Opinions and Views
An Invitation

Palestine Question
Zion Without God?

True Ecumenicity
Theological Basis

Need for Doctrine
Scriptural Emphasis

Jesus' Death
"Broken Heart" Theory

The Fool Hath Said---
An Allegory

Voices
News
Reviews
Contents

Editorials

Interchange of Views and Opinions .................................. 155
The Enigma of Palestine ...................................................... 155

Articles

That They May Be One ................................................. Jacob T. Hoogstra 157
Doctrine: A Scriptural Evaluation ................................... Henry R. Van Til 160
Did Jesus Die of a Broken Heart? ...................................... Stuart Bergsma 163
The Saga of Two Philosophic Ants ...................................... Ala Bandon 168

The Voice of Our Readers

Stimulating Scholarly Reformed Thought .................................. 169
Appreciations and Suggestions ........................................... 170

From Our Correspondents

South African Observations ............................................... 170
On Palestine and Egypt ...................................................... 171
From British West Africa ...................................................... 172
Reformed Church in America News ......................................... 173

Book Reviews

The Idea of Missions .......................................................... 174
Presbyterians: Scotch, Irish, American ...................................... 175
Denominations, Sects, and Cults ........................................... 176
Interchange of Views and Opinions

ONE of the objectives which the Editors of The Calvin Forum have set for the magazine from the very beginning is that it should be a medium for discussion and a channel for the interchange of views and opinions. From letters received and from the growing list of new subscribers we know that our readers appreciate the fare which our magazine offers. "I hope and pray our Lord may continually use the Forum to spread our glorious Reformed Faith to the four corners of the world!" writes a Korean convert to Calvinism. "I am convinced that your publication is deserving of increasingly wider circulation. Every issue provides stimulating reading" is the opinion of a Washington minister. A student at one of the largest universities in the country confesses that "it was a pleasant surprise to stumble upon your publication a few weeks ago", and, enclosing the subscription price, he adds: "I did not realize there was a magazine published in conjunction with Calvin College." In recent weeks many oral comments of an appreciative nature have come to our ears. It is increasingly being recognized that our magazine is the only one of its kind in the English language which makes its appeal to all lovers of the Reformed Faith and constitutes a bond of spiritual and intellectual fellowship with Calvinists throughout the world irrespective of denominational affiliation.

We believe our readers are in a position to help promote the cause which The Calvin Forum would serve in two particular ways. In the first place, we know from experience that the best advertisers for our magazine are our own subscribers. We know of many of them who recommend our paper to their friends. If many more would do so on occasion, we are certain the list of those who would be benefitted by the monthly visit of the Forum would be greatly increased. There is another way in which our readers could be of service to us and to themselves, as well as to their fellow-subscribers. We invite the expression of your opinion on any subject discussed on our pages by way of a letter or brief article. "The Voice of Our Readers" solicits your contributions. Dr. DeWind's fine contribution to the discussion of the subject of Psychosomatics, which was occasioned by an editorial of Professor Radius and appeared in last month's issue, is a fine sample of the sort of discussion we all appreciate. So is the stimulating and challenging letter which appears in the present issue from the pen of our Japanese-American subscriber George Uomoto. Such letters are a credit to the articles or editorials which call them forth, as well as to the subscribers who take the time to share their observations with the rest of the members of the Calvin Forum family. Our readers are scattered through all the continents of the globe. We invite you all to "talk back" to editors and contributors and give us the benefit of your contribution to the discussion of the issues and problems which we as Calvinists must face in our day and age.

C. B.

The Enigma of Palestine

WILL Palestine soon be the focus point of the clash between the East and the West? Will that long-dreaded conflict between Moslem and Christian (or, should we say: Judaeo-Christian) peoples soon break loose in this unholy Holy Land? Is the country where our Savior labored and died to be the tinder-box that will set off the explosion of World War III? Will United States forces soon be face to face with Russian troops under the name of a UNO police force in the Near East? Will the Jews realize their ambition of a restored Jewish state in Palestine, or will this unhappy race (which is not, but fain would be, a nation) soon be only a pawn on the chess board of international power politics? So the thoughtful Christian observer of current events may well ask, and as he does so, he is aware of a strange mingling of religious curiosity and international apprehension in his questions. About the religious factor in the picture we would say a word at this time. Not that we would indulge in the "prophetic" speculations which seem to fascinate (and to embarrass!) many Christians in our day. We are convinced that there will be no such special role for the Jewish people in the fulfilment of the counsel of God as dispensationalists and most premillenarians are wont to ascribe to them. But there is another angle to this Palestine question that is distinctly religious. Nor do I mean the "ethical" question of the right of the Jew to the country of his forefathers in the present world with its ever-recurring anti-Semitism. I mean a distinctly religious question. It is this. What is (or will be) the significance of the great divergence in religious outlook which exists today among the Jewish groups in Palestine?
Ever since John Haynes Holmes paid a visit to Palestine and wrote his *Palestine To-Day and To-Morrow* in 1929, we have been informed that the foremost and most aggressive groups of Jews that have settled in Palestine and are doing their part to develop its resources and build up new communities are not orthodox Jews, nor Reform Jews, but atheistic, communist Jews. Holmes who himself is an atheistic Humanist took great delight in this fact and lauded these communities—which do not even have a synagogue—to the skies as the true embodiment of the Zionist ideal. Paul Hutchinson, the present editor of *The Christian Century*, was in Jerusalem in the fall of 1946 and forwarded a significant bit of editorial correspondence from that city under the title “Zion Without God.” This article, in our estimation, has never received the attention which it merits. After describing the set-up in the typically socialist communal villages of the Jews in Palestine, he points out that there is one fact about these communal villages and about most of the rest of Zionism in Palestine of which one speaks with caution, but “which certainly must be faced when the prospects of a Zionist state are being considered. That is the aggressively secularist outlook which is in control.” He then goes on to say that there are only very few such communal villages in which Jewish religious practices are carried on. In fact, he speaks of precisely six such villages with a population of 900 out of a total of 108 villages with 28,700 inhabitants. He goes on to say: “That tiny minority represents what is left of the avowedly religious element. The rest are either vocally atheistic or utterly indifferent to the claims of religion. They were well represented by the able and enthusiastic young teacher who told me how, in the communal schools, they go about inculcating the love of Israel while making sure that the minds of the communal children are not contaminated or confused by hearing the word ‘God!’” Hutchinson tells us that some intelligent rabbis in Palestine were of the opinion that this situation could only lead to an intense struggle between the religious and non-religious elements in the Jewish community. “The day the Jewish state is born”, so he quotes one of the most acute observers, “the next war will open. It will be civil war between the Old City and the New.” Hutchinson adds: “What he meant was the old Jerusalem, within the walls of Zion, with its believing and praying population, and the new city which has grown up outside, with its modernistic buildings, its Jewish Agency, its General Federation of Labor, its sophistication, its Marxism and its Western absorption in the material.” Well might Hutchinson close his article with the exclamation: “Zion without God? What a prospect!”

Indeed, what a prospect!

What must one think of the claims of Bible-believing Christians that the return of such Jews as these to Palestine is the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament? Perhaps the Jewish rabbi who predicted the outbreak of a civil war, and who undoubtedly belonged to those Hebrews who know that without the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob there is no future for Israel, could give a satisfactory answer to this question, better than the misguided Judaizers among the Fundamentalist Christians of our day. But let us dismiss this angle. There are others.

Zion without God? What a prospect! Can there possibly be the making of a new nation in this conglomeration of atheistic and orthodox Jews? Are there any national ideals left to aspire after on the part of this unhappy people when once they have surrendered their belief in the God of the Old Testament? Did not even the liberals among Jews and “Gentiles” tell the world that the distinctive contribution of the Jewish people to the civilization and progress of the world is their Ethical Monotheism? What can bind atheistic Marxists and believers in Jehovah and His holy Law together in the bonds of a new national fellowship? Not even a common suffering can accomplish that.

Once more: Zion without God? What a prospect! Can anyone believe this will have no serious bearing upon the line-up of the nations which is fast being formed in the world’s arena since the close of the Second World War? Can there be any doubt where the ultimate loyalties of these atheistic Marxian Jewish communities in Palestine will lie? We ask this question in all seriousness, and without a strain of concession in the direction of the diabolical spirit of anti-Semitism. Perhaps the situation in Palestine, unfortunate as it is, can add us in becoming clearer than we are today on the real issue between Christianity and an essentially capitalistic civilization on the one hand, and the atheistic, communist ideology of Marxism on the other.

C. B.
That They May Be One
A Theology for Ecumenicity

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ECUMENICITY has already travelled a long distance without a conscious theology to guide it. A scientific theological basis for ecumenicity is a desideratum. Perhaps one may even imagine that if ecumenicity can advance so successfully without a theological basis why then encumber our efforts in finding one? Usually theologies beget dissensions, and dissensions give birth to agonizing divisions. Why not strive for an ecumenicity in the sphere of action irrespective of a man's theological position?

We believe, on the contrary, that any great movement in the church demands a sound theological basis which will indicate the specific place this movement occupies in the church of Jesus Christ. A theology will broaden and enrich our vision and thus create a stronger enthusiasm. Moreover, it will answer the supreme question whether ecumenicity be of God or of man. If it be of God—take it seriously!

Ecumenicity and the Invisible Church

There is a very common and simple way of escaping the problem of “Ecumenicity and Denominationalism” in the New Testament.

We all operate with a distinction that is unquestioned in Protestant circles—the church invisible and the church visible. All Protestants may not interpret this distinction exactly the same way, but the fact is that all use it.

It goes without saying that there must be a true unity in the church invisible. This church is born of God. Nothing impure enters into this living temple. All its members are in a vital relationship with the same Lord. Its ecumenicity is the Christ. Hence the problem of ecumenicity does not lie in the church invisible. It always of inner necessity must be one. But that is not the complete picture of ecumenicity. The crux of the problem is: Can the visible church be one?

There is a real danger at this point. We all agree that the “big thing” is to be a member of the church invisible. “Well,” we conclude, “the true unity is already found in the ‘big thing’, so why be concerned about the unity in the lesser thing—the visible church?” Consequently not a few in preaching on Lord’s Day XXI of the Heidelberg Catechism limit the first question to the church invisible and the second to the church visible. This is exactly what we seek to avoid. (Jesus Christ never gathered His own from all nations through the preaching of the Word through the invisible church. He did so through the visible church—Q. 54.) The question is: How can the church invisible and indivisible become manifest in the visible and divided church as one?

Ecumenicity and the Visible Church

It is urgent that we lay down as a principle that the church visible must manifest outwardly what is unquestionably inherently and spiritually present in the invisible church. That is, the church must reflect the unity found in the invisible church. This principle needs little proof. It is implied in our Lord’s High Priestly prayer and in the doctrine of the glory of Christ, both taught in John 17.

No doubt any theology of ecumenicity would insist upon these doctrines of Scripture. The church must express its unity because of the doctrine of the Trinity. God is Tri-unity. The church must take this doctrine very seriously (Ephesians 1 and 4:1-4, also John 17). It is inconceivable that the church would love uncalled-for divisions and still glorify God for the sweet and holy unity found in the Trinity. It just doesn’t jibe. Woe to the man who doesn’t hesitate to start rifts in the church! He is doing more than cutting the seamless robe of our Lord, to use the language of Cyprian. He is toying with the holy Trinity.

We must also take the doctrine of election seriously. There are no two elections any more than there are two Christs. If one election we must obtain one church (Romans 9-11; Ephesians 1, 2). This fact may shed some light on such knotty questions as these: Should Jewish Christians have their own church? Or, do spiritual prerogatives supersede nationalism? If we are all saved only by the electing grace of Christ should we separate according to color? Can a dispensationalist be a true ecumenist if he believes that some time in the future there will be two peoples of God—the church and the kingdom?

There is only one salvation and only one way of obtaining it. Faith cometh by hearing the one Word of our God. The New Testament church knew of only one method: a definite commitment in joyful obedience to the Word of God. Truth in Christ alone is the foundation of ecumenicity.
There is only one mandate given to the churches—be a missionary church for the breath-taking purpose of making disciples of all nations to recognize God as Triune (Matthew 28:19). Hence the one baptism which is also a confession on the part of the convert of his commitment to the Triune God. Pentecost especially should also come into the picture.

Eschatology may also have something to say in this matter. There can be no doubt but that one of the glories of the new life is that the church visible will be the perfect and complete reflector of the glory now hidden in the church invisible. It will be the perfect instrument of revealing the glory of Christ. If so, should we not seek to anticipate some of that glory now? We do so in sanctification!

If the foregoing is foundational to New Testament ecumenicity why do we not seek more of it? The answer is simple but true—the church because of sin is in the state of her humiliation.

No doubt the present distress of our world may force us to face ecumenicity with a passion. Now it is still the acceptable day for the Reformed world to unite. The compelling reason, however, is not the travails of the Christian church. Such may be only God's way of opening our eyes to realize our duty. We need and we have the warrant of Scripture: "That they may be one."

Ecumenicity and Denominations

To denounce denominations as the only sin besetting Christendom today is to sing a lamentation of ingratitude. All will recognize that denominations were historically unavoidable. Have they a right in the light of the New Testament to exist today?

In passing we may remark at this juncture that the New Testament does not teach that since there is a great variety in creation there is also a great variety in Christianity expressed in denominational life. In nature the great variety is within nature. In the New Testament the great diversity is within the same church. The New Testament never taught that God wants denominations since He created a rich variety. On that basis heaven would be full of denominations. In the language of Dutch theology: multiformity and denominations are not equivalents.

Denominations have been under God of immense value. They have broken impersonal, anti-spiritual church machinery that raised the organization above the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a believer. They have kept the torch of religious liberty undimmed in the night ofquisitions. Through them a great diversity in the expression of Biblical truths has come to light. They have called the church back to the one source—the Word of God. Let no man call our liberators sinners! Bigoted men? But may not our very criticism be a token of our own bigotry, perchance?

We must face the startling fact, however, that in spite of the many attempts to break the unity in the New Testament church no new denominations were organized. The explanation for this is not that the church patterned its life after the synagogue. The Talmud records major and minor opinions on a given question but never did these differences lead to denominations. No doubt the specific reason of the abiding unity in the New Testament church is theological. Christ demands of us to be one to show the glorious unity of the Triune God and to glorify the Christ. This is by far a more compelling motive than the claim of the French scholar, Goguel, that the basis of unity was sociological. Indeed the persecutions helped to keep the church united. Still the reason is: Christ wills it!

The difficulty of this question becomes more obvious the moment we study the attempts to bring about disunity and the church's reaction to these attempts. One may say that there is a minor but very significant thread in the book of Acts which shows the lofty attempts to overcome all disunity. Note the story of Ananias and Sapphira, the story of the complaining Grecian women. Peter receives the Gentile Cornelius. The Council of Jerusalem settles the Jewish-Gentile problem. Paul lands in jail because of his appeasement policy. But the unity is maintained!

Are We on the Wrong Track?

Did the New Testament make any provisions for denominations? If not, are denominations a sin? Or, is there a weakness in the New Testament? Or is it the very strength of the New Testament?

Indirectly the New Testament has made provisions for denominational life, but only indirectly. No doubt the Holy Spirit knew that if provisions were made we would conclude that denominations are natural, therefore God-willed according to His revealed will. (This is a common weakness among those who practically equate multiformity and denominations.) Diversity of a questionable type would become more fundamental than the prayer of Jesus Christ.

Still we must confess that indirectly provisions have been made. First of all it must be noted that the New Testament was to maintain its ecumenicity by discipline and excommunication. No one was permitted to break the unity of the church by doctrinal errors or sinful deeds. Any one who was at variance with the church was by that very token put out of the fellowship of the church. Discipline, contrary to current sentimental philosophy, is not divisive; it is a truly ecumenical necessity. If so, a church that desires to be truly ecumenical in the New Testament sense of the word, must exercise discipline.
Implicit in the foregoing is this truth that true ecumenicity demands of all of us to bow before the Word of God as interpreted by the apostles themselves. If this is irksome to us we can never speak of ecumenicity since we are only putting an imaginary roof over hostile groups.

Indirectly we believe the New Testament teaches us that denominations become mandatory only when the true ecumenicity is in danger. The New Testament virtually says this: "Do I embarrass you today with the problem of many denominations and differences all in the name of Christendom? You embarrass me! Did I not tell you in simple language if you, o Church, wed heathen Greek Philosophy, or you add elements of mystery religions to your Lord's Supper, or you allow the reason of man to dictate to the Word of God, or you make the church's consciousness the ground of your theology, you embarrass me? Did I not tell you to be separate and live the life of antithesis?" If the organized church will not obey, believers have the solemn office to organize a new church that will obey.

Ecumenical Methods

St. Paul in Ephesians 4 tells us that Christ has given to us as an ascension gift to the churches the apostles, evangelists, etc., to teach the church so that the whole church will be one in the truth. The great ecumenical method is preaching. The vision that Paul entertains (Eph. 3:18) is that the entire church may share each other's findings in the Word of God that all the saints may know the breadth and the length of the love of Christ. Ecumenicity is not the fruit of common action blind to basic differences.

The foregoing method may be blessed through many means: discussions, exchange of epistles in New Testament days, and exchange of preachers or follow-up visits of the apostles.

There is another method that solidifies ecumenicity. This is evident in the Council of Jerusalem. True ecumenicity demanded a common council. Even in its organizational life the church demonstrated the oneness in Christ Jesus.

Another method is sacrifice. Basically this sacrifice on the part of the Gentile Christians for the needy in Judea stems from a sense of debtorship to the church at Jerusalem. A deeper basis than this is found in the truth that our God is the liberal God in all His gifts, and that the church is called upon to imitate God.

If you think of the foregoing is it too far fetched to see in New Testament Ecumenicity the reflection of the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly offices?

Ecumenicity and Missions

True ecumenicity of the New Testament plunges us immediately into the subject of Christian missions. Modern missions demand ecumenicity because of embarrassing situations on the mission field. The New Testament does not view this problem first of all from a practical or sociological point of view. Its position is that all nations must know the true God in Christ Jesus as Triune. There must be one sheeple fold as there is one shepherd (the sheepfold illustrates more than an invisible church). Of inner necessity missions and ecumenicity will always be inseparable bedfellows. It is not surprising that many of our outstanding missionaries are also outstanding ecumenists. Nor is it surprising that the First Ecumenical Synod went on record as favoring the creation of a Reformed International Council of Missions. We wonder whether the Christian Reformed Synod of 1947(1) in its otherwise very appreciative attitude toward the First Ecumenical Synod considered the problem of an International Council of Reformed Missions in this greater exegetical framework. Too bad this denomination did not see that missions and ecumenicity are inseparable twins.

What Sin Has Wrought!

Frankly we do not believe that ecumenicity of the New Testament church will ever return. Historical differences which compelled man to live in isolation can be surmounted in our age. These were only accidental barriers. We do believe, as a credo, that as the Anti-Christ becomes more brazen all true believers will be drawn closer together. For today—missions and ecumenicity!

But shall we close our eyes on that account to the beauty of ecumenicity? Does not heaven hold out an additional appeal to us that there we all shall be one? If possible should some of that unity not be reflected here?

We strive for it not on the basis of a possible success. We strive for it because it is theologically imperative that we do so, and because Christ prayed for it. Sin will keep us from realizing it on this side of the grave but in fighting sin unity is born.

(1) This Synod did not adopt the proposal because of a few minor practical difficulties. Apart from the fact that representatives from three continents saw a real need, especially South Africa, we would think that the advisory committee would have taken a chapter out the last twenty-five years of ecumenicity.
URING the year 1947 one of the ministers of the Reformed Church in America had the perspicuity and the courage to characterize what is no doubt one of the besetting evils of the Christian Church at large. He said: "The disease in our church is indifference to doctrine" (AN APPEAL TO MINISTERS AND LAYMEN of the Chicago and Iowa Synods by the Rev. H. Bast, p. 4, A pamphlet printed by Don van Ostenberg, 62 E Keeler Building, Grand Rapids, Michigan). The author supports this charge by citing evidence and giving examples which apply especially to his denomination.

However, contemporary church history is replete with evidence supporting the proposition that doctrinal indifference is indeed an ecclesiastical disease of epidemic proportions. The now famous Auburn Affirmation is a case in point. If the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. as a whole had been greatly concerned about doctrinal purity it would not have tolerated the Auburn Affirmationists in its bosom, but these men would have been tried for heresy as was Dr. Charles A. Briggs, who was suspended from the ministry in 1893 because he denied the inerrancy of the Scriptures. (THE PRESBYTERIAN CONFLICT, Edwin H. Rian, Eerdmans, 1940, p. 18.)

This same indifference for doctrine became apparent when Dr. Machen "was denied the very basis of justice and fairness and practically condemned without a hearing" in 1936 by the hierarchy of his church. (ibid. p. 185.) Furthermore, this same attitude of indifference for the truth and negligence toward the teachings of the church is now threatening the unity of the Southern Presbyterian Church. At the moment the liberals are trying to consummate an ecclesiastical union with the Northern Presbyterians with total disregard of the doctrinal issues involved. (Cf. Southern Presbyterian Journal, Jan. 15, 1948; July 15, 1947; Feb. 15, 1946 et al.)

The same spirit of unconcern for matters of truth, i.e., doctrinal issues, the same listless complacency may also be found in the Christian Reformed Church. Its members no longer welcome and appreciate doctrinal preaching when it is controversial. By the latter term I refer to the type of preaching in which some form of the modern denial of the truth is scored, or the positive principle is concretized by the simple expedient of pointing out the ecclesiastical heresies that must be avoided. Another evidence is the fact that our men's societies, which have been organized to study the doctrines of Scripture, no longer attract more than a fraction of the male membership of the church. Bowling is far more popular. Besides, one never hears our members discussing doctrine; we are interested in methods, and programs and campaigns but to implicate ourselves into the truth, to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus has very little appeal today. This general lethargy is certainly not discouraged but rather abetted and promoted when ecclesiastical dignitaries issue a ukase warning consistencies not to permit our Dutch cousins to present their doctrinal differences lest we should become embroiled in the issue. The fact that no protests are forthcoming is mute evidence either that thought control is almost complete or that doctrinal indifference is so strong that we no longer are alert or interested to know what the truth of the matter is. However, this docility, this seeming readiness to think only by hierarchical decree may well prove a boomerang for the church. As a result the individual's consciousness of the integrity of his office of believer and his consciousness of being called and restored to the office of prophet are undermined. Consequently the apostolic admonition to try the spirits to see whether they be of God becomes a dead letter or must be turned over to Synodical committee. Indeed, this procedure of maintaining a death-like silence on controversial issues in order that we may have peace may perhaps achieve its objective; but, to my mind, it will result in the silence of the cemetery, the stillness of the tomb.

But enough; the situation has been sketched. And I am not interested in the phenomena as such just now—except by way of introduction—but rather in tracing some of the far-reaching results of doctrinal indifference and indicating the Scriptural emphasis on the necessity and urgency of assimilating the doctrines of Scripture.

In an address delivered in King's Hall, London, under the auspices of the Bible League of Great Britain, Dr. Machen made this arresting statement in 1927: "... if there is one thing that is characteristic of the Church of the present day, it is the alarming growth of plain stark ignorance" (Cf. IS THE BIBLE RIGHT ABOUT JESUS, p. 4, Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church). Ignorance is the result of not being indoctrinated, not being taught; and ignorance of the
truth leads to apostasy. Isaiah, e.g., mourns, "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge." And Jehovah complains through Hosea, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

The knowledge here mentioned is of Jehovah's redemptive acts and His covenant-keeping faithfulness. It is the knowledge of His commandments and His testimonies which were enjoined upon the people of Israel throughout the Old Testament but are especially celebrated in Psalm 19 and 119. However, we must not think of this knowledge in the Greek sense of an intellectual apprehension merely, or the scientific conception of a detached and theoretic knowledge of facts. On the contrary, the knowledge enjoined by the Word is the warm, intimate and vital conception of the Hebrew mind which issues in personal attachment and self-identification with that which is known.

Doctrines and its study is often deprecated as being of the letter whereas the spirit maketh alive. More often an invidious comparison is made between doctrine and life and preference is stated for the latter as though one can live without the truth or without having a doctrine. Over against these modern-day tendencies stands the fact that the Scripture presents its teachings (doctrines) in a concrete, vibrant way. Jesus made His doctrine relevant and vital by identifying Himself with it. Surely it is impossible, then, to make a disjunction between the person of Christ and accepting His doctrine. The one implies the other. Most of our Lord's teaching dealt with His Person and His mission. And these are matters of doctrinal interpretation. Surely it is folly to think we can accept Christ and deny His teaching or accept His teaching and deny His Person. Rather it is psychologically impossible, for, "If ye love me, keep my commandments", and, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice".

* * *

The importance of the study of doctrine in Christianity follows from the fact that here we are dealing with the heart of the matter. For, Christian doctrine is simply the teaching of the truth. The great presupposition of course, that truth is absolute and that it has been revealed and that it can be taught is part of the total picture. The truth as revealed by God is an authoritative interpretation of reality and must be accepted by us if we are to know God, whom to know is life eternal. But some one may object that we know God in the face of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Yes, indeed, but what Christ are we going to accept, and how do you know that you have the Christ of God? A matter of doctrine, good friend! The Pharisees rejected the Christ of God because they were unwilling to accept His teaching concerning Himself. They rejected the Rabbi from Nazareth because they gave their own interpretation of this Supreme Fact of history and would not accept God's interpretation.

To put it concretely: Christ cast out demons. The fact was clear. All were agreed that it actually happened. But the question of interpretation was the real issue. How did He do it? By whose leave and whose power? The Pharisees were ready with their answer, "He casteth out demons by the power of Beelzebub". But the truth of the matter was that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of God, which was potent evidence of His deity and the imminence of His kingdom as a universal phenomenon. The same issue comes up again and again. Jesus forgave sins because He was divine and proved His deity by healing the paralytic, but the Pharisees said that He blasphemed. Or take the case of miracles in general. Were they real or faked? Can they be rationalized as Lloyd Douglas does in The Rose, or do they exhibit the divine power of Christ and authenticate His mission from the Father? Thus it is clear that the doctrine is all important. The doctrine of Christ's Deity, e.g., was denied by His opponents, both ancient and modern, and in each case they cast their vote against the Christ of God. Certainly it ought to be clear that one cannot attach himself to the Person without making a choice as to the doctrine concerning that Person. To use but one further example of the relevance of doctrine let us take the fact of Christ's death. There can be no dispute as to the fact, but what did it mean? What relevance has it for living men today? In other words, what is the interpretation of the fact? The Pharisees said that Jesus died as a deceiver of the people. They jeered: "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ of God". The soldiers held Him to be a pretender as is evident from their mockery: "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself".

Dr. Fosdick, c.s., thinks that Jesus died a mere man martyred for His faith and His idealism. Emil Ludwig in his Son or Man suggests that Jesus died as a deluded dreamer, a religious fanatic who thought that He was the Son of God and because of that faith cast all caution to the winds and arrogantly defied the rulers. But what is the doctrine of Scripture? That Jesus of Nazareth was the divine Son of God, who died vicariously for His people. That He was the Mediator who by His one sacrifice hath forever perfected them that are sanctified. The teaching (doctrine) that we have received from God by revelation is that Jesus was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, that He loved us and gave Himself for us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

* * *

It is, then, evident that the doctrine, i.e., the teaching or interpretation, is the heart of the matter in Christianity. One can not say that he has
Christianity when he has read the Gospels as a biography of Jesus of Nazareth or has extracted a set of rules for living from the sayings of the Master. Doctrine is not an addendum that comes as an afterthought; neither is it the condiment which depends upon personal tastes. Rather it is the pith and essence, the core of Christianity; it constitutes the main course of the dinner, so to speak.

In the New Testament this emphasis constantly comes to the fore. Jesus Himself, e.g., is constantly comparing His teachings with those of His opponents and warns His disciples that they must not be taken in by the doctrines of the Pharisees. Christ always spoke with the authority of one who presents Himself as our chief prophet, i.e., our interpreter from the Father. He made the claim that He was the TRUTH, and therefore the only way to the Father. Paul assures us that Christ is made unto us from God—Wisdom. The prophetic element is given priority. Only to the extent that we know the truth can we be sanctified by the truth. And only to the extent that we know the Word can we wield that Sword of the Spirit effectively to the pulling down of strongholds.

Continuing with the testimony of the New Testament record we find that the disciples are approved because they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. The Bereans receive special mention because they searched the Scriptures to see whether those things were so, i.e., to see whether Paul was giving the correct construction of the matter, the right interpretation, the doctrine of God. Paul also is very insistent that Timothy must be very careful to watch his doctrine as well as his person, to continue giving attendance to doctrine among other things, and to continue in the things which he has learned (doctrinal aspect) because they are able to make him wise unto salvation.

One of the finest testimonies is found in the letter to the Hebrew Christians who were in danger of falling away and had already fallen behind in the Christian race. The apostle admonishes them to leave the beginnings of the doctrine (teaching) of Christ and to press on to perfection. The point of the entire passage is that God is not satisfied with spiritual infants, that they must become mature and that this maturity consists in growing in the knowledge of the Lord and of His Word. The doctrine of Christ is not to be substituted with something else, but believers ought not to be content or satisfied with the beginnings, they are not to remain infants taking milk but ought to be ready to masticate the solid food of the word of truth. “For every one that useth milk is unskilful (hath no experience) in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.” The author indicates that the ability to teach the Word is a sign of spiritual maturity, which in turn is to a great extent the result of a profound implication into the teachings of Christ.

However, not only does proper indoctrination make one fit for teaching others; it has another great advantage both for the life of the individual believer and for the church at large. In the study of doctrine we see the truth as a system and not merely as isolated facts. This is invaluable. In fact, it is indispensable, since we cannot know any single or isolated fact properly unless we bring it into relation with the body of truth. Dr. B. B. Warfield summarizes it thus: “What we do not know in this sense, i.e., systematically, we rob of half its power on our conduct unless we are prepared indeed to argue that the truth has effect on us in proportion as it is unknown. To which may be added that that when we do not know a body of doctrine systematically, we are sure to misconceive the nature of more or fewer of its elements.” (STUDIES IN THEOLOGY, p. 57, New York, Oxford University Press, 1932.)

Moreover, the Scriptures tell us that knowledge of the truth, which is after all the set purpose of indoctrination, is our best insulation against defection from God and the best antidote against error and heresy. Christ and His apostles are constantly recommending the relevancy of orthodoxy (straight-doctrine) over against heterodoxy. So e.g., in Matthew 24 Jesus warns and arms His disciples against the false teachers who are coming to deceive, if possible, the very elect. It concerns the doctrine of His return. “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” To this the testimony of John accords. “Every eye shall see him”. It ought to be clear that Russellism has no chance with those who have been indoctrinated with the truth about Christ's return.

Similarly Paul sets the Thessalonians straight on the return of Christ in order that they may not succumb to error and deception. “Let no man deceive you by any means,” he warns, “for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”. John, the apostle of love, not only warns against error but provides us with an unequivocal criterion for judging the spirits whether they speak the truth concerning Christ or not. “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come into the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” Here is an apostolic admonition to all the saints—not merely the theologically trained or a brace of hierarchical hounds (a la Domini Canes) to try the teachers, to judge and decide whether they speak the truth of God. And an unmistakable standard is provided...
on which the decision must be made. The question is: “Does this teacher, preacher, actor, entertainer, philosopher, editor, politician, spell-binder, cartoonist, or any other voice that purports to propound truth confess that Jesus Christ is the eternal and divine Son of God?” It is clear that if the individual believer is to be equipped to apply this criterion he must be indoctrinated.

Like preventive medicine which must be taken to be effective so too the truth must be inculcated, it must be learned (the very word used by Paul concerning Timothy) to achieve the desired results. And the old saw immediately comes to mind: “You can lead a horse to water, BUT . . .”

To which I would reply that we are not dealing with horses but with rational, responsible beings who stand in a covenantal relationship to God. And we have the assurance not only that the objective means—the Word—are able to make us wise unto salvation but the promise as well that if we bring up the child in the way that he should go he will not depart from that way when he grows up. One may not be able to convince a child that he ought to eat spinach because it will develop strong muscles, but it seems reasonable that a diabetic might be persuaded to take his insulin since his very life depends upon it.

The very life of the Christian Church depends upon proper indoctrination of its youth. If they do not learn the correct interpretation (the orthodox view) they will imbibe heresy, for the uninterpreted life is vanity. The solution for the chilling effects of intellectualism and dead orthodoxy is not less doctrine, but rather more doctrine that has been impregnated with the fire of conviction and the zeal of devotion to Him who said: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Did Jesus Die of a Broken Heart?

In approaching a subject so sacred as our-Savior’s sufferings and death we realize we are treading on holy ground, many questions will remain unanswered and the mystery of His death will never be uncovered. If the proverb: “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread” be true in this instance, we join a small group of medical speculators who have pondered with pen on this fascinating topic, and an innumerable host of theologians whose works on this subject are literally “legion”. The subject of the physical cause of the death of Christ has interested me ever since, some twenty years ago, I obtained in a bookshop in London, England, a copy of that most intriguing old book on this subject written in 1847 by William Stroud, M.D. (1)

Certain theologians would close the door to all speculation of a physical cause of Christ’s death, for in His “giving up of the spirit” some understand a voluntary relinquishing of the spirit and life back to God who gave it, with no physical cause of death necessary at all. (2) The hard-headed Christian scientist, however, will continue to maintain that since Christ was “God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting” (Athenasian Creed) that therefore that fully human body must be like ours in death in that it must have a physical cause of death or it is unlike our human bodies, and He would not be “like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted”. (Heidelberg Catechism.)

Those who maintain that a physical cause of death is out of consideration in Christ’s case argue as follows: Since Christ was both God and man, He could as the good shepherd (John 10:14-18) lay down His life for His sheep in a way that no other Palestinian shepherd could. “I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” These verses have been used to explain away all physical cause in Christ’s death, and to explain it purely as volition on Christ’s part. Such a theory would lay anyone suffering for a cause, and possessing such powers, open to the charge of having cut short his own sufferings by supernatural means not accessible to ordinary human beings, and failing to pay the price in full by using a way out.

Others maintain that Christ, the good shepherd of John 10:14-18, is speaking of His whole voluntary suffering from the incarnation onward, His passion voluntarily endured, His hours in Gethsemane, the cross, the voluntary bearing of the wrath of God to the full, all of which were the reasons for His Father loving Him so. (3) These would agree that Christ possessed this power of “laying down
His human heart endured in those sleepless hours immediately preceding the cruel sacrificial blows. His perfect body was now battered Gethsemane onward. At that moment the sacrifice of the lamb of God began. The blood in the pericardia! sac, almost instantly opened the pericardia! sac and liberated the "blood and the water" described by the Apostle John.

The proponents of this theory magnify rather than minimize the intensity of Christ's sufferings. They maintain that Christ died as a result of His crucifixion, during which He endured agonies perhaps more brief in hours of time than the criminals crucified "one on either side" but a thousand times more intense in His sensitive soul. In fact, the physical sufferings were almost trivial compared with the soul agony, for "the suffering of Christ's soul was the soul of Christ's suffering."

Whereas medical science would assert that it is unusual that a perfect heart, uninjured by previous disease, should rupture, we must keep in mind the following: Christ's blood began to flow already in Gethsemane. From the moment He endured agonies, with a liberation of a large quantity of blood into the pericardiac sac, almost instant death, followed by a separation of the blood into its clot and serum. It is assumed the spear thrust opened the pericardiac sac and liberated the "blood and the water" described by the Apostle John.

A Consultation with Modern Cardiologists and Pathologists

Since I personally can by no means qualify as an authority on the heart and the pathological changes it may undergo leading to death, or on the post-mortem findings in rupture of the heart, I have sought the opinion of some who are authorities. I opened correspondence with two eminent authorities, Dr. Carl V. Weller of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Dr. Paul Dudley White of Boston. The letter which I addressed to each was passed on to two other authorities in leading medical schools of our country. The letter was as follows:

"Dear Dr. ——: Would you be willing to give an opinion on the basis of the salient post-mortem findings in a case of sudden death in which I am much interested? I am writing an article pertaining to a unique case in medical history in which the physical cause of death is not clear but concerning which a few very pertinent facts are given. I refer to the physical cause of Christ's death, a subject which has long interested me.

"I believe that we can truthfully say on the basis of all data recorded in the four gospels that the facts in the case are as follows: The person was a young man of 33 years of age, always in excellent health, had not known one sick day in his life, was in the prime of manhood, had no disease or illness of any kind immediately preceding his death, and up to the very moment of death was fully conscious, mentally clear and able to cry out with a loud voice, indicating vigor and strength. He died suddenly, very likely within a minute or two. His sudden death was preceded by about three hours of unspeakable soul agony.

"The only post-mortem findings recorded are:
1. Many lacerations of the skin of the back where he received forty stripes about twelve hours before death.
2. Lacerations of the forehead where a crown of thorns was roughly placed about twelve hours before death.
3. Four large puncture wounds, through both hands and feet, in size sufficient to admit the tip of a finger, and caused by large nails driven through these members in an act of crucifixion about three to six hours before death. The nails did not break any bones in hands or feet. No unusual hemorrhage was noted.

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • MARCH, 1948
4. One large irregular spear wound in the left side extending obliquely upward from the rib margin into possibly the pericardial sac and heart itself. This wound was made to insure that not the slightest possibility should exist that life remained at all, as it was necessary to remove the body from the cross sooner than usual because of certain Jewish ceremonial laws. There is no question but that this wound was made post-mortem as He was pronounced dead by the highest authority. At the moment this post-mortem spear wound was made, a phenomenon occurred that seemed unusual to bystanders. It was observed that from the wound there came out 'blood and water.'

"Could this phenomenon of 'blood and water' appear in any other case than in rupture of the heart, assuming perfect health and absence of pleural fluid or ascites from disease? If the spear pierced the post-mortem (normal) heart, would there be a separation of blood elements into serum and clotted corpuscles, or would the heart be practically empty of all blood?

"On the basis of the above findings can any approximate diagnosis of the cause of death be made? If you are willing to hazard an opinion I would be very grateful. I would also request permission to quote from your reply in my article. Sincerely Yours, ——"

Opinions of Modern Authorities on Christ's Death

Since I leaned strongly toward the broken heart theory as a solution to the problem of the physical cause of the death of Christ it came as a surprise to me that not one of the four authorities who answered my letter agreed with the diagnosis of ruptured heart, all believing the evidence too scanty. I will quote from their replies without indicating which authority is quoted: "I find myself unable to hazard an opinion in connection with the question raised by your letter. It would seem that more information would have to be available in order to raise any conclusion to a higher level than that of conjecture. Have you checked back on the original Greek?" "Was His heart punctured by the spear? I suppose if long enough time had elapsed after actual death there might have been some sort of phenomenon of this nature due to piercing the auricles, if not the ventricles. I would think it is very unlikely that the heart itself had ruptured early and that there was a pericardial effusion. I don't know what would be the cause of death in crucifixion." "I doubt that there are any reliable records available as to the mechanism of death or post-mortem findings in victims of crucifixion. I find the available evidence so scanty that I am not encouraged to do much guessing. I wonder how high on the cross Christ's feet were nailed; how tall he was; how tall the Roman soldier was, and how long the spear was. The answer to these questions, if available, would provide a better idea as to the probable course of the spear wound. I think it easily possible that the spear passed through stomach, left lobe of liver, diaphragm, pericardium and into the heart. The watery fluid may have come from the stomach. I don't believe the evidence conclusive that death had occurred prior to the spear wound. It seems to me that the three hours of 'unspeakable anguish' may have terminated in shock and unconsciousness and that the attendant syncope was erroneously regarded as evidence of death. I believe that a draught of vinegar and water was drunk on the cross and that this may have been in the stomach." "I have never run across any post-mortem record of death by crucifixion, though it is not impossible that they exist. A small amount of pericardial fluid, up to 20 or 30 cc., is normally present in good health. It is possible that with a wound piercing the pericardium and heart, enough pericardial fluid might escape to be described as water. One would expect, however, that it might be so rapidly blood-stained it would not be recognizable."

While the above answers quoted would seem a discouragement to any adherent of the broken heart theory, post-mortem findings in cases of ruptured heart reported by one of the four above-mentioned authorities were in several instances recorded as follows: "The pericardial cavity was occupied by approximately 500 c.c. of fluid and freshly clotted blood."(5) Two other authorities reporting on 654 post-mortem examinations of cases of ruptured heart (6) stated: "Death is usually so sudden that in many cases the person is seen merely to fall over dead or is found dead. The great majority of cases were complete ruptures of the wall of the heart, producing large hemopericardia."

In my own opinion, which I humbly maintain unsupported by the first four authorities quoted, but certainly supported by the last two quoted, the presence of any considerable quantity of serum and blood clot issuing after a spear wound as described above could only come from the heart or the pericardial sac. We must agree from the outset that no pre-existing disease affected Christ's body; He was a perfect lamb of God. It is extremely rare, well nigh impossible authorities say, for the normal heart muscle to rupture. Christ however, suffered as no man before or since has suffered. Psalm 69:20 says prophetically: "Reproach hath broken my heart." The next verse continues: "They gave me gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." We take the second prophecy as literally fulfilled, but many consider it fantastic to take verse 20 also literally. If Christ's heart did not rupture it is difficult to explain any accumulation of "blood and water" as described by John. The normal pericardial effusion of an ounce or less would be a mere trickle unobserved by anyone.
Had it been vinegar from the stomach John would have recognized it as such and thought nothing of it. Further, to presuppose, as some do, that the spear pierced the still living heart and thus to account for the blood and water is both contrary to Scriptures and to science, for pure blood would have issued forth. It was in the crucifixion itself that His death was to be accomplished, not in a spear thrust by a soldier.\(^6\)

There is one other circumstance which I think no one has connected with the death of Christ and which might explain the “blood and water” without rupture of the myocardium. I refer to Gethsemane and the bloody sweat. As Schilder says: “The church should concern itself with the sweat of Jesus’ passion” \(^15\). Luke alone mentions this sweating of blood. The Greek word used is “thromboi”, “His sweat was as it were cloths of blood falling down to the ground.” Luke 22:44. Only the physician knew its significance and recorded it. Without diminishing one iota the uniqueness of Christ’s suffering there have been several instances of sweating of blood recorded in medical history.\(^1\) Stroud refers to about a dozen instances, usually associated with the most intense suffering of body and soul. In most cases of sweating of blood, death followed soon after, for this sudor sanguineus is not merely a bloody effusion from the skin (hematodrosis) but also a bloody transudation into or through other membranes of the body, resulting in death. Christ was saved from such premature death, before the cross. Hebrews 5:7-9 tells us: “Who (Christ) in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death was heard in that He feared.” “And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him,” says Luke. He was saved for a crucifixion twelve hours later. If He died not of a broken heart for the sins of the world, it is possible that Gethsemane saw the bloody weeping of a heart, which issued in the “blood and water” following a spear pierce twelve hours later.

**Views of Theologians on the Death of Christ**

I am deeply indebted to my pastor, the Rev. Mr. John Weidenaar, for a literal translation of the Greek in John 19:34 and notes on the Greek meanings and shades of meaning, as well as for access to his library—giving Calvin’s, Meyer’s, Erdman’s, Van Andel’s, Alford’s and Lenski’s opinions on the physical cause of Christ’s death.

Alford \(^2\) considers the piercing of the side as a modification of the usual crucifragium or breaking of the legs with a heavy mallet or bar to secure speedy death, as without such means the crucified might linger in life for a few days.\(^4\) Stroud mentions criminals hanging on the cross for four days before death took them, and even cites one instance of a criminal being crucified, and after hanging for many hours he was pardoned, taken down from the cross, and recovered after his wounds healed.\(^1\) Hence the crucifixion itself was not the cause of death, but the shock from wounds, sun exposure and exhaustion would be the final cause. Alford does not think the crucifragium was inflicted for the purpose of causing death or that it could cause death. This is an error, for the shock attending such cruel injury to bones can be the “coup de grace” causing death.\(^4\)

Calvin \(^3\) considers the soldiers’ passing by Jesus in the crurifragium while breaking the legs of the two criminals crucified on either side a “very extraordinary work of the providence of God.” Lenski \(^9\) in similar vein elaborates on the remarkable way the body of Jesus was saved from mutilation. He concludes from Mark 15:43 on, that the Jews had not informed Pilate of the early death of Jesus, and that Pilate ordered the breaking of Jesus’ bones as well as the others. Why did the soldiers, taught to use no judgment of their own but to take orders as orders, go from one malefactor to the other but pass Jesus by? Lenski believes the centurion stayed their hand, God was watching over His son and at this point He called a halt. The order to pierce Christ’s side must have come from the Centurion.\(^8\) But from John 19:31 one might almost conclude the Jews deliberately requested the crurifragium for all three crucified and were thwarted. Hence it is unlikely Christ died from wound shock for He died before the other two, yet was a perfect man.

Concerning the spear thrust Alford \(^2\) and Meyer \(^6\) state the lance penetrated deeply because the word used for “pierced” denotes a violent stabbing and the wound inflicted was a hand’s breadth wide (John 20:25). The spear itself was a longay, the Roman hasta, with iron head a hand-breadth wide.\(^4\) The weapon was used to make sure that Jesus was really dead by giving Him a thrust that in itself would have been fatal.\(^9\) It was John’s object to show that the Lord’s body was a real body and underwent real death. It was necessary to establish the bona-fide death of Christ, or the resurrection could be questioned. \(^4\) Alford concludes the lance probably penetrated into the left side from below, as a right-handed person would naturally aim thus, and also because of the purpose of the spear thrust, intended to reach the heart to insure death. He thinks the spear perhaps pierced the pericardium or envelope of the heart, but does not think the quantity of liquid would be sufficient to be observed unless the “blood and water” was a consequence of the extreme exhaustion of the body of the Redeemer.\(^1\) There is no scientific support for the view that exhaustion alone would cause this phenomenon.

Erdman \(^3\) relates the “blood and water” mentioned by John to the later writing of John in his

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1. Calvin (1583).
5. Alford (1863).
7. The Rev. Mr. John Weidenaar.
First Epistle as symbols of redemption and evidences of divine incarnation. The pierced side was then evidence that Jesus was the Christ. Calvin sees no miracle in the “water and the blood” but instead regards as natural that the blood, when it is congealed, should lose its color and come to resemble water. Calvin says: “It is well known that water is contained in the membrane which immediately adjoins the intestines. What has led them astray is, that the Evangelist takes so much pains to explain that blood flowed along with water, as if he were relating something unusual and contrary to the laws of nature. But he had quite a different intention, namely that believers might infer from it that Christ came with water and with blood (I John V, 6). By this he means that Christ brought the true atonement and the true washing.” Calvin’s physiology as related above is not as sound as his theology.

Meyer, after mentioning the theories that Jesus was not yet dead before the spear thrust, and that the blood in Jesus’ body decomposed in the corpse into blood-clot and serum, only to discard both, leans toward the view of the spear piercing the heart of Christ or else accepting the view of Stroud, who advocated the broken heart theory. He mentions, and discards as untenable, the view of Hoffman and others that the blood in Jesus after death was undecomposed, still-flowing blood, and that the “blood and water” were signs that the body of Jesus was exempt from corruption. Meyer believes John desires to set forth the phenomenon of “blood and water” as something entirely unexpected, extraordinary, marvelous, a miraculous event, attesting that the corpse was that of the divine Messiah of whose specific calling and work, blood and water (redemption and new birth through baptism) are the symbols. While Meyer thinks the “blood and water” was, in John’s mind, “the apparently so incredible thing,” Van Andel believes exactly the opposite, emphasizing the two circumstances of not breaking Christ’s bones and piercing His side as amazing, while stating (my own free translation from the Holland): “There is no real reason to believe that in the outflow of blood and water any miracle is to be thought of. John means rather to indicate that the spear thrust, which was made with the intention of bringing Christ’s life to an end, only proved that it was unnecessary, Jesus was already dead. The outflow of water and blood is a well known sign of death.” Medical science would not agree with Van Andel in this last statement.

Lenski is the most profound of all in his views. He states: Jesus is true man and thus had PSUCHE (soul) and PNEUMA (spirit). These two are one, namely, the immaterial part of our being. But when PSUCHE (soul) is used it is used for our immaterial part in so far as it animates our material body and receives impressions from this body, while PNEUMA (spirit) then is reserved to indicate this same immaterial part in so far as it is open to a higher world and able to receive impressions from the Spirit of God. Man’s personality, his EGO, is in the soul or spirit. In Jesus this personality or EGO was the LOGOS. The death of Jesus was not the separation of the LOGOS from the human nature of Jesus. In the death of Jesus His human soul or spirit was separated from His body. The death of Jesus took place entirely in His human nature and in no way affected the union of the LOGOS with His human nature. In the sinless person of Jesus the spirit ruled absolutely. In dying He gave up His spirit.

Lenski rejects the “broken heart” theory as sentimental and not upheld by science. He rejects the theory that “Jesus died, not from physical causes at all, but by a mere volition of His will”, believing that this volition was apparent throughout His whole passion. “The death of Jesus is due to the physical effects of His suffering and crucifixion. This alone is the cause assigned by the Scriptures. When the spirit left, the body of Jesus died.” He concluded: “As far as present medical conclusions are concerned these are quite useless in the point of the ‘water and the blood’. We know from Acts 2:27 that no form of corruption touched the body of the God-man. The ordinary processes of decay never appeared in that holy body. Deductions drawn from our dead bodies cannot be applied to the fluids of the dead body of Him who knew no sin.”

The proverb: “Doctores inter se different” has again been demonstrated. The Doctors, both medical and theological, disagree among themselves as to the physical cause of Christ’s death.

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8) Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel, by Lenski, pp. 1285-1292.
9) “Rupture of the Heart”, Annals of Internal Medicine, 1944, pp. 777 to 802, by Paul D. White, B.A., M.D., P.A.C.P., cardiologist, Harvard Medical School. “Engaged in research, practice and teaching especially in the field of heart disease; Past President American Heart Association; Author of textbooks on heart disease.” (Who’s Who).
11) Carl V. Weller, M.S., M.D., Professor of Pathology, and Chairman of the Department of Pathology, University of Michigan Medical School.
12) Paul Dudley White, M.D., personal communication. See also footnote 9 above.
13) Tracy B. Mallory, M.D., Assistant Professor of Pathology, Harvard Medical School.
14) Alan R. Moritz, S.B., A.M., M.D., Professor of Legal Medicine, Harvard Medical School.
15) Christ in His Suffering, by K. Schilder, Ph.D., ch. 21.
The Saga of Two Philosophic Ants

Two ants met one sunny morning on a strip of uneven sidewalk by the side of an old house whose foundation had been leased by the Neglect, Idleness Realty Company, as a community dwelling for a colony of house-hunting ants, who had, soon after, taken in their cousins, the Termites, to live with them.

On the mild summer morning of which we speak, one ant had been strolling leisurely, his antennae sensitive to the presence of any stray aphid who might be nearby, when his reverie was interrupted by a second ant who was anything but in a mood for a leisurely stroll. He was obviously excited. His antennae quivered, his manibles were working, his cilia were disheveled, and, horror of horrors! he had done what no self-respecting ant would think of doing, he had run out of his flat, the second left of yonder knot-hole, without having washed!

“Come now, my friend,” said the first ant with a good-natured yawn, “You are certainly in a state. Cool off under this leaf and tell me what is troubling you.”

This the second ant was glad to do, for the first ant was somewhat older than he, and had the reputation in the colony of great erudition.

“Yes, I am excited,” admitted the second ant. “I hung from the twig in the ceiling of my flat but hardly rested a moment all night. Last evening I attended a meeting of the older ants in the colony, at the palace of the Queen and they were telling about a vast being called ‘Man’. He is, according to them, of tremendous antiquity. He made this house in which we and our forefathers have lived for generations. They say he walks on only two legs and has no antennae and yet can sense things an indefinite number of ant-lengths away. He is so monstrous large that with one foot he can crush whole colonies of ants out of existence”.

“Oh, have you been listening to old-queens’ tales again?” said the first ant, with a sardonic laugh.

But the second ant was too upset to be stopped so readily in his excited rehearsal of what he had learned.

“Man,” they said, “makes whole mountains with his hands as easily as you turn over an aphid. He can carry water enough at one time to bring a flood that would destroy our ant-people by the thousands”.

“Yes, yes,” replied the first ant, “I’ve heard that flood story before. Do you think that even if there were such a being as Man, he would be so cruel and arbitrary as simply to destroy helpless ants, to say nothing of innocent queens, larvae and pupae? You can see in a moment that the thing is preposterous!”

“On the contrary, my dear fellow,” said the second ant, “Our queen spoke at the meeting, and, as you know, she has attained the amazing age of fourteen years and she told us that in her early youth her mother said that she remembered a time, now some twenty years ago, when Man assailed this very foundation with vast floods of water, and it was done for no other reason than that Man was displeased with the ants and wanted to destroy them”.

“What is the basis of these wild, unheard-of tales that the oldsters are keeping alive?” asked the first ant skeptically.

“It seems that they have ancient recorded traditions, handed down by queen to queen-larva through the generations, and according to those traditions, there have been and still are ants living in the immediate proximity of Men and they have reasons to know Man’s great power.”

By this time the first ant was equally excited, but for quite a different reason.

“I can sense”, he said, waving his antennae in great agitation, “that you are an exceedingly gullible ant. If you had traveled as widely as I have—if you had had the education that it has been my privilege to obtain—you would not be taken in so easily by these myths. I, for one, cannot accept the belief that there is any such being. I have climbed every mound within a thousand yards of this wall and I have never seen anyone such as you have been describing. And, speaking of this old house, I don’t believe that anyone built it. I am a fairly old ant, nearly four years old now, and it has always been here, practically unchanged except that it is becoming a bit more crowded with ants and termites as time goes on. It stood here in my mother’s day who was an old-old queen who mothered several generations of ants. It has been here for more ant-generations than I can count on all the cilia of my six feet. Do you mean to tell me that there is a being of such antiquity that he could have built this house? Nothing doing! If anything, I accept the thesis that this has always been here.”

“Always here?” queried the second ant, “but it must have been built at some time. We know that when we build anything it requires planning and materials and all the carpenter ants we can muster”.

“But you forget”, said the first ant with a superior air, “that when we build something, it is designed and has some purpose. But this tottering old wall has no meaning. It came into being by nothing more than a fortuitous concourse of circumstances. It required no Maker!”
"I am sure," went on the first ant, now quite carried away by the cogency of his own reasoning, "that I know nearly everything that can be known. Just look at my long antennae," waving these appendages proudly, "I spent many a weary month stretching and sensitizing them. I can tell in a moment where an aphid lies hidden, if it be even six inches from me. I have set these antennae a-quiver from every vantage-point within many rods of this old wall. The ends of the world are an open book to me. I simply cannot reasonably accept the notion of a being so great and so far-seeing and so powerful as you have been describing this mythical Man of yours to be. Why, use your reason, Ant, you can see, surely, that the whole thing is untenable".

Just then, as the two philosophic ants paused for a breathing-spell, a man spoke nearby.

"I have just bought this old house," said the voice. "But I see the foundation is pretty well filled with ants and termites. Come on, let's walk down this old side-walk and look at the farther end!"

The two ants heard the voice, like a clap of thunder. A shadow passed swiftly along the walk where they stood, petrified. When the shadow passed, the sunlight shone upon two tiny black spots on the walk, where once stood two ants who were reasonably certain that there simply was no such being as a Man.

"THE FOOL HATH SAID . . . . . ."

ALA BANDON

The Voice of our Readers

STIMULATING SCHOLARLY REFORMED THOUGHT

January 22, 1948
951 Davis Place
Seattle 44, Washington.

THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Dr. Boonka:

GREETINGS once again from one of your faithful readers of THE CALVIN FORUM. Time and again I have wanted to write to you and your colleagues in appreciation for your vigorous work on behalf of Calvinism. In these days it is refreshing to see Calvinism being intelligently reaffirmed and set forth as the sole Weltanschauung for the world, as your group is doing.

I have just finished reading Mr. Harry R. Boer's "Perspectives for Reformed Advance" in the Jan, '48 issue. For a long time I have wanted to write to you concerning certain questions and problems about the various phases of the Reformed Faith, but either could not express myself adequately and hence decided not to write, or else fell into the sin of procrastination and forgot to do so. Mr. Boer has written almost exactly what I have wanted to ask you for a long time. While I am of Japanese extraction, I have somehow been fascinated with the solidity and unified cogency of Calvinism, especially of your Dutch groups. This was partly due to the reading of some of Dr. Kuyper's and Bavinck's books. Still further to reading of your CALVIN FORUM and the Westminster Theological Journal, still more to the reading of books by the chief Reformed writers in this country, especially Berkhof and Van Til. I have never come into personal contact with any of your group members and hence my fellowship with your Reformed group has been nil. While I am a Presbyterian (a student pastor at the present), I have become increasingly aware of the decline in vigorous theological thinking on the part of many Presbyterian ministers and friends with whom I have come into contact. May God's sovereign grace yet restore the mantle of theological leadership to our impoverished church.

Hence for this reason, having to rely chiefly on reading, I have long wished and prayed that somehow, the following things could be accomplished:

1. A scholarly theological quarterly (like the former Princeton Theological Review) having more articles on a high scholarly level on all phases of life—cultural, scientific, and philosophical—written by the best Reformed thinkers of the world. Or perhaps two journals, one exclusively theological and the other somewhat on the order of Philosophia Reformata (only in English for those of us who can't understand any other language).

2. Translation of some of those Dutch books of Kuyper, Bavinck, etc., still unavailable in English. I am also especially interested in the writings of your Reformed philosophers, Vollenhoven, etc.

3. A series of books on Reformed philosophy covering the whole range of philosophy, especially in epistemology. I am a philosophy student at the local University and feel keenly this need to keep myself from falling into acceptance of one of the current philosophies. My only help at the present is the writings of Dr. Van Til, who covers some aspects of philosophical questions, at present my only guide and stay in directing my thoughts in the channels of Reformed thought. Here, I have been amazed by the output of the Neo-Thomists on all phases of Thomism. Is there any outstanding Reformed philosopher on the high scholarly level of M. Gilson or M. Maritain? Can't Reformed thought produce a series of books on the same order as they? Surely from within the ranks of those who comprise the Calvinistic Action Committee, there should be outstanding thinkers, not necessarily philosophers, who can contribute specialized treatises and books, or even an article in a compilation or symposium. Even a book on the order of What Lutherans Are Thinking would be a God-sent help to many of us who are not too well versed in Reformed thought. Financial problems surely are an obstacle, but I do not believe they ought to be.

4. Establishment of a Reformed University somewhere in the United States on a high scholastic level for specialized studies in the whole realm of Reformed thought, especially those disciplines lacking in state universities. That is, I feel there is the urgency for a graduate school of philosophy, psychology, and the sciences based on Reformed thought and tradition. The only course open at the present is to go all the way to Amsterdam, which is almost impossible for most of the American students, especially when one is married and has to work to support a family. But such a University here in the United States would make that dream more acceptable.

5. More adequate exposition of the Reformed concept of education. The recent "course" put out by the NUGS is admirable but we hope, only the beginning. This certainly ought to be a fertile soil.
I could write more, but I'll have to hasten to work. Suffice to say, I only hope that Calvinists everywhere, but especially from your group, will do some of these things to help many of us, who are grappling with some of these fundamental problems without the aid of adequate material and too often falling into unknown heresy because of it.

Yours with gratitude for your work and with hopes for a stronger and wider diffusion of Calvinism, for the sovereign glory of God, I remain,

Yours truly,

GEORGE Y. UOMOTO,
Student Pastor,
Japanese Presbyterian Church,
Seattle 44, Washington.

APPRECIATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Dr. C. Bouma,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

THIS is to let you know that I have been enjoying THE CALVIN FORUM. To me the January issue was even better than some of the other issues. There is a real challenge in this issue for the Christian Reformed Church. I found this strikingly true of the articles "Perspectives for Reformed Advance" and "Vacuum Packed Christianity."

It is not entirely natural to get a note of appreciation without qualifying it with some dissatisfaction, from a Hollander at least. It seems to me that THE FORUM ought to be more progressively promoted by advertisement in our other publications. I feel that there are readers of the "Banner", "Federation Messenger", "The Christian Home and School Magazine", and others, also possibly outside of our denomination, who might be interested in the FORUM if they only knew it existed. It seems to me THE FORUM has been rather passive and just hoping for the best instead of making an aggressive effort to enlarge its influence through increasing its circulation. THE FORUM deserves more readers.

It seems to me that there is another problem closely related to this, that is, that there ought to be more generous recognition between these various publications. For instance, the editor of the "Banner" might make mention of articles in the FORUM in his editorial "Briefs" as occasion might warrant. This would add momentum to the interest of the problems discussed. I know that these publications serve somewhat different ends, nevertheless there could be more mutual treatment of the problems which confront our church and Calvinism in general.

 Permit me to say again that I benefit greatly by reading THE FORUM and hope it may find a place in many more homes so it may not be a "candle under a basket".

Sincerely,

RIEMER VAN TIL.

Waukon, Iowa
January 14, 1948.

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed find a check for two dollars to pay for my subscription. I enjoyed the last number immensely.

Sincerely yours,

E. M. DE BUHR.

Salem Evangelical and Reformed Church,
Waukon, Iowa.

803 Merchants Nat'l Bank Bldg.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa
January 19, 1948.

Mr. Clarence Bouma,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Professor Bouma:

I want to congratulate you on the last issue of THE CALVIN FORUM. It was certainly a very good issue.

I appreciated especially the articles by Harry Boer and Stanford Reid.

Would you please send me six additional copies and bill me for same?

Yours truly,

G. A. ANDREAS.

From Our Correspondents

SOUTH AFRICAN OBSERVATIONS

University College,
Potchefstroom,
January 12, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I HAVE just received my copy of THE CALVIN FORUM of December 1947, in which my previous letter appeared.

From this I may deduce that postal connections between us have been fairly well brought up to normal. Now I write in sweltering heat. This is mid-summer, and although we had copious rains, the heat is at the present moment almost unbearable. I am back in the harness again after my short leave of a few months which I spent mostly traveling by car through our vast but beautiful country. South Africa was at its finest during our trip. My wife and I toured alone as our children had to attend school. It was a most pleasant second honeymoon after more than a quarter of a century of giving attention to our growing-up children. The youngest is now eleven, and the oldest of twenty-two has just qualified as a medical doctor.

Things political, cultural, educational, and otherwise are very quiet over here. Our next parliamentary election comes off only towards the end of this year or the beginning of 1949. At the present moment we have just passed the days of national celebrations: Dec. 16, Dingaans dag, the day on which the "Voortrekkers" crushed the military power of the Zulus in 1838, and, of course, Dec. 25, Christmas Day, which is spent here, I suppose as with you, differently by God-fearing and Godless people. On the whole we Afrikaners still observe our Christmas Day as a day of religious celebration. Our real holiday is New Year's Day. On the 1st of January everybody tries to get away from the old home into the country, usually some nearby seaside or river resort.

The Afrikaner and the War

Some years ago I wrote you about the political situation, and particularly about the Afrikaner attitude towards the European war. A most interesting book has just appeared, written by two South African Englishmen. The first author is Professor of History at the Rhodes University College, Grahamstown, and the second is a journalist. The authors are Michael Roberts and A. E. G. Trollope, and the title of the book is: The South African Opposition 1939-1945. The book has been published by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. at a very low price, viz., 11/6 South African coinage. I suppose you would be able to obtain it over there at about 2.25 dollars.

It is an essay in contemporary history, and I can heartily recommend it to all readers who are interested in South African history. The authors, of course, are Englishmen, while

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • MARCH, 1948
the South African Opposition are chiefly Afrikaners. Naturally this essay is written from the English standpoint, but I may state from a very objective, scientific standpoint. The authors try to give a very fair interpretation of the thoughts and actions of the Afrikaners during the period of World War No. 2. The book comprises the whole field of Afrikaner activity, mostly political activities. In seven chapters the authors give you a valuable insight into our attitude. The problems of Reunion between the Afrikaner sections—we Afrikaners are very keen on politics and have therefore split into different sections—form the main issue in Afrikaner politics. Various movements, like the "Handhaversbond", the "Herenigde Nasionale Party", the "Osswegbrandwag", the "Nuwe Orde", are discussed. Particular attention is given to "Volkseensheid" (National Unity) as the main contrast to the Party Machine. The book closes with an Aftermath (from the general election during the War to the end of the War) and an Epilogue. The Book is pleasant reading, even to an Afrikaner like myself.

With best wishes for the New Year to you and all your readers, and with kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

J. Chr. Coetzee.

ON PALESTINE AND EGYPT

113 Sharia El-Kasr El-Aini,
The American University at Cairo,
Cairo, Egypt,
February 8, 1948.

Dr. Clarence Bouma,
Editor, THE CALVIN FORUM,
Corner Benjamin and Franklin,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Editor:

Perhaps the single most important world problem issuing from conditions in the Near East and of particular interest to friends in America concerns Palestine. While present unrest in Egypt about the partition of Palestine has considerably subsided, there continues a steady undercurrent of activity designed to make the carrying out of the U.N.O. decision difficult, if not impossible. One hears rumors about unofficial armies recruited by the Moslem Brotherhood, a voluntary politico-religious organization, or about other attempts made by Arab League officers to keep alive popular opposition to partition. Street demonstrations and parades have been banned by the government which is fearful that these may be used as opportunities to bring about a cabinet crisis. The Moslem Arab population of Egypt in so far as its individuals are aware of events at all is opposed to a Jewish state to the last man. Christians here are likely to be somewhat indifferent about the whole matter although occasionally one meets a Christian who expresses concern, and less frequently one notes a Christian who is actively participating in the obstruction program itself. The prime minister has announced that the government will protect the considerable Jewish minority in Egypt and their property. Leading Jewish department stores at the time of recent outbursts were heavily guarded by the police.

The Jew and the Arab

There are a number of facts in the present pattern of things out in this part of the world of which Americans at home are probably not aware.

(1) Most Arab countries including Egypt contain substantial Jewish elements most of whom are not at all sympathetic to the Zionist cause in Palestine. Most Egyptian Jews have little commerce with Zionism as is attested by the comparatively good treatment accorded them by most Egyptians. Most of these Jews have been here for generations; indeed some of them probably have an ancestry going back to the days of Moses. Palestine means nothing to them, nothing at all, but trouble.

(2) In Palestine itself there are a number of old Jewish families whose ancestors have been in Palestine for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, who have survived countless upheavals in the country's political history, and who are not in the least Zionist. These members of oldtime Jewish families are likely to be as Arab as the Arabs themselves except that their religion is Judaism. Even those who settled in Palestine previous to the beginnings of political Zionism and who are definitely European in origin are not all in the Zionist camp.

(3) Almost every American residing out here whom one contacts is heartily opposed to the U.N.O.'s solution of the Palestine problem. Many of them privately express amazement that the American government could perpetrate such madness as to support a partition scheme.

(4) Many thinking Egyptians understand that the American government's attitude in the Palestine situation is dictated by the apparent necessities of domestic politics. There are millions of Jewish votes at stake, especially in some of the larger strategic states; there is a powerful Zionist lobby at work in Washington; and there is a popular sympathy among Americans generally for the underdog—which in this case appears to be the unfortunate Jewish people. There is more appreciation of the American political situation at home among people abroad, i.e., the thinking people, not the plodding masses, than most Americans in their provincialism can visualize.

(5) Few Americans at home seem to realize that the present course of action is costing our government highly advantageous friendships among peoples of this part of the world whose good will is needed for strategic purposes as well as for bringing about the reconstruction of a world economy which the Marshall plan seeks to encourage. Then too, American cultural, missionary, philanthropic, and business institutions and their programs will find increasingly hard sledding in this important area in the face of opposition engendered by the United States' approach to the Palestine issue.

There are rumors that the cholera epidemic of last autumn was not really eradicated but that the warm weather of spring will bring a recurrence of the disease. Egyptian authorities are worried that cholera may become endemic. It is difficult to discover just how many perished in the recent epidemic; some insist that the number exceeds 10,000. The indescribable living conditions among Egyptian peasants lend substance to the fear that this disease may easily become a chronic condition to add to Egypt's many other health problems.

Egyptian Archaeology

Your correspondent has just returned from a two-day visit to the site of ancient Thebes which is about four hundred miles up the river (south) from Cairo. It was interesting to note that most of the remaining ruins were the imposing structures and the painstaking works of art created in the interests of religion. The tremendous temples with their massive columns and the remarkable underground tombs in the Valley of the Kings speak in unmistakable accents down the long centuries—more than thirty of them—of man's effort to achieve fellowship with the forces that control the universe and of his search for eternal life in another world. The carvings and paintings on the walls of the inner chambers in the tombs are simply amazing. This is a land whose past produced achievements in the realm of art and politics which the present cannot hope to rival.

Many Christians at home often wonder what kind of archeological evidence Egypt's antiquities afford for an understanding of Biblical narratives or early Christian church history. There is little direct and specific corroboration of events or characters. However, the reconstruction of Egypt's ancient history from these antiquities has yielded a rich background of various social, economic, political, and religious factors that operated in the life of an important people contemporary with...
Bible history—a people who greatly affected Israel's problems. One begins to see something of the tremendous power of a culture such as it is, even the brilliant starry sky—all are so different from what we are accustomed to that I imagine even a life-time of service will not be adequate to take the elements of unusualness out of the new environment. I write, therefore, with the utmost tentativeness.

Perhaps the most prominent impression of all is that Africa is in transition, and this has both its positive and negative aspects. By this I mean not so much that there are some good things and also some bad things, but rather that, apart from the evils which the forces which have introduced. nearly every positive contribution he has made has brought with it its shadowy aspects. I need but mention the influential factors of education, money, economy, and transportation. The enlargement of the mind, the impetus to culture and to a uniform economy, the interchange of ideas which these have given can hardly be overestimated. But it is undeniable that insofar as they are not under the control of Christian morality or guided by a well established culture, they have cast Africa into an uncritical and blatant materialism such as Europe and America hardly know. To have money is for a vast number of Africans the end of all living and his craving pursuit of it is mollified by but few of the amenities and suavities that cover the same quest in America. The African has been given too much too suddenly. The squalor in the port city of Lagos, the use of European type houses without knowing how to use them, the tasteless imitation of western apparel, the arrogance of many store clerks and of nations in position of authority—all emphasize that the new civilization that is coming into being is not the product of a gradual and organic growth but rather that it is being imposed or imitated.

Not even the church has escaped this blight. It is painful indeed to hear Africans singing translations of English and American hymns to American and English melodies while their own resources of melody and expression seem to be so largely ignored. On the other hand, there is everywhere evident, along with indolence and passivity, a great will to work. Many European-owned stores are staffed entirely with African clerks; on our headquarters compound here in Jos a sizable store-building is being constructed entirely by African labor. Increasingly the African is taking leadership in matters of education. It is also the conscious aim of our mission that white leadership shall only be tentative and we are working therefore to create as soon as possible, under God's blessing, a wholly independent African church.

When one leaves the coastal city areas he enters a vast and beautiful world. I had the exhilarating adventure of driving our new mission station wagon from Lagos in the far western to Lupwe in the far eastern part of Nigeria. The road led through huge tropical forests, over rolling expanses of country with mountains in the background, through numerous native villages in which life seemed to be carried on with all the simplicity that have for ages kept the African the same as his forefathers. I have found the African kind and differential, full of laughter, while there is that about him which betrays a certain heaviness of life. I am eager to know him better. I do feel, and the facts bear it out, that when the African character with its own peculiar gifts is hallowed by the Spirit of God a rich contribution will be made to the church universal.

Missions have already done much to achieve this. When we consider that it is but seventy-five years since the death of Livingstone, who explored and opened the continent, it can only be said that great things have been done. Individuals and communities have left their paganism and turned to the truth of the Gospel, fear has been replaced by freedom, ignorance by light, aimless existence by purposeful living, the mastery of demonic forces by the general lordship of Christ. But even so, the coming of the Gospel presents its unpleasant problems. I refer to only one here. Africa is losing its selfishness. To what extent the church has caused this, and to what extent the coming of secularised western civilization, is difficult to say, but there is no doubt that the church has given a

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • MARCH, 1948
tremendous impetus to its becoming discredited. It would seem that this is a gain. It certainly is a condition for the advance of the Gospel. But when this ancient support of the social structure is lost and the resulting vacuum not filled by a positive content, confusion worse confounded may result. So far, many Africans have been brought to see the folly of belief in fetishes but this has, lamentably, not been accompanied by a corresponding acceptance of the Gospel, so that the African has lost his old beliefs but is not appropriating the new view of God and man and nature which Christianity presents.

The unhappy results of this uncompensated loss were strongly brought home to me recently in a conversation with some of our veteran missionaries. There is throughout this country an unparalleled amount of petty thievery going on. It is the complaint of all, not only of Europeans but also, and not least, of Africans. I asked how this phenomenon was to be accounted for. The surprising answer was that the disappearance of fetishism is in large measure responsible for this. When belief in it was strong, possessions—especially crops in the field—were strongly protected by the fetish whose curse or displeasure no right thinking African would dare to incur. Now this safeguard has so largely disappeared in many areas that if crops are not harvested immediately upon becoming ripe they are stealthily made off with by unrequested night labor. That is to say, fetishism provided a sort of morality founded on fear. Now that the fear is vanishing the morality is going with it. Strange as it may seem, the Gospel helps to create conditions which make the need for its dissemination even greater than before it came. To stop, retrench, or even to maintain the status quo is to allow the African house to become the dwelling place of seven worse spirits.

Needless to say, the undersigned finds himself in a state of transition also. There is much to be learned and much to be unlearned. At the present time I am much exercised to learn the Hausa language. Though far from being a linguist, there is much in it to intrigue me. Again, like so much of Africa, it is “different”. One who has passed through a Reformed theological training with its many abstract concepts must learn to express himself in terms of pictures and concrete images. The difficulty involved in this has some compensation in the thrill that adventure in a new language gives. British missionaries have worked out a remarkably good grammar. One is amazed at the regularity of the language. In this respect it stands much closer to Greek and Latin than to English and Dutch.

After another month of study I hope to go to Lupwe and join our small missionary force there. The work to which I have been so long looking forward will then begin in earnest. In the course of that work other perspectives will doubtless present themselves which may be of interest to Forum readers.

With all best wishes,

HARRY R. BOER.

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA NEWS

Dear Dr. Boutma:

INVENTORY time has come and passed in many a place of business. The biggest, most important business in the world is that in which we are engaged as Christian workers. It behooves us, therefore, to take inventory, too.

The above statement is the first paragraph of a searching letter just sent to all the ministers of the Reformed Church in America by the Minister of Evangelism of the denomination, Dr. Jacob Prins. As you know, our denomination is carrying on a great forward movement called the United Advance. Rev. Marion De Volder, pastor of the Hope Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, is the General Chairman. The financial goal is $2,600,000, an additional $100,000 for Relief having been added by the last General Synod to the original goal of $2,500,000. This amount which is an extra, over and above regular giving, is to be divided among five causes, namely, Relief, Foreign Missions Reconstruction, Home Missions, Evangelism and Extension, and Educational Institutions.

The United Advance is not simply an attempt to get more money, however. It includes very definite “spiritual aims”. They are: 1. Revive our Communicant members, 2. Reclaim our inactive members, 3. Rescue the Perishing, and 4. Reap (nurture-shepherd) the flock. The program is being pressed under the direction of Dr. Prins with heartening results. Several pamphlets containing detailed, helpful suggestions as to how this effort may be implemented in the local church have been distributed. Some of the subjects dealt with are “Adult Catechetical Evangelization”; “Reaching for Them”, a booklet covering in detail the entire subject of personal work and witnessing; “No Space to Spare”, emphasizing that the whole program of the Church should be devoted to saving and edifying men, women and children and that the Church has no “Space to Spare” for any other activity; “Training the Lay Evangelist”; “Building and Cultivating the Prospect Roll”; “Hold Those Won”; “Reclaim Inactive Members”; and “Revitalized Lives for a Devitalized Age”.

Now six months have passed since this spiritual program has been launched and the Minister of Evangelism is calling for inventory. These are some of the items we are requested to fill in:

- Number of Communicant Members, October 1, 1947?
- Number Received on Confession of Faith from October 1, to December 31, 1947?
- Number of Inactive Members reclaimed from October 1, to December 31, 1947?
- Number of Communicant Members received by transfer from October 1, to December 31, 1947?
- How many lost to the Roman Catholic Church since October 1, 1947?
- How many won from Roman Catholicism?
- Number of Personal Workers? Visitors we can depend on?
- Number of Names on our “Responsibility List” to be won to Christ? Number Reclaimed?
- Number of Scholars enrolled in Sunday Bible School, October 1, 1947? December 31, 1947? Increase? Loss?
- Number of Scholars enrolled in Catechetical Classes, Week-Day Bible Schools, Last Year? This Year? Increase? Loss? Number of known Stewards and Tithers?
- Number of Prayer Partners, People who set apart time for prayer daily?
- Number of Family Altars? Number of Organizations in the church?
- Number of New Churches organized since October 1, 1947? Missions? Bible Schools?
- Percentage of Increase in regular church contributions since October 1, 1947?
- Percentage of increase in regular church attendance since October 1, 1947?

These items supply food for thought—and some honest heart-searching on the part of all of us ministers and church workers, do they not, Mr. Editor? Would it not be beneficial for the cause of Christ if every minister and church would be asked to take such an inventory and report on the results? Are there not a large number of churches in every denomination “majoring in the minors and minoring in the majors”? We feel that this program is one of the most salutary and hopeful emphases in our denomination. May God use this effort as one of the means of revitalizing our church and of bringing in the spiritual reawakening and return to the Bible and to God which our country so much needs.

Yours in our blessed Lord,

WILLIAM A. SWETS.
THE IDEA OF MISSIONS


To review a book written a half dozen years ago that is in itself a review of a previous book may seem a little unusual. The reason for such a procedure is, in part, the extraordinary significance of the material which this little book treats; in part, the fact that the war has kept it from being previously available.

Dr. Bavinck expresses keen appreciation of the depth and clarity of Dr. Kraemer's survey of the great world religions and of his keen interest in and practical suggestions for carrying out the work of missions. In a little over a hundred pages he first gives us an excellent digest of Kraemer's book and then comments more extensively on certain features of it. A summary of the line of thought, while not doing justice to either book, can give some idea of their contents.

The world is today in a state of transition. In both the West and the East a growing relativism is shaking men's faith in everything they once considered sure. Under such conditions, the Christian church as the bearer of God's plan of salvation is awakened to the urgency and greatness of her task. The whole church must become more aggressively active in the work of missions, the more because everywhere rising nationalistic movements are threatening to end the existing freedom of missionary gospel preaching. Apparent lack of success ought not to deter the church from this work. The mistakes and limitations of past missionary effort and the difficulties encountered in the evangelization of pagan countries with their strongly entrenched and conservative religious systems—these all conspire to make progress slow. Missions are not the work of years, but of centuries.

Kraemer calls his view of the Christian faith “Biblical Realism,” a term he uses to contrast his view with the modern idea that Christianity is just a philosophical or moral system. In his discussion of the great facts of the gospel and of Christian ethics, he points out that both the Christian faith and the Christian ethics differ from all others in being not man but God-centered. He says that the gospel deals not with the Being of God but with the Will of God. The Kingdom of God is not to be identified with any sinful, humane, earthly order, and the gospel gives us no ready-made, comprehensive, permanent system of human life and thought with answers to all questions.

Kraemer makes some interesting suggestions as to the proper attitude toward the non-Christian religions. These need to be seen as comprehensive life-systems. They should be thought of not so much as containing certain elements of truth arising from natural theology, but as systems opposed to God’s will in Christ. Accordingly, the missionary in establishing a point of contact with the people among whom he works, though he must be thoroughly conversant with them and their beliefs, must not try to find it in those beliefs. The most apparent similarities between them and the gospel turn out to be contrasts, for all those ideas are part of a unified pagan system. Not the pagan system, but the missionary himself, should be the point of contact.

Several interesting suggestions are made by Kraemer on the proper missionary approach. The missionary must recognize, he thinks, that there is a great difference between the gospel and historic Christendom. The latter is all too human and imperfect and gives the missionary no grounds for a feeling of superiority toward the pagans. The non-Christian religions are complex cultural and social structures, and the influence of Christianity on them has not made them more receptive but has aroused them to new opposition. The Christian missionary must always remember that his purpose fundamentally is not to speak of human religious experiences or to give social help, but to witness to God’s revelation.

The gospel must be preached in a manner adapted to the people to whom it is brought. The missionary must use native terms and forms of expression. Too often what are merely Western usages and customs (including creeds!) have been forced upon young Eastern churches. In the future more must be done toward making these younger churches truly indigenous. Greater significance too must be attached to the church as not a merely human organization but as Christ’s possession. Even though no earthly social order may be identified with the Kingdom of God, the missionary must promote social applications of the gospel in discarding pagan customs, and in replacing them, not with secular, but with Christian forms.

After the Conference of Tambaram, for which Kraemer’s book was written, the author answered those who criticized his low evaluation of pagan religions. He did so in an article entitled “Continuity or Discontinuity”. He pointed out that what he meant by his term, “Biblical Realism”, was that the Bible witnesses to the Divine deeds and plans for the salvation of men, and not to man’s religious ideas or experiences. Therefore Christianity may never be regarded as a fulfillment of non-Christian religions. What similarities there are, are far exceeded by the contrasts and opposition between the two. There can be no natural theology in the sense of pagan religions being a lower level upon which Christianity can be built, even though God has worked in the hearts of men outside the sphere of revelation. Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God, stands in every respect opposed to all wisdom and power of man. The missionary must approach the pagan religions, not from any supposedly neutral or unbiased standpoint, but as a conscious and avowed Christian. Neutrality in these matters is impossible. Modern studies of Biblical Criticism and Comparative Religion may not be allowed to mislead in this respect. Historical Christendom may not be identified with God’s revelation in Christ. Clement of Alexandria represented pagan religions as products of a general revelation preparatory for Christianity. In contrast, Karl Barth stressed the opposition between the two. Kraemer feels that of the two Barth was nearer the truth, although he is not completely satisfied with the latter’s exposition of the better elements in pagan religions. In confronting the problem of these “higher” elements in pagan religions, Kraemer prefers to begin not from any general religious ideas, but from God’s revelation in Christ.

After such a summary of Kraemer’s book, Dr. Bavinck comments on certain features of the argument. Bavinck concerns himself with four problems: Christendom and God’s Revelation in Christ; Biblical Realism; Pagan Ontological Speculation and the Voluntaristic Concept of God; and, The Evangelistic Mission Method and the Problem of Adaptation.

Bavinck points out that Kraemer’s repeated sharp distinction between Christendom as a historical movement and God’s revelation in Christ, while having certain merit, is in danger of being overdrawn. All witness to the gospel, after all, becomes a historical, human fact. The church, although it is all
Concerning Biblical Realism, Bavinck observes that while Kraemer is right in pointing out that the gospel is a real revelation of God, rather than a pure abstract speculation or philosophy, he goes too far in denying that the Bible has philosophical interests and a system of thought and ethics. The Bible definitely does present a "world and life view"; it appeals to the intellect as well as to man's other faculties; it deals with relationships as well as with facts. While Kraemer's emphasis on being Biblical and Realistic is good, he is one-sided.

Again, the often recurring idea in Kraemer's argument, that the Christian revelation is a revelation of God's Will rather than of His Being, while valuable in criticism of pagan religions with their love of abstract speculation, is also overdrawn. The strong interest of the Bible in God's Will is rooted in a recognition of His Being. It is the Creator who speaks.

Bavinck finds one of the most valuable parts of Kraemer's book its treatment of mission methods. Kraemer criticizes the old aggressive polemic method, which so often loses itself in fruitless argument, the newer sympathetic method which does not differentiate enough between God's revelation and all human religions, and what is called the "ethical" method which ignores too much of the religious and cultural background of its subjects. He recommends what is termed the "evangelistic method", which is characterized by gospel preaching, adaptation to native attitudes and conditions, and a spirit of helpfulness. The necessity, while being true to the gospel, for the missionary to adapt his approach to the Oriental customs, expressions, and thought forms, is especially emphasized.

Dr. Bavinck rejoices in the new mission interest coming to the fore in this book; which, as it was, calls the church to totalitarian spiritual warfare; and he writes his extensive review to arouse increased interest in the great missionary problems with which it deals. Both Kraemer's and Bavinck's books are important. For those who understand the Dutch, Bavinck's excellent digest provides in brief compass some of the most stimulating ideas in the large work as well as some criticism of its peculiarities. These peculiarities seem to be largely the result of the writer's somewhat Barthian position. In spite of this limitation, one deeply appreciates Kraemer's able and informative portrayal of the Christian missionary task throughout the world, his insistence on the gospel as God's revelation, his attack on the common liberal missionary programs, his insights into pagan religions, and his valuable practical suggestions as to missionary methods. One can only echo Dr. Bavinck's wish that such books as these may help arouse the Christian church to new zeal and more effective execution of her Lord's Great Commission.

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PRESBYTERIANS: SCOTCH, IRISH, AMERICAN

It cannot be said that readers of THE CALVIN FORUM know too much about historic Presbyterianism and its principles. The two countries which in the days of the Reformation were most devoted to Calvinism were the Netherlands and Scotland. In the former country the chief emphasis in the struggle fell on doctrine, in the latter that chief emphasis was a matter of polity. Whoever reads Scottish Church History soon becomes acquainted with such terms as "Presbytery", "The Covenants", "Divine Right of Presbytery", etc. All true Presbyterians, of course, hold to the system of doctrine as set forth in the Westminster Standards, but on the matter of Church Government and related questions there are differences between the numerous historical groups that have sprung up in Scotland, Ireland, and the United States. In this brief discussion we simply present some publications of comparatively recent date dealing with groups of Presbyterians.

Blue Banner Faith and Life is the name of a magazine which has just begun its third year. It is edited by one person, viz., the Rev. Johannes Vos, who is also its publisher (R.F.D. #1, Clayton Center, Ky., 35 cents per year). Dr. Vos is the author (Johannes Vos, The Scottish Covenanters. Published by the Author, 1940. $1.50). Calvinists who are interested in the problem of the relation of Church and State will not wish to be ignorant of the Covenanters position.

Some years ago a reprint of an article by Professor G. D. Henderson on "Scotland and the Synod of Dort" from the Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis, Vol. XXIV, appeared, in which the close relations between Scottish and Dutch Calvinism in the 16th and 17th centuries were brought out and the strong emphasis both placed on opposition to Arminianism was stressed. The most valuable source of information on Scottish Theology which has appeared in recent years from the pen of a conservative Calvinistic scholar is Scottish Theology, in Relation to Church History since the Reformation by John Macleod (Edinburgh: Publ. Comm. Free Church of Scotland, 1943. pp. 351. 7th/6 d.). This book consists largely of lectures delivered in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. It is a thorough account of the development of Theology in the Scottish Presbyterian Churches. (See review in THE CALVIN FORUM, Vol. X, p. 125). Professor Macleod, who was an authority in this field, was at the time Principal of the Free Church College in Edinburgh. Another book that should be mentioned in this connection is Donald Maclean, D.D., by Rev. G. N. M. Collins (Edinburgh: Lindsay & Co., 1944, pp. 165, 5sh.). It is a biography of the grand old man of the Free Church, Dr. Donald Maclean, who spent his life in the ministry and in the professorate of the Free Church. He succeeded Principal Maclean in the Principalship of the College (Semi­nary) but died before Macleod did after a very brief incumbency. Dr. Maclean, whose life and work were memorialized in THE CALVIN FORUM (Vol. VIII, p. 156), was active in the organizing and on the programs of the European Calvinistic Conferences and was both the founder and until his death also the editor of The Evangelical Quarterly. He, like Macleod, was a staunch defender of the Reformed Faith.

Scotch Presbyterianism became established in Northern Ireland more than three centuries ago. Today the Irish Presbyterian Church has largely succumbed to Modernism. A small group of loyal men in Belfast and the Ulster country protested against this decline, but were forced to secede. This happened in 1927 and the Church they founded is known as the Irish Evangelical Church of Ireland (see review in THE CALVIN FORUM by Rev. James Hunter). In a 64-page booklet the Rev. W. J. Grier gives the story. The close connection between this group and the Free Church of Scotland is indicated by the foreword writ-
ten by the Rev. G. N. M. Collins. *The Origin and Witness of the Irish Evangelical Church* is the title (Evangelical Book Shop, 15 College Square East, Belfast, N. Ireland). The same author (W. J. Grier) has recently written a mealy little book of 86 pages in which he exposes the Premillennial position and upholds the Amillennial tradition of the Presbyterian Churches (*The Momentous Event. A Discussion of Scripture Teaching on the Second Advent and Questions Related Thereeto.* Belfast: Evangelical Book Shop, 1945. May be had from Baker Book Shop, Grand Rapids, Mich., $1.00). This is a fine little book, except that it should name sources of writers quoted. The author also fails to give credit in any form to Dr. Pieters, upon whose articles in *The Calvin Forum* he leans heavily, if not exclusively, for the millennial teaching in the patristic writings.

**CLARENCE BOUMA.**

**DENOMINATIONS, SECTS, AND CULTS**

**THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE IN AMERICA. By George Hedley. New York: Macmillan, 1946. 177 pages. $2.00.**

In fifteen chapters, each covering about ten pages, the author gives us in this book an informative sketch of the various denominational groups found in our country. The Greek Orthodox, the Catholics, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, the Quakers, the Methodists, the Disciples of Christ—all are taken up in turn, and, for liberal measure, there are chapters on the Jews, the Liberal Christians, and the Revivalists. The two closing chapters, consisting largely of standpoint and evaluation deal with the Hebrew-Christian Tradition and with the Church of the Future. Though the author is a liberal, it must be said that he compresses a good deal of informative historical material and truthful characterization of these groups into his ten-page chapters. But when it comes to ultimate evaluation and that disappointing look. The author's point of ultimate truth is given in these two sentences: “Christianity is the affirmation that God may be known to man because God can be found in man. To this affirmation every Christian, Jewish and cardinal assent” (p. 157). From this point of view every denomination has some “good point” and there is even no essential difference between Judaism and Christianity, as the author clearly states.


Here is another treatment of most of the historic denominations in our country, but the treatment is different. The book is larger and the chapters are longer, and in each case the authors single out the leader or founder of the group for biographical treatment first, which treatment is then followed by the brief discussion of the history and characteristics of the group. Luther and the Lutherans, Calvin and the Presbyterians, Servetus and the Unitarians, Loyola and the Roman Catholics (as well as the Eastern Orthodox Churches!), Cranmer and the Episcopalians, Browne and the Congregationalists, Bunyan and the Baptists (in America), Fox and the Quakers, Wesley and the Methodists, Ballou and the Universalists, Joseph Smith and the Mormons, Mrs. Eddy and the Christian Scientists. The closing chapter deals with Judaism, “the mother of all churches”. As a printer's product this is a beautiful book. Many historical prints in sepia adorn the volume. The treatment is informative. As for evaluation, the same disappointing treatment as that of Hedley (above). There are some fine things to say about all of the groups and their leaders. He is “sympathetic” to Calvin as well as to Servetus. And that shows there is no theological standpoint or criterion offered by which the views of these groups are tested. There is, however, one nice feature about this book. In Chapter I the authors give a four-page statement of what they call “The seven great ages of time” and “The old story of salvation”. This is an admirable statement, thoroughly biblical and true to the Faith of the Scriptures. These authors at least know that this is historic Christianity. “Even today”, they tell us (p. 10), “you will find some leaders in our churches afraid to speak plainly regarding the changes they have or have not made in the old story.” Indeed, we may add, and that is where the real problem begins.

**RELIGION IN AMERICA. By Willard L. Sperry. New York: Macmillan, 1946. $2.50.**

This is an attempt to make clear the American religious scene to the people of Great Britain. Such a discussion has the advantage of calling for clarity and explicitness. Professor Sperry, who is the Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, is fully aware of these requirements as he responds to the British invitation to tell about “Religion in America” in this first volume of a projected “American Life and Institution” series. He writes as a scholar with knowledge of facts and balance of judgment. At the same time there is nothing abstruse or “heavy” about his discussion, which may be enjoyed by any reader of average intelligence. After two historical chapters, the causes and consequences of the separation of Church and State are taken up in chapters III and IV. There are informative chapters on the Protestant Denominations, on Roman Catholicism, and on the Negro Churches. Likewise a chapter each on Church Union, Religious Education, and American Theology. The standpoint is throughout that of a liberal. In connection with his evaluation of Calvinism, Dr. Sperry states a most interesting and significant problem about the American mentality. He points out that for years the “pessimistic” view of human nature of the orthodox theologies that came from Europe to our shores (“man a fallen and sinful creature, dependent upon divine grace for his salvation”) existed side by side with an incorrigible native optimism in actual life. “For three hundred years he found in the history of his country no occasion to concede any such disquieting facts and no need to doubt his own resilience in the presence of trouble. Therefore, the old grim words which, in varying forms, he has used on Sundays to confess his sins, have had little relation to the cheerful self-confidence with which he has gone about his business for the rest of the week.... How the grim hereditary Calvinism of New England could survive so complacently beside the resolute cheerfulness of daily life is a riddle which remains to be read.” These sentences give food for thought. Sperry, of course, does not really “understand” Calvinism. But do not his statements also point to a fact, viz., that dualism, Sunday religion, and the divorce of religious convictions from actual daily life have marked much of the American scene in spite of the teachings of Jonathan Edwards and others? But, to return to Sperry’s book, it should be added that forty pages of Appendices offer much factual and statistical information about the denominations and the sects.


A brief compact account of the “Concordia Teacher Training Series” of the beliefs and practices of most of the American denominations and sects. Written from the Lutheran point of view, it offers in the main biblical evaluations. The criticism of Calvinism is, of course, also from the Lutheran standpoint. The inclusion of the Methodists and Holiness-Pentecostalists groups under the heading of “The Arminian Reformed Church” strikes one as odd, though it is not uncommon among orthodox Lutherans. All in all, a brief, handy account, with a conservative doctrinal evaluation.

**CLARENCE BOUMA.**