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State University
and Religion

Ten Educators Speak
A Symposium

Amsterdam Conference
of World Council

Christian Training
for World Tragedy

Barthianism
Neo-Modernism?

Glorious Heritage
Heidelberg Catechism

Voices
Correspondence
Verse
Books

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An Educational Symposium

Editorial

WE ARE not often in the fortunate position of being able to offer our readers a symposium as in this issue. But here it is. No less than ten educators express their opinion, each in rather limited compass, on a brief dealing with one of the great problems of our American educational system.

Let us tell you how it happened. Down in Greensboro, North Carolina, you will find the Woman's College of the University of that state. Recently this institution, as many other state universities, grappled with the problem of introducing courses in religion into its curriculum. The Chancellor of the University appointed a committee to consider the desirability and advisability of introducing such courses. One of the men on this committee chanced to be a comparatively young teacher in the department of History and Political Science. He is a 1944 Ph.D. of the University of Illinois, a member of a Christian Reformed Church in Chicago, trained in Christian primary and secondary schools and an avowed Calvinist, though not a graduate of Calvin College.

In the course of the deliberations of the committee this young man, Dr. Richard Bardolph, developed his own attitude toward the problem of the place of religious courses in a state university and took the pains to formulate his tentative convictions on the subject in the form of a brief which was submitted to the committee. Dr. Bardolph then took the initiative to send us a copy of this brief soliciting our critical opinion as a Calvin Forum group. He did not intend it for publication, but the editor induced him to submit it for that purpose and that it be made the basis for a symposium by a number of Christian educators.

The editor's suggestion was endorsed by the entire editorial committee and a dozen educational leaders were invited to participate in this written symposium. Nine of these have responded and their contributions appear in this issue immediately after the brief of Dr. Bardolph. We shall be happy to receive letters of agreement, disagreement, appreciation, or criticism of the views here expressed. If the response is what we expect it will be, we will probably place a number of these reader reactions in the next issue. In this way we may approach the technique and interest associated with a radio round table followed by a question hour. We invite our readers to swamp us with letters!

It is only fair to say that the brief of Dr. Bardolph was drafted months before the recent deliverance of the United States Supreme Court in the McCollum-Champaign case was released. It must be equally clear to our readers that this Supreme Court opinion has greatly increased the relevancy of the problem.

This decision, startling to many people of Christian convictions, has aroused and is still arousing a twofold, quite divergent, response on their part. On the one hand, there are those who are not at all surprised that the highest court of the land should have stated the case of religion and public education thus. These Christian people have held the conviction for some time that the state on the one hand must be neutral and on the other hand cannot in reality be neutral in the matter of religion and education. The “solution” of the problem for these people is that by private initiative or through the agency of Christian groups (Church, parental groups, associations, etc.) educational institutions (primary, secondary, as well as higher) ought to be founded and maintained. In these institutions all subjects are then to be taught upon the presuppositions of the Christian religion as embraced by the group.

Another group of Christians has been startled by the court’s pronouncement, particularly because it seemed to be a deliverance partial to the atheism which Mrs. McCollum embraced and which seems in this way to be vindicated. This group is already asserting itself in various religious assemblies and papers and will, no doubt, not let the matter rest here. They are insistent that, if “neutrality,” “separation of Church and State,” “freedom for all” can be interpreted to mean that atheist Mrs. McCollum cannot be coerced to have her youngster receive “religious” education, neither can they be coerced to accept an essentially atheist interpretation of things for their children from teachers who claim to be “neutral” in the matter of religion. We will, no doubt, hear more from this group, which includes many Fundamentalists. They will not fail to raise the question what the same United States Supreme Court meant by its one-time declaration that “this is a Christian nation.”

Meanwhile the problem as to the proper attitude on the part of the state toward religion in public education remains a knotty issue. For those of us who believe in a system of Christian education free from all state control, the immediate solution of our own educational needs is simple and clear. But we are also citizens, Christian citizens, of this great republic with its Christian traditions for the guarding and promotion of which we feel a grave responsibility.

Possibly these few paragraphs may serve to introduce both the Brief and the Symposium on this urgent problem. C. B.
I have drafted the following memorandum for a double purpose: to clarify and systematize my own thinking on our problem, and to afford the committee some explanation for what may seem to them an obstinate stand on my part in our subsequent deliberations. I have no illusion that my views can be made to prevail either in the committee or the faculty; I do not argue my case, therefore, but merely state the premises upon which my conclusions rest. I add, however, that the minority views that I express are shared, in varying degrees, by at least a fraction of our constituents (the people of the state) and are therefore entitled to a hearing.

My attitude toward the problem of religious instruction in state-supported institutions is determined by my beliefs concerning the nature of religion, the nature of the democratic state, and the nature of public education in a free society.

The Nature of Religion

As an adherent of a positive Protestant creed, I stand with that minority of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants who deplore what has come to be called the "liberalization" of religion. The issue can be briefly stated. Those who, like myself, are implacably opposed to "liberalism" or "modernism" in matters of religious belief and practice hold that there are a number of components that are of the essence of religion, sine qua non, and in default of which a cult or an ism cannot be defined as a religion at all. I do not pretend to have explored the social origins of religious cults: I am aware that the anthropologists have inquired earnestly into the question; but I deny the relevance of those investigations to my problem, and I do not intend to suspend judgment on matters of religious conviction until these cool, scientific investigations give me warrant to proceed. (Nor do I, by way of analogy, intend to defer loving my child, until experts in the origins of that sort of thing supply me with statistics, charts, and a neatly-reasoned dialectic couched in an adequately professional argot, and assure me that I may now go forward without laying myself open to the charge of being a credulous fool.) Whatever the remoter of origins of religious experience and belief, I assert that the religious way of life, properly defined, has been distinguished from other systems by the following attributes:

1. It is uncompromisingly theocentric. A Supreme Being (or Beings) to whom all things are referred, is posited—a deity whom men reverence, fear, love, before whom men humble themselves, and with whom men, groaning under a sense of estrangement, seek to reconcile themselves by appeasement, atonement, or propitiation, immediate or vicarious, of one kind or another. Historically that principle has taken many forms, but it is the principle only, not the forms, that concern me at this point.

2. The concept of religion is inseparable from the concept of authority; that follows infallibly from the previous proposition.

3. The votaries of religion have, in every age and every land, claimed that religious truths are communicated to men's minds by revelation, not by the testimony of sense.

4. They have invariably postulated supernatural, extra-rational theses, or (to borrow an expression from Kant) "transcendental forms" that are beyond the reach of rational demonstration. That is, not only are the ideas communicated by means independent of reason and sense; but once lodged in the mind they remain rationally incomprehensible.

5. It is inconceivable to me that the term religion can be so distorted as to include an ideology in which mysticism does not have a large place. I use the term here in its philosophical sense, of course: the earnest, even desperate, striving of the individual, through religious contemplation and worship, to feel with greater acuity the identity that he feels must subsist between himself and his God. For the religious way of life leads to and proceeds from an ideal metaphysics, inchoate and inarticulate among simpler folk and more precisely formulated among the more philosophical—a metaphysics which holds that the universe is a stable idea in the mind of God, having no independent substantial existence, and communicated to the minds of men by the stable will of God in certain patterns fixed by Himself. The religious man, the mystic, labors to find himself by losing himself in, and feeling his kinship with, the all sub-yuming Real; by turning from the many and various to the One and Changeless. That experience is deeply, passionately personal; it is a path man treads alone. In this sense, individualism—an intense individualism—is of the essence of religion.
The Nature of the Democratic State

In considering the role of a minority in a democratic state, it is necessary to distinguish between two classes of rights.

The democratic theory of the state posits (a) rights internal to the individual, wholly independent of the social compact; and (b) rights not inherent in the individual, but created and guaranteed by society itself. The former pertain to the freedom of the mind, and their particular aspects are complete liberty to think, to speak, and to write, except of course where the exercise of such freedom exposes society to a clear and present—not a vague and potential—peril. The latter pertain to property and to the administration of the civil state, and precisely because they are created, *ab initio*, and underwritten by the social compact, they are defined, restricted, even cancelled by civil agency on the simple majority principle. If, for example, it is a question of controlling a segment of our economy, or of extending the franchise, or of mobilizing the resources of the state against external shock or internal convulsion, we simply count noses (albeit indirectly, through the representative principle) and proceed to implement the policy agreed upon. But with respect to the first-mentioned category of rights the simple majority principle does not operate. Except in the instance noted (clear and present danger to the social compact) they are totally and irrevocably imprescriptible. They can be suspended only by unanimous agreement and then only temporarily.

Now religious rights involve perfect freedom of religion or irreligion (again, with the exception noted; and that takes care of the snake cultists, polygamists, etc.). The positive implication of this
Public Education in a Free Society

As to the nature of public education in a free society my view is:

(1) Democratic public education concerns itself with the knowledge of philosophy and understanding both for its own sake and to equip its charges for effective citizenship in civil society. If it seeks their moral regeneration it must, for the reasons already touched upon, do so through means other than religious.

(2) Its methods are geared to reasonably demonstrable "certainties", susceptible of objective, empirical investigation, and deriving their sanction from reason. It has not hitherto concerned itself with convictions guaranteed by faith only and claiming their derivation from revelation operating through mystical union of deity and creature. I may add, parenthetically, that I do not believe there is such a thing as a completely demonstrable first premise anywhere. Reason can never be the ultimate guarantor. Even the mathematicians, who perhaps expose themselves less to the charge of credulity than any other objective scientists, trace their proofs back from C, which follows from B, which follows from A, which is self evident; Q.E.D.

In the traditional courses with which college curricula deal one proceeds from faith through reason and sensation to "certainty." Religious exercise, however, proceeds from faith, and only through faith, to what it conceives to be certainty. The two areas are thus separated by an unbridgeable gulf.

(3) The traditional curriculum deals in areas that fall within the common experience of all men, in a temporal and material context. Men do not take or leave the propositions of, say, the study of biology or history, or of writing and speech, or of physics in the same sense that one takes or leaves the canons of religion. One is ignorant of the former; one does not accept or reject them. Here again is a vital distinction. One may accept or reject the doctrine of the trinity, for example; it is not empirically demonstrable. One does not object, however, to the doctrine that two and two are four; one is only ignorant of it.

Moreover, men discuss the principles of biology, history, mathematics, and arts freely, and no one feels that his privacy is invaded if he is asked whether objects fall earthward or if Socrates was wise. The case of religion is strikingly different. It is a deeply personal matter. So far as human society is concerned men may have no religion, or religions of their own devising, or belong to the Church of the Latter Day Saints. More than that: extreme reticence, except among certain extroverted, coat-lapel-grasping enthusiasts, characterizes the religious man. Not even within groups knit by close friendship are the basic convictions of men's religions candidly discussed. Men scarcely discuss them with their wives, or children with their parents. I do not say that this is as it should be. I think it is not. But I cite the difference between men's readiness to discuss their physical condition and their reluctance to discuss their spiritual plight as evidence of a significant dichotomy. Again, to argue that religion is a case apart is to labor the obvious.

In sum, I am deeply persuaded that any courses in a state-supported institution that are designed to inculcate religion, or to modify it, or to pass judgment upon it with a view to influencing religious belief positively or negatively, or even to increase one's respect for religions other than one's own (that is, to weaken one's loyalty to a sect: for loyalty to principle is indivisible and democratic society safeguards men from the necessity of compromising religious principle)—any such courses, I say, are counter to the democratic faith and to the tradition of free education in a free society. I do not say that these ends are evil (i.e., the incultation of religion, its modification, or the advancement of a particular creed). Indeed, I think I am more eager than most to see them prosper if their tendency were toward the reassertion of old verities now so universally repudiated. But I do assert that the state should recoil from any suggestion that it underwrite them. I assert that even were the state to undertake to promote my brand of religion, I should still be among the first to protest.
WHAT courses designed to influence the religious life of the student directly have no place in an educational institution supported at public expense, I believe, hardly open to question. Furthermore, experience has shown that where such courses are introduced, whether under the heading of “Bible” or that of “Religion”, they are almost invariably conducted from the modernistic or critical point of view. I must confess that, except for minor and incidental issues, such as that of the dichotomy between religious and empirical truths, and that of the rational incomprehensibility of religious ideas, I find myself in full agreement with Dr. Bardolph’s argument. In what follows, therefore, I pretend to do little more than state some of the things suggested to me as a result of my own experience as a teacher in a state university.

Dr. Bardolph’s position, unassailable as it is, will simply be by-passed by any state university that wishes to introduce, or give credit for, courses in religion and Bible. There is nothing to prevent it from taking the view that religion, like literature, belongs to the humanities, and that it represents a content to be studied “objectively”. Religion, or rather, religions, belong to our cultural heritage, and there is no reason why an educated man should not be acquainted with them. Furthermore, religion is a human phenomenon, which as such can be made the object of scientific investigation. It is, after all, legitimate to ask why people believe a religion, just as it is legitimate to ask why they dream, make verses, go insane, or paint pictures.

What is the temper or spirit in which these investigations are made? As we know, the moral and spiritual influence of the state university makes itself felt not so much by what is stated as by what is taken for granted. This can be a strong, pervasive, and almost paralyzing thing. It is assumed that of course no completely civilized man acquainted with contemporary advances, and respecting truth, could ever revert to the immature conceptions of the ancients. God, the soul, immortality, and so on, since they are matters about which no scientific knowledge is possible, can only be of historical interest. What function did religion play in the remote past, and what are the attitudes and activities, resulting from the conquest of nature, which today have largely superseded it? In other words, religion is a human peculiarity to be explained. Now to the vast majority of students this will have the efficacy of explaining it away. Like any psycho-analytic phenomenon, religion, once it is “squarely faced”, i.e., in the manner in which the university faces it, vanishes away. Incidentally, now and then some scientist or philosopher, realizing that a lifetime of the most strenuous intellectual effort has brought him only to a dead-end, will be driven to some form of mysticism—Christian Science, Rosicrucianism, even Buddhism. Rarely does he turn to Catholicism, and never to orthodox Protestantism.

Courses in religion and Bible taught from the critical point of view will not, of course, greatly harm those whom the university has in other ways already conditioned to the “will to disbelieve”. It is otherwise in the case of that minority coming from comparatively orthodox homes, who naïvely suppose that a course in Bible in the university really amounts to a continuation of the kind of training they received under the auspices of their local churches. A large minority, if not a majority, of such students are disgracefully under-educated in matters of specific Christian teachings. Hence it is not hard to understand that their faith is easily shaken—assuming that this staggering ignorance can support a faith.

In this connection I should like to make an incidental plea. In my opinion, our own institutions of higher learning could improve somewhat on their methods of arming their graduates for the day when they shall be called upon to contend for the faith among their pagan contemporaries, who have seen the Bible “shot full of holes” in the university. It is doubtless important to know why one is Reformed rather than Anabaptist or Arminian or Roman Catholic. Is it any less important nowadays, at least for the Christian who claims to be educated, to know why he is Reformed rather than agnostic? What the college-trained man of the world will want to know is why we consider Scripture to be the voice of God in the first place. And what about “all those inconsistencies in the Bible”? What do we mean by inspiration and infallibility? Now the ability to give a reasonable reply may not make for better Christians, but it will almost certainly make for less embarrassed ones. It seems to me that the apostolic admonition, that we be able to give a good account of the faith that is in us, would today involve at least some acquaintance with the so-called Bible difficulties and their resolution. And if the methods, reasonings, and conclusions of the higher critics can be made relatively plain in English by instructors in the university—some of whom are wholly ignorant of both Greek and Hebrew—, there is no good reason, it seems to me, why the answers to them could not be made equally plain in a Christian college.

The question as to what the state may and may not demand of free education in a free democracy, is one so vexing that it will probably never be completely settled by argument. A point is soon reached where one no longer argues, but simply makes assertions. One can, of course, cut the Gordian knot by asserting that it is no more the business of the state to teach religion than it is the business of the church to teach chemistry. But this position can be defended only if we agree to confine the discussion to the question of the minimum demands which any state is, for practical reasons, compelled to make upon education. Obviously, education at public expense should at least train, or be able to train, for those services upon which the social and material efficiency of the nation depends, services such as soldiering, engineering, medicine, law, and so on. The state university would then be conceived as being in a class with, say, military and naval academies. Thereupon it would easily follow that such things as philosophy, religion, art, and any type of cultural activity engaged in for its own sake, have no place in a state university.

Suppose, however, one takes the position, as Dr. Bardolph does, that public education is legitimately concerned with the “promotion of effective citizenship”. In that case one must determine, not only the meaning of effective citizenship, but also more or less specifically the educational methods and content which supposedly lead to it. Views on this question may conceivably be legion, depending upon the citizens’ views both of the state and of the relative importance of such things as religion and morals. For the spirit in which these things are regarded is bound to have its effect upon the national welfare. Even knowledge for its own sake occasionally proves to be of tremendous importance. We may remind ourselves that the atom bomb presupposed years of exacting physical investigation for its own sake.
That state is best, says Thoreau, which governs the least. Or, to use more contemporary language, that state is best which minds its own business. This is an important truth. Nevertheless, the assertion that the proper function of the state is the maintenance of justice, and that this involves the business of protecting the citizen from invasion and revolution, does not settle very much. No fertile imagination is required to realize that the number of functions which the state may assume and, having assumed them, justify by means of the rationalizations of some supreme court or policy making board, is almost without number. And just where the limits will be drawn will largely depend upon the temper of the age.

Cornelius Jaarsma
Professor of Education
Calvin College

I READ and studied Dr. Bardolph's brief with much interest. He states his case very well. His position is clear and his reasoning is readily followed. He deserves much commendation for his courageous stand in the face of great opposition to and the unpopularity of the views he presents.

From his characterization of the nature of religion and from his observation of the effect of current liberal views upon religion, Dr. Bardolph concludes: (a) that the religious life is "inescapably sectarian"; (b) that modern liberal views negate each of the vital points characteristic of true religion; (c) that the teaching of religion in a state institution to avoid sectarianism of necessity liberalizes religion. His characterization of religion is both comprehensive and pertinent. His subsequent attempt to show that the main points in modern liberalism are the very negative of the points that characterize the religious way of life is equally telling. The result of the liberalization of religion, he correctly observes, is a pragmatic ethics, an atomistic metaphysics, and an anthropomorphic theology.

The author finds the nature of the democratic state inherently inconsistent with the teaching of religion in state institutions. In as much as courses in religion of necessity further the liberalization of religion, they promote a positive religious attitude. They "involve the citizen's compulsory support, through the tax system and through the schools that he owns, of religion or religious views that may be repugnant to him". (Optional courses in religion and "released time" plans are no exception to this.) Religious rights belong to the rights inherent in the individual, and are not prescribed by social compact. These rights involve "perfect freedom in religion or irreligion". Therefore, no one can be coerced to support religion or irreligion.

The teaching of religion in state-supported schools runs counter, therefore, to the democratic faith. Again the author states his case very well, it seems to me, and he shows conclusively that courses in religion in state-supported educational institutions violate the religious rights in the democratic society of our day. We have no right in a democratic society to use the authority of government to underwrite our brand of religion; nor has any religious group this right. This is our protection against religious persecution, and the guarantee of the free exercise of our religious way of life in the modern world.

The author continues his argument by pointing out that public education in a free society seeks to develop "certainties" by reason and sensation based on faith. In religion, however, our "certainties" are of faith, of supernatural or extra-rational origin. These two kinds of education he thinks incompatible and separated by an "unbridgeable gulf."

The author is correct in his observation that education in a democratic society seeks its basic "certainties" through rational and empirical activity based on presuppositions accepted by faith. It does not take the "certainties" of religion into account. If courses in religion are given in state-supported institutions, religious "certainties" must be arrived at as are "certainties" in non-religious fields. The result is further liberalization of religion.

That, however, the two kinds of education mentioned operate in areas not to be bridged needs some special consideration. It is quite obvious that in state-supported educational institutions the two cannot be bridged. If religious "certainties" were taught as proceeding from faith, these "certainties" could not be made criteria for "certainties" in non-religious spheres of learning. There can be no meaningful integration of the two kinds of education under these conditions. The dualism must remain. However, the integration becomes possible when religion is made the very core of all education. The two areas, then, are not only bridged, but occupy their respective places in educational values. State-supported educational institutions obviously can effect no such integration.

In conclusion, I find myself wholly in accord with Dr. Bardolph's position. His concluding paragraph is especially pertinent. Let us refrain from promoting teaching of religion in public institutions. Our answer to the educational dilemma lies in Christian education on all levels. Religion as characterized by Dr. Bardolph should constitute the very essence of all education from the Christian point of view.

One must not conclude from this position, however, that the Christian has no interest in education that excludes religion from its program. Quite the contrary. It is to the interest of all in a democratic society that the highest possible standards be maintained morally as well as socially and academically. Religion cannot be used for this without devitalizing religion itself. Broad human purposes seem to be the only source of motivation in state-supported educational institutions.

G. T. Vander Lugt
President Central College

With much that Dr. Bardolph says in this memorandum I am in full agreement. Whatever I say must not be construed as arguing against his conclusion, as that may follow from other premises or from the same premises more clearly stated. I am not here discussing his conclusion so much as I am considering an assumption in his basic premises.

Let me say at the outset that I fully agree that religion is theocentric, authoritative, revelational, supernatural; that the origin of religion does not determine its validity; that modern religion has been liberalized into a man-centered, empirical, authority-lacking naturalism or humanism.

It is when he begins to describe the fifth attribute of the religious way of life that I demur, for there he appears to go off on what I take to be a tangent and to state no longer what I believe to be the evangelical Protestant position unless, and that is always possible, I misunderstand. The author, in my judgment, is hopelessly involved in the individualist or solipsist position typical of all mystics, resulting from a basic dualism. He denies, in substance, the corporate spirit of religion, and especially of the Christian religion, which, while insisting upon the necessity of sincerity in worship, does not make it an "identity" subsisting "between himself and God." When we as Christians profess to believe in the Christian church, which is the communion of saints, we mean to emphasize the fact that the church is the body, the corpus, of which Christ is the head, a body of which each Christian is a member. And as a member of the Christian church, he does not lose "himself in . . . the all-subsuming Real." That is the language of pantheistic mysticism, which is at the opposite pole of Christianity.

This mystical position results from a basic dualism which colors his views on the nature of religion, of the democratic state, and of education and knowledge.

The author's whole position commits him to maintain that religion is something apart from the rest of life, unrelated to it, without bearing upon it. It is practiced in the solitude of mystic fellowship. Hence, a person can be religious, even a
Christian, in a university and not have it manifested in his chosen vocation. One can, according to this view, be a Christian and a teacher of, say, economics, or history, or literature, or science, or philosophy, the two being wholly unrelated. One's vocation is, therefore, a neutral sphere. A person's theology, or the faith which it seeks to systematize, has no relation to other aspects of human experience.

Religious faith and theology cannot, in my judgment, thus be treated as unrelated to whole areas of human life. I grant that a person may teach a given subject and be totally unaware of the theological or metaphysical assumptions involved. This unawareness, however, does not argue that knowledge in certain fields of human endeavor has no theological implications nor involves a metaphysics. From my point of view, there are no neutral areas, and Dr. Bardolph, if he is a teacher, will be teaching religion whether he means to or not. This is inevitable. Of course, he seeks to evade the difficulty by saying that some courses teach religion directly, others only indirectly. The word indirectly, however, in this connection means no more than that the implications are not clearly drawn out, or that they are held in abeyance, or that they are not followed through to their logical conclusions.

Or take his conception of the state where I find a similar dualism. "The state," so Dr. Bardolph maintains, "has the duty of perfect neutrality." This means, I take it, as regards the various sectarian interpretations of religion. The state is neutral as regards the difference between Protestants and Catholics, or between Calvinists and Lutherans. If it means that the nature of the democratic state is such that it excludes religion, I must disagree, for, with all our paganism, we are still a Christian nation, and our constitution, which defines the kind of nation we are, never meant, not even in the first amendment to the constitution, to exclude religion and set up a "neutral" state, whatever that may mean.

True, the recent Supreme Court decision denies the church the right to establish the jurisdiction of the school to give religious instruction, but it does not deny, even now, the state the right through its public schools to study religion in its curriculum. The only restriction that is placed upon the teaching of religion is that by so doing the state shall not "establish" any church or churches.

If the second World War taught us anything, it has or should have taught us the fiction of a neutral state. There is no neutral state, for if a state is not Christian, then it is Marxist, or Fascist, or Materialist, or Liberal Rationalist, or what have you. Only a person who divorces religion from life could speak of a "neutral" state.

Or, finally, take his position regarding the nature of teaching and of knowledge. Here again the author is involved in a dichotomy characteristic of his dualistic view. There are two areas, he says, (1) of faith and (2) of knowledge, and these two are "separated by an unbridgeable gulf.

Here faith and reason are opposed in a wholly unchristian way, as though faith were devoid of reason and reason devoid of faith. Saint Anselm many years ago stated the proper relationship when he said, "We believe in order that we may know." A Christian gratefully and joyfully should use the reason God has given him to apprehend ever more fully and completely the revelation of Him who is all in all. Only for Christian faith is the universe meaningful and intelligible, for it is in the light of the divine purpose apprehended by faith that reason finds significance and rationality in human experience. The universe means what it is in the mind of God, and reason, proceeding from Christian faith, seeks to "think God's thoughts after Him." Reason and faith are never identical, but neither are they divorced.

In sum, assume to begin with a dualism between religion on the one hand and the rest of life as something neutral on the other, and the conclusion follows that religion cannot be taught in a university. But it would also follow, it seems to me, that religion cannot be taught at anywhere. All that an individual can do is, and these are the author's own words, "feel with greater acuity the identity that he feels must subsist between himself and his God." The author here reduces religion to feeling, and feeling, obviously, cannot be taught.

Lambert J. Flokstra  
Professor of Education  
Calvin College

As I read the closely knit reasoning of Dr. Bardolph, the following lines from Whittier flashed through my mind,

I trace your lines of argument;  
Your logic linked and strong.  
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,  
And fears a doubt as wrong.

Accepting the premises of the author in regard to the nature of religion, the nature of the democratic state, and the nature of public education in a free society, one can readily understand how he arrives at the conclusion that the introduction of courses in religion in state-supported institutions is undesirable.

It is with some of the premises, however, that I would take issue. The author's analysis of the religious way of life is too narrowly conceived; it is limited to the orthodox conception of religion. It ignores the broader definition of religion as devotion, loyalty and supreme allegiance to some ultimate reality. In this latter sense, mankind is inerably religious; every person is basically committed to some all-controlling person, ideal or principle. Whether he is aware of this basic commitment or not is irrelevant. In this sense modernism, liberalism, secularism, communism, naturalism, scientism, and even atheism are forms of religion as well as Judaism, Christianity, and Moham­medanism. There is no religious vacuum. Where true religion is discarded or ignored, idolatry (i.e., false religion) in some form fills the void.

If the foregoing be true the author's position in regard to courses in religion is hardly a tenable one. The absence of formal courses in religion does not spell a comfortable neutrality. The barring of courses in religion rather implies an abdication, a surrender to the religion of secularism, a way of life which denies the relevancy of religion to other categories of life.

Whether the religion of secularism is to be preferred to the liberalism which the author fears will characterize courses in religion in state-supported schools is a question that is debatable. Secularism formally ignores religion; this ignoring is one of the subtest and most powerful forms of denial. If courses in religion are offered, religious questions are at least thrown into the open. Religion is recognized as an essential part of our cultural heritage; the student must of necessity face the religious issue, come to grips with it, and make a choice or surrender.

Dr. Bardolph lists six components that are of the essence of religion. It strikes me that there is a significant omission in this list. Because of its pertinency to the subject under discussion, a statement to the effect that religion is central and all-pervasive in human living and that it permeates and influences every aspect of life should have been added. A corollary of such a statement would be an insistence on the integration of religion and education. Any attempt to divorce the two, even in a tentative "practical solution" of the religious question in public education, stands condemned.

In discussing the nature of the democratic state, the author contends that a person's religious beliefs fall in the category of inherent individual rights and that in this matter "the state has the duty of perfect neutrality." From this it would follow that public education must be completely neutral. Whatever theoretical constructions legislatures and courts may make in regard to neutrality and non-sectarianism in education,
actually such neutrality is a myth; it is a legal fiction. By virtue of the fact that the teacher is a religious being whose approach to and interpretation of the body of knowledge to be taught is colored by his basic religious commitment, neutrality in education is impossible.

In another connection the author contends that democratic public education concerns itself with the “extension of knowledge and understanding both for its own sake and to equip its charges for effective citizenship in civil society” and not with religion. This statement reveals an unfortunate dichotomy between knowledge and effective citizenship on the one hand and religion on the other. Does not the concept of authority which the author has earlier in his article posited as one of the attributes of the religious way of life provide the only sound basis for effective citizenship? Can true knowledge and effective citizenship be divorced from religion?

A similar dualism is reflected in the author’s views of methods and subject matter in the traditional courses as contrasted with these in courses of religion, the former deriving their sanction from reason and the latter from faith. This implied antithesis of reason versus faith is in my opinion a false one. Both faith and reason are operative in both categories; the difference between the two is one of relative emphasis. One can hardly conclude, as does the author, that “the two areas are thus separated by an unbridgeable gulf.”

I can see the real practical difficulties involved in the problem of introducing religion in public education. Yet the problem must be faced. As long as the large majority of our future citizens are trained in public schools some way must be found to make religion an integral part of the public school curriculum. Unless this is done, we are educating a generation of secularists. Perhaps we must rethink and restructure our basic premises in regard to the nature of religion, of education and of the state. Possibly public education is an anomaly. In his opinion in the widely publicized McCollum case, Justice Jackson made this significant observation, “... One can hardly respect a system of education that would leave the student wholly ignorant of the currents of religious thought that move the world society for a part in which he is being prepared. But how one can teach, with satisfaction or even with justice to all faiths, such subjects as the story of the Reformation, the Inquisition, or even the New England effort to found a Church without a Bishop and a State without a King, is more than I know.” He sensed the difficulties. At any rate the United States Supreme Court in giving official legal sanction to Jefferson’s phrase, “wall of separation between Church and State” as the proper interpretation of the First Amendment has provided both the occasion and the stimulus for a thorough reconsideration and revaluation of the issues involved.

But, having said this, and no more, are we to understand that all theocentric religion involving the concept of authority and a claim to revelational truth is therefore genuine? For here it is not the Catholic and Protestant interpretations of Christianity, but also Judaism as against these, and Mohammedanism as against all, and modern Mormonism and other isms which are included. Is not Dr. Bardolph’s definition so broad that he already rejects the specifically Biblical concept—so that even his religion, as defined, is man-centered?

This possibility gains support from other considerations. Dr. Bardolph’s treatment of the nature of religion is studied with an emphasis on God as “posited,” and the “concept” of authority, on the “claim” to divine revelation, on man’s “postulation” of the supernatural. Now, unless these terms refer beyond to transcendental realities—an issue to which Dr. Bardolph gives little attention, despite his protest against man-centered religion—there is no truly God-centered religion. Consistently, Dr. Bardolph is driven to an examination of the Biblical claim of special revelation and the religious uniqueness of the Hebrew-Christian religion. If the Biblical religion is not unique, then the protest against man-made religion fails.

But Dr. Bardolph’s definition of religion as involving “extra-rational themes” which remain “rationally incomprehensible” involves him a priori in the rejection of the uniqueness of the Biblical view—for the God of the Bible, while disclosed in special revelation, must be “identified or recognized ‘postulation’ and man together” with man. The revelational rationale of the Hebrew-Christian religion is already rejected by Dr. Bardolph because of a prior identification of essential religion in super-rational (or irrational) terms, and a lumping of all religions in this warehouse.

Such religion, indeed, even if asserted to be more theocentric, can only prove to be a more subtle type of anthropocentric religion, and is simply a variant of the very species of religio- teaching against which the doctor protests.

Now, to some of his assumptions about education and religion:

1. Why should it be said that religious courses in state universities will necessarily accelerate the naturalistic anthropocentric trends? This is assuredly the trend, and it is likely that in view of the secularized era it will be promoted by religious courses in state universities—but why necessarily?

2. Does not the refusal to teach the Christian religion involve a betrayal of the very “perfect neutrality” which presumably characterizes a democratic state? The attempt to teach the values of the democratic way of life involves necessarily some religious outlook, some metaphysical convictions, and if the Biblical view is suppressed, then a non-Biblical view only will be taught [in whatever guise or variation]. And this is a twofold peril: (1) it displays a basic antipathy to one viewpoint in a land of supposed impartiality; (2) it rules out the one view in interaction with which our democracy had its birth and in divorce from which it is impossible to justify permanently its values and ideals.

3. The notion that a democracy, if it seeks the moral regeneration of its citizens, must do so “through means other than the religious”, is the very point at issue. First, is there any other means of moral regeneration? Deep down, if one is really concerned with ethics—with an unchanging world of moral distinctions—he automatically raises the question of the supernatural; a genuinely objective morality is inseparable from the problem of religion. Hence Dr. Bardolph’s view involves him—despite his desires to escape such modern secularization—in the justification of morals by a revolt against the only adequate sanction for morals. On his own alternative, does he remain any further but a moralistic sanctimonious one however much he may protest against such a reduction? Secondly since there is, in the Biblical view of God and the world, an objective moral order by reference to which values gain their significance, it is an irreducible and unneutral and undemocratic outlook which withholds from the citizenry this religious
view while presenting every variety of competitive view. If Christianity is true, democracy has no more vital concern, nor has its state universities. Assuming Christianity to be untrue, it is, of course, a matter of indifference to them.

Louis Berkhof
President Emeritus
Calvin Seminary

It is not entirely clear to me just what the Committee, of which Dr. Bardolph is a member, proposes with respect to the introduction of courses in religion in one of the Colleges of the University of North Carolina. From the general thrust of this Brief it would seem to follow that it has drawn up a report favoring the introduction of such courses in some form or other. But in view of the recent decision of the Supreme Court in the Champaign case, it is hard to see how the Committee conceives of the possibility of introducing such courses, without meeting with serious objections.

But however this may be, Dr. Bardolph disputes its feasibility and argues his position well. On the whole I find myself quite in agreement, though I am inclined to question some of his statements. He pleads for a mysticism in religion which makes men feel "with great acuity the identity that he feels must subsist between himself and his God." Is man then in some sense identical with God? He also speaks of the "mystical union of deity and creature." Does not this point to the influence of some monistic philosophy?

The author rightly maintains that the votaries of religion have always held that religious truths are communicated to men's minds by revelation, and then says that "they have invariably postulated supernatural, extra-rational theses... that are beyond the reach of rational demonstration. That is, not only are the ideas communicated by means independent of reason and sense, but once lodged in the mind they remain rationally incomprehensible." Does this refer to all religious truths, or only to some teachings of Scripture, such as those respecting the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, the supernatural works of God, and so on? If it refers to all religious truths, does not this lead to irrationalism? What then becomes of the fruit of the Church's reflection on the truth, and of its systematic presentation? Do we not rightly speak of Christianity as a reasonable religion? Do we not also believe in order that we may understand?

But however these statements may have to be understood, it is quite clear that the author takes his religion very seriously, and is implacably opposed to all religious liberalism, which tends to obliterate all religious distinctions, and finally leads to pure Naturalism. He rightly maintains that religion is in the last analysis a personal matter, in which only those who are in fundamental agreement can act collectively; and certainly does not believe that one should ever compromise in religious matters. Moreover, he clearly sees that the introduction of religious courses in State-supported schools would tend to reduce religion to certain indefinite feelings or to some hazy ideas about some personal or impersonal Power, and to a wishful hope of a continued existence in some "beautiful isle of somewhere." He correctly perceives that such a religion ceases to be religion in the proper sense of the word.

We share the author's objection to the introduction of religious courses in State-supported schools. Real religion cannot be taught there without meeting serious objections on the part of those who support the schools. It may be possible to teach parts of literature, or to teach something about religion as a phenomenon in human experience and in history, as the former editor of The Christian Century suggested last year, but this is not teaching religion. And I would add that even the introduction of real religious courses would not solve the problem of religious education. Religion is not something alongside of the rest of human life, but is the most fundamental factor in the life of man, since he is created in the image of God. The religious element must penetrate the whole of education. Adding a few religious courses alongside of the many courses which are controlled by the popular naturalistic philosophy of the day, would simply confuse the pupils and train a generation of young people who are painfully halting between two opinions.

Henry Van Zyl, Jr.
Professor of Educational Methods
Calvin College

O f the three arguments presented by Dr. Bardolph, I prefer to comment briefly on the first one; viz., his beliefs concerning the nature of religion forcing him as an honest man unalterably to oppose any such attempt of teaching religion in a State University.

After one has read Prof. Weaver's book, Ideas Have Consequences, and has particularly reflected on its sixth chapter, "The Spoiled Child," in which the author pictures our present American society idolizing and worshipping comfort, ease, and pragmatism, and consequently compares it with the spoiled child in its infancy, the one is gradually led to conclude that the ever-present craving for yet easier ways and still more comfort is a manifestation of the inevitable decline. He quotes Mr. Justice Holmes as intimating that the withering-away of religious belief, the conviction that all fighting faiths are due to be supplanted turns man's thoughts toward selfish economic advantage.

In the brief before us we meet a champion fighting for the essential nature of religion as the preambles of his Christian faith dictate to it. This compels him to discourage the project of teaching religion in the State University. As a happy warrior this author belongs in a class with Prof. Weaver of the University of Chicago; with Mr. C. S. Lewis, the writer of many books on religious topics, typical of which is The Abolition of Man; and with Hans J. Morgenthau, who wrote Scientific Man vs. Power Politics. All these men deserve our respect, for in their pleas for a return to traditional beliefs, they are modern Jeremias fighting against the popular trends of secularism, naturalism, and that prevalent hankering after creature comforts which always goes hand in hand with an inveterate aversion to discipline of any kind, mental as well as physical.

Here we find a student of life who dares to think and reflect and analyze in the realm of basic ideas concerning religion. This attempt to think through man's greatest need is indeed a hopeful sign.

Six inherent characteristics of religion as traditionally conceived are presented by Dr. Bardolph, and he contends that by introducing religion in a State University all these six aspects will not only be lost, but before long will be supplanted by six totally different characteristics of religion—every one of them a man-made invention together flying under the flag of religion.

Now this new religion with or without the label of liberalism and modernism, so the argument runs, will be another form of naturalism. And to Dr. John Dewey nature is as all-sufficient for a philosophy of education as to Dr. Littlefair of the Fountain Street Baptist Church of Grand Rapids it is for the Christian religion. The latter argues in his pulpit that man has all he needs for his religion in the revelation of God in natural laws.

It would seem that Dr. Bardolph's argument is well-founded. He has the courage to examine foundations, the beginnings of one's reasoning, his premises, assumptions, and presuppositions. He knows full well that Bildad, the Shuhite, was right when he pointed the rhetorical questions, "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?" Just as these water plants cannot possibly have any beginnings of growth nor subsequent growth without mire and water, so the teacher

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of religion cannot possibly initiate any proposition without his basic mire and water—without his assumptions. Right here Dr. Bardolph foresees that these historically Christian premises and preambles, as so many inherent features of the essence of Christianity, will be replaced by man-made assumptions wholly apart from historic Christianity.

He adds weight to his argument by frankly stating that so-called scientific knowledge and investigations are not entitled to priority over his religious convictions. He insists that his non-scientific beliefs of the Christian faith come first. It does seem as if he is in perfect agreement with Dr. Vollenhoven, who in his De Noodzakelijkheid eener Christelijke Logica makes for all believing Christians the pertinent observation that “the scientific (wetenschappelijke) knowledge must rest on the non-scientific” (p. 87). This latter category, the non-scientific, for Vollenhoven includes all the attributes of the religious way of life as understood against the background of Creation, Fall, and Redemption. Genuine logic must rest on such and similar preambles of faith.

More and more it seems to be of strategic importance for students of the Christian religion and particularly for the study of Calvinism as philosophy and as religion, to examine ever and anon and that very closely the presuppositions of any teacher of religion or of truth in general, and find out whether these are secular and rooted only in the human, the immanent, and the natural; or whether they are Christian assumptions and beliefs as grown out of a view of reality which does indeed include the human, the immanent, and the natural, but over and above these insists on interpreting these three only in terms of the highest thought aspects here: the divine, the transcendent, and the supernatural.

Dr. Bardolph’s first argument would seem to make sense particularly for one who meditates a bit on the recent discovery of astrology. Our greatest responsibility, that of educating its children? Who in his day would be taught effectively and meaningfully, it will have to be taught along sectarian lines. Our system of neutral education forbids such a practice.

On the other hand, if courses in religion are not taught along sectarian lines, such teaching will contribute to the “liberalization” and weakening of religion. This procedure also violates the principles of neutral education, for it demands support from a group whose very religion is being undermined.

The solution offered is to keep courses of religion out of state universities. If such courses cannot be taught as they should be taught, then drop them altogether.

The question now arises as to whether “non-religious” education is the solution. Isn’t religion also devitalized by separating it from education? Isn’t failure to teach religion as bad as “liberalizing” it? It would seem that the end-product is the same regardless of which of the two procedures is followed.

The answer to this question may be that if the state omits religion from its educational program, it will not overstep the bounds of neutrality. But that is tantamount to admitting that the state then commits the sin of omission rather than of commission. After all, what is the difference? Doesn’t failure to teach any religion carry the same condemnation as teaching a false religion?

That raises the interesting question of the possibility of a neutral education. Dr. Bardolph lists six attributes of the religious way of life. On the whole they are acceptable, but are they sufficiently inclusive? Should it not also be said that religious convictions are basic and give bias to our thinking and understanding? Isn’t Dr. Bardolph’s brief the result of thinking that is colored by his religious convictions?

If our convictions, or basic beliefs, bias our thinking, then the convictions taught or encouraged are of the utmost importance. The assumption that thinking, understanding, and interpreting can be taught without regard for basic principles is either false or false in fact. But as far as fact is concerned, religion is not a vital and dynamic force in life, for it touches only part of life; if it is false, the practice based on this false assumption certainly ought to be discontinued.

Again it may be argued that education concerns itself only with developing the ability to draw conclusions rather than with the conclusions that are drawn. This position leaves room for argumentation, but even if it is granted, the education that is based upon it also violates the principles of neutrality. It indicates a degree of confidence in man’s ability that runs counter to the conception of man as a depraved being. The fact that only a small minority holds to such a conception of man cannot serve as an answer to the objection. The rights of all must be protected.

If the teaching of courses in religion violates the principle of neutrality in education, and if the omission of any reference to religion makes true education impossible, then what is the solution?

The first step, it would seem, is to reconsider our system of state-controlled education. The fact that our forefathers set up such a system of public education should not be the deciding factor. The colonial social structure differed from that of today. Neither should the fact that the large majority of our school population attends the public schools be accepted as a reason for continuing them. The majority may be wrong even if it may be assumed that all who make use of the public schools are in sympathy with the program of education followed in these schools.

We are not advocating the abolishment of the present system of state-controlled education; we merely ask that some thinking be done in this area. A few questions are suggested: Is state education, as it is being developed in our day, any more acceptable in a democracy than a state religion? Are the rights of minority groups protected when these groups are compelled to pay for an education that undermines their system of religion? Should they be forced to finance a program of education that is in harmony with their convictions in addition to paying for public education? Doesn’t the omission of religion satisfy the demands of only a small minority? (The McCollum case is an example.)

The matter of parental responsibility for the education of children should also be considered. Is the state strengthening the position of the family when it relieves the family of its greatest responsibility, that of educating its children? Who

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John A. Van Bruggen

Educational Director
National Union of Christian Schools

R. BARDOLPH states his case convincingly. His conclusion follows logically from his premises.

The line of reasoning is somewhat as follows: Religion, if it is to be dynamic and vital, must be sectarian. If it is to be taught effectively and meaningfully, it will have to be taught along sectarian lines. Our system of neutral education forbids such a practice.

On the other hand, if courses in religion are not taught along sectarian lines, such teaching will contribute to the "liberalization" and weakening of religion. This procedure also violates the principles of neutral education, for it demands support from a group whose very religion is being undermined.

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It is with a great deal of interest and approval that I have perused Dr. Bardolph's reaction to the proposal of introducing a course of religion at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina. The author declares that he does not argue his case, but merely states the premises upon which his conclusions rest. But, as a matter of fact, he does argue the case, and his arguments are well-nigh irrefutable when his premises are once granted and his definitions are agreed upon.

In the main, I am agreed with the general scope of his argumentation, but the fundamental problem of the relationship between religion and public education hardly finds a happy solution in his conclusions. The matter does not strike me as being so easy, unless one simplifies the problem by means of his definitions of terms. Perhaps the author did not seek to offer a solution, and desired to say no more than that the problem cannot be solved in the way suggested by the proposal of the introduction of courses in religion into an educational institution supported by taxation. He is probably correct there.

When Bardolph discusses the nature of religion, he limits its meaning to a distinctive type of historical Christianity. I am agreed with his delineation of religion, but I would hesitate to say that any man has a right to so delimit the use of the word. And I am sure that those who advocate the introduction of courses in religion at the University of North Carolina would declare: "That is not precisely what we mean by religion." They probably would insist, as the majority of men giving thought to this problem would, that liberalism, modernism, humanism, naturalism and so on are all forms of religion. Some of them may be false religions, and every man would stamp each one false in so far as it deviated from his own personal convictions.

Religion is personal, as the author states, but not so personal that there is no room for communal religion. There are certain basic considerations, shared by thousands or perhaps millions, that enable them to confess one faith.

The author, in his attempt to define carefully, also distinguishes rather sharply between religion and ethics. One wonders whether that is justifiable either on theoretical or practical grounds. From his viewpoint, and mine, every real ethics is grounded in a distinctive conception of God and on His prescription as to moral and ethical life. I presume that he would have no objection to the inclusion of a course in ethics in the University. And yet all such basic ethical principles as the golden rule, honesty, fairness, love, and many others, generally adopted, and their justification in divine authoritative declarations. One could say that they should yet be taught in a tax-supported institution because they have been liberalised and have become essentially anthropocentric, which I think is true. I am inclined to feel, however, that there is an element of common grace operative in this world that makes this ethics valuable even though the professors may have detached it from its solid moorings. In fact, the practical aspect of religion may and usually does find its most obvious manifestations in one's relationship to his fellow beings. In brief, anent the declaration on the nature of religion, Dr. Bardolph must justify his definition of religion if he desires to use it as a premise for his statements on the general problem. At best he can declare: "The kind of religion to which I am committed should not be taught in a tax-supported institution, or indeed may not be taught there." It seems probable that he gives no value to the elements of common grace through which or by means of which many elements of religious and ethical truths may be conveyed to the minds of those not fully committed to his theological position and which are nevertheless generally recognized.

Turning to the author's second main premise, I find that it fails to give me complete satisfaction. It may be theoretically correct to insist that the State must allow me perfect freedom of religion and that it has the duty of perfect neutrality, but it is certainly practically impossible. His very conception of religion with which I am personally sympathetic, would never allow for a field of neutrality. The Bible itself makes the sharp distinction between those who are for God and those who are not. The latter are against Him. There is no neutrality relative to Dr. Bardolph's religion. In fact, every bit of neutrality is against His position and therefore against Him. Absolute freedom of religion is a possibility only when the subject is absolutely isolated. There may be no legal limitations of the exercise of my religion, but there are numerous ideologies and even legislations converging upon the project of undermining my faith. The attitude of the State toward Sabbath observance, liquor, and a host of other things may work against my religious convictions. My liberty of religion is restricted, and those whose ideas are opposed to mine are abetted and even fostered. The practicality of the State's neutrality and of genuine freedom in matters of religion still remains to be demonstrated.

Turning to the third premise, I am impressed with similar questions. There is here the same tendency to limit conceptions into small compartments of their own by definition. Reason and faith are rather sharply differentiated. The one is assigned to religion and the other to public education. Such differentiation does not exist in fact. Even in the realm of so-called neutral systems of thought, which must by that very token be anti-Christian, there are basic conceptions adopted which are not reasonably demonstrable. They are merely assumed and such assumptions are regarded as certain because they seem to fit in with the experiences of life. Then, again, the art of reasoning was not unknown to Paul. In fact, our theologians will insist that they have a reasoned theology, even though their system is based on Revelation, and even then it is interpreted Revelation.

The entire theory of the absolute objectivity of the materials of science or of the scientists may be called into question. The tax-supported educators do not and cannot give bare facts in their instruction. They do and must give interpreted facts. Indeed, one cannot touch science without coming into the sphere of religion, where one of necessity approaches the question of creationism or evolutionism. Even the formulation of the principles of science will have a tremendous bearing upon my conception of God and vice versa. It is not incidental at all that the universities are breeding a race of atheists. It was and is simply impossible for the professors to leave religion alone. Of course, they cannot, because everything is a revelation of God.

Coming to the problem itself, I find myself in a quandary. It is true, I do not like the idea that the public be taxed to support a type of education that is peculiarly my own religiously. But, on the other hand, I do not like to be taxed to support an education that is directly opposed to my own fundamental convictions and that is anti-God. Such is the character of all so-called neutral education.

I am inclined to take Bardolph's position as the lesser of two evils. Yet there may be a realm of cooperation in the field of education among men because of the presence of God's common grace in this world. There is some cooperation in that field when it comes to community morals, laws, business, and social living. Is such cooperation possible in education?
JULY,lie education. is not only theoretical oversimplification, but involves, morally, insistent that the state adopt and teach only orthodox Christian-ness so

Like leaves are ye, Planned and I agree that the state should be free to appeal to all parties, and that if simply liberal it is not fair to orthodoxy. But I think all that this means practically is such a course in religion at a state college should fairly state the presuppositions and implications of each of the religious alternatives; for example, that orthodoxy is committed to supernaturalism, special revelation, etc.; that granted its presuppositions, orthodoxy makes sense. In general, it means that orthodoxy, too, is given full and just opportunity to state its case.

I should think that to preserve the interests of education "neutrality" of the state would demand that the course be taught in this way, rather than that nothing should be taught. Mr. Bardolph and I agree that the state should be free to state the presuppositions and implications of each of the religious alternatives; for example, that orthodoxy is committed to supernaturalism, special revelation, etc.; that granted its presuppositions, orthodoxy makes sense. In general, it means that orthodoxy, too, is given full and just opportunity to state its case.

I should think that to preserve the interests of education "neutrality" of the state would demand that the course be taught in this way, rather than that nothing should be taught. Mr. Bardolph and I agree that the state should be in some sense neutral; we differ on the meaning of neutrality. I concede, finally, that fairly to state the presuppositions and views of the various opposing religious alternatives is difficult; I think that the task requires a teacher who is an orthodox scholar. But not to confront state college students with the implications of the alternative articulated religious options is, I think, to fail education and democracy both. And to insist that state education should be wholly naturalistic is, I think, to fail Christian citizenship.

That no Christian can be satisfied with less than his own denominational college for his children is, of course, another matter.

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Leaves... in a Setting Sun

Like leaves swished, swayed, swung in these tree-tops
By breezes in a setting sun—
These catalpa, beech and birch leaves, these quivering cottonwoods,
These shimmering, orange-like clusters of that mountain ash,
With a golden oriole twittering, twittering a high note on a high branch,
Yea, myriad leaves swished by changing breezes
in a setting sun—
Like leaves are ye, O sons of men!
Planned are ye by a Creator,
Like these swishing, swaying, swinging leaves
In scintillating green in these tree tops
Swishing, swaying, swinging, shimmering, shining
in a setting sun—
A last sylvan sunshine—
Soon swirling, falling down, like rushing waters of a water fall...
AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS, has rightly been chosen to be the host to two different types of ecumenical conferences this summer. It is centrally located and is far enough distant from the troubled eastern front. From a human point of view it may even merit this distinction for the splendid role the Netherlands played during the recent invasion. Amsterdam will accept its assignment with honors.

The well advertised ecumenical conference is that sponsored by the World Council of Churches. Much preliminary work has been taken care of, and the stage is now set for one of the biggest ecumenical conferences in the history of the church. Whatever our attitude may be we cannot fail to note the historical significance of this conference. No one can ignore its existence nor its possible influences.

There are two other conferences that will not be able to make the headlines of the church press. These conferences, however, should make history also. The first is the International Calvinistic Conference. Dr. W. H. Jellema will represent the United States at this conference, and will also more particularly represent Calvin College and the Calvinistic Action Committee. The other conference is smaller in scope, and should not be put in the same category as the two other conferences. We hope that this will be of great consequence to Calvinism. The Society of Calvinistic Philosophy intends to put on a conference also, taking advantage, no doubt, of the presence of many foreigners in Amsterdam this summer.

The great Ecumenical Conference sponsored by the World Council of Churches commands our interest in this article. We are more interested in the problems it raises than in its proposed agenda.

Praiseworthy Accomplishments

We can admire the organizational genius behind the scenes. This conference shows what proper planning and organizing can do.

We may be astonished at the fact that the churches have not as yet officially approved it, but still the conference will be in full swing when it meets this summer. The committees and the churches are positive all will approve with appreciation what has been done. The enthusiasm warrants such conclusions.

We can admire a return emphasis upon the need of unity of thought as well as unity of action. For a time it seemed that some would be satisfied with only a unity of action. The churches then could do things in common in spite of different convictions. That this is untenable is becoming increasingly clear. The cry for an all out ecumenicity, thought and action, is becoming bolder and more persistent. Seminars have been held in Switzerland and a representative faculty has taught a representative student body. From a formal point of view the approach is sound. There can be no ecumenicity when men do not agree upon fundamentals.

We can admire that thus far the World Council has felt that true ecumenicity demands of the nations blessed food and clothing for the nations in distress. This too is sound.

We can admire the sense of responsibility leaders of the church have in this hour of crisis. Let many a critic emulate that conviction of responsibility.

Thus the World Council has put a definite stamp on the coming conference in Amsterdam.

Problems this Amsterdam Conference Creates

The problems this conference raises practically boil down to this: What is ecumenicity? This problem underlies the search for a name for this conference that will cover the absence of the Roman Church from its fellowship and the inclusion of other Non-Protestant churches. This conference may not be limited to Protestants and at the same time call itself ecumenical. A roof has to be found big enough to house all the branches of the Christian Church. And what name shall be given to this figurative roof?

The basis of fellowship is: Christ is Lord. In the great struggle between orthodoxy and modernism difference of interpretation has come to the foreground. One would reasonably expect that some proviso would be made that the conference would require a definite conception of this basis: Christ is Lord. This is not the case. Such possible difference precludes true ecumenicity.

It is a strange situation that a modern ecumenical conference is in danger of having a different conception of the Christ from the Council of Chalcedon. If so there will be no ecumenicity with the past. This is a requirement that is essential for the church which must claim to have been the pillar of truth throughout the ages. No longer can we recite honestly the Apostles Creed that confesses that we believe in one church. Such a conference would
not belong to the one church. It would be another church with the same theological window dressing. And is it not a fact that people are tremendously concerned about the disunity in the churches of today and are not concerned for a moment with the unity of the churches of all ages?

Another great problem that this ecumenical movement faces,—and we suspect that this is considered about the major question,—is the relation of ecumenicity to worship. There is a passion for all Christians to break bread together and drink the same cup as a token of true ecumenicity. The communion service must take on the symbol of ecumenicity. This did not happen as yet, and that is just what alarms the ecumenists. The intransigence of various groups on this point seems to be unbreakable. One of the major problems is therefore to realize the one cup whether a man is a Presbyterian or an Episcopalian. If this one cup has not been realized there is no true ecumenicity.

Another aspect of the same problem of worship is the diversity found in Christian worship. If ecumenicity really grips the church, it should manifest a degree of unity in worship. Little differences annoy the worshipper. Major differences confuse and offend. Consequently leaders are trying their hand at devising new forms of worship that could be adopted by all churches. It would require a stupendous revolution in the historically set ways of serving God, but why stop short of such a revolution if true ecumenicity demands it? New orders of worship have been submitted based upon psychology. Leaders have found what elements are common in all orders of worship and have followed the trends in worship of the last few decades. We did not read of any scholarly studies of principles of worship according to the Word of God.

There are other problems involved in this search for ecumenicity that will come to light in the discussion of the agendum of the conference. To many leaders of this movement the above are the problems of ecumenicity. To us the question has not been even touched upon, and that question is basic to all the foregoing.

The Major Problem

Although the major problem may not suggest itself to many it does remain the question. The weight of a problem is not determined by the number of people worrying about it. The great question is: What is our basis of fellowship? The answer, “Christ is Our Lord,” is, as we have noted above, too limited and ambiguous. The problem is: Is the Bible God's Infallible Word and is it therefore the basis of all true ecumenicity?

Many may say that we have outgrown that puerile doctrine of infallible inspiration. They say they do not even mention it any more. But that is just the problem, why do they not? If the Bible may be compared with a constitution of the state how can a church be sound that ignores its true foundation?

What then is the basis that demands all our obedience? Is it the “consciousness of the church”? Is it the church that has a tradition to bolster up the Bible and be sole interpreter of the Word of God? Are we making truth as we paddle down the stream of history?

In one of our classes a rabbi told us that the Pharisees translated Psalm 119:12b thus: “It is time to work for Jehovah.” We were told by the rabbi that this was grammatically possible. The point is, when a new situation arose the Pharisees felt constrained to make a new law for it was time to work for Jehovah. Is that what we are going to do? New situations in the world demand new pronouncements, so it is time that we work for Jehovah. The point is that Jehovah does not need our help. He has given us the help in the Word of God infallibly recorded as the Bible. In this respect people who believe in the consciousness of the church or in the tradition of the church become very intimate bedfellows.

This same problem can be seen from another angle. There seems to be an attempt to have the orthodox and the modernists get together to understand each other. Splendid in many ways! Whether urgent we do not know because language is clear enough when written to know each other’s point of view. Still it has its good points. The purpose, however, is another story. There seems to be a desire to get a higher synthesis of orthodoxy and modernism, a “beyond” both. What would the result be? Simply another form of modernism! If orthodoxy forsakes the basis of the Bible as the infallible Word of God, it is no longer orthodoxy, and if it denies or repudiates its position there is no synthesis but an apostacy. We do not anticipate any hybrids. It is either . . . or!

Our Reaction

We do not believe for a moment that we should co-operate with the World Council of Churches if it does not adopt the basic assumption of Biblical ecumenicity—God’s Word, the Bible. We can see great wisdom in the suggestion of the Rev. P. Van Tuinen in a recent issue of The Banner that it would have been splendid if an auditor perhaps of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands had been appointed to this conference simply as an official reporter. Perhaps such an auditor would have been helpful to give direction in the development of a Reformed ecumenicity. Perhaps the Dutch churches so close to the scene did not feel the necessity of one.

Our first reaction is that we emphasize the fact that the Reformed faith is rich in ecumenical history. That, deplorably, is often forgotten. Our generation of Reformed people feel more like isolation-
ists, and are apt to say that this isolationism is native to the Reformed soul. It is not. Just let us jot down a few thoughts without claiming any logical order.

First we are sure that during the early part of the Protestant Reformation the Reformed felt as strongly one as did the Roman Church. The only difference was that the Reformed felt the unity primarily in a spiritual way while the Roman Church did in an organizational way. A strong organization is more pretentious, even today, but it is also deceptive. We wish people would realize this in their evaluation of the Roman Church. The Church felt one in faith irrespective of national boundaries. Undenominationalism is a decided danger today in that it inflames a bad individualism that can easily ally itself to an impure individualistic strain in modern Protestantism.

All Reformed Churches meant something to all the churches. True, the confession of a given church was binding upon that church, but no one thought of forgetting to consult all the confessions. This Reformed consensus of opinion carried great weight in those days, an ecumenicity we have lost to some degree.

It may surprise us that a classic of the Netherlands asked the Westminster Assembly for advice since there was no general synod being held in the Netherlands. How could it be possible unless there was the conviction of unity and of mutual help.

Reformation Reformed Ecumenicity opened its hands to the needy and even risked the blood of its youth for the safety of the saints in danger. Let the Hungarians tell us the story of Michiel De Ruitter and his rescue of the galley slaves, pastors who would not stop preaching the Word of God.

There was an attempt to understand the non-Reformed Christians. Calvin and Melanchthon were great friends and planned conferences. As a matter of history, and we stand corrected if necessary, we dare say that the Reformed were more ecumenical than any other branch of the Reformation.

There was also the feeling of the need of each other in the discussion of great issues. Witness to that fact is the great Synod of Dort. Dort showed humility in that it consulted the whole Reformed Church and vision in that it knew God has given us the entire church to delve into the truth.

Reformed men who are interested in ecumenicity are not presenting anything new. The Reformed Churches in their golden age were outstandingly ecumenical. Calvin was the great ecumenist of his day as witnessed in his correspondence, teaching, and conferences.

We do not need merely a revival or a repristination of this Reformed ecumenicity. What we need today is the consciousness of the implications of our Reformed faith, to be sure. The real need of the hour is that we have the proper organization to function in the world. As the soul needs the body, so the true spiritual ecumenicity needs the proper body or organization to be effective in the world today. And the moment the soul dies, may the body also be buried before sunset.

Why do we need this organized ecumenicity? If eleven apostles were told to conquer the world, why should we hesitate to have a vision of making the Reformed faith effective although we may not be in a majority?

We may have a distinctive purpose in the history of Christianity to tell people plainly that our basis of ecumenicity is the Word of God. We have a religion of authority stronger than any human made or contrived authority as that of the pope. In this sense our isolation is our strength. We continue to witness to the world. We thereby call man back to the Word of God as the prophets did of old.

There is no other choice. If the Bible cannot be trusted in its teachings that it is the infallible Word of God it cannot be trusted in any other of its doctrines. If the basic truth is unreliable what about the teachings?

If any other basis of fellowship is adopted, then we are sinning against the God of grace. The Bible is God's gift of grace. It was given for our salvation and for any salvation anywhere as the reformation of a church. Does God need "church consciousness?" Does He need tradition? It would be sin to say yes.

It is not time for us to work for Jehovah. It is time to learn what Jehovah has revealed to us graciously and absolutely. We must sit as disciples patiently listening to the Word of God and translate our findings of God's Word to living doctrines for this age and generation. Two sons of Aaron carried foreign fires to God's altar. We may have the foreign fires of tradition and Christian consciousness.

The forgotten, the minor, the outgrown problem is still the big problem. As men in Jesus' days were offended at his human nature, so we may be offended at the Bible, the Word of God written by men, but we must accept this offence.

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Trained for Tragedy*

George Stob
Professor-Elect of Church History
Calvin Seminary

If we can trust to what the experts say, you don't have a chance. Other generations of college graduates were invited to hope for a bright and promising future. They were encouraged to suppose that the world was their oyster, to be cracked open with their college diploma. Not so this generation. They are told only that the world has already cracked wide open, and that it is for them to face the peril of its gaping, roaring chasms. That may sound suspiciously like poetry,—the poetry of the tragic mood. But those who say it are not poets. They are men whose interests and occupations are fairly prosaic; but men who under the pressure of world events have been forced to a cold, hard look ahead, and who, for what they see, are afraid.

Prophecies of Doom

Today we witness the rise of a new kind of fire and brimstone preachers. They are not the enthusiasts of the glory train. They are cultured scholars, men of thought, hard-headed scientists. They have taken time out from philosophic abstraction, from scientific experiment, from school administration, to reflect on the meaning of their age. They find it new, not just with novelty, but with a character that profoundly distinguishes it from all world history that has gone before. They recognize that scientific and technological skill has reached the near-ultimate. Man is now able to blow himself and his civilization to bits. And the suspicion is that he will. That is precisely the critical point in the spreading gloom. The old confidence that man, as the master of his soul, was also the master of his age, is gone. Now it is confessed that he is deficient in intellectual and moral training, and that the whole tradition of western culture in which he has been schooled has become pointless for the new day. And even though these prophets plan a thorough revamping of the educational program, and look toward the building of a totally new culture they are still faint-hearted because they are plagued by the growing awareness that man is deficient not only in training, but even in basic character. And so, while they try to quicken hope, they go on preaching doom in the spirit of those who fear it cannot be avoided.

The late Alfred North Whitehead was thought by many of them to be a far-seeing prophet. Several years ago he declared that we had been going on the assumption that life would always be what it was, and added: "We are living in the first period in human history for which this assumption is false." Howard Mumford Jones more recently takes up the thought, and talking like a man standing at the world's end he speaks of the acute "difference between the twentieth century and its predecessors," and he goes on to answer one group of traditionalists by saying that "the issue of our time is not whether communism is a form of heresy, but whether mankind shall survive to be either orthodox or heretical." Elton Mayo of Harvard, a Professor in Business Administration, has all but given up on the race as afflicted with "utter social incompetence," and adds: "This defect ... has of recent years become a menace to the whole future of civilization." Dr. Raymond B. Fosdick warns that "no greater crisis was ever faced by any generation in history," because "the enemies that threaten us are of our own creation," and he is certain of a "nightmare without end" if we don't quickly find answers to the question of social control. Hanson Baldwin, in the New York Times, is doleful enough, but he allows that "civilization will endure as long as there is a library in Peru or Afghanistan or Siam," and some of his more fundamentalist colleagues promptly rebuke him for watering down the doctrine of doom. And even the hard-boiled scientists, who in passionless objectivity were wont to offer their discoveries for the health and comfort of the human animal, are vastly alarmed for the consequences of their latest Promethean trick. They begin to fear that their animal has a soul, and a wicked one. All these men are in dead earnest, and they complain about some who turn too quickly from their preoccupations to the Sport pages, and about others who turn as quickly to the equally irrelevant pages of Plato and Shakespeare.

Training for This?

You see, this generation of college graduates is promised no happy heritage. That ought to be specially disappointing to those who, whether in the service or not, suffered through the war years. There is always a tendency to hope that there will be some compensation for those who have endured a good part of the privation and sacrifice of a common effort. The veterans of this war may have had special reasons for so believing. Of course, there was always the old query, "Where are you going

* Commencement Address, Calvin College, June 2, 1948.
to sell your Jonathan apples?" It was only a joke. They expected something better, without asking too much. But even modest hopes have a way of spiralling. To begin with, one might get home to the wonderful old routine, where the danger of death seemed far off. But given that, there would certainly be more. With Hitler and Tojo down, civilization would be purged. Amazing scientific developments, stimulated by the needs of war, would make for a vast material enrichment. Best of all—the good old GI Bill; one could even get married and still go to school. The hopes for an abundant life, redeemed from the old frustrations, looked pretty bright; at least in the dreamier moments, in those places where dreams were needed to fill the void.

And so they trained, and the rest of their generation with them. And while they trained the new world turmoil with conflict in every place, on every level—the worker against the employer, the consumer against the producer, the renter against the landlord, the Democrat against the Republican, the Chinaman against the Chicanan, the Jew against the Arab, the Dutch imperialist against the native, the Russian against everybody; matters of life and death became questions of party policy or national expediency; the U.N. became the practice-ground for power-balancing; international conferences became brain-beating slug-fests; Russia rolled on with protective majesty over everything in sight; the U. S. stock-piled atom bombs and clamored for men and airplanes, while Russia left all the world to fearsome speculations concerning her own; and scientific prophets calculated the midnight hour and civilization's end.

And so they trained—*for this*—not for the new, abundant life with its cherished freedoms. *They trained for tragedy.* One could say that sorrowfully. One could say that bitterly, cynically. I propose on your behalf to say that triumphantly, because if you have come into Calvin's essential heritage, you are ready—you go out trained for the tragedy which is said to be imminent.

**Toward A Christian Realism**

You are so trained, for one thing, because Calvin fortified you with a sobering Christian realism, based on a deeper and truer analysis of man and the human situation. It's a commonplace to say that any education to be worth while ought to take account of the situation that prevails in the world into which the college graduate will go. And it may be a fair criticism when Howard Mumford Jones, in a recent book entitled *Education and World Tragedy,* contends that the traditional type of education badly misses the mark. He would suggest that apart from training in a few specialized techniques, its basic program produces only a drawing room culture, out of touch with the modern world, and good for only a few rich ladies. To meet the deficiency he proposes a new program which emphasizes: the study of the theory and application of science, the study of representative government as it functions in Great Britain and America, the study of Russia, the study of the Orient, and the study of personal relationships in modern society. Jones is thought to be a thorough-going realist. But it would seem that his realism is still pretty romantic. He hopes that this broken world can be fixed up with a new college curriculum.

Whatever the merits of his proposal—and there are merits—I venture to say that the new program would still leave men and women essentially ignorant of their world, and would only set the stage for a new disillusionment. And whatever the possible shortcomings of your education, you have been trained to know something basic about human life and world history. You know, or ought to know, that the responsible factor in world tragedy is precisely man,—not only what he does, but more significantly, what he is. In its own way that knowledge gives you a sense of balance, because it secures you against disillusionment, and gives you something of the measure of the obstacles confronting the human task.

For want of this knowledge many of our contemporaries are in a panic. They can't understand why we should have come to such a pass as this. We have a long tradition of culture, great institutions, countless schools, even churches. What could be wrong? Scholars are looking hard for the points of breakdown, and books analyzing them roll off the presses. Many of the analyses are pertinent. They do find clogs in our social machinery. But they never get to the basic trouble, because they are too uncritical of those who operate and are produced by our social machines. For that reason their solutions are illusory, their programs fail, and when a major breakdown occurs again, they are stunned.

We have learned long ago that the trouble with mankind is man,—the man who apart from God is very nigh a devil. You have never been told to give up on the world and forget about social responsibility because that is so. But you have been told to face and reckon with the facts. And that kind of training conditions you for real, for sober, balanced living. Nothing totally shocks or paralyzes the Christian who knows the awful truth about the human situation. In a sense we have always been living on the border of the cataclysmic because we have known that any magnitude of evil is possible to the human heart. That means that we reckon always with the imminence of an unlimited threat of evil, not only from man's inventions but also from God's judgments on this incorrigible race. You know well enough the character of the world into which you graduate. You know what you may have to contend with. You know what you will face. Calvin College proposes to graduate no opti-
mistic illusionaries, no Pollyanna reformers. You have been fortified with a sober realism. You are trained for tragedy.

**The Transcending Faith**

You are so trained, furthermore, because Calvin fostered in you a faith in the God who exercises sovereign control of the whole historical process, and who ultimately resolves all world tragedy into glorious victory. That gives a ground of confidence, as Paul would say, that “your labor is not vain in the Lord.” Even now we have less reason for giving up on the world than the scholar or scientist who is without that faith. We know that this world is no blob of matter thrown off into space, its basic structure is not the atom, it is not governed by the predictable or unpredictable laws of nuclear energy, and it is not within the province or power of any man to bring about its dissolution by pressing a push-button. The world is God’s creation, its basic structure is His mighty Word, the Word by which “He commanded and it stood fast,” and by which He governs it still. Not natural force, not the dissolute human will, but the gracious and long-suffering God rules sovereignly in history.

Again I say, this gives the one ground for hope and puts meaning into all our efforts for the present. The modern reformer has nothing to interpose between the world and a relentlessly rolling doom except a puny pervert called man, trained in new social skills, perhaps, but still only man in his sinful measure. He knows no saving grace other than the modern blurb called “social competence.” He has no gospel except the pronouncement that “the beginning of social competence is the trust of man in man.” What hope can that yield when that same man is already charged with “utter social incompetence,” and when he is accused of having made of this last half century “a history of deepening horror.” The truth is that our life in the present is without hope and meaning unless we count ourselves collaborators with God who is the sovereign Lord of all history, and make His sovereign will the pattern of that life. The effectuation of that in your own life has been a foremost objective of your training at Calvin.

That, I think, is enough for the present. As for the future, we can leave that in the hands of Him to whom all time as well as eternity belongs. The future is not ours. We cannot fashion the destiny of the years. The future does not belong to any dictator or any other political power; it belongs to no college of scientists, to no super-military machine. The future is God’s. And that is more than well. His hand is strong, His counsel wise, His purpose infinitely glorious. Even if the situation were many times worse than it is, you should have no cause to go out into the world plagued with uncertainty and fear and a sense of the futility of it all. To be sure, tragedy will certainly come. But you are trained for it; and if Calvin’s heritage is the heritage of your own soul, you have the faith by which in God’s grace you will transcend it. Whatever the years may hold, there can be nothing in them to shake the Christian soul. The fearful portents that are here now and that are yet to come will only presage the coming triumph of God’s Kingdom. And even though we may often have to set the face grimly forward, we have always the quieting trust that since He works above us and before us as well as with us, our “labor is not vain in the Lord.” Meanwhile, there is more than enough strength in the words of the Lord Jesus: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you . . . In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Anyone trained in that kind of faith, as you have been, is trained for tragedy.

**Called For Such a Time**

To mention only one thing more, you have been so trained because Calvin College has endeavored to cultivate in you that Christian character that lives with a high sense of moral and social responsibility. We can almost agree with those who trace the tragic gloom of this age to “utter social incompetence.” If we could define that in more strictly Christian terms, the analysis would be substantially correct. When people make their own ego both the standard and the goal for all their living and striving, society becomes a vicious place peopled by countless evil geniuses. And whether the ego be as big as a nation or as small as an automobile salesman or a novelist, they each add their part to the sum-total. Whoever lives to and for himself is the enemy of God and society’s devil.

That’s the trouble with our world—there are too many social incompetents who regard neither God nor man; and it is the confession and complaint of many educators that our colleges are merely piling the heap by training for only technical competence. But Calvin College was founded, and thank God there are still some other schools like it, precisely in order to train men and women first of all for the highest type of social competence—for life and service in the fear of God and with devout regard to His will. And if your college diploma does not embody for you a holy challenge to that kind of living, it might just as well be burned as crisp as Martin Luther burned the Pope’s bull. Remember, Calvin’s objective has not been first of all to train teachers and lawyers and business men and engineers and writers and doctors to technical competence. There are plenty of that kind, and too many of them have degrees cum turpitude in social incompetence. It is Calvin’s aim, because it is her calling, to train to Christian competence in every
profession and vocation. And that, as every thinker acknowledges, is exactly what this age needs.

Because you are Calvin graduates, you will be held responsible, perhaps by men; certainly by God, for a type of service that is unselfishly Christian; and your honest title to a diploma from a Christian college will be determined by the measure in which you personify her first and highest ideals. That means, certainly, that no one here seriously cares how great a scientist you become if you are not Christian in the application and interpretation of your science. No one will be impressed with your high professional rank in law, if you swim the foul tide and cash in with no regard for right and decency. No one will thrill to notices of your literary achievements if, in the process of arriving, you were ready to fill the swill and belabor all that's Christian mainly because it is. No one will be inclined to honor you if, in rising to high political success, you don't give to God and your country the qualities of Christian statesmanship.

But we have reason to expect better things from you. Not only so, but in the name of God, we have a right to demand them. After all, Calvin College is not just a high class private school with low-cost tuition. Calvin is a Christian College committed to a high calling from God and from a sacrificing and hopeful body of Christian people. And it is a matter of fervent concern to those Christian people who have sacrificed for and sponsored your education that Calvin graduates shall acquit themselves in terms of their Christian training. In the face of the urgent crisis of our disintegrating world, you are among the crucial and strategic few who have been trained to stand before the face of God and to answer to Him for responsible, idealist, Christian living in your chosen field of effort.

More Than Conquerors!

Who said you don't have a chance? Assuredly you do, and you above all. Your education at Calvin has not been irrelevant. The whole of your training has encompassed a most critical period in our history, and some of you have been the better conditioned for it because you were thrown into experiences where, standing on the border line of eternity, you saw, for a moment, at least, some of life's terrible urgency. And now, in the Providence of God, you go out fitted with a type of training which in this kind of world above all greatly enlarges your opportunity and makes more insistent your calling.

No one presumes that your task, or ours, is an easy one—least of all if we take it seriously, with a devout resolution to follow the leading of Christ our Lord. But the whole issue of it can be nothing other than triumphant. In fact, it is a vast understatement to say that you do have a chance. In the name of the Christ who said: “I have overcome the world,” and who taught us to say: “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us,”—in His name you have more than a chance—you are the possessors of an infinite and glorious certainty. It may well be that, notwithstanding, we shall come into days and years of sore travail. But above you, and around you, and, I trust, in you, is the Christ, whose is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Go ahead! You are ready! You are trained for tragedy—trained to challenge it, and ultimately, through the grace of Him who conquers all, to transcend it.

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BARTHIANISM AND MODERNISM

Paterson, New Jersey.
April 22, 1948.

Dear Editor:

As usual the February issue of the Forum stimulated its readers. Dr. Daane’s review entitled, “Barth, Brunner and Van Til” proved especially interesting to me. No sphere of theological thought escapes the impact made by the crisis theologians. Reformed thought, especially on the continent, has subjected “neo-orthodoxy” to its searching criticisms, and now American proponents of Calvinism engage their energies for the same reason. Thus when one Reformed thinker evaluates the work of another, one experiences increased interest and stimulation.

After reading the review of Daane, various questions arose in my mind, and I wish to take this opportunity of recording my observations. The Forum, which all of us keenly await each month, affords us this unique privilege of interchanging our thoughts. To register these few observations means only that I am seeking to evaluate Barthian theology from a Reformed point of view, and certainly they are not meant to imply that I have reached the answers to the many perplexing questions involved.

My first reaction concerns the following statement of Daane’s review, “The uncovering of the epistemological pedigree which determines the divergences—which admittedly are many and significant—will not by itself convince the average reader that the theology of Brunner and Barth can simply be designated by the term ‘modernism’.” Immediately one wonders what will delineate modernism if the epistemological substructure of its thought does not. For Reformed scholars it scarcely admits of argument that a theology constructed upon Kantian presuppositions precludes the privilege in the Trinity God of the Scriptures as historically fashioned by Reformed thinkers since the days of Calvin. The God of the Bible is antecedent to all experience without radical transformation by the knowing subject. Being determining all things after the Counsel of His will finds no place in a theology with epistemological roots in Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. The Critique eliminated the possibility of divine revelation in history. If the knowing subject contributes an original, constitutive element to knowledge, God’s revelation cannot become part of man’s cognitive experience without radical transformation by the knowing subject. Such transformation destroys revelation. The Kantian forms and categories rob God’s revelation of its objective, authoritative character. Precisely because modern liberalism uncritically accepted Kantian criticisms, it dethroned the Sovereign God who determines all things in His created world, and enthroned man, thus subjectivizing revelation. It is the critical, dialectical epistemology of these theologians which makes their theology anti-scriptural, and consequently liberal or modern. Hence the epistemological pedigree does determine the basic color of theological thought.

The average reader of Barth and Brunner faces frankly a radical transformation of classical Reformed thought. Barth, claims to be a Reformed thinker. Yet when I see this eminent theologian radically transform the truths which we hold dear, I am forced to admit that Van Til chose the best term possible in terming this theological construction modernism. For Barth the Bible is not the Word of God, and apparently the reason for his conclusion lies in the fact that the philosophical tap roots of Barthian epistemology rest in Kant rather than in Paul. Barth denies the historicity of Paradise and the story of the fall by terming it a myth; he refashions election and reprobation into something vastly different than the clear Pauline teaching; he confuses justification and sanctification so that they are virtually identical; he claims that our time, calendar time, world-time is completely relative; he maintains that because time is relative the last word which applies to the Jesus of our history is the grave; he refashions the Covenant of Grace into a teaching beyond recognition; he repudiates uniquely and forcefully, the sacrament of infant Baptism by maintaining that the sacrament has an exclusively cognitive significance. Isn’t the fundamental reason for all these divergences found in the essentially anti-Biblical epistemology of the critical dialectical tradition? We must attempt to meet Barth at the root of his thinking, and that means an analysis of the philosophical tradition which informs his thinking. By so doing, we shall discover the reason for all the divergences from Reformed thought which abound in his writings. Is an epistemology which excludes the Sovereign God of the Bible as historically ambivalent, being who determines all things according to His Counsel, and consequently destroys revelation in the historically accepted Reformed sense, doesn’t designate modernism, then I would appreciate knowing what will delineate modernism.

Secondly I wish to register an observation concerning the following statement of Daane. “I cannot escape the feeling that Van Til’s evaluation of dialectical theology is determined by his own epistemology and therefore is not more charitable.” This is a classic understatement. Van Til explicitly states that he loves and adheres to the tradition of Calvin, Voetius, Kuyper and Bavinck. He frankly admits that the Scriptural presuppositions of historic Reformed thought preclude dialectical epistemology. As a Reformed thinker he wants to do nothing else than confront the theology of Barth and Brunner with the criticism of Scripture and a revelationally orientated epistemology.

But is this a matter of charity? It ought not to be, it seems to me. We certainly do not plead for that eagerly sought and never obtainable “scientific objectivity.” When we confront a theological construction of thought with God’s Word, this is not a matter of charity, but a matter of the truth. As loyal sons of God we can do nothing else. In the field of epistemology Van Til challenged the crisis theologians with a consistent attempt to remain loyal to God’s Word. Is it not somewhat confusing to speak of degrees of charity, when we try to defend God’s Word? When we honestly believe that a theology radically departs from God’s special revelation, and submit that theology to the criticism of God’s Word, we are not being uncharitable, but rather true to our task.

Thirdly, I wish to remark concerning this statement. ‘Do not Van Til’s own notions of the ‘limiting concept’ and the ‘apparently paradoxical’ qualify his epistemology in the direction of faith rather than in the direction of a ‘theology of possession’?” In Daane’s statement the terms “faith” and “theology of possession” are used in the Barthian sense. For Barth “faith” and “possession” are mutually exclusive, and they seem to be for Daane also. Possession for Barth means that God has actually revealed Himself in history. That is why the church believes that the Bible is the Word of God. But Barth vigorously opposes that idea. Contrasted to possession is faith, and I can not help but feel that faith for Barth means the dialectical principle in action. Faith is no longer that “sure knowledge and firm confidence” of which the Heidelberg catechism speaks. Barth wants no company with Ursinus and Olevianus, for in their theology meant possession. Thus when Daane says that Van Til’s epistemology may be qualified in the direction of faith rather than in the direction of possession, he sets
up a false antithesis. Faith and possession are included in each other for the Reformed thinker, and so Van Til's epistemology is qualified in the direction of faith and possession. For Barth faith and possession contradict each other precisely because the relation between God and man is basically one of discontinuity. For classical Reformed thinkers faith and possession belong together precisely because the relation between God and man is one of continuity through saving grace in Christ. To set up faith and possession antithetically as Daane does apparently adds up to more confusion.

Finally, I am sorry that Daane gave no further explanation concerning his indication of Van Til's thought. Says Daane, "In short, Van Til's evaluation of the dialectical theology seems to be determined by his own epistemology which tends to deny an epistemological difference between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of any empirical fact, because it apparently is based on a 'one level of Being' concept, and operates with an abstract employment of 'sub specie aeternitatis'". To characterize Van Til's epistemology so summarily does it scant justice, and leads to misunderstandings. Surely Van Til makes a distinction with respect to Being and being. Van Til pleads for consistent, consistent and concrete thought, and simply to state without further explanation that he employs a certain principle abstractly achieves no constructive end. If more Reformed thinkers would obtain Van Til's writings, analyze, criticize and study them, they would discover that Daane's characterizations leave much to be desired.

To date I have not discovered anyone who has successfully challenged the main thesis of Van Til's book. Is he correct in maintaining that Barth and Brunner have informed their foundations? If so, Van Til's analysis of the epistemological structure of Barth and Brunner's thought is fundamentally unsound, we must agree that the theology of "neo-orthodoxy" is indeed a New Modernism. And since there are still many vexing and searching questions involved in the construction of a soundly Biblical, Christian, and Reformed epistemology, let us submit our conceptions of philosophy and theology to more consistent and conscious self-evaluation.

ALEXANDER C. DE JONG.

"OUR YOUTH IN THE ATOMIC AGE"

Fourth Reformed Church
1031 Ionia Ave., N.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
May 12, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

CONGRATULATIONS! The May, 1948, issue of THE CALVIN FORUM is literally excellent from cover to cover. The article entitled, "We and Our Youth in the Atomic Age," is soul-stirring, heart-searching, challenging, superb! May God give us grace to give heed.

Cordially,

WILLIAM A. SWETS.

Grand Rapids, Mich.
June 11, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

IT HAS been a long time since I experienced such pleasure from the reading of any article as I felt when I read Clifford Vander Ark's "We and Our Youth in the Atomic Age." This message was so timely and to-the-point for our youth and also for the older people that I feel it should be shouted from the rooftops.

Scripture tells us over and over that the life of a Christian is not easy, but too many of us in our blind complacency "go sailing along." I strongly disagree with the optimists who tell us that our youth are firmly rooted in the faith. As Rev. Vander Ark points out, the one way to test them is confront them with a decisive choice—and UMT is one way of doing that.

I know that the CALVIN FORUM does not reach enough of our people, especially the younger ones. I feel strongly that as many as possible should have access to this splendid article.

May I suggest that "We and Our Youth in the Atomic Age" be published in the form of a pamphlet and be made available to all our young people and also to the young people of other groups? It seems to me that all who have read the article will feel with me that this suggestion is almost a MUST.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN STEENSEMA.

7309 South Union Avenue
Chicago 21, Illinois.
May 18, 1948.

Dr. Clarence Bouma,
Editor THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Brother:

REV. Vander Ark's challenging, gripping and soul-stirring article "We and Our Youth in the Atomic Age," should in my humble opinion be read by every Christian leader in—and outside of our circles. It is also my conviction that much of the Christian leadership of our day must be aroused out of its "smug complacency".

If at this most critical period in the world's history, we as God's people fail to meet our God-given duty and responsibility, disaster will surely overtake us, and God's irrevocable judgments will be poured out upon us. May it not be that Rev. Vander Ark's clarion call will be a means in the providence of God to open the eyes of many?

What can be done to give this article the widest possible distribution? Could it not be published in pamphlet form (perhaps the type of the CALVIN FORUM could be used) and sold at a very low cost? Or perhaps, better still, be distributed gratis? I believe a sufficient number of serious minded Christians can be found who would be willing to finance such a project. I am willing to do my bit. May our "Back to God Hour" be willing to offer it to its listeners, which would be an inexpensive way to reach a large number of people.

May I kindly have your opinion on the above suggestion?

Fraternally yours,

G. B. VAN HEYNINGEN.

Editor's Note: An excellent suggestion which THE CALVIN FORUM gladly supports. Will anyone interested in furthering this plan please make contact with Mr. Van Heyningen or REV. C. Vander Ark, Ocheydan, Ia.?

UNINTENDED SLIGHT

882 Pobles St.
Pittsburgh 21, Pennsylvania.
April 30, 1948.

Dr. Clarence Bouma, Editor
The Calvin Forum,

Dear Sir:

I WAS surprised when you published a letter from me, the purpose of which was to express admiration for THE CALVIN FORUM and the sturdy Dutch Churchmen behind it. The letter contained incidentally a slighting reference to my own denomination and its leadership.

I am sorry that I made that reference for it said more than I meant. I think your readers must have received an unpleasant impression, not knowing in what a carefree mood I was writing.

The reason for my slighting remark was my regret for what seems to me faulty leadership over a period of time in the matter of union. I respect our leaders as individuals. They are my friends and I hope you will publish this letter quickly before it may seem to have been forced by their reproaches. I would appreciate your kindness in doing this.

Yours truly,

GUY D. WALLACE.
From Our Correspondents

A WORD OF FAREWELL

Grand Rapids, Michigan.
May 27, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

A FEW years ago, while at home in my native Ceylon, I happened to read The Calvin Forum. It told me about an excellent Seminary at Grand Rapids. This was the start of my ambition to become trained in a truly Reformed Seminary.

I am thankful to Almighty God for the wonderful way he has led and protected me. My ambition has been realized, and I am sure you appreciate knowing that it was your paper which gave me my idea.

I have during my stay here been an avid reader of the Forum. Apart from the scholarly material it contains, I have been struck by the spiritual depth and sincerity flowing from its pages. It has always maintained its primary purpose of glorifying the Sovereign God and promoting the fundamental principles of Calvinism.

On my return to Ceylon I shall continue to maintain contact with your paper and, through it, my contact with the good people of the Christian Reformed Church.

You may have heard of the recent sudden death of the Rev. Neville B. Janas of our Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon. The late Rev. Janas was a personal friend of mine and I shall miss him when I return. He had, before he entered the ministry of God, qualified himself as a lawyer. Answering the call of his Master, he first trained at the United Theological College in Bangalore (India). Later he entered Princeton Seminary and later, two years ago, the Rev. Janas became a graduate of the Trinity College in Edinburgh. This has been a joy to his family, and to his Church, as well as to me.

[note continues with the story of other correspondents and events]

IRISH CALVINISTS

15 College Sq., East Belfast.
North Ireland.
11th May, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

IN your February (1948) issue of the Forum (p. 151) you state that the late Dr. Duncan M. Blair of Glasgow University "was a scholar of the highest order and an elder in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland." I would like to point out that Dr. Blair was an elder in the Milton (Glasgow) congregation of the Free Church of Scotland. These two Churches in Scotland are Presbyterian bodies—quite independent of each other. Both are orthodox, and personally I feel that their differences are very superficial. The Free Church of Scotland, to which Dr. Blair belonged, is the larger of the two.

The National Union of Protestants (Ireland)

I have referred in former letters to the ceaseless efforts of the Roman Catholic Church to drag Protestant Northern Ireland under a Roman Catholic government in Dublin. Even if we had a fair representation in that government we would still be outnumbered by 4 to 1. The Protestant North has no desire to be subjected to such a rule. If such a calamity were to take place Northern Ireland would immediately be flooded
by Roman Catholics from the South, and it is difficult to see how bloodshed could be avoided under such circumstances. Protestantism is being menaced in Ireland, so is Calvinism. Mr. De Valera, who is now leader of a very powerful opposition in the Eire government, has been busy spreading lies in the States concerning the Protestant section of Ireland. He spoke of Britain enforcing partition in Ireland. But the truth is that Britain is doing nothing of the sort—Northern Ireland wants union with Britain and freedom from the shackles of Rome.

Because of the serious state of affairs in our midst, there was formed The National Union of Protestants (Ireland). This organization has made rapid strides in the city of Belfast, and is still growing. But other Protestant organizations have been formed here before, and have died as quickly as they were born. Therefore there are many who are skeptical of any new effort in this sphere, and consequently are very cautious in their attitude to N.U.P. One can hardly blame them. Will N.U.P. be a success? Will it stand the tests? A lot depends on the Protestant people, especially the Christians, who, after all, are the true Protestants. However, N.U.P. looks promising. It is a union of evangelical Protestants to stand against Rome, to educate the people, and to preach the Evangel. Furthermore, it constitutes an answer to Romanists who assert that the Protestants are hopelessly divided.

In an interview with the organizing secretary of N.U.P., Mr. Norman Porter, I asked him—"Is it true that N.U.P. (Ireland) although associated with N.U.P. in England is quite independent of that body? Answer—"Yes." "Has N.U.P. any political aims?" Answer—"No." "What is the attitude of N.U.P. towards Modernists?" Answer—"The same as its attitude towards Popery." Well, if he is wrong, it is O.K. On joining N.U.P. the new member is required to sign his name under these words—"I the undersigned will endeavour with the other members of the Union to maintain the Reformed Protestant Faith as based upon the Holy Scriptures, and I firmly declare that I am a faithful Protestant."

Among the leaders of N.U.P. are a number of Calvinists, including three ministers of my own Church (Irish Evangelical). This is something to be thankful for. N.U.P. presents Protestants over here with an opportunity—I wonder will they take it? The official organ of N.U.P. (Ireland) is "The Protestant," which is issued monthly under the editorship of Mr. Norman Porter. This magazine deals with news of local interest, besides proving instructive articles on the religious controversy.

Eire's New Government

Since my letter of February last, a Coalition government has been formed in Eire. When Mr. De Valera's name was proposed for the Premiership, the nomination was defeated by five votes (75-70). Mr. John Aloysius Costello (pronounced Cost-lo) a 57 year old barrister, was appointed Premier of the Coalition (voting 75-68). Mr. De Valera's party is not participating in this coalition, but constitutes a formidable opposition. Mr. Costello found himself in power because of National Labour's last minute decision to vote against De Valera. He was Attorney-General in the Cosgrave administration. Mr. Costello was called to the Bar in 1914 and to the Inner Bar in 1929. He is, of course, a devout Roman Catholic.

This coalition is faced with many disadvantages. (1) There is a very strong opposition, which makes defeat always possible. (2) The new ministers are inexperienced. (3) The five parties that constitute this coalition have, in the past, fought over different principles and programmes. They are united now solely because of their common dislike of dictatorial De Valera. But if once they fail to agree their defeat is assured. Mr. De Valera is waiting patiently for this to happen.

Yet many think that the coalition will stay in power, because every member of it knows that agreement is essential to their present position. As far as Northern Ireland is concerned there seems to be no change in the situation. The new Eire government wants commercial co-operation with Britain, and it wants an all-Ireland republic as did De Valera. The same obstacles lie in their path.

"Revive Us Again"

That is the title of a 64-page booklet by Rev. Philip E. Hughes. It is published in U.S.A. by Zondervan Publishing House. The book holds within a foreword by Rev. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, is having a good reception over here. To quote from the cover—"This book maintains that Revivals have never been the result of zealous Christian organization. Revivals are extraordinary dispensations sent by God from above on such occasions as He sees fit. Revival is and can be solely the work of the Holy Spirit of God." There is a distinctly Calvinistic approach in this writing. "Finite ephemeral man cannot even begin to procure for his unhappy race that which is spiritual, and therefore infinite and eternal. This is, and can be, only and solely the work of the Holy Spirit of God. He must do it, or it will never be done at all." (p. 10.) "Revival comes from God and leads to God, that He may be 'all in all,' and that man may learn that of himself he is nothing." (p. 11.). Mr. Hughes stresses the sovereignty of God in connection with his subject. Turning to prayer, he shows how the great revivals of history have been linked with prayer. "Prayerlessness," he says, "is powerlessness and barrenness and sleep." (p. 20.) But he keeps a balance by pointing out most emphatically that the 'same Holy Spirit cannot be organized or commandeered for the work of revival . . ." (p. 29.). Effective quotations from Andrew Bonar's diary are given. On 17/7/1868, Andrew Bonar wrote, "... Spending some hours alone with Father, Son, and Spirit. It was basking in the beams of grace."

The chapter devoted to "Apostolic preaching" is excellent. The writer goes on to plead for a proper combination of "Godliness and Learning." His chapters on "Human Emotion" and "Human Fallibility" are clear and thoughtful. Mr. Hughes strikes a practical note near the end of his booklet when he writes—"Let us expect a downpour of spiritual blessing from above; let us prepare for it; let us pray for it; let us preach for it; let us get back to the study of our Bibles that we may be equipped and instructed for it!" (p. 61.) "Revive us Again" is a book which should be read by all who are interested in the fascinating study of Revival.

With Greetings from Irish Calvinists, Yours in Service, FRED S. LEAHY.

THE SUPREME COURT DECISION

The recent decision of the U.S. Supreme Court did far more than rule out all "released time." It blacked out all religious teaching in regular school time. Here lies its great significance.

This court ruling marks the dead end of the secularizing trend in tax-supported schools. It takes in all the religious slack which was still found in some areas of our country. On our national educational highway we have now passed the fertile valley of American Christian culture and have entered the arid regions of un-Christian pagan ideology. Henceforth state-prescribed education will move in a universe of thought that is anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible for the simple reason that it is not for God, for Christ, for the Bible. This decision of our highest court is the natural springboard for the world educational movement which sails under the flag of UNESCO.

Religiously interpreted, this court decision warns us: If we want our children to be religious, we must not send them to the public school. Stated positively, it implies: If we want our children to be Christians, we must send them to a Christian school.

Morally interpreted, this decision suggests to the thoughtful: If we would train our children in moral virtues, we must not send them to the public school—instead we must send them to a private school whose moral instruction is based upon the Chris-
tian religion. These statements are underscored by none other than an ex-President of Harvard University in these words: "Nobody knows how to teach morality effectually without religion. Exclude religion from education, and you have no foundation upon which to build a moral character." (Charles W. Elliot)

This Supreme Court ruling, which declares religious teaching in the public schools to be unconstitutional, is as drastic as it is sweeping. No comfort should be sought in the thought that it will be a dead letter. The Court's ruling which one atheist brought about, the ever increasing number of atheists will enforce. According to reports, atheistic leaders have already taken steps to instigate court action wherever the Supreme Court decision is not enforced.

Now that it is perfectly clear in what direction the tax-supported schools are moving, it is obvious that the only course left for us as Christians is to establish and support private Christian schools, cost what it may.

A Second Revival in Christian Schools

The early schools of America were Christian. The Bible was the chief text. The standard reader was Biblical from cover to cover. Glorious school days, those!

When, in the middle of the 19th century, it dawned upon the Christian leaders of those days that a secular school system was being introduced into the various states of the Union, a private Christian school movement was launched. Under the leadership of Dr. A. A. Hodge of Princeton fame and others, the Christian school project soon grew to about a hundred schools of elementary grade.

This Christian school movement declined as fast as it had come into being. One cause of its decline was the chaotic condition brought on by the Civil War. A more fundamental cause was no doubt the fact that the early public schools—though secular in theory—were largely Christian in practice.

Why maintain a private Christian school when one could be had at public expense?

But theory is basic to practice. Principles have a way of determining conduct. When teachers for generations were trained to teach—and actually taught—all books except the Book of books, the time would come when knowledge of this Book and conduct based upon this Book would cease. Today that time has arrived.

Once more the Christian people in this country—the remnant that has survived the secularization of education—are stirring themselves educationally. Dissatisfaction with secularized instruction is mounting. A Christian school revival is sweeping across the country. With "released time" placed under constitutional ban, the Christian school movement has received added impetus.

What will become of the present upsurge of Christian school interest? Let us pray that it may be Spirit led.

The Formation of N. A. C. S.

An important resolution was presented to the Annual Convention of the National Union of Christian Schools held in Pella, Iowa, August, 1946. It proposed that this convention "heartily" support the formation of an "overall national organization similar to the N.A.E. (National Association of Evangelicals)." It was so decided by the house of delegates. This decision led to the formation of what is now known as the N.A.C.S. (National Association of Christian Schools).

The N.A.E. is the only evangelical organization in America which is designed to embrace all groups that are admittedly evangelical in character. Since the proposed school organization was to be all-embracing and similar to the N.A.E., it was a logical move on the part of the Board of the N.U.C.S. to request the N.A.E. to originate the overall school organization. This request was granted. Hence although conceived by the N.U.C.S., the N.A.C.S. was begotten by the N.A.E. It opened an office in Chicago in the fall of 1947. Although self-governing and self-supporting, the N.A.C.S. is an affiliate of the N.A.E.

We believe that God has called the N.A.C.S. into being for such a time as this. May it meet the challenge of the hour—reclaiming education for Christ for the children of homes which still bear His name.


Book Reviews


By writing this book Rev. Van Baalen, a graduate of Kamper, the Netherlands, who pursued post graduate studies at Princeton for two years, has put many of us to shame and made debtors of all of us. What has long been felt to be a necessity, a commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, he has had the courage to attempt and the perseverance to produce. And a praiseworthy achievement it is. Many there were who were so enamored of Dr. A. Kuyper's magnificent E Voto that they called for its translation into English, but what Rev. Van Baalen has done is far better. Dr. Kuyper's Dutch, with its long involved sentences, its frequent verbosity, its wealth of local color illustrations and other evidences of having been written in the low countries, its unique personal idiom and rhythm, is really untranslatable. It should be a source of joy to all of us that the Synod of 1947 abandoned the idea of providing a translation of E Voto and a source of still greater joy that Rev. Van Baalen did accomplish what everybody admitted should be done.

The title Rev. Van Baalen has chosen for his book is a fortunate one. No better title could have been selected. A heritage of the fathers the Heidelberg Catechism certainly is; but it is more than this: it is a noble heritage; nay more, it is a glorious heritage. For of all Reformed creeds it is the simplest, the most vital, and the most practical. And there is in it, too, the glow that warms the hearts of God's children. Whether or not these characteristics, we doubt whether this catechism would have maintained an honored place in our services to this very day in spite of the fact that it is some three hundred years old and devotes too much attention, in a few instances, to subjects that today can hardly be considered as controversial as they were at the time of composition.

Rev. Van Baalen has written a readable book, a book, in fact, that invites being read. This is a most remarkable accomplishment indeed. To write on familiar subjects, on subjects which readers have become familiar in the catechism class and through sermons or lectures from the pulpit, throughout their entire life time in many instances, requires ability of no mean order. It can be said without hesitation that Rev. Van Baalen's treatment of the Catechism holds spellbound the reader who is acquainted with the subject-matter, as well as the reader who
is not. In a most remarkable way the author has overcome the prejudice that springs from familiarity.

How has he succeeded in doing it? To begin with, he is master of his material. He is at home in the field of Reformed truth. He understands it in its bearings and ramifications. Not only does he grasp the meaning of his material, but, no matter how difficult or abstruse a subject may be, by the time it has passed through his mind it has become simplified and clear. Furthermore, he is never satisfied with stating a truth abstractly and letting it go at that; he cannot but turn the abstract into the concrete and apply truth to situations in life as it is lived in the year of our Lord, 1948. This he could not do as well as he does, were he not a wide and alert reader who is deeply interested in what goes on in this world and who is deeply imbued with the idea that Christian faith should function in the performance of our every task. Rev. Van Baalen, again, has caught the very genius of the Heidelberg Catechism and understands the purpose for which it was written. He knows that it thrives with Christian experience and that it is very practical. He is aware that the question, What does it profit to believe this or that doctrine, occurs repeatedly. And so he has very wisely avoided the error of turning the pulpit into a lecture platform, of making a lecture in dogmatics of what should be an edifying sermon. Finally, the author has that rare, elusive something that we call style. What he writes has a delectable flavor. His chapters abound in anecdote, bits of poetry, allusions to historical events, telling illustrations, apt quotations, all of which makes for clarity, liveliness and interest.

Should the eulogistic note of this appraisal be toned down by calling attention to a few flaws that may here and there be found? Not at all. It is to say that such flaws as make him and there be met with in reading are in comparison with the excellence of the whole insignificant and appear for the most part in footnotes.

In fine, Rev. Van Baalen has given the public an excellent book. It should have a ready sale. The layman can read it and enjoy it, and the young minister who is learning the art of making sermons on the Catechism will do well to read it.

JACOB G. VANDEN BOSCH.

THE BARSABBAS FAMILY

THE EARLIEST RECORDS OF CHRISTIANITY. A Special Abstract from the American Journal of Archaeology, L.I, 4 (October-December, 1947) By E. L. Sukenik. Available from the Editor-in-Chief, American Journal of Archaeology, Philadelphia 4, Pennsylvania. $1.00, or $0.80 each in lots of 20 or more.

PROBABLY the best method of introducing the very interesting archaeological discovery which is described in this Abstract is to remind the reader of a few facts which may be gathered from the New Testament:

(1) In Jerusalem there was a Barsabbas family, some members of which are known to have been disciples of Jesus. Thus, Acts 1 informs us that Joseph called Barsabbas was "placed on the nomination" for the office of apostle, to replace Judas Iscariot. Though he was not chosen, he must have been a devout disciple, one who had associated himself with the inner circle of the friends of Jesus "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out" among the Twelve, "beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up . . ."

Then there was a Judas Barsabbas, who was sent by the brethren at Jerusalem in order that he (and Silas) might accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, carrying with them a letter drawn up by the Jerusalem Conference. In this connection it is not out of order to call attention to the fact that this Judas Barsabbas is called one of the "chief men among the brethren."

(2) The second fact which should be clearly before our minds is this: according to the Gospels the crucifixion of our Lord caused deep sorrow and grief, wailing and smiting of breasts, Lk. 23:27, 48; 24:17.

THE STATUS OF REASON


This book is an ambitious undertaking which in my judgment does not come off. Its purpose is laudable, the task it takes up is important and needs doing; but because of a questionable theory of historical causes which generates a distorted analysis of western cultural history, and a futile conception of philosophical truth, the book does not fulfill its promise.

What the author proposes to do is to explain why the western man of today feels himself at an impasse. At the eve of the recent military victory (the lectures published in this volume were delivered at Columbia University in the spring of 1944) mankind faced an unparalleled opportunity for the improvement of life; yet we felt troubled by fear, by uncertainty as to a positive program, by the dehumanization of culture and the suppression of individuals by techniques for mass manipulation. How this impasse came about is to be traced through a study of two concepts of reason and the historically strong one from one to the other. Until Jefferson the leaders of western culture believed that reason was objective, i.e. capable of grasping stable truth about the proper ends of life as well as about effective means. But recently reason has come to be regarded as an instrument for selecting only means; ends have been surrendered to control by irrational forces whose drift is set toward self-centered and tangible goods. What factors produced this swing from objective to subjective reason, can it be reversed, what is the humanistic outlook for the future?

We should notice how Horkheimer analyzes a few modern movements making toward the subjectivity of reason. During the fight for religious toleration, he says, reason was represented as conciliation and religious controversies were con-
temned as propaganda issuing from political factions. Then
government was made secular while religion was set aside
as of no serious cultural import. Cut loose from spiritual
direction, politics was enslaved to material ends. Eighteenth
century liberalism then justified the nation as a tool for the
gain of selfish individuals; but when the selfish individuals
threatened national unity, the liberals urged government to
adopt terrorist methods. Again, the classic democratic theory
of Locke and Jefferson respected the majority principle be-
cause the individual was honored as a rational agent whose
insights into objective ends, clarified by public discussion, could
accord with divine and natural law. But recent positivist
thinking deprives the individual of such dignity, considers ideas
as the advertiser does, i.e. as mere tools for manipulating votes,
and represents majority rule as a tyranny of irrational deci-
sions by a mob of voters pushed around by the cleverer pressure
groups.

A few cultural consequences of this process may now be
surveyed. Horkheimer satirically reminds us of the profit-
mined man's appreciation of Christmas and of our readiness
to rate the artist by the terms of his Hollywood contract. In-
dustry has become so colossal, so demanding, so thoroughly
dominated by plan, that the individual learns no duty but
serve conformity; still, dimly realizing that industry per-
vades even the remoter conventions (we must be careful whom
we marry, and when, lest we lose standing in the club) and
that its sole aim is self-preservation and domination over
things and men, the individual comes to despise civilization
and to rebel. The secret rebel becomes the prey of demagogues.
Self-respect is virtually impossible in industrial culture. The
classical individual could respect himself as a moral agent
whose ends coincided with the welfare of society or as a child
of a gracious God. But after the Renaissance had abandoned
the religious basis for man's dignity, industrial culture could
talk only of man's right to preserve himself against nature
and society and to do so by no means except sinking his indi-
viduality in a collectivized economic behemoth—the corpora-
tion. He could not see the separation between his corporation
and methods. Thus to be virtuous meant to produce material
comforts and to conform to a vast impersonal system whose
aims are meaningless. The self to be preserved is scarcely
worth the candle.

In an early chapter Horkheimer rejects two proposed reme-
dies for this cultural debacle. One is positivism, which is ques-
tion-begging dogmatism about the limitation of knowledge to
experimental science and is dangerously careless about pro-
viding values fit for governing the uses of technology. An-
other criticism (which I think is doctrinaire) is this: the pos-
itivist's confidence in science is misplaced because the facts,
concepts, and aims of science are determined by commercial
and here. To me it is decisively not true that our productive system
Horkheimer's comments on Plato and Aristotle can be mea-
sured by the fact. To me it is decisively not true that their
systems had no motive but to defend the privileged. True,
Aristotle argues for slavery; but he erred (we believe) in an
empirical or factual judgment about the rational powers of
non-Greeks. And in the very same discussion he states a prin-
ciple on which we depend (when we reflect) for moral dis-
approval of slavery. This one instance is sufficient to wreck
our author's historical theory. Its application is doctrinaire,
derelative, distorted. Is it true that we have given up Jef-
ferson's conception of human reason in favor of basing democ-
ocracy on pressure-driven mob-rule? What color of truth is
there in the thesis that Neo-Thomists are insincere, that they
offer their doctrine not as truth but only as propaganda de-
signed to reconcile the masses to exploitation? (4) If Hork-
heimer's theory of causes is defective, it becomes clear that we
cannot dispose of science and our cultural heritage on his
way. Philosophy and science have a function which is in-
visible and subjective; philosophy is not merely a reminder
of the indefinable, distorted. Is it true that we have given up
Horkheimer's own remedy is presented via mainly negative
definition of philosophy. (1) Philosophy will not use fixed
concepts. The universality of flux defeats the application of
static meanings; and a static concept betrays the urge to domi-
nate its object. (2) Philosophy will not rank concepts in the
order of generality. Generality is a mirror of man's repres-
sive urge toward nature and society; Plato's search for ulti-
mate factors expressed the power-relations between the privile-
gated class and the oppressed. (3) Philosophy is negation, a
running critique to show that every humane ideal, though
claiming to be valid, is relative to the social tensions of an
epoch and put forward by a group concerned to safeguard its
privilege. Though I confess it puzzles me, the author's positive
account of philosophy seems to be the following. Philosophy
reminds us that there is always a tension between nature and
spirit, fact and ideal; that the very concepts we apply to fact
are products of social domination (i.e. that society are, the base for its mode of distinguishing between
thing and person); that man can reshape what he has created,
via a system which, operating on the principle of subjective
reason, ends by making man himself a manipulable thing.
Philosophy confers tranquility by revealing the inevitable
causes which produced our materialist culture; also it can keep
alive the lure of new advance. Freed by science from fear of
an unknown nature, and from superstitious obeisance before
eternal entities, we are now, because of modern techniques,
favorably equipped for augmenting individual independence
from industrial pressures.

My rather full account of the author's thesis excuses me
from lengthy criticism. (1) Of the notion that a process can-
not be described by a stable concept, should anything else be
said than that it is pure confusion? Does the concept "lead-
ing" prevent my performing the leap? (2) In no better case
is the dictum that it is intellectually useless to rank concepts
in order of generality. The distinction between psychology and
physics is a distinction in generality. Horkheimer says noth-
ing convincing to show the futility of searching for the gen-
eral structure of events. He is impressed by the flowing char-
acter of events; he believes in inevitable evolution and thinks
that it subverts the efforts of science or philosophy in its
incompitable, mode. But change would have to be devoid of pat-
tern to a degree far beyond anything Horkheimer accepts be-
fore either of these dicta (1 and 2) could enjoy a tincture of
credibility. For he affirms the possibility of progress, the
relevance of ideals, and a theory of the causes of history.
Turning to the last of these topics, (3) I question whether, if
the theory is true, Horkheimer can tell us why he wrote his
book. If the moral ideals, the science, and the philosophic
insights of an epoch (or of every epoch until the present?) have
been determined by the rivalry over power of that epoch's
contending groups, would it not be a mistake if the defini-
tions or reflections escaped submission to the productive system?
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sured by the fact. To me it is decisively not true that their
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the tranquility of resignation to his kind of historical causa-
tion.

It is regrettable that Horchheimer addresses a very real
problem with the weapons of left-wing Hegelian historical
analysis and an *ad hoc* concept of philosophy; these wea-
ones are fit for firing only blanks. But the problem is urgent,
rising from a widespread paralysis of basic value insight. It is
true that masses of men embroil themselves in rivalry for low-
der goods and lack a vision conferring fellowship. At bot-
ttom the issue concerns whether it is possible to gain the moral
truth required for redirecting human energy. Fortunately the
status of objective reason is not so hopeless as Horkheimer
thinks.

Jesse De Borr

**TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY**

**The Middle of the Journey**. By Lionel Trilling. New York:
The Viking Press, 1947.

This book, *The Middle of the Journey*, is a novel of ideas,
but, unlike most such novels, it is about real people, not
the usual puppets whose strings the author pulls to cause
them to jump whatever way his ideas demand. The book is
not easy reading, for the characters are mature persons, not
adolescents, and the ideas are subtle. But although it does not
lend itself to a quick scanning; it is an exciting story for those
who will take the trouble to work into it. Therein lies the sec-
ond respect in which it differs from most novels of ideas. The
ideas which the book deals with are political, and the politics
is communism. There have been a great many books recently
about communism written from a great many different points
of view. This novel is perhaps the most tempered and absorb-
ing of them all. What it has to say is said in sympathy but
in disillusionment, is said reluctantly, almost under compul-
sion.

The voyage of which Mr. Trilling writes is a journey of the
mind. His main character, John Laskell, through whose mind
the story moves, is an expert in public housing. He has trav-
elled from a comfortable upper-middle class childhood, through
a dabbling in literature and philosophy, to his present posi-
tion as a liberal, sympathetic to communism, finding many of
his friends among "the Party," but taking no active part in
its affairs. Here, in the middle of his journey, his mind made
up about his world, a series of upsetting events befall him,
forcing him to reassess himself, his friends, his ideas and
ideals.

There is a peculiar timeliness about this book. One is amazed
that Mr. Trilling, writing, as he must have, some time ago,
should have surmised so accurately how people would feel about
communism today. But the timeliness goes beyond the author's
which the book deals

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**"RELIGIOUS" FICTION**

No Trumpet Before Him. By Nelia Gardner White. Phila-

Paul Phillips, a Methodist minister, is presented in this
novel as a preacher hero whose personal integrity is
made to win out in the end over parishioners who had
supposed they would rather mould their minister than be
moulded by him. Paul is no longer wanted in Aporia because
the people of his little rural church suppose he is a bumbler
and is lacking in social tact. The case is, however, that he
thinks more highly of conscientious preaching than he does of
flourishing Boy Scout organizations, and cares more for out-
spoken admonishment to some of the members of his church
than for the Missionary Society dinners those members like to
promote. So they get it communicated to Bishop Fellowes that
they want the Reverend Mr. Phillips assigned elsewhere.

The Bishop acquiesces, but so far from sending Paul down
to Soda Center, the one charge with fewer responsibilities than
even Aporia, he promotes him to First Church, Warrenton.
Warrenton is the cultural capital of the state, and First Church
is rich and socially elite. His members have distrusted these many
years on cultural talks mildly tinctured with religion. Moving
tactfully among the people of Warrenton, consequently, while
faithfully preaching the truth is a matter of some nicety for
which Paul Phillips is not well suited.

At Warrenton, Paul sticks to his last, preaches what he calls
"the teachings of Jesus," and for the rest sits in his usually
unvisited church office trying honestly to face reality. There
are points on which he will not compromise. He eliminates a
professor's projected discussion of Baudelaire from the mid-
week lecture series of the church. He welcomes a Negro to
the congregation, and pays a social call upon the man in his
ramshackle novel all across the tracks. On Christmas day, in-
stead of preaching, he simply repairs his wounded sentiments and
from practical implications, tells his audience that
the disgraceful Negro slums of the town are their doing.
So, and in other ways, Paul brings on the board meeting which is
called to petition for his oustment.

But Paul's influence has had time to work, especially among
the young who had been whetting their cynicism on the feeble-
ness of the Christianity they had grown up in. Jeanie Fel-

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lowes, for instance, cynical, sated, and troubled by the consequences of rebel indiscretion, is attracted to the genuineness in Phillip. So is Gabriel Ficke, a smart Bohemian young blade, and so is Keziah Woodley, an idealistic young creature seeking content for her ideals. These had expected to find Mr. Phillips another stuffy shirt and are surprised to discover a man in it. They rally to him. Even Miss Fyne, who is mainly responsible for the selection of the Negroes, gets to thinking about things. Instead of voting for Paul's release, she speaks in his defense. The petition falls, Paul is vindicated, and true religion would seem to have a future at Warrenton.

Those are the materials of the novel, and as materials they are commendable enough. This book moves in a medium of church and parsonage. It is, as we say in our demoralized times, "wholesome," and it contains no profanity, obscenity, or sex exploitation. It is the sort of book that can "safely" be put into church libraries.

Nevertheless it is a poor book. It is not authentic. It lacks, not competent craftsmanship, but artistic integrity. The ground swell of experience does not surge up in it; the ring of conviction resounding from insight cannot be heard; the testament of mind and spirit are not present in it. The whole novel is contrived. It is not literature.

It is not literature: it is trade writing. It is calculated to hit as big a piece of the religious market as possible. As such, it comes off. Speaking on the level of its own importance, one can say that this "religious" novel is a slick job. The Saturday Evening Post spotted it right away, and serialized it: this was for the million: enough religion to appeal to everybody, not enough to embarrass anybody, a touch of Lloyd Douglas' optimism, and a reminder of Cronin's and Walford's hero saints. Now let it be true, as Oscar Wilde said, that all art is exaggeration, and that it takes a little contrivance, something of the manipulator as well as the seer, to fit the stuff of life into the mould of fiction. But when one encounters such calculated manipulation as No Trumpet Before Him, he feels pretty certain that what the trade calls "slick" writing is indeed slick writing, and mostly tripe. It is the product, not of a reading of reality, but of a reading of the market. And the fact that such slated writing is aimed at the religious market, rather than at the tired housewife, the teen-age, or the 50,000 dollar income market, makes it no better as literature.

The pity of it is that this book was awarded the 8,000 dollar Westminster Award for Christian fiction. Apparently the religious fiction awards are becoming too big to miss. It is worthwhile for professional writers to put out a neatly fashioned commodity according to the specifications of the prospectus. Miss Gardner at least has a practiced hand for pleasing the million, and her novel is more successful than most religious novels precisely because it is the product of an able worker. But competent or incompetent, the end is still a low one, not a high one; the result is still trade writing and not literature. In such writing the author's fidelity is a fidelity to the principle of business, and the principle of business in such matters is to touch on everything everyone wants to hear, to touch on nothing so profoundly as to cause discomfort, and yet profoundly enough to make the reader think it is literature he is reading. What the duty of the author comes to then is a duty to his employer's sense of how much reality the trade will bear.

Religious fiction awards, when they function in this way, and religious fiction, when it is conceived and written in this manner, are enough to make one wish that the adjective "religious" would never again be attached to the noun "fiction." But that is our secular-Protestant way nowadays: to sprinkle a little religious sentiment over a demoralized culture. So we get "religious" politics, "religious" journalism, "religious" education, and "religious" art. It is a question-begging performance.
ness of the sin. On the morning of the son's hanging, Kumalo is back in the province, high up in his mountain retreat, facing honestly and alone the magnitude of evil and the magnitude of grace. And there is comfort for his desolation:

Who indeed knows the secret of the earthly pilgrimage? Who indeed knows why there can be comfort in a world of desolation? Now God be thanked that there is a beloved one who can lift up the heart in suffering, that one can play with a child in the face of such misery. Now God be thanked that the name of a hill is such music, that the name of a river can heal. Aye, even the name of a river that runs no more... But this the purpose of our lives, the end of all our struggle, is beyond all human wisdom. O God, my God, do not thou forsake me... I shall fear no evil, if thou art with me.

_Cry, the Beloved Country_ sings itself. The style is lovely, musical. It is plain and simple, for the plain and simple suit the importunity of a novel torn, bleeding, from the body of contemporary life. But the style is raised also to the level of the timeless. Not archaic, not inconspicuously Biblical, but touched by ideal vision and dignified by the note of permanence, the style raises the experience to the plane of the universal. Especially in the dialogue, which is quilted with a quaintness of the remote and important, and is vigorous in its elemental concreteness, the power of a passion controlled but strong is forcefully conveyed.

The problem of South Africa out of which this novel emerges is not that the gold shares are down. It is not that Malan has supplanted Smuts in the government. It is the substitution of economic ends for religious, for moral, for human ends. It is the problem of disintegration. Wholeness can come back to South Africa, but whether it will, that is another question:

The sun tips with light the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand. The great valley of the Umzimkulu is still in darkness, but the light will come there. Ndodheni is still in darkness, but the light will come there also. For it is the dawn that has come, as it has come for a thousand centuries, never failing. But when that dawn will come, of our emancipation, from the fear of bondage, and the bondage of fear, why that is a secret.

HENRY ZYLSTRA.