to balance its budget this next year, which means an increase of nearly sixty thousand over last year. Last year's deficit was met out of reserves, but these are nearly exhausted and not available for the coming year, we were told. The budget is the Achilles heel of the rule of Modernism in the Church.

(3) A separate missionary board and association of ministers within the church for those sound ministers who still remain in. We recommend this though we know it will lead finally to the eviction of such sound men.

(4) Withdrawals by individuals, congregations, and ministers at the earliest date possible unless they first want to fight the apostasy using the first three methods. It must come to withdrawal in the end unless a sufficiently strong group is formed in the Church to demand and organize a continuing true, Bible believing evangelical Church teaching an infallible inerrant Bible, and willing to fight in the courts of the land to prove the remainder of the Church, in departing from the Bible and Westminster Confession of Faith, is following a "divisive course."

"Bible Christianity" is less pessimistic about the state of affairs in the Presbyterian Church in Canada and its Assembly of last summer. This periodical, although soundly Reformed, has advocated a more restrained course of action, seeking reform within the church rather than breaking with it. It quotes reports from several commissioners to the Assembly which testify that the Calgary Assembly was a good one, and that with a few notable exceptions a fine spirit prevailed. "Bible Christianity" also expressed satisfaction with the fact that the contentious question of the Church of Christ in China (criticized because of its modernistic tendencies) was sent down to the Presbyteries for consideration and decision. This paper considered it "rather curious" that the Assembly adopted the overture which repudiated "the action of those within the church who have taken it upon themselves to condemn as harmful to the church's welfare and false to her mission plans and policies which are in clear harmony" with Presbyterian principles as defined by the Westminster Confessions, while the matter about which these condemnations were made was submitted to the Presbyteries as was the desire of those censored critics. It was maintained, further, by "Bible Christianity" that it was a "wise move" of the Assembly to ask the Synod of the Maritimes to review the decision of the Halifax Presbytery regarding Rev. Perry Rockwood, as this Synod "is in a position to deal with the facts of the case."

Finally this observation was made, that although there were things to discourage those who are sound in the faith, nevertheless the Presbyterian church is far from being apostate as some would have us believe.

Well, CALVIN FORUM friends, perhaps the picture of the Presbyterian Church in Canada drawn by "The Contender" is a bit too gloomy, but it would seem that that of "Bible Christianity" is perhaps a bit too bright. Things may not be as bad as "The Contender" holds, but it certainly gives reason for the utmost concern if the church countenances plain Modernism at the training schools of its ministers, and if those who criticize the practice are silenced or held up to ridicule. Moreover, this writer wonders what good it will do if the Synod of the Maritime Provinces "is charged with the duty and responsibility of inquiring into the regularity of the proceedings minutely, and may instruct or admonish the lower court and order any portion of the minutes deleted" in the Perry Rockwood case as long as it is also provided in the general rules of the church that "a judicial sentence may not be reversed, nor may a question, the decision of which has become final, in a matter affecting a private party, be revised."

Christian Greetings,

PAUL DE KORKKEOEK.
Book Reviews

A NOVEL WITH A RELIGIOUS THEME


VesperS in Vienna shares more than a common authorship with an earlier book by Bruce Marshall, The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith. Readers of the earlier novel may remember that the wise old bishop says to Father Smith: "The essential difference between Christianity and other religions is that Christianity is a difficult religion. It is not easy for men to abandon pleasure and prosperity and power and live each day as though it were their last. It has never been and it never will be..." In VesperS in Vienna, the wise Mother Superior of the convent of the Daughters of the Holy Ghost says to Colonel Nicobar of the British Army of Occupation in Austria: "...I think that the trouble of the world is this: It has never been easy to obey our Lord's commands, not even in the days when all Europeans were Christians, and did not imagine that, just because they could see planets and stars and the moon at the end of a telescope, Christ had not died for their sins and risen from the dead." In both books there is this expression of the difficulty involved in being a Christian and of the resulting tragedy because, difficult as it is, Christianity is the only answer to man's questioning.

Although there is a similarity of theme in the two novels, the stories are quite different. In The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith, the events center around the life story of the Roman Catholic priest, Father Smith; while in VesperS in Vienna we spend a few months with Colonel Nicobar, who is in charge of subversive activities in Vienna. While living in this Austrian city the Colonel and his small staff are billeted in a convent. His tasks involve such assignments as returning Maria Bühlen, a Volksdeutcher from the Volga, to Russia, and inspecting a train load of exiles from Yugoslavia. To both the Colonel and the reader the importance of such tasks in the efforts to establish peace is perplexing. Colonel Nicobar is recalled to London for his unconventional manner in carrying out his assignments; there, much to his amazement, his tasks are misunderstood, and he is praised, not blamed—and promoted.

The plot built around such incidents and their causes and effects is thin. The love story of Maria Bühlen and Major Twingo does not stir the imagination; nor does the suicide of Maria, who prefers death to returning to Russia, have the flavor of tragic reality. Bruce Marshall has not written an enchanting story; he is too didactic, but it is a story well told with no superficial words and with sentences of beautiful simplicity, such as, "Colonel Nicobar wondered if it was indeed possible for them to share philosophy as they shared the wind, the rain, and the stars which was the common finger of God upon them..." And the author has created two interesting characters, Colonel Nicobar and Mother Auxilia, the Mother Superior of the convent. Marshall has, moreover, written a novel which has a message; consequently the reader's interest is sustained.

Colonel Nicobar is a contemplative man. He is introduced to us as such on the second page of the book when he "wonders sometimes whether the 'four freedoms' could ever be secured by dynamite and whether progress was synonymous with propulsion." Much to the annoyance of his superior officer he tries to define such terms as "democracy" and "subversive activities." One has a feeling of indulgent sympathy for him when "his hand that wasn't there began to pain him," for the Colonel had lost an arm in the first World War. One's sympathy is aroused too because the Colonel is essentially a lonely man; there is in the shadowy background a family with whom he has no vital relationship. He is much disturbed by the fact that soldiers do not know why they are fighting, but finds that conversation on such subjects with his fellow officers is impossible. With Mother Auxilia, however, he finds a communion of spirit. It is the story of this friendship which makes the book delightful reading.

Mother Auxilia is a very devout, sometimes almost naïve, Mother Superior with a wise understanding of human nature, even the human nature of a British Colonel. It is by means of the conversations between these two that Bruce Marshall presents the arguments of men against the Church and the answers of the Church. One evening the conversation begins with the Mother's question, "Tell me why aren't you a Christian?" During the course of the conversation a Russian officer enters and becomes a participant. Surely now Mother Auxilia will be vanquished, but no, the final word is hers: "And comrades can't possibly do without God what Christians have failed to do with God." And the reader feels that the author is on Mother Auxilia's side.

It is this attitude on the part of Bruce Marshall that makes VesperS in Vienna a significant book. Although the Church, which is of course the Roman Catholic Church, is severely criticized by various characters, none of them has a counter proposal that is able to refute the Mother's arguments. Although the Colonel is not "converted" and "still felt that there was a catch in it somewhere," he has no answer. Christianity may have failed, but Christianity alone can succeed. To give the impression that this novel is a religious one is misleading. It has too much flavor of army life to be such; the caricatures and sometimes vulgar comedy are a part of the book as well as its religious ideas. The army flavor is to be expected since Bruce Marshall himself was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Displaced Persons Division of the Allied Civil Commission for Austria; consequently much of personal experience and reaction enters into the story. Christopher Morley in his Saturday Review of Literature says, "He crosses all literary picket lines and flits from humble devotion to mischievous burlesque." Yet Christopher Morley also says, "If, Bruce Marshall, is one of my favorite lay priests." Because of this evaluation and the statement in the New York Times review, "His book is a prayer for mankind," the book should be regarded as more than a passing novel and deserves our attention. Mature Christian readers will find VesperS in Vienna stimulating reading.

GERTRUDE SLEINGERLAND.

THE ANATOMY OF BEWILDERMENT


Because the plot of this novel is slight and unimportant to the interest, there can be no harm in giving it away. Jan Vander Loef, a Dutch youth of limited means and education, takes it into his muddled head that the times in the Europe of the 1930's call for action. A political enthusiast on the radical side of the question, he bicycles his way into Germany. He fosters a nebulous sort of hope that he is marked by destiny to do redemptive things for Europe and the world. In the course of his first evening at a German inn, he is inveigled into the scheme of some crafty Germans, who, it turns out later, are Nazi bigwigs looking for just such a bland innocent as Jan to serve as a tool for their ends. As their pawn, he does his daring deed: he sets fire to the Reichstag.

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He is caught, jailed, tried after the Nazi fashion, and put to death. During the period of imprisonment, his acquaintance, Jimmy Verschoor, considers doing something for Jan. But Jimmy, well-schooled, worldly wise, the thoughtful son of a Leyden professor whom Jan had served as a gardener, cannot bring himself to the point of action. Although secretly as aware of the drift of things political in Europe as Jan, he is too "intelligent" to see any sense in an act of radical personal protest.

That is the plot, and those are the principal characters. But the plot is mainly a rock to hang ideas on, and the characters are mainly avenues to social criticism. In fact, The Pawn, although it is called a novel, and although Landheer prefixes to it as his epigraph the lines from Edmund Rostand—

Ce n'est pas l'autre chose,
Que Phistoire due enfant, enfant, enfant, enfant,
is mainly social commentary and only secondarily a novel. Of course, one can take the view which David Cornel De Jong takes in his Introduction, and hold that the brief third part, concerned as it is with the delirious thoughts of the maddened Jan in prison, is the principal part, to which the rest of the volume is only build-up and preamble. However, there is in this book neither subtlety or characterization nor any sense of physical milieu, neither a natural nor a symbolical atmosphere, neither warmth and color in the matter of description nor distinction of style. Perhaps it is best, then, to accept and to recommend it for what it chiefly is, namely, perceptive social criticism, than for what it is not, namely, a captivating tale.

For the social criticism, the political commentary, is good criticism and good commentary. Landheer's portrait of the Nazi mentality in its rise to power, and his delineation of the obtuseness of the pre-war Western mind to the menace which was about to bully it into passivity, is freshly perceived, interesting, and convincing. By shaping his perceptions into the form of a novel, Landheer has opportunity to touch on the whole range of typical reactions to Nazism on the eve of its solidification of power in bewildered Europe. His quiet reiteration of the two notes of obvious menace and baffling indifference to menace are effective as the continuous dropping of the water upon the rock.

Some will say that all this is water under the bridge. Publishers do say that such another book exposing the Western mentality in the inter-bellum years will fall dead from the press. But all this is not water under the bridge. As surely as the past is prologue to the future, this book makes no obvious claim to symbolism, is full of meaning. True, it is an inadequacy and a distortion that Landheer's criticism lacks the religious dimension, that his problems arise and are discussed in a secular context, and that he nowhere suggests that this secularity of context is a cause of the problems. But be it, as one hazards the guess, that Landheer writes from the critical vantage point of liberal humanism, he anatomizes the mind of the Continent in the '30's so tellingly that those who read must profit. HENRY SYLFFER.

LABOR EXPLAINS ITSELF


What labor and management do, whether they are engaged in peaceful co-operation or in militant conflict, is not merely their own affair; it is also the affair of the public. Whether they are engaged in the production of goods or in bargaining collectively to determine the fortunes of industry shall be divided between them, their action affects the whole community. In fact these two groups together constitute a very large part of the community. We know that management is aware of this fact. Its statement of its own policies and its statements of the policies and of the demands of labor frequently appear in print. In the volume under review representatives of labor and other spokesmen for them point to the record of labor's achievement in many fields of activity to prove labor's interest in the whole community. They frankly state their dependence upon the community, and especially upon the church, and they avow that the motivation behind their activity is social and spiritual as well as self-centered and secular.

The opening chapter by T. North Whitehead points out a fact, too generally forgotten in these days of mass production, the fact that a worker's job takes up much of his waking day and constitutes, therefore, a large part of his life. A job, we are reminded, is not only necessary to "make a living," it is "living." As such it should do more than require of the laborer endless repetitions of the same motions, motions that leave him dull, uninterested in, and bored by his work. It should enlist his interest, and in it and through it be supposed means of expressing himself, of serving himself, his family, and his community. The author admits that other positions in life than those of workers in industry may be dull and uninteresting, but he contends that the jobs which laborers hold are generally not meaningful, that they are too frequently meaningless. Management spends untold millions in research to improve machinery and methods of production. The author believes that more money should be spent on research to improve the worker's job and to make it seem more worthwhile to him.

The remainder of part one of this book is devoted to a discussion of labor's interest in other than its own immediate affairs. Excellent chapters are presented on labor's concern for the national welfare, for children, and for education, on labor's interest in politics and especially in fair treatment of minorities, on labor's interest in fair treatment of labor by the Federal Council of Churches and the National Labor Organization. Although this information is not new to the student of labor problems, it is apparently not very well known to the general public and the publication of it is, therefore, necessary and timely.

Section two deals with the subject of labor and the church. It presents a challenge to the church to concern itself more with the life and problems of the laborer. It points to contributions that the church has made and to others that it might make if church leaders were aware of their opportunities. It acknowledges with appreciation the work that has been done by the Federal Council of Churches and by leaders in the field of social action among the Catholics and the Jews. A point, apparently well taken, is this that religious leadership has thus far manifested itself largely in state and national organizations and that more should be done on the local level where actual problems present themselves and where leadership is sorely needed.

The six autobiographies given in the third and final section are intended to reveal what it is that motivates labor leaders. To those who think of all such leaders as belligerent radicals, the reading of these chapters will be a real revelation. When one stops to consider that some fifteen million of our industrial workers are at present enrolled in the unions, it should be apparent that many of the members, and of the leaders also, must be members of our great religious organizations. There, undoubtedly, are not all the church members in the union movement and they are right in insisting, as some do, in these chapters, that the labor problem presents a challenge to the church. However, what should be apparent to union leaders is the fact that misunderstanding and criticism of the labor movement by church leaders may be an indication of the fact that the union members have not realized as clearly as they should the challenge in the religious teachings of the churches for the conduct of union members.

The reading of the addresses published in this book should contribute toward a better understanding of the aims and policies of our labor unions. It should bring home to religious leaders the fact that union members need and are looking for guidance. It is, no doubt, true, as union men charge, that church men have not kept up with the rapid changes in industry and may, therefore, have failed to grasp their opportunity to be of great influence. It is, however, easy to find fault with the church, and this is frequently done within the
A GREAT teacher speaks to teachers and students. He generously divulges some of the secrets of his unquestionable success as a professor of Bible. This book is primarily a study of applied methodology and the response of those who have eyes and actually see and ears and actually hear. This book is the “James Van Sprunt Lectures” of 1946 sponsored by the Union Theological Seminary of Richmond, Virginia, including as an appendix an abridged essay of John Ruskin on “Composition”.

There are “two sides of scripture” (p. 25). The divine is God’s revelation. The other side is the communication of this revelation to man. This side is “open to the view of all comers” (p. 25). It is presented “to men in the familiar forms of literature, as history or poetry, proverb or parable, discourse, meditation or apocalypse” (p. 25). In this respect scripture, regarded as a medium of communication, has a close affinity to all the arts (p. 26).

Dr. Kuist does not focus his attention upon the first, the revelational. He does, however, make some commitments. He alleges that “in the last two decades many valuable contributions to the literature [on the subject of revelation] have been made” (p. 26). The contributors recognized as such men as John Baillie, Karl Barth, Nicholas Berdyaev of the Russian Seminary in Paris, E. Brunner, Karl Heim, and others. In passing we may say that we sincerely hope that our author may be taken much in little space. The last fifteen pages, which might possibly rather have been called Appendix than IV, offer views held by Old Testament scholars (Pfeiffer is quoted again and again); yet he never allows his pages to be burdened with excess baggage.

The book consists of three parts. The first deals with the Bible as such—its inspiration, its canonical status, and its proper interpretation. This covers fifty pages. The second part, entitled “Bible Survey: A Treasury of Bible Information,” begins with a most interesting chapter on “Streamlined Dates” with charts and suggested mnemonic devices to master important Bible dates, and then gives a fine outline survey in one hundred and thirty pages of the whole Bible history in four chapters: From the Dawn of History to the Division of the Kingdom; From Intertribal Warfare to Immanuel’s Birth; From the Manger to the Mount; and, From Pentecost to Patmos. There is a wealth of material in these chapters. Its organization is helpful and strikes the eye. The third part deals with the books of the Bible, with about a hundred pages on the Old and about one hundred twenty-five pages on the New Testament. It is interesting to note that the author deals with the Bible books in their chronological order, a feature which is very helpful and refreshing for the traditional Bible student. These 225 pages of Biblical Introduction contain much in little space. The last fifteen pages, which might possibly rather have been called Appendix than Part IV, offer a few lists of key chapters identified by gem quotations, and a list of Bible passages suitable for use on private and public occasions.

Special features of this book, which is truly a treasury of Bible information, are such as: The cross-references from the Bible book section to the appropriate Bible History section and vice versa; the mnemonic devices for the mastery of dates, topics, and outlines; the charts; and a host of other features scattered throughout the volume. Only a few misspellings occur, with which we shall not clutter this review.

This book is full of life. Even dates come to life under the hands of the author. There is not a dull page in it. And—best of all—it makes you want to read and study your Bible more than ever before.