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the **CALVIN**
ORUM

Sarospatak and Calvin
Hands Across

Italian Colonies
A Moral Issue

New Testament Study
Recent Trends

Evolutionary Thinking
Some Assumptions

Voices

Correspondence

Reviews

VOL. XIV, NO. 3

**TWO DOLLARS
A YEAR**

OCTOBER, 1948

The CALVIN FORUM

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VOLUME XIV, NO. 3

OCTOBER, 1948

THE CALVIN FORUM

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Sarospatak and Calvin Seminaries*

Jacob T. Hoogstra
Minister Prospect Park Church
Holland, Michigan

THURSDAY, September 16, 1948, will ever remain an outstanding date in the history of Calvin College, of Calvin Seminary, and of THE CALVIN FORUM. In a special chapel service on that day Dr. Clarence Bouma, professor of Calvin Seminary and editor of THE CALVIN FORUM, received an honorary professorship from the Sarospatak Seminary, an institution of the Hungarian Reformed Church located at Sarospatak, Hungary. We extend our sincerest congratulations!

Unknown to us, Hope College in Holland, Michigan, held a similar service on the previous day. At this occasion Professor M. Eugene Osterhaven, Th.D., was likewise honored by the same Hungarian institution. Dr. Osterhaven has spearheaded student relief movements for Hungarian students. Besides, he is known to champion the Reformed Faith. It gives us great joy that he and the institution he represents have also been honored. Since we did not attend this service we cannot include it in our coverage.

Returning to Grand Rapids and Calvin, we report on the combined September 16 chapel service of College and Seminary.

Dean Ryskamp, taking the place of President Schultze, who was incapacitated, made a few opening remarks. He observed that this was a great occasion which might well serve the purpose of reminding the student body that the two schools are one institution, not only in the organizational sense, but also with a view to purpose and ideals. He then introduced the Rev. Dr. Samuel Volbeda, President of Calvin Seminary, who presided throughout the service.

President Volbeda read Revelation four and then led in a faith-stirring prayer, thoughts of which were taken from the chapter of triumph just read. He informed the faculties and the combined student body what the occasion was that brought the two schools together in joint assembly. He thereupon introduced Dr. Joseph Zsiros, who for the present is guest professor of Bible at Hope College, but whose permanent position is that of President of the Sarospatak Institution and, more particularly, Professor of the Old Testament in Sarospatak Theological Seminary.

* It was thought particularly appropriate that this article, written at our request by the FORUM's correspondent for Ecumenical Calvinism, who is also a member of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary, should take the place of the Editorials for the current month.—HENRY J. RYSKAMP, Associate Editor.

He had been chosen to represent his faculty in conferring this honorary professorship upon Dr. Bouma.

Those of us who know Dr. Zsiros know him as a man of great faith, which he unconsciously radiates wherever he is. Robed in a symbolic Hungarian toga, Dr. Zsiros impressively walked to the lectern and spoke as follows:

Dr. Zsiros' Address

Dear Presidents:

"In this solemn time—when by the help of God you started already towards blessed goals—it is a sublime feeling and unspeakable pleasure for me to be with you together within these consecrated walls at the feet of the invisible King, *"who was, and is, and is to come"* (Rev. 4:8), and to express before you the hearty greetings of our Hungarian Reformed Church and to give a member of your honorable Faculty, namely Professor Dr. Clarence Bouma, the honorary diploma of our Sarospatak Theological Seminary. For a servant of Jesus Christ there is no greater happiness indeed than to see and to know that in the whole world several chosen souls and here in America crowded congregations are serving His kingdom and glory with great truth, sacred offerings, and resignation of the whole life without rest and without conditions, such as our Hungarian Reformed people experience. They also try to serve Him among difficult physical and spiritual circumstances struggling against hunger and lack of clothing and fuel.

"For in Hungary two and one-half million—I have to change my statement: in Europe about two million six hundred thousand and four hundred Hungarian Calvinists are living in two thousand and seventy-five congregations, being served by two thousand and sixty ministers who obtained their education in five theological seminaries from sixty professors.

"During long centuries up to this summer our pride was our church-schools, namely one thousand six hundred and sixty-five elementary schools with two thousand eight hundred and sixty-six teachers; twenty-eight secondary schools (so-called gymnasiums), four high schools, four teachers' training colleges (preparatory or normal schools), the annual number of pupils of which was on the average about two hundred seventy thousand. This com-

munity is one spiritual unit also in its physical divisions. This Hungarian Calvinist community sends you, esteemed Presidents, honorable Board of Trustees, and Faculty of Calvin College and Seminary, beloved student body and noble youth, its blessing, Christian gratitude and love commingled with sweat and tears, with the blood of its contrite heart and the prayers of its burning soul.

"In and for this community our Sárospatak Academy (*) is one of the most ancient fortresses of the living Word of God, situated in North-East Hungary. Now she is the starting point and so to speak one of the centers of the great revival movement which became a dominant factor of our religious life in recent days.

* * *

"Dear Professor Dr. Bouma, our four hundred and eighteen year old Sárospatak Academy elected you an honorary professor of her Theological Seminary by unanimous decision and in Christian love.

"1. This diploma is a remembrance of those old times through which a 'cloud of witnesses' (Hebr. 12:1) speaks to us. It is with the most thankful heart that we remember how closely—already centuries ago—your fathers, then in the Netherlands, and our fathers in Hungary became united with each other and how much of the same Spirit and mind they possessed through their common faith and knowledge of the pure Gospel. Ever since the beginning of the seventeenth century our predecessors from generation to generation attended the universities of the Netherlands, and enriched in soul and mind they came back to be the most faithful servants of our Church and country. It was written that in Utrecht for a Hungarian student the yearly benefice was 25 gulden and Utrecht received fifteen Hungarian students every year. Some of them returned to Hungary with fourteen, sixteen, even thirty hundredweight of theological books. One of the most precious historical records of the Reformation in Hungary, the *Historia ecclesiae reformatae in Hungaria et Transylvania*, by Lampe Ember, was published in Utrecht.

But this was not all. It was also through the generous help of our forefathers that the Word of God, the Holy Bible, was rendered into our native tongue and published there again and again. Thirteen editions of the Bible in Hungarian came from the printing establishments of Amsterdam, Leiden, and Utrecht. All this happened at a time when Protestants in Hungary were not allowed to have the Bible printed in their own language. Allow my mentioning of another incident worthy of interest.

* In Europe the term "Academy" has a meaning quite different from that in America. An Academy in the European sense is a "vestibulum scientiarum", a vestibule of sciences. The Sárospatak Academy embraces a Theological Seminary, a Gymnasium, a Teachers Training School, an Institute for the Humanities, a School of Economics, and an English Institute, and before the First World War she also had a Law School for the training of lawyers and judges. An Academy in the European sense is hence a community of colleges, a small university.

Our children, even those of the smallest villages in our country, know the name of *Michael De Ruyter*, the admiral of the Dutch navy, and remember him with the deepest reverence for the liberation of a large number of pastors of the Hungarian Reformed Church, who because of their loyalty to their faith had been sold as galley slaves. Among these galley slaves were twenty-six pastors, former students of Sárospatak Academy. They were also set free through the intervention of this God-fearing, Christ-minded Dutchman, *De Ruyter* (February 11, 1676).

It was the same spirit of Christian love and sacrifice that led the people of the Netherlands after the First World War to invite thousands of Hungarian children to their own land to be their foster parents. It is also an historical fact that after the Second World War in our great misery we received some of our first help in a communication with the following lines in your handwriting, dear Professor: 'Our prayers for your welfare accompany our gifts. We, your brethren of the Calvinistic Action Committee, feel the bond that binds you and us together in Christian sympathy and in the common cause of God's truth'. The Spirit of God and the common faith embraces the past and the present and connects us together as brethren in Jesus Christ. This diploma wants to be an expression of our deep gratitude for these historical facts.

"2. This diploma is an appreciation of the great mission of your life, of your indomitable devotion to the ancient clear evangelical faith and of the undaunted struggle which you started for the glory of God and the kingdom of Jesus Christ against all secularization. The Calvinistic character of your soul appeared best in this persistent fight. Here in America, and over the ocean, in Europe everybody comes to know you as a true soldier and brave advocate of that ancient sacred heritage, the roots of which emit the quickening power of the Word of God through the great work of Calvin, through the *Institutio religionis christianae*. In this struggle it becomes more and more clear that it is not all the same whether an anthropocentric or a theocentric conception rules our life, not even indifferent which dogma stands in the center of our view, whether the doctrine of justification through works (*actio vitae bonae*), or the teaching of justification by faith (*sola fide*), and the truth of the justification of grace (*sola gratia*). (Rom. 3:24-28, Eph. 2:8-9). He who could look into your life, into your work, into your religious and theological conception, does see the only one factor in it—the free grace of God. For through your whole being shines the holy truth of the Revelation: 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy' (Rom. 9:16).

"3. But this diploma wants to be a good witness of your scientific work also, the background of which is that firm conviction that here in this sinful world everything has to happen for the glory

of God. *Soli Deo Gloria!* God is everything; everything else, even man with his beauty and abilities, with his richness and power, is nothing. Every moment of life serves this immeasurable and incomprehensible glory. In order to this service He gave us the community of the chosen, which has to be a living and ever active church, the power of which is the sovereignty of the redeeming and saving grace (*gratia Dei*). Therefore the members of the church have to take seriously and with the knowledge of their whole responsibility the living God. They have to give only Him glory and they have to look for the certainty of their salvation in His grace only. This certainty may be available in the absolute obedience to the holy will of God. This church must be the church of the Word of God. Everything which serves either human philosophy, or vain aesthetical interests, or blind superstition, and deprives the soul of this living Word of God—we must leave out of the life of the church. Only the Holy Scripture must rule over every moment of life. Only the complete subordination to the will of God gives man heroism and enables him to develop all his abilities most completely against every menace of this godless world. *Timor Dei expellit timorem hominum*: the fear of God expels the fear of men. Such a man living and obeying the heavenly will is a fellow-worker with God, whom He entrusted with the service of His glory, *out of His free grace and sovereign will, for the sake of Jesus Christ*. Such a man is an instrument only, but he is the instrument of the ever living God. He depends on His Creator and Law-giver, but he is free and independent of everything in this world. He is a servant only, but the servant of a heavenly goal. He is small and weak, but the Lord God shows His power in his feebleness.

“This religious determination is a characteristic in your theological conception, dear Professor. But it is good to know that this determination is the foundation of the clear self consciousness of every true Christian personality. It is the *conditio sine qua non*, the preliminary condition of the correct development of every social community. It is the only guarantee of the freedom of nations and a blessed pledge of the independence of the visible Church of Christ. By the teaching of this religious determination, Dr. Bouma, you are a true follower of our great reformer: *Johannes Calvinus*.

“Through the presentation of this diploma all these things are acknowledged, certified and professed by us.

“In the name and by the authority of our church district and our Faculty I wish the blessing of God upon your life and work and I request you, dear Professor, to accept from me this honor and testimony of our Sárospatak Theological Seminary with brotherly love.”

After this presentation speech he handed Professor Bouma a most beautiful diploma. The work-

manship is superb. Dr. Bouma then responded appropriately to this effect:

He did not know whether to feel honored or humbled at this moment. He felt deeply the honor bestowed upon him, but also humbled because he did not feel deserving of this diploma more than others who like him were champions of the Reformed Faith. He then said that what Dr. Zsiros had ascribed to him was exactly what Calvin College and Seminary stood for. He looked upon the granting of this diploma not only as a recognition of him as a man but as a representative of the Christian Reformed denomination.

Reflections

The main design of this article is to express our congratulations and to allow all our FORUM readers to share with the Calvin faculties and student body the privilege of reading this fine presentation speech of Dr. Zsiros.

The following are some of the impressions that stirred our souls.

An academy in its 419th year conferred a professorship upon one in an institution that is still in its adolescence. Unwittingly we engage in a bit of reverie. We dream of the Reformation, of the students of this great school, who were the heroes of religious liberty, and even of the great educator, Comenius.

Faith speaks a universal language. Racially the Hungarians are different from our Dutch forebears, but in Christ we are one, and we speak the same language of the Reformation. We felt a foretaste of that great day to come when from all tongues and tribes we shall adore the same Christ who is now watching the great day of tribulation of his elect in Hungary.

We were reminded of the Protestant Ecumenicity of Reformation days. Men were not so nationalistic that a man's country overshadowed his ability and qualifications. Somehow this professorship and that of Dr. Osterhaven has made the Reformed world shrink greatly. It has made the urge a thousandfold stronger to have a Reformed International as a reflection of what Christ has taught us: to be one in the same faith.

Another thing which impressed us is that Sárospatak lies in the north-east corner of Hungary, the city closest to the Russian border. Here is an Academy that is challenged to remain the citadel of the Reformed faith. Here was one of its captains upon the Calvin rostrum.

Finally, Professor Bouma sensed the challenge this presentation implied. In his acceptance he stressed that we were held responsible by God to press onward and forward while Europe was seething with unrest.

Surely the clock of time strikes “vigilance” louder today than even during the Reformation!

Ethiopia and the Return of the Italian Colonies

Copy of Letter sent to a Presidential Candidate

Denver, Colorado
September 11, 1948

The Honorable Governor Thomas E. Dewey
Capitol Building
Albany, New York

Dear Governor Dewey:

ABOUT two weeks ago, I saw or heard a pronouncement to the effect that you were in favor of the return of Italian Colonies to Italy. Though I am in favor of the Republican platform in general and sincerely hope that the Republican Party attains victory in the November elections, I must register my reactions as firmly opposed to this matter of the return of Italian Colonies to Italy.

I spent four and a half years in Ethiopia as a Medical Missionary, from 1935 to the end of 1939, having been medical director and superintendent of the George Memorial Hospital in the American Mission (United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia, Penn.). I arrived on the scene at a time when it was a question in everyone's mind as to whether Mussolini would carry on an aggressive war against Ethiopia. What happened soon after this is a well-known matter of history. I was in an excellent position, however, to feel the pulse of national feeling among the Ethiopian people, and it was my privilege on three occasions to meet His Majesty the Emperor, Haile Selassie.

Students of history well know how Ethiopian resistance broke down before the ridiculous show of force which Italy carried on, and against which Ethiopia had no hope from the beginning, should the war start. It was verily a parallel with the lion going after the mouse. Italy was rated as a great power and had modern armaments whereas Ethiopia, due to millenniums of isolation, could put up a defence comparable only to that of medieval times. We were witnesses of modern bombers, and numerous cases of poison gas were treated in our hospital, (notwithstanding Italian denials!). Due to the inferior equipment, resources and know-how, Ethiopia was comparatively soon overrun, though not as soon as the Italians expected. The reason for this comparatively slow progress of the war was the fact that the Ethiopians had a great principle of right on their side. When a soldier is convinced that his cause is just, he can generally do far more

than is expected of him. However, the final result was inevitable, and I was a witness to the marching of Mussolini's legions into the Capital city of Addis Ababa. I was also a witness to the cruel, suppressive measures which the Italians used later to subjugate its unwilling vassals. Throughout the Italo-Ethiopian war, we felt that the sentiment of the American people was in favor of the Ethiopians though the government took no official action, and business firms were allowed to sell scrap-iron and other material, including tractors, trailers, etc., to the Italian government. It was with anything but pride that we saw huge American trucks and trailer trucks hauling maximum loads of oil and gasoline into the capital city to establish that as a base. It was the old story all over again of supplying aggressors with the means by which they could carry on their unjust aggression. This we learned later, to our sorrow, when Japan used our scrap-iron against our boys.

When will America learn that America's sense of international morality must coincide with that of the actions of her commercial interests? While we were in daily danger of being bombed from the air by the Italians, at that very moment we were receiving reports that street car tracks, etc., were being torn up in American cities and being sold to Italy as scrap. We now have three sordid examples of unjust aggression, Hitler, Mussolini and Japan, both against China, and against us at Pearl Harbor. When I returned to America in 1939, my ship, the President Pierce, changed its course somewhat because on its outbound journey from America it was so heavily laden with scrap-iron for Japan that it first went to Kobe and Yokohama to unload, and on the return journey from Manila it was not necessary to visit Japan as all American vessels were finding it more profitable to make a direct journey laden with scrap-iron.

The return of Italian colonies to Italy is in direct violation of the spirit of the Atlantic Charter. Nor is the Atlantic Charter to be looked upon only as an idealistic pronouncement, not to be carried out when the opportunity is present. The Ethiopians are an ancient people with racial origins which go far back, even before medieval days. It is a matter of historical record that Eritrea, as well as more of the Red Sea Littoral, have belonged to Ethiopia for centuries. The future disposition of Eritrea and other colonies adjacent to Ethiopia should be determined, not by the needs or desires of Italy, but by

the Nationalistic consciousness of the people in the disputed territory as determined by a plebiscite, fairly conducted by objective international auspices. It is true that there is a minority in Eritrea which desire either union with Italy or complete independence. These are mostly Mohammedan. The vast majority of Eritreans, however, belong to the Ethiopian Church and have expressed themselves, and are expressing themselves, in no uncertain terms that they wish to be united to Ethiopia. Even as the roots of World War I can be traced directly to the Congress of Vienna in 1815, when Europe was divided, not on the basis of nationality, but on the basis of what the more powerful nations could get on the international "chess board", so the roots of further dissension, strife and war, will be built upon any return of former colonies to Italy, particularly Eritrea.

Some contend that return of former colonies to Italy does not include Ethiopia which is recognized as an independent country and as a member of the United Nations. Ethiopia is well aware, however, that proximity to Italy in Eritrea and other nearby

colonies will be strongly provocative of further aggression.

It has been said that your pronouncement was made as a means of gaining favor with the large Italian vote in New York and in other states. We have only to recall, however, that many Italian-Americans were not in favor of their native Italy overrunning Ethiopia, and that to every fair-minded Italian-American, allowing Italy to return to East Africa is a means of carrying on the imperialistic policies of the nineteenth century. We, as Americans, pride ourselves that no peoples are unwilling subjects under our flag. It is only consistent Americanism that we allow Ethiopia and other nations to work out their own future without duress or aggression from imperialistic nations.

Yours very respectfully,

(Signed)

JOHN A. CREMER, M. D.
Medical Director
Bethesda Sanatorium

4400 East Iliff Avenue
Denver 7, Colorado

Recent Trends in New Testament Study*

William Hendriksen
Professor of New Testament
Calvin Seminary

THE business of occupying the chair of New Testament Exegetical Theology must be a snap. It should require hardly any effort at all. Is it not true that in the early history of our school one professor taught the following subjects: Dogmatics, Old Testament History, New Testament History, General History, Church History, O. T. Exegesis, N. T. Exegesis, Practical Theology, Geography, Chronology, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew? Sometimes the editorship of the church-paper or other functions which today require full-time were added for good measure, to keep the professor out of mischief. For the work at school a generous salary of \$1,000-\$1,300 was allowed.

But even these miracle-men were overshadowed by the many-talented Leonardo da Vinci of fifteenth and sixteenth century fame, of whom a biographer relates that he was "an architect, sculptor, painter, poet, musician, chemist, engineer, merchant, and [as if we did not suspect it] a profound thinker, a precocious originator of all modern wonders and ideas, a subtle and universal genius . . . the restorer of all the arts and sciences."

* Address delivered at the Opening Exercises of Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich., on Wednesday, September 8, 1948.

And here we are: somewhat conversant with just one field of knowledge: theology; professor in one division of that field, *Exegetical Theology*; not, however, in the whole of it but only in one department, *New Testament Exegetical Theology*. What a snap!

So it would seem. Nevertheless, as Longfellow told us long ago, things are not what they seem. The fact is that this New Testament Department is a territory so vast that it is no exaggeration to say that any man, straining his God-given capacities to the utmost, and using all the tools at his disposal, will still not be able to cover it with any degree of thoroughness in a lifetime.

In this paper we shall endeavor merely to scratch the surface; that is, to examine the topsoil, not the subsoil. Or, to change the figure, we shall not ask you to climb into every main branch that grows out of the stem of the N. T. tree, and we shall certainly not risk either your or our own health by venturing out upon numerous twigs. We shall investigate recent trends in *some* of the main branches of N. T. study. We shall describe the *trends*, and shall not attempt to give you a lengthy list of recent book-titles. There are several N. T. Bibliographies and other works which furnish the titles. In addi-

tion, we have written extensive reviews which have appeared in public, and from these sources such information can easily be gathered.

Lexicography and Grammar

In our Seminary Catalog *New Testament Greek and Elementary Exegesis* heads the list of undergraduate subjects in our department. Among graduate courses there are two *N. T. Reading* courses, also one *Hellenistic Reading* course and one course in the significance of *Biblical Aramaic* for the study of the *N. T.* It is evident, therefore, that all these courses aim to promote the student's ability to read and interpret the New Testament. Now a person who approaches subjects such as these may easily commit the error of thinking that lexicography and grammar belong to the category of finished products. Deeper reflection and more thorough study soon reveal that even in matters such as these we have traveled no farther than the first few miles. That this is true *today*, in the year of our Lord 1948, may cause surprise, but it is true just the same. So, for example, it is a fact that a good *N. T. Lexicon* does not exist. We make this statement without fear of successful contradiction, and in the full awareness of a certain amount of progress which has been made. G. E. Wright of the McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, stated in a recent article: "A new dictionary of New Testament Greek which utilizes the papyri and the LXX . . . is sorely needed." (*The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, edited by H. R. Willoughby, p. 78). Now that clause "which utilizes the papyri and the LXX" deserves attention. It serves to emphasize the woeeful state of affairs for the question immediately suggests itself: How can there be a *N. T. Lexicon which utilizes the LXX* as long as we are still waiting for an adequate dictionary of the LXX? Nothing that approaches completeness has ever been produced. There is an old work in Latin, but as our own recent studies have indicated, that work is far from complete.

Another question which demands an answer is this: Before we begin to clutter the entries of the *N. T. Lexicon* with all kinds of material from the papyri, should we not first of all settle the question to what extent this papyri-material can be legitimately used to shed light on *N. T.* terms and constructions? At present there is certainly no agreement on that issue. On the one hand E. J. Goodspeed, in line with A. Deissmann, J. H. Moulton, G. Milligan, A. T. Robertson, and many others, proclaims that the Gospels are written in popular Greek, that Semitisms must not be expected, and that just about every *N. T.* word can be explained in the light of the papyri. Here are his own words: "Many unusual constructions in the *N. T.* Greek used to be explained as Semitisms—that is, as due to imitation of Hebrew or Aramaic idioms. But in

the presence of the Greek papyri these too have rapidly dwindled until they have lost any literary significance." (Article in *Atlantic Monthly*, Oct., 1936). But, on the other hand, C. C. Torrey, A. T. Olmstead, and others, in several books and articles, deny all this in no uncertain terms. They are convinced that the literature of the Koine dialect is unable to account for the peculiarities of *N. T.* Greek; that any attempt to show something similar in the papyri fails utterly; and that an exegesis of Jesus' sayings based on the Greek alone is hopelessly out of date.

As we see it, there probably is an element of truth and of error in both positions. Detailed and undeniable evidence has established the fact that by studying really comparable papyri-material something can be learned about the characteristics, grammar, and vocabulary of *N. T.* Greek. Similarly, something can also be learned by delving into the Hebrew, the LXX, and the peculiarities of Aramaic grammar and lexicography. We fear, however, that the opposing camps, which represent two present-day trends, each insisting upon its own theory and at times rejecting the opposite as being utterly nonsensical, have failed to do full justice to a simple rule; namely, that, after all, the Bible is its own best interpreter. In our own investigation into the meaning of the preposition ANTI in the New Testament we soon discovered that the papyri-material furnished little information which could not be gathered more readily and clearly from a study of the LXX and especially from a careful investigation of the *N. T.* context, in which the preposition occurs. This study has confirmed us in the conviction that Reformed Hermeneutics is correct when it insists on the great value of the study of *the context* in the work of Exegesis. We would, moreover, solemnly warn students against attempts, of which several examples could easily be given, to explain *N. T.* terms wholly in the light of the connotation which they may attain in certain non-religious papyrological settings. Even in our *Lexicography and Grammar* we should remain Reformed. Moreover, what good reason can there possibly be for giving our unqualified support to either of two camps which are guilty of defending unwarranted extremes as they fiercely contest each other's conclusions? While we gratefully acknowledge whatever real light is furnished by sources that lie outside of the New Testament, let us place the emphasis where it belongs and let us, accordingly, continue the Reformed tradition of explaining *N. T.* terms and constructions on the basis of their *N. T.* contexts.

Parenthetically we may add that one should not fall into the error of placing too much confidence in the lexicon. Yes, even then when, in support of a certain meaning, references are given, one should be sure to look them up. Again and again it will be discovered that the references fail to prove what they were supposed to prove. Is it possible that the dictionary-definition is at times the result of the

philosophical or religious bias of the author? Could that possibly be the reason why W. Bauer in his famous *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, third edition, Berlin, 1937, entry ANTI, refuses to ascribe the substitutionary sense to that preposition, as used in the highly significant saying: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a LUTRON ANTI POLLOON"?

Returning to what we stated a moment ago, it should be clear by this time that as long as the relative significance of papyri-material for N. T. lexicography and grammar is still the subject of fierce contention it will be useless to look for a really good N. T. Lexicon. In the meantime we shall allow Goodspeed and his school to fight Torrey and his school, and in our work of Exegesis we shall continue to apply hermeneutical principles that are tried and tested (having been taught here at Calvin for many, many years) and that are safer by far and not less scholarly than either of the opposing trends which today are contending for the mastery.

One more word about N. T. Lexicons is necessary. Why is it that at best these books merely present facts and furnish data, but fail to show the student how this information can be acquired as a lasting possession? Is it not deplorable that to this very day no one has written a handy N. T. Lexicon which throughout shows the relation between Greek and English words, so that at a glance the student will see how this Greek word, which at first looks so formidable and bewildering, is, after all, a component element in a very familiar English term? Is it not an undeniable fact that memorization (for example, the acquisition of a foreign-language vocabulary) is based upon the process of mental association? Why then has no one ever written a Three Column Lexicon of the N. T., showing, in parallel columns: a) the Greek word, b) its English equivalent, and c) wherever possible (which means in most cases), the English cognate or derivative? Must books be difficult in order to be worthwhile? Must sermons be hard to digest in order to edify?

It is possible that the student who has been following us up to this point will say: But why spend so much time on utterly dry subjects like lexicography and grammar? All we, as future ministers, need is the *Pulpit Commentary* or some *Sermon Illustration Book*, and we can go on our way rejoicing. We answer that unless a future minister of the Word studies the Bible thoroughly, and in the original languages, he may soon find himself in the predicament of a certain long departed preacher who had fallen in to a similar neglect. At the close of his first year in the ministry he is reported to have sent an S.O.S. to the Faculty of the Seminary from which he graduated. It was to this effect: "Please help me, as I am at a loss what to do. I have preached through the entire Bible, from Genesis to Reve-

lation. I have reached the end of my rope. *Ik ben uitgepreekt.*"

In addition to—or, perhaps, in combination with—a really good N. T. Lexicon we need a book of N. T. Synonyms. We rejoice in the fact that R. C. Trench's well-known treatise is being republished. It contains much that is excellent. Nevertheless, anyone with even a superficial knowledge of the N. T. field readily understands that a book written about seventy years ago will hardly suffice today. To be sure, the progress in N. T. research, especially along this line, has been slow, but not quite as slow as all that. The Synonym book which we envision should, in the first place, be far more complete than is that of Trench, and secondly it should incorporate the results of worth-while lexicographical studies which have been made during the last several decades and which have been incorporated in numerous articles and theses.

Translation and Commentaries

As is clear to anyone who has perused recent Bibliographies of N. T. Literature, very little has been done of late in the realm of scholarly, conservative N. T. commentaries in the English language. Older works have been or are being republished, but these, as should be self-evident, cannot fully satisfy present-day needs, inasmuch as they naturally have not kept pace with whatever advance there has been in textual criticism, archeology, lexicography, and related studies. What is urgently needed, as we see it, is a Commentary on the N. T. in the English language written by American authors of Reformed persuasion. These men should be scholars, versed in the three Bible languages: Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic. Although the contents of such work should indicate that it is based on thorough study, its style and language should be sufficiently simple and vivid to make it useful to the intelligent layman. Such a commentary is long overdue. We might suggest that it be accompanied with a new translation of the N.T., somewhat on the order of what is found in *Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift*, where these two elements, new translation and new commentary, occur side by side.

This last remark naturally calls for some statement with respect to present-day trends in the sphere of translating the N. T. into English. Versions of the N. T. are appearing so fast that one can hardly keep up with them. When one has become thoroughly acquainted with Moffatt and with Goodspeed, a new edition of Weymouth is suddenly thrust upon the market. Next appears the Berkely version by Verkuyl, a work of considerable merit, though the rendering is rather free at times, and finally, the *Revised Standard Version*, which right now is creating such a stir. We have made a somewhat detailed study of this version. On the favorable side it must be said that, among other things,

it has done away with *many* archaisms—by no means *all* (note: “Move hence to yonder place,” Matt. 17:21)—, that it is somewhat more keenly aware of grammatical mood and tense distinctions, that, barring several unhappy exceptions, it is based on somewhat more scholarly work in the field of textual criticism, and that it does greater justice to what, after everything has been said, will probably still be regarded as Semitisms.

On the opposite side, it cannot be too strongly stressed that this version, as we pointed out from the very beginning, is characterized by many faults. Conservative scholars should have expected this. None of them should have been caught napping when this new translation (which erroneously calls itself a revision) made its appearance. Dr. O. T. Allis calls it a *liberal* version. In his *Revision or New Translation*, just off the press, he states: “If by ‘liberal’ version is meant a version which represents a lax and ‘liberal’ attitude to the question of the plenary, verbal inspiration and the divine authority of Scripture, then RSV is clearly such a version.” (p. 143.) He quotes the statement of one of the men who prepared this version. After calling attention to difficulties in translating, that author stated: “But once the translator of the New Testament is freed from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration, these difficulties cease to be formidable.” Our own investigation has convinced us that in many instances this RSV is not a version at all but at best an interpretation or an attempt at paraphrase. Words—sometimes entire phrases—are omitted; expressions are inserted; lengthy sentences are simply cut up into shorter ones in such a fashion that style and meaning disappear, and what in the original is a modifier has now become an independent sentence. Thus, for example, Paul’s joyful and confident expression of gratitude to God for the spiritual progress of the people at Philippi is no longer grounded in the firm conviction that he who has begun a good work in them will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ; see Phil. 1:3-7. What in the original is a modifier has become an independent sentence, with loss of meaning. Again the sentence-order has in numerous cases been completely changed, thus destroying the intended emphasis of the original; and finally, numerous notes which appear in the American Standard Version and are of great value were simply dropped. What is needed is a true and faithful version of the New Testament, made by conservative scholars.

Works on New Testament Introduction

Among the subjects taught in the New Testament Department *N. T. Introduction* may be considered one of the most important. In this field there has been bustling activity in recent years. Several new books, some of them excellent in many respects, have been published of late. Neverthe-

less, among these books we have not seen any that combines the following musts: (a) it must be alive with respect to the recent trends in *N. T.* study, discussing present-day issues from a conservative point of view; (b) it must devote ample space to the discussion of the actual contents of the *N. T.* as a whole and of its several books; and (c) it must present its themes, outlines, and other materials in such a manner that these can be rather easily retained by the student. A really good and up-to-date *N. T. Introduction* is urgently needed. Broadly speaking, we can divide recently published *N. T. Introductions* into the following groups:

First, there are the texts which may be classified as radical. These proceed from the History of Religions’ point of view, and regard much of what is found in the *N. T.* as the product of the passing fancies of undeveloped, rather primitive, minds. According to this school Paul affirms what James denies. The fact that some of these books have already gained wide popularity and have been introduced in certain seminaries is deplorable.

Secondly, there is the *N. T. Introduction* falsely called conservative. Probably as the result of the Barthian influence several books of this character have made their appearance of late. Their authors tell us that the Bible is a fine book, indeed. They stress that return to the Bible is the only hope for the church. They even enlarge on this theme, but they do not regard the entire Bible, as originally written, to be the inspired Word of God. Again and again they make inexcusable concessions to the position of liberal theology. Nevertheless, throughout their books they keep on emphasizing that they are conservative. One of them even spells the word conservative with a capital letter. He seems to think that the implied exclamation: “I am a Conservative, CONSERVATIVE, CONSERVATIVE,” will prove to be convincing in the end, somewhat after the fashion of those who say that any lie can be made acceptable if it is repeated often enough. Another author whom I would place in this group writes an Introduction to the New Testament but completely omits any discussion of a few of its books. He ignores them as if they did not exist.

Now this attitude to Scripture is dangerous. We should be on guard against it. This certainly does not mean that one must make a hobby of fighting Barthianism. Far from it. This movement must be studied in the light of its own historical background and in the light of Scripture. It should not be represented as being either better or worse than it is. Nevertheless, when the doctrine of plenary, organic inspiration, a doctrine so dear to us, and so fundamental is caricatured, when it is represented as being inconsistent with the study of textual criticism—as is done by E. Brunner in *Revelation and Reason*, p. 274—, and when that same author who on several pages of his book clearly ridicules the orthodox position fails to show us by what criterion he himself accepts certain portions

of Scripture but rejects others, it is time to condemn such unfair procedures in the most emphatic language. In this connection we would call your attention to Prof. L. Berkhof's "What is the Word of God?", a chapter in *The Word of God and the Reformed Faith*, p. 51 ff. Read that fine summary of the Reformed position with respect to the Bible as the inspired Word of God. At this point we cannot refrain from expressing the sincere wish that every student may, in his struggle with the Dutch language, achieve the necessary efficiency to read with profit that real gem: G. C. Berkouwer's *Het Probleem der Schriftkritiek*. Let it be remembered that some of the best N. T. literature from the Reformed point of view is being produced in the Netherlands. If others, without any Dutch background whatsoever, have burned midnight oil in order to acquire a knowledge of the Dutch language so that they might read its excellent religious literature, why not you who glory in your Dutch descent? Of late several first-class books in the field of the New Testament have been published in The Netherlands. We refer to such works as: S. Greijdanus, *Schriftbeginselen ter Schriftverklaring*; same author, *Bizondere Canoniek*, a work in N. T. Introduction; H. N. Ridderbos, *De Strekking der Bergrede naar Mattheus*; same author, *Zelfopenbaring en Zelfverberging*; and, last but not least, to that truly beautiful work *Christus De Heiland*, in which the best Reformed scholars of The Netherlands have given us their finest contributions on this glorious subject. The work was edited by F. W. Grosheide. No one who wishes to pass as a real Reformed theologian, at least no one who would be known as somewhat at home in Reformed *New Testament* literature, can afford to ignore books such as these. Works of this character, whether published in The Netherlands, in our own country, or elsewhere should be diligently studied. They constitute the cream. Why be satisfied with skim-milk? Moreover, these authors regard the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

In the third group of recent N. T. Introductions we would place those which, though wholly sound in principle and excellent in many of their features, are lacking in distinctive methodology. These works reveal the tendency, to a greater or lesser degree, of following the negative Bible-critic step by step. The critic, in his book, has tried to show that a certain N. T. book is of doubtful authorship. He has, let us say, presented ten arguments to prove his position. The conservative answers these arguments one by one with much evidence of erudition and with unassailable logic. His soundness cannot be open to questioning. Nevertheless, when finally he puts down his weary pen, he becomes aware of the fact that in answering the arguments of the critic he has used up all the available space. There is room only for one or two lines in which the entire contents of the Bible-book must be summarized. The result is this: when the student finishes his course he may know *all* about the critic, but *all*

too little about the Lord. He has been introduced to Harnack, but he has caught only a fleeting glimpse of Paul. To this error what we consider a minor fault is sometimes added. We refer to the fact that in some of these recent works—we are not discussing the older ones—the books of the New Testament are taken up one by one according to the order of arrangement found in the English Bible. This method is open to the objections mentioned in our *Bible Survey*, pp. 215-220.

In the fourth category we would like to place those books on N. T. Introduction which reveal the three characteristics that have been mentioned and avoid the errors which have been condemned. So, if one of you will be kind and industrious enough to write such a book, we shall immediately place it in this fourth category.

As to Form Criticism

In the field of *N. T. History* and so-called *Biblical Theology* books are appearing faster than anyone can read them. Paul is being "recovered" right along. That very apostle who in his hymn of love, I Cor. 13, defends the true and well-balanced religion over against such extremes as ecstatic emotionalism ("though I speak with the tongues of men and angels"), dogmatic intellectualism ("though I . . . have all knowledge"), humanitarian philanthropism ("though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor") and all-out asceticism ("though I give my body to be burned") has been called the advocate of each of these in turn. Says J. S. Stewart in his book *A Man in Christ* (p. 2): "We have had Paul the ecstatic visionary, Paul the speculative theologian, Paul the organizer and ecclesiastic, Paul the humanitarian moralist, Paul the ascetic." Most of the nineteenth century reconstructions of Pauline teaching have characterized him as a dogmatist, the creator of a philosophy of religion. Of late there have been several reactions, but on the whole they have not been of the right variety, witness several recent attempts to make of the great apostle a mystical dreamer or a man who was the victim of epileptic seizures.

As to the "life" and teaching of Christ, Form-criticism is the vogue today. It is a historical reconstruction of the pre-Gospel writing period, or rather, an attempt to arrive at such a reconstruction. The material of which the Gospels are made are divided into several distinct units, types, or forms; such as, miracle-stories, sayings of Jesus, apocalyptic sayings, etc. These separate units are then divested of whatever the Form-critic regards as extraneous material; i.e., material that was added to the original form. The theories of many of these Form-critics are subjective in the extreme. They believe that miracle-stories must be late, for the simple reason that miracles could not have happened. Often, the presupposition, whether expressed or implied, is of this character: the Gospel-stories

are nothing but folk-tales that have grown by gradual accretion, like a rolling snowball. Early preachers took the "forms" as they found them, and added or subtracted—usually added—to suit their purpose. These advocates of Form-criticism fail to explain how, in striking contrast with the rise and development of folklore, in the very brief period of a single generation during which the Gospel-tradition was transmitted orally, and in spite of all the eye-witnesses, including several men of keen intellect and historical acumen, mere folk-tales could have gained such general currency and widespread acceptance. They fail completely to explain how such a mighty and glorious movement as Christianity could have developed from such a false start.

What the new trend may lead to is clear from a statement by one of its earliest proponents, Rudolf Bultmann. Says he: "I do indeed think that we can now know almost nothing of the life and personality of Jesus . . ." (*Jesus and the Word*, p.8). Another clear illustration of what the trend has accomplished is seen in C. W. F. Smith, *The Jesus of the Parables*. What is left of the Parable (e.g., of the sower,) after Smith gets through with it conveys a totally different lesson from the one which the reader, uninstructed in the niceties of Form-criticism, has found as he studied it in his own N. T. Though several trenchant refutations of the errors and weaknesses of Form-criticism have been published, the critics go their merry way. The business of peeling the apple, cutting it to pieces and getting at the core, is too interesting a pastime to be given up easily. Moreover, just now the expert in this art rejoices in the reputation of being considered very learned. It is too bad for the theory that the critics themselves differ so widely on so many basic points. The whole spectacle would be amusing if it were not so serious.

* * *

What has been presented in this paper was not intended as an exhaustive summary of all that is new in the field of New Testament studies. We have merely pointed out certain trends. These trends, sad to say, are mostly negative. Many of them are mutually conflicting. Nevertheless, their adherents swear by them, and one is considered unscholarly if he does not accept whatever happens to be advertised as the latest discovery.

The Reformed scholar, who takes his stand upon the sure foundation of the Word of God, has a mountain of work ahead of him. Even when you and I limit ourselves to the writing of the most essential books, such as will be in the nature of tools for further research, this task will require years of patient toil. Scores of men must be engaged in it. It is, however, work that must be accomplished. It must be done for the sake of God and His kingdom, in order that the glorious work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may stand out more clearly than ever, and in order that the church which He

founded may cause its light to shine more brilliantly in this sin-darkened world. Let us then work while it is day, in thorough dependence upon the qualifying power and the sustaining grace of our Almighty, Triune, Covenant-God.

No Concern of Ours

THE situation being what it is, I was feeling worried lately, really down in the mouth. I wanted some advice. So I looked up a scientist, because I have heard that scientists know the answers. "The situation," I said to him, "is bad and what's more I believe it is getting worse. What do you mean to do about it?"

"I just work here," he said. "Ask him."

He took his hand off the test tube he was holding and pointed at his employer, a business man. "Things are bad lately," I said to him, "and I was wondering what you were thinking . . ."

"I simply tend to my business," he interrupted. "But for something like that now you ought to go over to the University. They get paid there for thinking about things."

The first man I found at the University was a professor of history. I figured he ought to know, and I said to him, "I don't like the trend lately, and I want you to tell me what ought to be done about . . ."

"About Russia," he said. "I know, everybody's wondering. Ask me next year, second semester; just now I'm doing the Graeco-Roman period."

Then I met that writer whose picture I had seen in the paper. I went up to him and said. "You're an artist, I hear. What are the artists saying about the state of the world lately?"

"Artists," he growled, "have nothing to do with the state of the world. Their responsibility is to their art." And as I left he barked after me, "Why don't you ask a preacher?"

That was an idea. They used to send us to the Chaplain in the Army too. I looked for a preacher and found one. He had his armfull of hymn books. "The world," I began, "is cracking at the seams, the bottom is dropping out, the . . ."

"I know it," he said, "but speak to me about it later. We're having a rally at the park tonight, and I haven't arranged for the song service yet."

It was plain I wasn't getting anywhere. I went back to the scientist in a huff, and came upon him talking to the business man, very friendly. "Who is responsible for things anyhow," I demanded.

"I told you," he said, "that I just work here. The government maybe."

"But that's commu-fascism, isn't it?" I was shouting now.

"Could be," said the business man, "but it's no concern of ours. We just tend to our business."

H. Z.

Some Presuppositions in Evolutionary Thinking*

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SOME time last winter president Everest presented to the members of our affiliation a proposal that this organization publish its estimate of the evolution theory after we have thoroughly studied and discussed the matter and have come to certain definite conclusions. It was suggested that the proposed publication should appear about ten or eleven years hence, at a time coinciding with the centennial of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. This would give the members of our affiliation ample time to prepare a thoroughly scientific and scholarly work on the Christian approach to this vital and important subject. The suggestion is no doubt an excellent one. There is perhaps no greater need among us than a scholarly Biblical statement of views in regard to evolution.

Since the publication of the *Origin of Species* the theory of evolution has become established in the various fields of science to such an extent that one must admit its well-nigh universal acceptance. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of books and papers have been written against it but to no avail so far as the prestige of the theory among the rank and file of the scientists is concerned. Religious leaders have attempted to stop the onrush of this theory because it seemed to conflict with the account of creation in Scripture but their attempts have gone largely unheeded. There is no use in duplicating work already done by others. If our organization is to do anything in this line it should be something different, something more fundamental than anything that has thus far been attempted. We shall have to be positive rather than negative. We shall have to construct rather than break down. If we do that, we shall have to start at the bottom, at the foundation. And it is just here that we, who believe the Scripture as God's inspired truth, differ from most evolutionary scientists of today. Faith in God and in His Word is not a refuge for a bewildered mind whose native capacities have failed to comprehend the intricacies of a complex universe. It is rather a starting point and an accompaniment to the normal functioning of the mind. It is a guide to truth. We must be willing to assert that we start with certain presuppositions when we interpret nature. We must be conscious of these presupposi-

tions, test their validity, and proceed from them to the logical conclusions.

This may sound very unscientific in this age of inductive reasoning, and yet, in following this method we need be no more deductive than the modern scientist who interprets all he sees in the light of his evolutionary conception. I have yet to see a consistent evolutionary interpretation that was derived by a purely inductive process.

It is the purpose of this paper to point out briefly some fundamental presuppositions that are basic to evolutionary thinking, to evaluate them, and to give their counterparts in our own approach to the questions of interpretation of natural phenomena. I mention just four, though there may be others.

The evolutionist believes:

1. That our knowledge of natural phenomena comes from nature alone.
2. That the fundamental similarities among living organisms can be explained only on the basis of a relationship of descent.
3. That the variations or changes that are observed in living organisms are unlimited in their scope, and
4. That the causes of such changes are operative today in the same way they have always been in the past.

* * *

The first mentioned presupposition, namely, that our knowledge of natural phenomena comes from nature alone, is in a sense basic to all the rest, for it is our counterpart to this propositions which enables us to see the limitations and shortcomings of the other three. The counterpart to the first proposition would read something like this:

Natural phenomena are not known from nature alone but from nature and from the Scriptures, for God has revealed Himself not only in nature but in the Scriptures as well. And it is precisely with the aid of this latter revelation that we get a complete picture of the facts.

Now it is evident that right here at the beginning of our considerations our faith plays its important part. It is here also that we can expect the most severe opposition. For what, after all, have we done with the so-called scientific method? Have we discarded it altogether? If so, we cannot expect to receive a listening ear from those who have so proud-

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ly and to a large extent so justifiably lauded its achievements during the past centuries. It is for us to point out that we have not dropped the scientific method altogether but that we have amplified it. We have included with our sources of knowledge the inscripturated word, because we believe it to be a part of the whole. Our unbelieving and liberal associates will not accept this inclusion as valid. We can only point out that without it we shall not be able to get a complete picture, for such questions about nature as whence? whither? and wherefore? can not be answered without it. We must be willing to take this position from the outset or lose the cornerstone of our entire scientific structure.

* * *

The second presupposition (that the fundamental similarities among living organisms can be explained only on the basis of a relationship of descent) is an assumption which seems logical when one considers that ordinarily things which are similar have a common origin. Lindsey in his *Textbook of Evolution and Genetics*, for instance, devotes several paragraphs to this point.¹⁾ He states among other things that, "When relationship is mentioned, the immediate thought aroused is of similarity. Further analysis shows that we cannot have similarity, i.e., relationship, without some degree of community of origin." To Lindsey and other evolutionists any similarity indicates a relationship of descent, a genetic relationship, and therefore, since living organisms have at least some structures in common, even though they be only protoplasts and cell structure, they must all have come from a common protoplasmic and cellular ancestor. This conclusion is unwarranted. Though we may be willing to admit that similarities usually indicate a common origin, we cannot conclude that all living organisms are genetically related. Sometimes similarity does not indicate such a relationship but is evidence of a common creative idea. Our counterpart for this second evolutionary presupposition would be: "Similarities in living organisms do not always indicate a genetic relationship, but they may and do in this case point to a common cause, a common author, a common creator who has made all things according to certain fundamental plans." This conclusion is just as logical as the evolutionary conclusion and we accept it because it is in accordance with the revelation in the Scriptures.

* * *

A third presupposition deals with variations observed in living organisms. It is an observed fact that living organisms are not wholly static. That is, offspring are not identical with the parents. They differ from them in varying degrees of dissimilarity. The reasons for such dissimilarity can, at least to a large extent, be explained by Mendelian hered-

¹⁾ Lindsey, Chapter VII, 1937.

ity, gene mutations, and polyploidy. It must be said to the credit of Charles Darwin that he took note of the importance of variations although the above-mentioned phenomena were not known at his time. We can, however, not proceed to Darwin's conclusions that such variations have given rise to the various groups of animals and plants that exist today. Although modern scientists recognize the inadequacy of Darwin's theory, they nevertheless conclude that variations somehow or other have in the past and do now give rise to new forms of organisms. The whole quest of the modern evolutionists is to find some explanation for changes sufficiently significant to account for the appearance of these different forms. It is admitted that our present knowledge has not yet supplied us with an adequate explanation. Nevertheless, it is the firm conviction of evolutionists that there is an explanation and that through continued study and experimentation it will some day be discovered. It is this conviction that we can not share, for it is based not on facts in the first place, but on a previous acceptance of the evolutionary process.

On the other hand, both Scripture and our present knowledge of scientific facts indicate that variations are limited in their scope. All known causes for change, such as ordinary Mendelian inheritance, hybridization, mutations, polyploidy, appear to operate within certain set boundaries, within which we observe the variation to which evolutionists attach such great significance. They argue from the specific to the general. Since they see variations which give rise to different forms within a species, they conclude that similar variations have given rise to the different species, and genera, and families, *et cetera*. Such a conclusion is not logically warranted.

In Scripture we have the significant statement that God created living organisms "after their kind." The word "kind" is not necessarily synonymous with the word "species" as used by the modern scientist. Because of the confusion presented by the use of the word "species" for the Genesis "kind," Marsh suggests that the word "baramin" be used. Says he: "If this word were used it could present but one idea in the mind of the reader; not the broad Linnaean species, nor his narrow one, nor the modern 'species', but only the 'Genesis kind.'"²⁾ I do not know whether the use of such a new word is necessary. If it were used, however, it should be defined as a sort of kaleidoscopic entity within which the pattern and appearance may change and vary a thousand times, but whose various appearances are always limited by the number, shape, and color of the pieces that make up the pattern. This, I believe, is a true picture of the created "kinds" of organisms. They vary and change, but their pattern is always limited by the genetic composition of the germ cells. So far as I can deter-

²⁾ Marsh, F. L., *Evolution, Creation, and Science*, p. 162, 1944.

mine there is nothing in Scripture or in science that conflicts with such a conception. All the known facts seem to conform with it.

* * *

We come now to the fourth and last mentioned presupposition, namely, that the causes for change are operative today in the same way they have always been in the past. This has become one of the most fundamental assumptions of evolutionary thought. Dobzhansky in his *Genetics and the Origin of Species* mentions it as one of the three main assertions of evolution when he says, "All these changes have arisen from causes which now continue in operation and which therefore can be studied experimentally."³) Following in the wake of Charles Lyell and his actualistic geology, all evolutionists have made this principle their loadstar in determining the events of the past. For, as Nordenskiöld puts it: "If past natural phenomena in general are to be calculated or at least reconstructed with fair probability, it is necessary to start from the present, whose course of events it is possible to survey."⁴)

It is no doubt due to the appeal of such statements that this principle has been so universally accepted not only by evolutionists but also, credulously, by some who profess not to believe in evolution. A consistent application of this principle, however, spells evolution if not in fact then certainly in a way of thinking. A consistent application of this principle, it seems to me, does away with creation in the orthodox interpretation of this term. It identifies present phenomena of development and change with the developmental processes which we call creation. The latter has always been interpreted by conservative Bible scholars as a unique process, which was completed at the beginning of the seventh day. It should not be confused with God's sustaining care of His creation and His continued operation in the universe. These we call His providence. This distinctive character of God's creative work is clearly indicated in Genesis, where we read: "And the heavens and the earth were *finished*, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God *finished* his work which he had made; and he *rested* on the seventh day from all his work which he had made."⁵)

A belief in the uniqueness of the creative process brings us face to face with certain difficult questions. These questions should be squarely faced before we attempt to publish our views of the origin of this universe from a Christian, scientific point of view.

Why is it, for instance, that we so readily accept the period theory of the days of creation? Why is it that we so readily accept the two billion years

estimate of the age of this earth and include in that age the entire creative period? Is it not in part due to the fact that we erase the line of demarcation between creation and providence? Is it not because consciously or unconsciously we accept the principle that present natural phenomena are a measure of past events, including the events of creation? Have we not with credulity accepted the interpretations based upon this fourth presupposition?

If so, should we not first of all reconsider the implications of some of our conclusions lest we find ourselves torn loose from our moorings?

Scripture tells us *that* God created this universe with all that it contains. It does not tell us *how* God created it. Does His other revelation, the revelation in nature, tell us that? Are His operations in the care and sustenance of this universe perhaps the same as those which governed His creation? This appears to be the assumption of some of us. But is this assumption in accord with the Scriptures? If it is not, we err when we come to certain conclusions which are based upon it. Paul under the guidance of the Holy Spirit tells us that, "the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity."⁶) Do these "things that are made" also show us the processes God used in making them? And the writer to the Hebrews tells us that it is: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear."⁷) Does the Holy Spirit here mean to tell us that present appearances do not lead us into the mysteries of God's creative work?

It appears to me that we stand committed to an evolutionary philosophy if we do not distinguish clearly between creation and providence. But how then can we explain certain natural phenomena? How can a Christian geologist, for instance, explain the earth's strata without Lyell's presupposition? Will he have to return to the old cataclysmic theories of Cuvier and others? Hardly. But upon the basis of Scripture cataclysms can not be ruled out altogether. In this connection, we ask: Have Christian biologists and geologists (outside of Price and his associates) taken adequate account of such Biblical and historical facts as the effects of sin and the fall, the peculiar characteristics of the antediluvian period, and the tremendous effects of the deluge?

In connection with this fourth presupposition it seems to me we shall first of all have to assert that we cannot hope to explain God's creative work by means of empirical procedure. Furthermore, we can accept the assertion of Marsh⁸) that: "any . . . changes which have appeared in organisms *since creation* have arisen through natural causes which

³) Dobzhansky, T., *Genetics and the Origin of Species*, 2nd edition, p. 8, N. Y., 1941.

⁴) Nordenskiöld, *The History of Biology*, p. 456, 1928.

⁵) Genesis 2:1 and 2.

⁶) Romans 1:20.

⁷) Hebrews 11:3.

⁸) Marsh, F. L., *Evolution, Creation, Science*, p. 24. Washington, 1944.

now continue to be in operation and which therefore can be studied experimentally."

Before we as an organization are ready to express ourselves publicly and officially on the larger aspects of the evolution problem we should study prayerfully and scientifically such fundamental is-

ssues as I have tried to present in this paper. Then, with the help of God, we may at least be able to establish more firmly the faith of those who by God's grace are led to the truth and significance of that majestic pronouncement: "And God said let there be . . . and there was."

The Voice of our Readers

"A REAL GEM"

255 Jefferson Avenue, S.E.,
Grand Rapids 3, Michigan,
September 14, 1948.

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

My dear Dr. Bouma:

ALLOW me to compliment you on the very fine August-September issue of THE CALVIN FORUM. I enjoyed everything that was in it. A good and timely article was the one by Rev. R. O. De Groot under the caption, "Calvinism and Evangelism Today." When I read that article I thought of brother Afman, who is now laboring in Bellflower, California, and other laymen workers and evangelists who are always looking for practical and lucid material on this subject. It seems to me this article by Rev. De Groot contains the seed thoughts for a tract or a pamphlet, or a little handbook or guide for all those who are engaged in Calvinistic Evangelism.

Dr. Henry Zylstra's book review on "The Heart of the Matter" by Graham Greene is to my way of thinking outstanding. A real gem! There is a great and inspired sentence in this book review which sounds like a sonorous "finale" of a great symphony. In this sentence one finds the *summa summarum* of things real, expressed in a note of triumph and finality. The sentence bears repeating:

"The Christian is at bottom the most courageously thoroughgoing of realists, the one, after all, who dares to look the devil full in the face, and who, having seen God and Golgotha, finds all other glory and all other horror rather commonplace."

Thanks, Dr. Henry!

WM. B. EERDMANS, SR.

APPRECIATION

2229 Wetmore Avenue,
Everett, Wash.,
September 16, 1948.

Dear Doctor Bouma:

More than one of last year's monthly numbers was worth the subscription price of the whole year. The Lord's blessing has surely accompanied your strenuous labors. To Him be the glory and from Him our help will come when we consecrate ourselves wholly to the task of witnessing for Him. I am sure that this has been your experience also with this venture of faith: THE CALVIN FORUM. May it long continue to give positive Christian guidance amid the welter of intellectual and moral confusion into which our generation has fallen because it has forsaken the firm basis of God's Word.

Sincerely,

Your Brother in Christ,

H. J. TREZENBERG.

AS TO BARTHIANISM

Lafayette, Ind.,
August 7th, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

PLEASE allow me to register a few of my reactions to Rev. Alexander De Jong's reactions to my review of Dr. Van Til's book, *The New Modernism*, [June-July issue, p. 246].

First of all I notice that the difference between De Jong and myself is not a matter of the essential correctness of Van Til's analysis of the epistemological rootage of the Barthian theology. Yet the whole tenor of his article indicates that he has ignored my twice repeated assertion that on this score Van Til is essentially correct.

Our first difference concerns the propriety of designating Barthianism by the term "modernism." To substantiate his contention that "Van Til chose the best term possible in terminology this theological construction modernism," he presents a list of Christian doctrines which Barth admittedly distorts. Except for the Barthian construction of time, which incidentally was the focal point of my criticism of Barthianism, every doctrine listed has also been distorted by many other Christian theologians and Christian churches whom we do not as a matter of accepted parlance designate by the term modernism. Orr held a mythical interpretation of the Genesis account of the Fall and even Jonathan Edwards was on the verge of a "pre-temporal Fall"; yet we do not call them modernists. A refashioning of election and reprobation into something "different than the clear Pauline teaching," and a distorting of the Covenant of Grace and Infant Baptism, has been done by a host of Arminian and Fundamentalist Christians, but we do not call them modernists. In Roman Catholic thought "justification" and "sanctification" are fluid concepts yet we do not call her a Church of Modernism. Van Til suggests, and correctly so, that any of these digressions is a step toward modernism, yet we do not as a matter of fact call these men and churches modernists. To use the term thus would be both confusing and meaningless. It may be objected that Barthianism contains all these heretical distortions and therefore "modernism" is the "best possible term." This would be to make the applicability of the term a matter of degrees. But in this area of interest De Jong does not like degrees. The matter is all white or all black. He writes: "If an epistemology which excludes the Sovereign God of the Bible as antecedent Being who determines all things according to His Counsel"—which, he adds, destroys revelation in the Reformed sense—"doesn't designate modernism, then I would appreciate knowing what will delineate modernism." I wonder how many Christian thinkers actually do accept this basis and its determinations for their epistemology? I do not say that they ought not; I merely ask how many actually do? They that do not—and their number is undoubtedly many—are in De Jong's usage of the term *essential* modernists.

Men usually shy away from giving definitions of terms such as, "liberalism" and "modernism." Yet I would venture the judgment that one of the constitutive and definitive elements

of modernism is the denial of the unique deity of Jesus Christ. Modernism is parasitical. It is essentially negative and lives by the grace of Christianity and its protest against it, more specifically against a supernatural revelation through an Incarnate Deity. This places modernism outside the Christian Truth. This manner of drawing the line of separation coincides with the line drawn by the Bible, where the *essential* question is, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" Give the answer that He is God's Son, as the Barthians do, then one is *within* the Christian truth even though much of the rest of one's thought is honey-combed with heretical misconstructions. I grant that a theology ought to be judged by its most basic proposition. Accordingly I would like to ask the following question. The question is not whether Barth's Kantianism is the deepest root of the divergences between Barth's theology and Reformed thought. I think it is, as do also De Jong and Van Til. My question is rather this: Taking Barth's theology as a whole, which does more to give it form and content, thereby making it what it is, the deity of Christ or Kantianism? The answer is obviously the former; not even by the magic of dialectics could one begin to deduce even the twisted Barthian theology from the moralism of Kant. There is surely much "grey" in Barth, but it is not all unrelieved black. While we ought to be very careful with Barthianism, nothing is gained by overstating our case—except the dubious result of creating greater sympathy for Barth.

The same inability to see more than two colors and its resultant either-or attitude of absolutism is seen in De Jong's appraisal of Van Til's thought. I wrote, "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." De Jong asks, "Is it not somewhat confusing to speak of degrees of charity when we try to defend God's Word? Whenever we honestly . . . submit that theology to the criticism of God's Word, we are not being uncharitable, but rather true to our task." Had De Jong opposed me because of an impression that I was not wholly sympathetic to Van Til's epistemology, that surely would have been his privilege. Instead, he curiously confuses Van Til's epistemology with God's Word—and then consistently enough declares that here there is no room for degrees of charity. By a concealed twist of thought, my disagreement is no longer with Van Til's epistemology and the criticisms grounded in it, but with God's Word. The same tendency to identify human thinking with God's Word is unconsciously betrayed by the sequence of the following: "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, . . ." Such unqualified identifications, however, are illegitimate, for no matter how true and accurate our theological constructions, they never completely contain God's Word. If, however, it is not God's Word but Van Til's epistemology, which differs from that of Barth and even from elements of that of Bavinck and Kuyper, and an epistemology concerning which Van Til himself admits is but a good start on that long road toward a self-conscious Christian epistemology, then a degree of charity with respect to differences is in order. It is only out of order if this epistemological truth is the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

De Jong states that Van Til declares that, "he loves and adheres to the tradition of Calvin, Voetius," etc., and that "he wants to do nothing else than confront the theology of Barth and Brunner with the criticism of Scripture and a revelationally orientated epistemology." I do not doubt Van Til's love and desires. But it will, however, always be a *permissible* (even necessary) question whether Van Til or anybody else does in fact completely do so. It seems that De Jong himself concedes the right to differ with Van Til—without necessarily becoming Barthian or un-Scriptural. He writes in his last sentence: "there are still many vexing and searching questions involved in the construction of a soundly Biblical, Christian, and Reformed epistemology" and he pleads that we, "submit our conceptions of philosophy and theology to more consistent

and conscious self evaluation." If this is the state of affairs, charity is in order.

My primary purpose in writing, however, is to remove the reflections cast on my own theological thinking. In my review I asked, "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'?" To this question, which was purely a question and not a judgment clothed in a question, De Jong makes the incautious and bland assertion that, "In Daane's statement the terms 'faith' and 'theology of possession' are used in the Barthian sense." Nothing I have written or said warrants that statement. He continues, asserting that for Barth, "faith and possession are mutually exclusive and they seem to be for Daane also." This somewhat more cautious deduction De Jong apparently draws from my refusal to make a *simple unqualified* identification of "faith" and "possession." If they are not simply identical, then in his thought they must be "mutually exclusive." But here, too, the matter is not so simple. If faith and possession do not completely coincide, *i. e.*, if they are not identical, then, declares De Jong, faith is no longer "sure knowledge" as the Heidelberg Catechism teaches. To this I would answer: Faith certainly is knowledge, but this does not allow for a simple inversion of the identification so that one may say, "knowledge is faith." This would reduce Christianity to intellectualism. On this basis there would be no difference between knowing about Christianity and knowing Christ, nor would it be possible to maintain any distinction between so-called *historical* and *miraculous* faith and saving faith. I myself am of the opinion that our custom of speaking of historical and miraculous knowledge as "faith" is a tendency to invert the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism, which teaches that faith is knowledge, but not that knowledge is faith.

De Jong is correct in his reading of Barth when he says that faith for Barth is the dialectical principle in action. As an intellectual (epistemological) dialectic in which "yes" and "no" are in endless opposition and contradiction, I, too, reject it. But again the matter of the relationship of "faith" and "possession" cannot be settled by a flat *intellectual* "yes" or "no". (For the same reason I do not believe one does full justice to Barth if one interprets him exclusively on a philosophical basis.) For the truth about man—his sin and his faith—is not found in his thought but in his history. Accordingly, faith is involved in a *temporal* dialectic, for man's Fall is a *historical* fact and Christianity is a *historical* religion in which "grace and truth became in Jesus Christ." God's Gift, which is ultimately Himself—His coming to man—is not given all at once but progressively within the temporal-historic process and therefore a complete unqualified possession will obtain only at the *end* of the temporal-historic process, *i. e.*, in eternity.

For the Old Testament man Christ was coming; for us He both came and is coming. In every age the believer believes in something which he does not as yet possess *in the manner* in which he shall in eternity. In their faith, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had title to the earthly Canaan, but they did not possess it—as their nomadic tent-life testifies. *Hebrews* teaches that they were content with their "non-possession" because they sought the heavenly Canaan. Yet even as such, these heroes of faith are described as those that "received not the promise." The historical temporal character of both Christianity and our faith prohibits both the *mutual exclusion* and the *unqualified identification* of faith and possession. It is precisely the historical character of the revelation, which prohibits either a complete exclusion or a complete identification.

No, Barthianism is not "neo-orthodoxy", but neither is it sheer "modernism." How then shall we label it? Perhaps it would be better to omit the label—(not the criticism!) How, for instance, do we label the theology of H. Hoeksema or K. Schilder? Labels, in cases such as these, frequently do more harm than good.

As does De Jong, I too hope that more Reformed thinkers will turn more of their attention to these and related problems.

This, however, will not be encouraged by a premature eagerness to attach labels nor by non-too subtle hints from high places that Barth and Brunner are not worth our reading. If that were true then it would be very strange that Calvin Seminary, at least in my school days, offered a course in Barthianism. Whether we like it or no, it was Barthianism and not

Orthodoxy that rocked the theological world. This is to our shame. With hard work and intellectual respectability let us rise to the occasion and give the right answers to the urgent issues of today.

JAMES DAANE.

Lafayette, Indiana.

From Our Correspondents

SOUTH INDIA LETTER

Telugu Village Mission,
Adoni, South India,
July 28, 1948.

Rev. Dr. C. Bouma,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich. U. S. A.

My dear Friend:

FEELING the need of recreation a few evenings ago, I settled down with the help of an obliging friend to browse among the pages of a small pile of church periodicals. Many of them were, alas, three or four months old, but when one lives in the Orient and works among people to whom time is of little account, one acquires a tolerance of time-lag and delays of various kinds. Be that as it may, the perusal of an account of Mission Emphasis Week at Calvin earlier this year induced in your correspondent a certain impatience at the physical limitations which preclude a projecting of oneself in space and time so as to be able to sit in on gatherings of this type.

To an admirer of the denomination's premier seat of learning and all that it stands for, the promotion of mission-mindedness among the student body is a matter of genuine satisfaction. And as a Calvinist who is privileged to share in the direction of fairly extensive missionary work among India's so-called "Untouchables", I cannot but reflect on the repercussions such a policy might have on distant mission fields in the measurable future. We who know India realize only too well that there are multiplied millions among us who have never heard of the Kingship of Christ and His finished work of redemption. And yet it is most heartening to find so many avidly receiving the Gospel. It is also true that save in the great missionary cradles of North America and Western Europe, there is a sad dearth of Kingdom workers, particularly those who are of the Reformed persuasion. Realizing, therefore, the great and urgent need for preaching and teaching which conforms closely to the Reformed doctrinal position, and having come to believe in the Church as the Christ-ordained source of all missionary effort, I frankly covet the tremendous potential which you and your devoted colleagues are building up on the Calvin campus. May the Lord guide you in your several tasks!

Christian Missions in the New India

Having written a few months ago about the new 'atmosphere' current in Free India, let me dilate at this time on the general position of Protestant missions under the new set-up. But in order to make myself clear it will be necessary to mention that these units fall naturally into two main groups: the large Europe- and America-based denominational missions founded from 50 to 150 years ago, and the newer bodies—most of them inter or non-denominational, and a few of them indigenous—operated by various Christian societies but not directly sponsored by any particular Church or denomination. My own Telugu Village Mission, since its inception 28 years ago, has come in the latter category. However, it is a source of great encouragement to know that serious consideration is being given the matter of its future "stabilization" through

incorporation, wholly or in part, into the missionary program of the Christian Reformed Church, the project continuing to hold the prayerful interest of many friends in America.

Controlling many educational and medical institutions, the older denominational missions have not, as a general rule, been noted in recent times for an aggressive policy of evangelistic expansion. Of late years the majority of these large missions have been transferring power to the hands of qualified Indian nationals and have in consequence been shrinking in actual size and scope. Also, the recent big merger of a number of denominational groups into the Church of South India has resulted in further loss of identity with the corresponding parent denominations in Europe and America. In short, we are witnessing the emergence of a more or less National Church which, if rich in institutional amenities, is nevertheless lacking in orthodoxy and truly missionary fervor and zeal. In this connection one wonders just how a certain conforming Reformed group fits into the doctrinal picture in view of the almost overwhelmingly Arminian character of the new united Church's constitution.

Often weak in organization, the independent missions being without a strong church backing are sometimes unable to meet their commitments. For the same reasons the institutional work of these groups is generally inadequate or largely elementary, in its scope. But in spite of these obvious handicaps, a great deal of vigorous and successful Gospel work is accomplished by the native and foreign preachers attached to free-lance units with a correspondingly large and sustained intake of catechumens and converts. Moreover, these missions have kept clear of unionist entanglements, partly on grounds of orthodoxy, and partly because of a natural desire for complete freedom of conscience and policy.

Every Protestant missionary organization, however, denominational or otherwise, large or small, is faced today with dangers from several quarters,—dangers which may in time challenge the very existence of the evangelical missionary enterprise in India. I propose, however, to comment on just one of them—the most menacing—the challenge of Romanism, leaving the others to be dealt with, the Lord willing, in a subsequent South India letter.

Romanism and Protestant Missions

Unified in aim and organization in a manner altogether unknown to the divided ranks of Protestantism, the Roman Catholic Church has very recently further strengthened her position in India by having her far Eastern Apostolic Delegate represent the Vatican at New Delhi. Armed with seemingly limitless funds her host of suave, well-trained priests and educators carry out their policy of predatory expansion in a thoroughly systemized way. They seldom visit pagan centers, preferring apparently to seek their proselytes among Protestant Christians. Their victims are often obtained by various forms of chicanery: the offer of free education with food and clothing to children of the poor, irrespective of church affiliation, the tempting of ignorant under-privileged village Christians with gifts of food and even money, and by deliberately villifying Protestant missionaries and their native helpers. "Converts" gained in these and other equally illegitimate ways are regimented into perfunctory attendance at Mass, a telling of

their beads, and are taught cynically that they may now bow before the effigies of the Virgin Mary and various saints instead of the old Hindu gods and goddesses. But always with a remarkable working knowledge of psychology, an appeal is made to the love of the mystical, so dear to the heart of the average East Indian.

Having tried to convey to your readers some idea of the *modus operandi* of the Romanists in our midst, I find that the half has not been told, for instance, of the extensive estates and buildings which are being acquired from time to time to house their minions, and for use as sectarian colleges, seminaries, and high schools. Suffice it to say that the Roman Church has been busy for many years in an effort to entrench herself as strongly as is humanly possible, and that the progress made has been remarkable, particularly in view of the fact of their missionaries having no message to give her people save that of salvation by works and that, through the Church of Rome. Thirteen years' experience of Romanist pressure has convinced me that we who labor to propagate the historic, or orthodox faith that has come down to us from New Testament times can counter the wealth and power of Rome only by preaching and teaching the pure Word of God. Only thus, it seems to me, can we fortify our converts against the wiles of the enemy.

Before leaving the subject, I feel it would be appropriate to mention an interesting letter received not long ago from Dr. R. H. Borkent, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Evangelical Movement of the Netherlands at the Hague. I gathered from the letter that the organization is an anti-Romanist one seeking to quicken Protestant consciousness the world over. Evidently the rumbling of the Roman juggernaut reverberates through many lands besides pagan Hindustan.

Let me, in conclusion, assure you of my appreciation of the regular arrival of THE FORUM, the last being the May number with its many good things. "The Rediscovery of the Missionary Task" was to us the highlight since we had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Bavinck personally last fall. I feel that some of the problems he discusses are ours too—and of course they demand solutions.

With warm Christian greetings,
Fraternally yours,
ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH U. S. A.

Princeton, N. J.,
August, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

HERE are a number of developments that have come to a head within the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., that may be of interest to your readers. Hence this letter.

The Restoration Fund Commission, authorized by our 1945 General Assembly, which had as its goal the raising of \$27,000,000 within a period of three years to assist in repairing the destruction in Europe, Asia and America caused by the last World War, made what had been expected to be its final report at the 1948 Assembly meeting in Seattle, Washington. Its report of a total of \$25,101,432 in cash and pledges was disappointing in that it was an admission that the goal had not been reached but encouraging in that the amount raised was not only the largest ever raised by the Presbyterian Church but larger than any ever raised by any other denomination of similar size for a similar purpose. The Commission was continued with instructions to use every effort to collect the full \$27,000,000 not later than June 1, 1949.

Intermediate Catechism

Twenty-five years ago our General Assembly approved an Intermediate Catechism designed to meet the needs of teen-agers and others for whom the Westminster Shorter Catechism was deemed too difficult. That catechism, however, had fallen into

almost complete disuse, and in the hope of securing a catechism that would be really effective in educating the youth of the Church in its doctrines and government, the 1944 Assembly, on motion of Dr. Earl L. Douglass, widely known as the author of the *Snowden-Douglass Sunday School Lessons*, appointed a committee with Dr. Douglass as chairman to "revise and re-write" the Intermediate Catechism and to report to the next Assembly. Final action on the work of the committee was not taken until the 1948 Assembly. The committee recommended and the Assembly approved the changing of the name from the Intermediate Catechism to "An Outline of the Christian Faith in Question and Answer Form for Use in Communicants' Classes, in the Church School, and in the Home, with a Commentary on the Outline." The Outline contains sixty-nine questions and answers subsumed under eight heads, viz.: Our Knowledge of God; Man and his Sin; Christ our Saviour; Repentance and Faith; The Church and the Kingdom; The Means of Grace; The Christian Life; and The Future Life. Some indication of the extent of the Commentary is given by noting that the Questions and Answers when printed alone occupy fourteen pages but when printed with the commentary they occupy sixty-two pages. It is to be hoped that the Outline will be widely used. While it leaves considerable to be desired from the view point of the historic Reformed Faith yet it is so much better than what we have been led to expect from official sources in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in recent years as to be an occasion of rejoicing on the part of evangelicals. While this Outline has been authorized by the General Assembly for use in the churches it has not been approved by the Presbyteries and so is not part of the Constitution of the Church. Hence its status is not like that of the Shorter Catechism.

"The Presbyterian" and "Presbyterian Life"

The first issues of *Presbyterian Life: A Journal of Protestant Christianity* appeared in February of this year. This is a bi-weekly magazine, attractively printed with numerous illustrations, subsidized by the Church and designed to be "a journal of news, bringing the Presbyterian Church and its membership into intimate contact with all that transpires in the field and world of religion." To quote further from official sources, "it shall however be a truly Presbyterian magazine. To this end it shall also be a journal of information and promotion, bringing to the mind of the Church the whole task of the Church." The publication of such an official paper is in the main a new departure on the part of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The outcome of the venture will be awaited with much interest. It disclaims any intention of being an organ of opinion. It will be surprising, however, if in its news report and its efforts to promote the work of the boards and agencies of the Church it does not reflect the opinions of those in immediate control of the organization of the Church. Such previous attempts at an official paper as have been started in our Church have ended in failure largely because of the doctrinal colorlessness that has characterized them, or where they have been doctrinally colorful, by the dissatisfaction they have aroused in a Church as sharply divided doctrinally as is the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Presbyterians may read with interest papers with whose doctrines they do not agree, but it is hardly to be supposed that they will tamely submit to be taxed for their support. Such a paper as *Presbyterian Life* in a Church like the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.—unless it be true, as some would have us believe, that there is now doctrinal unity in the Church—is likely to find itself on the horns of a dilemma, so to speak. If it is doctrinally colorless it will be too dull and uninteresting to command attention. If, however, it is doctrinally colorful it will arouse controversy that will affect adversely its financial support.

Another matter of interest, closely related to that just mentioned, is the passing of *The Presbyterian* after an existence of 117 years, inasmuch as this leaves the liberal *Presbyterian Tribune* the only journal of opinion in our Church. Throughout most of its long history *The Presbyterian* has been unwaver-

ing in its defense of the Reformed Faith as set forth in the Westminster Standards. Following a change of editors in 1930 it became less militant in this respect but continued, not without warrant, to be regarded as the organ of the conservatives in the Church until about three years ago when its control passed into the hands of what was at least a semi-liberal group. At that time its Board of Control removed from its masthead the statement declaring that "the policy and influence, both direct and indirect, of the paper shall always be to emphasize what are known as the fundamental doctrines of Evangelical Christianity, such as the integrity of the Bible as the Word of God, the true humanity and true deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, the necessity and validity of the Atonement as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, the resurrection and personal return of our Lord, and salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ," and substituted the following vague and indefinite statement, capable of being interpreted in a manner acceptable to both conservatives and liberals: "The *Presbyterian* shall be unreservedly committed to the interpretation, propagation and application of the historic Christian faith, in accordance with the Reformed tradition and the confessional standards of the Presbyterian Churches. It shall aim at all times to unfold the everlasting truths of the Gospel, and shall strive at all times to deal with contemporary issues in church, society, and state from the viewpoint of God's revelation of Himself in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. The *Presbyterian* shall be in all respects an independent journal. It shall be the organ of Evangelical Christianity, owned and edited by men who seek, above and beyond every other interest, the glory of God, the salvation of men, the unity, peace, purity and edification of the Church, and the increase of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth."

In view of what *The Presbyterian* had become it can hardly be said that its merger with *Presbyterian Life* is a loss to the cause of conservatism in the Church. It continues, however, to be a matter of grave concern that the conservatives in the Church are without an organ. The need of such an organ is great. The fate that has befallen *The Presbyterian* offers no proof that such a paper would not receive adequate support. Financially speaking *The Presbyterian* went from bad to worse following its change of policy. In the end it was apparently confronted with the alternative—discontinue because of lack of support, or merge with *Presbyterian Life*. It chose the latter as the most face-saving.

New Sunday School Curriculum

An event more ominous, if we mistake not, than any we have mentioned, is the approval by our Assembly of The New Presbyterian Curriculum for Sunday Schools. It is seven years since its preparation was begun by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Sunday Schools throughout the Church are being urged to adopt it in place of the lessons previously used. Large claims are made in its behalf. It is represented as a distinct advance over all previous curriculums and as an event of importance not only for Presbyterians but for evangelicals everywhere. It would take too much space for us to consider its alleged merits in this letter. We content ourselves, therefore, with directing attention to a searching critique of it written by the well-known scholar, Dr. Oswald T. Allis, which after being printed in the *Sunday School Times* (325 N. 13th St., Philadelphia 5, Pa.) has been reprinted in pamphlet form and is obtainable for fifteen cents each with special rates for quantity orders. Dr. Allis indicts the New Curriculum on five main counts: (1) the Bible is given a secondary rather than the central place; (2) its reading books conflict with the Bible; (3) the Bible is loosely and incorrectly quoted; (4) it employs unscriptural simplifications; and (5) it is modernistic. For these and related reasons Dr. Allis says to the Sunday Schools: "If you have been using the International Uniform Lessons, continue to use them for the present and demand that they or any substitute for them, such as the New Curriculum aims to provide, be truly

Bible-centered, and that the device of teaching modern liberalism by the story-book method be definitely abandoned." It remains to be seen how widely, beginning with October of this year, the New Curriculum will be adopted. That it is meeting with opposition is indicated by the fact that we are advised that copies of Dr. Allis' critique have been or are being sent not only to all the pastors of Presbyterian churches (U.S.A.) but to all the superintendents of their Sunday Schools.

By way of conclusion it may be added that the 1948 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. emulated two previous ones in electing as its Moderator an Auburn Affirmationist according to which such doctrines as the full trustworthiness of the Bible, the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of our Lord, and the death of Christ as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God, are not essential doctrines of the Word of God and the Standards of the Presbyterian Church. This would not seem to indicate any trend toward orthodoxy in said Church.

SAMUEL G. CRAIG.

FROM PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Princeton, N. J.,
August 18, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

THE comparative quiet on the Princeton Seminary campus during the summer months marks a somewhat welcome relief after one of the busiest years in the history of the school. Last year's record enrollment of approximately three hundred and forty students included representatives from 38 states as well as the continents of South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. For the first time since the last war the International Student Service of the World Council of Churches has been able to send students from various European countries to our campus and others for a year or more of graduate study. The easing of international communications as well as the post-war return to normal conditions has swelled this year's graduate enrollment to 93 students.

For the second consecutive year Princeton Seminary has offered a summer course in Elementary Hebrew. By concentrated study the full nine month course is given in ten weeks. Thirty-eight students are at present enrolled for the course which runs from June 15 to August 20. Though the concentration is quite intense, many students feel that the propedeutic character of a language course is an argument in favor of such a plan. In this way the student is more free to engage in actual theological training during the regular academic year.

Though a few of the faculty have remained in Princeton for the summer vacation period, most of them have been engaged elsewhere. Drs. Mackay, Homrighausen and Vasady are in Amsterdam as delegates to the World Council of Churches. Dr. Homrighausen has been in Geneva since last February as chairman of the Provisional Department of Evangelism of the World Council. Dr. Piper has been giving a course of lectures for six weeks at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Kuist has been lecturing on the Pacific coast. Others are spending their summers on research and writing in their vacation homes.

Princeton Seminary lost one of its most ardent supporters and its greatest son in the death of Robert E. Speer last November 23. Dr. Speer's passing constitutes not only a loss to the Seminary of its beloved President of the Board of Trustees, but also of a truly great thinker and missionary statesman to the Church Universal. As his successor to the presidency of the Board, Dr. Peter K. Emmons, pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Scranton, Pa., has been elected. Dr. Emmons is a well-known figure in Presbyterian circles; at present he also serves as Vice-President of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.*

Doubtlessly many readers of the CALVIN FORUM had recent occasion to become more familiar with a practical demonstration of our activities through hearing the Seminary Choir. Last year the Choir made a tour through the southwestern part of our country, going as far south as Mexico City. This

year the Choir under the direction of Dr. David Hugh Jones has just completed a two month tour through the northwest. Their route was made through Chicago, St. Paul, Helena and Spokane, and the return journey was made through Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnepeg and Toronto.

The annual summer Institute of Theology was held this year from July 12 to 22. Besides members of the Seminary faculty, other members of the Institute Faculty included Professor John Baillie from Edinburgh and Professor F. W. Dillistone from the Cambridge Episcopal Divinity School as well as many others. That the popularity of the Institute is steadily increasing is attested by the growing attendance of ministers from other denominations. For example, the Christian Reformed Church was represented here by at least seven ministers during the course this year—more than ever before!

Due to heavy teaching schedules and extra-curricular research and lecturing the Faculty does not find frequent occasion to meet for discussion outside of regular faculty meetings. Outside of occasional social gatherings and official meetings there has not been as much meeting for discussion of common problems as might be considered ideal. The creation of a Faculty Club to meet at regular intervals during the com-

ing year for purposes of fellowship and discussion of problems of mutual interest is intended to meet this need.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN WM. WEVERS.

CORRECTION

638 Goffe Hill Road,
Hawthorne, N. J.,
September 18, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

SOMEHOW an error crept into my latest letter to THE FORUM, an error which is in itself slight, but which deserves correction because it bears on a rather important matter in the life of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at the present time. The report states that "The committee (on secret societies) was discontinued". This should read: "The committee was continued."

Thank you for placing this correction at an early date.

Cordially yours,

EDWARD HEEREMA.

Book Reviews

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

TRANSCENDENTAL PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT. *An Inquiry into the Transcendental Conditions of Philosophy.* By H. Dooyeweerd. Grand Rapids: The Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948. 80 pages. \$1.50.

CHRISTIAN thinkers will want to study this essay. It is Professor Dooyeweerd's first attempt to formulate in English the central thesis of his monumental *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.

The thesis is that theoretical thought is based upon super-theoretical ideas; that the strictest scientific thinking rests upon non-scientific foundations; that there is an intrinsic and necessary connection between "religion" and "science" (Wissenschaft); that there is no such thing as "pure," *i. e.*, "unprejudiced" reason; that no philosophy can lay claim to theoretical autonomy.

This thesis is formulated in opposition to what Dooyeweerd, borrowing Kant's language, calls the "dogmatism" of the historical schools of philosophy, all of which uncritically assume the autonomy of theoretical thought, remain ignorant of the true motives of their own thinking, and consequently never come to fundamental grips with each other. Lacking in critical self-consciousness they mistake for theoretical axioms what are really "religious" presuppositions. This accounts for much of the superficiality in contemporary philosophic discussion. Because thought has not penetrated to its roots, the real issues between rival philosophies are never actually joined.

To remedy this situation Dooyeweerd undertakes to reveal these roots, and thereby to exhibit the fundamental antithesis between Christian and non-Christian thinking and the merely polar tensions that separate rival non-Christian schools, and to lay the foundation for a profounder study of the history of philosophy.

Dooyeweerd undertakes to establish his thesis, not by appealing to divine revelation (although the Bible is unequivocal in its teaching concerning the religious root of human existence) but by conducting a strictly philosophical, more particularly, a critically epistemological, investigation. He proposes to establish his fundamental thesis, not by a transcendental dictum, but by a transcendental critique, that is, by "a serious and exact inquiry into the structure of theoretic thought itself," which, as

he adds, is "a matter of critical *science*, not a matter of dogmatic confession." Like Kant, but more critically than he, Dooyeweerd proposes to examine the structure of knowledge and to inquire under what universal and necessary conditions philosophy, in the strictest theoretical sense, is possible at all. He believes that he can establish to the satisfaction of any truly critical thinker, whatever his philosophical persuasion, that theoretical thought is not autonomous but rests upon and is guided by super-theoretical, *i. e.*, "religious" loyalties and commitments. He insists that his results proceed directly from his critical inquiry and that "the transcendental problems formulated in the course of this investigation are strictly bound to the structure of theoretical thought itself."

One might be inclined at this point to ask: How can one conduct a philosophical argument which shall have objective validity and yield conclusions which recommend themselves to every unprejudiced mind when these very conclusions are to the effect that every philosophical argument is "prejudiced" by extra-philosophical loyalties and its conclusions "religiously predetermined"? How can Dooyeweerd whose thinking is by hypothesis conditioned by his extra-theoretical faith in Christ hope to succeed, by theoretical thought, in reaching conclusions that demand acknowledgment by those who share a rival faith?

To this Dooyeweerd replies by admitting that his investigation is conditioned by his super-theological commitments: "I do not pretend that my transcendental investigation is unprejudiced," but, he adds: "this does not derogate from its inner scientific nature." At this point his central thesis comes, I think, into sharper focus. He does not wish to deny the possibility of theoretical thought, but only to call into question the dogma that theoretical thought is autonomous. Theoretical thought itself, he holds, can discover that it rests on non-theoretical presuppositions, and what the *nature* of these presuppositions is but cannot establish the truth or falsity of the *content* of these presuppositions. This latter is a matter of religious faith. Philosophers proceeding from antithetical faiths cannot by theoretical thought convict each other of error in respect of these faiths, but they can by theoretical thought or philosophical discussion penetrate to and lay bare these faiths.

Dooyeweerd conducts such a discussion in the essay under review. In three short but significant chapters he considers

The Possibility of a Transcendental Criticism of Philosophy, The Method of such a Critique, and The Religious Motives of Western Thought.

In the first chapter Dooyeweerd rejects the view that philosophy is a mere subjective view of the world, a matter of *Weltanschauung*. Philosophy is strict science; the theoretical attitude (*theoria*) is essential to it. But philosophy, like all theoretical thought whatsoever, has universal and necessary conditions or *presupposita*. The *presupposita* are not to be confused with the subjective presuppositions or prejudices which reflect or embody a subjective *view* of the former. The former are universal and necessary, the latter are particular and contingent. Dogmatism arises in philosophy when the two are confused. A dogmatic, uncritical philosophy is one that mistakes its super-theoretical prejudices (*i. e.*, its particular view of the universal conditions of all thought) for theoretical judgments of universal value. The so-called "Autonomy of Philosophic Thought" is an instance of a super-theoretical prejudice widely mistaken for a theoretical axiom. That a transcendental problem lurks in this "axiom" Dooyeweerd seeks to demonstrate first by an analysis of thought and reality in terms of the *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* (Chapter II) and then by a critical review of occidental philosophy, which, he holds, has differently conceived the "axiom" in different stages of its development (Chapter III).

The argument in the second chapter proceeds by pointing out that theoretical thought is analytical, that the *Gegenstandsrelation* which characterizes its structure depends upon a theoretic abstraction, that the requisite synthesis cannot be effected in terms of either of the discriminated poles of the relation, that the attempt so to effect a synthesis has given rise to all the "isms" in philosophy, that self-knowledge is the only key to philosophic synthesis, and that such knowledge is by nature religious, "always correlative to knowledge of God." The Self, for Dooyeweerd, is *transcendent*, at once "the religious center, the heart, of the whole of our temporal existence" and "the hidden player playing on the keyboard of theoretical thought." Theoretical thought, he concludes, "must admit that true self-knowledge is not possible in the way of a purely theoretical inquiry while it is nevertheless strictly required for critical thinking since the thinking "Self" is a basic *presuppositum* of all theoretical thought."

In the third and final chapter Dooyeweerd distinguishes four great religious motives which have dominated the evolution of western culture and western scientific and philosophic thought—the Greek, the Christian, the Scholastic, and the Modern. The Thomist will be horrified to find Christian Philosophy contrasted with Scholastic Thought, and well he may if "Christian" is taken in a merely historical sense. Dooyeweerd takes it here in the theistic sense, and argues that Scholasticism does not break with but merely accommodates Greek Philosophy to the Christian Revelation, that, in other words, it is not, as it supposes, engaged in effecting a synthesis of philosophy and religion, but rather in the quite different and wholly impossible task of effecting a theoretical synthesis of antithetical religious motifs.

In this chapter Dooyeweerd points out that all theoretical thought without exception is founded upon and determined by a complex of Transcendental Ideas which, as a complex, he calls *Wetsidee* and which is known in its inelegant English version as "Idea of Law." These Transcendental Ideas are not to be confused with theoretical Concepts. The latter serve to discriminate the different aspects of reality, the former concentrate theoretical thought on the mutual relation, the radical unity, and the origin of these aspects. The three transcendental ideas of Relation, Unity, and Origin determine theoretical thought, but their *content* depends on religious motives which are by nature super-theoretical. The history of philosophy, Dooyeweerd contends, exhibits the influence of these ideas on each and every system of theoretical thought.

This reviewer finds himself in agreement with Professor Dooyeweerd's thesis and considers the author's exposition of it, considering the limitations of space and the difficulties of a

foreign tongue, not only an excellent introduction to his philosophy, but a rallying point around which Calvinistic thinkers may gather in their effort to bring every thought into subjection to God and to his Christ. No one interested in Christian thought should fail to study the book.

Mr. Eerdmans deserves commendation for entering upon this publishing venture.

HENRY STOB.

DUTCH POETRY IN TRANSLATION

COMING AFTER. *An Anthology of Poetry from the Low Countries.* By Adriaan J. Barnouw. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1948. XX and 348 pages. \$5.00.

PEOPLE have been willing to learn the Italian to get at Dante, English to get at Shakespeare, German to get at Goethe, and so on, but people by and large—I know that such a figure as Edmund Gosse is an exception—have been unwilling to learn Dutch to get at the literature of The Netherlands. Moreover, although Homer had his Chapman and his Pope, Dante his Carey and Longfellow, and Goethe his Bayard Taylor and others, the Dutch poets, even the big ones, have for the most part gone without translators. Van Noppen's version of Vondel's *Lucifer* is a lone exception; Van Noppen and that small collection of Dutch poems by Sir John Bowring under the title *Batavian Anthology, or Specimens of Dutch Poets* in 1824.

Adriaan J. Barnouw's mediation between the Dutch and the English-speaking worlds is the more welcome therefore because it is centuries overdue. I marvel at both his courage and his success in this responsible business. A translation always has its limits, is rarely the equivalent of an original. I say rarely, for there is Baudelaire's version of Poe, which is superb, and a transmutation really (Poe has been lucky in his translators; his Continental reputation, particularly the French, is singularly wide and high; even Van Lennep's *De Raaf* compares favorably with "The Raven"); and, though few Americans have noticed it, there is also Guido Gezelle's *Hiawadha* which is, I think, a better poem than the *Hiawatha* it translates. But such miracles excepted, the rule holds that translations, though indispensable—where would the Germans be, and what, without the Schlegel *Shakespeare*, or we without the Carey *Dante*, or the Taylor *Faust?*—are not quite adequate. It is as Goethe said: When one begins to translate, he runs head-on into the untranslatable.

To convert bald scientific statement, in which formal pressures are not significantly operative, from one language into another is difficult enough. But in poetry this challenge to the recreator is most exacting. There is so much to defy him because the poet uses so many elements simultaneously in his effort to make his form do the work of refining his thought, vision, or emotion. Metre and rhythm and rhyme, image and symbol, accent and cadence, word order, assonance and consonance, and, most important, a community of diction—these all at one and the same time contribute to the total effect. So poetry comes as close as language can to pure significance. In the translating, consequently, there can be no change without an accompanying loss. Hence I admire Barnouw's courage. In his "coming after" (*And I come after, gleyming here and there*, Chaucer has said), he enters into tryst with the eloquent dead, promising the seers and sayers of the past that he will remake their work without marring it.

This promise he keeps. True, these poems also are translations, and are not the equivalent of the original pieces. The translator is sometimes forced to compromise; hence there are such occasional infelicities and defects as false rhymes (*bud-understood; door-moor; taste-grazed*), archaisms and poetisms (*'mong, midst, twain, neath, ere*), harsh juxtapositions of sound (*As sure as he knew death his life journey's goal*), unnatural word order (*And now I must to him subject be*), and the like. But of these it should be said that they are occasioned in Barnouw's stanzas by a determination not to sacrifice more important formal elements. So, for example, he does complete justice to the music and melody of the verse, that total sweep

and pattern which we call its swell. Again, he is more than usually sensitive to vowel quantity and assonance, involved as they are in tempo, and the contribution of tempo to mood. And his range in diction, thanks partly to his scholarship in the early and medieval Continental and English languages, is fruitfully wide. But see, just for a sense of it, what he can do to preserve the sound and melody of Boutens:

My pallid thoughts go seeking thee in the night watches
Like tired sheep that struggle to the distant fold.
They fleck the darkness white with twilight-glimmering patches
Grazing the shadow slopes along the gloom-steeped wold.

Although I try each day with sun and gentle pleading
To soothe in my own fold and pasture their dumb plaint,
Still in the dusky eve their long-drawn bleat, unheeding,
Breaks open towards the dark the gates of my restraint.

Anguished I watch them while they nearer, nearer falter
To grief, which now between us flows a wide, bleak stream,
But mark them safely climb the bank across the water,
And fade away afar in haze of distant dream.

Thus, midst the waning night, all joy and sorrow fleeting,
I feel the hours glide as through a lifeless town,
Till with the rising sun their unconsolèd bleating
Turns to the fold and cries along the dew-drenched down.

The Anthology comprises poems from more than sixty Dutch and Flemish authors, most of them represented by one or two poems each. Some sixty pages go to the medieval period, some sixty to Renaissance and Reformation voices, seventeen to the usually over-rated nineteenth century, and somewhat more than half the book to the interesting 80's and after. But for "William of Nassau," which, acrostics and all, is very effectively reproduced, and De Genestet's "Such is Holland," the selection of poems is based on aesthetic worth rather than on national or folk interest.

Coming After is an anthology of specimens, but it is more than that. It is a history of Dutch literature too. The work of each author is preceded by a critical evaluation of his achievement, and the volume as a whole is introduced by twenty pages of critical-historical orientation to Dutch letters. The whole book is a fine thing, also in point of the craftsmanship and taste put into it by the Rutgers University Press. HENRY ZYLSTRA.

POETRY AND RELIGION

THE CHRIST OF THE POETS. By Edwin Mims. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948. 256 pages. \$2.50.

THE origin of this book is to be found in the five Shaffer lectures delivered by Professor Mims at Northwestern University in 1944. Since it was felt that in these times of uncertainty in respect to spiritual truth a more thorough inquiry into the subject might be helpful, it was decided to publish a much expanded version of these lectures. The volume under review is the result of four more years of preparation, and is similar to the author's *Great Writers As Interpreters of Religion*, but more specific in its aim and more limited in its scope.

Professor Mims' purpose was "to be catholic in my consideration of all possible interpretations of Jesus by including Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, unitarians as well as trinitarians, modern poets as well as traditional." As the author himself tells us in his Preface, his point of view is that of Howard S. Bliss' poem, *The Modern Missionary*, which suggests loyalty to a Christ whose nature need not be carefully defined. His own loyalty, it is true, is not of the lukewarm variety, but seems to glow with a certain warm admiration for the traditional view of Jesus, as it is expressed, for example, by George Herbert in his religious poetry. Nevertheless, he makes it a point to be tolerant towards those who hold liberal views of Jesus, as his explanation of Tennyson's conception of Jesus readily illustrates. To call Tennyson a "conqueror of doubts" is a rather hazardous thing to do. When one makes a close study of the references to Christ in the *In Memoriam*, one does not find anywhere a clear statement as to the true nature of Christ, the God-man, or of His bodily resurrection as a basic element in the Christian view of immor-

ality. Nor are the intermittent victories of the poet the result of faith in Christ. It is hazardous, moreover, to make Tennyson a "conqueror of doubts" in view of the Kantian dualism between faith and reason, soul and mind, which he accepts as the basis for his great compromise. This dualism is, without a doubt, a contributing cause, if not the chief cause, of the doubt that harassed the poet to the end of his life. The fact that Tennyson in his last moments occupied his mind with Shakespeare rather than with Christ and His Word is significant.

Admittedly, it is not an easy task to reproduce faithfully a poet's religious views. What he writes is the product of his poetical intuition, and, though by virtue of this fact he may have deeper insight into life than the philosopher or the scientist, he expresses himself more imaginatively and with less regard for logical precision and consistency than these do. Besides, he may be sincere in his personal attitude to Christ, and yet depart widely from a truly Biblical interpretation. His views may be so vague and even contradictory as to make a satisfactory statement of them impossible. Hence it becomes us not to be too exacting in our demands of anyone who makes a study of religion in literature. But his point of view we should know, and we are glad that Professor Mims specifically stated it. And so we do not hesitate to say that *The Christ of the Poets* is a helpful book for those interested in the subject, though it can never supersede the reading of the poets themselves.

Professor Mims shows himself to be of a religious nature. Only such a nature is qualified for the study of religion in literature. Realizing the importance of religion in life, he also realizes its importance in literature. He rebukes anthologists for not including among their selections religious poems that have as much artistic merit as the secular poems selected. He disagrees with those critics who seem to think that the inclusion of spiritual material disqualifies one from being considered a true poet. He agrees rather with T. S. Eliot in holding that, while aesthetic considerations are essential, the greatness of a piece of writing is determined by the religious philosophy it embodies. These are sound convictions, and we wish that all teachers of literature shared them.

J. G. VANDEN BOSCH.

A COUNTRY REPORT

THE HOME PLACE. By Wright Morris. New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948. 178 pages. \$3.50.

IF you were country born and raised, and if the country you were raised in was the plainer area of the Plains States, Nebraska, Kansas, the Dakotas, and such; if you lived the life of the farm there and liked it, or if you didn't like it but made a virtue of necessity and put up with it anyhow—then you will find *The Home Place* very interesting.

You will find it very interesting, especially before you read it. I say before you read it, because this book, which is a sort of novel, has as many full-page photographs in it as it has pages of text. I know you will be looking at the photographs, all of them, long and attentively, before you embark upon the story surrounding them. And I think also that the story the author as photographer tells is told better than the story the author as writer tells.

For the photographs in themselves, independent of the story, constitute an epic, not, as they used to say of Cooper's novels, an epic of the prairie, but an epic of the hard harsh life of the farm in contemporary Nebraska. These photographs are uncannily artistic in this respect particularly that, except for the first and the last, they are photographs of things, not of people, and yet are so conceived and ordered that they are things *humanized*, things that tell of people, and the life of people. This is your true art of photography. It is art not merely because the pictures as pictures are expert enough in execution to be worthy of *Life* magazine; it is art more because the effect of any one and of all of them together is a single effect: that of the bleak, harsh, colorless, but inviolable

and invulnerable life on the farm in the inner Middle West.

A Model-T, California-top Ford standing lone and stark in front of a paintless granary-corncrib, the Home Comfort Range with its calculated minimum of kitchen conveniences, a washpan and bucket on the back-porch bench, a piece of a broken singletree overgrown with mould, a walking plow with one of its handles crudely repaired, a bed-spread loosely hung on the concave mattress of an old steel bed, the yellowed photo-portrait of a grandmother in its wooden frame—these and the rest of them tell of hardihood, endurance, wear, and of stern independence. Really these pictures are so remarkably eloquent, such a speaking report of man against nature in the dust-bowl of a decade ago, such a telling record of the farmer in his costly independence from the rest of the world, that one could wish to have them alone, bound up apart from the text.

I have a feeling which I cannot quite justify, but which I feel just the same, that to start writing around pictures which in themselves are so effectively narrative is to belabor the obvious. When we look at "The Night-Watch" we want no other story than Rembrandt's painting tells. Indeed, I do not think that this wedding of the photographic and literary in *The Home Place* works well. I seem to remember old Lessing, and his *Laokoon*, and the confusion of the arts. And I think that Mr. Morris had a little trouble with his narrative, could not hit upon a satisfying scheme of treatment, and consequently vacillated between several. In the main his story is of a man and his wife and two children who, forced out of New York by the housing shortage, consider trying for a home in the country. They go to Grandpa's place for a trial visit, and decide not to stay. This device gives the author something of the spectator's detachment from country things and values, a little more, I think, than he wanted. Somehow, at least, the impression is left that the author-narrator cannot make up his mind about the psychological point of view from which he wants to look at his characters.

They say that rural electrification, what with the damming up of the Missouri and such, is coming in, and I suppose that before long the connotations of *The Home Place*, its Home Comfort Range and Home Comfort Tobacco, will be giving way to refrigerators, groomed lawns, six-hour days, and a private plane for the farmer. When that time comes I shall want this book, that is, the pictures in it, to keep the outline of country things and ways and values sharp and vivid. Certainly the historian who finds this book in the far-off future will have no trouble catching a sense of American rural life in the Plains States during the early twentieth century.

HENRY ZYLSTRA.

WALCHEREN AT BAY

ROLL BACK THE SEA. By A. Den Doolaard (*Cornelius Spoelstra*). Translated by Burrows Mussey. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1948. 435 pages. \$2.95.

MANY Americans who trace their origin to Zeeland or any part of the Netherlands will probably welcome this novel since it glorifies a doggedness of the inhabitants of the inundated island of Walcheren not only, but also of the Dutch race against its age-old enemy, the sea; here nearly personalized in the form of a cunning, relentless devil. This devil was loosed upon the island by Allied bombs in October 1944, when strategy required that German influence on the Channel and German protection of Antwerp be "drowned out" even at the cost of discomfort and, possibly, permanent dispossession of the island's inhabitants. Four breaks in the dikes helped to bring on V-E Day; they also brought the possibility that Walcheren become a lost island unless the gaps in the dikes were filled before the racing tides ripped gullies so large that they could never be filled by man with known methods.

At the very time of the same year in which Walcheren is reaping its first harvest after the war, Den Doolaard's book appears as the fruit of a kind of journalistic record begun during his own tour of duty as *liaison* officer between the

British Royal Engineers and the Dutch Government Department of Dike Repairs. The writer's problem obviously was to make good fiction of an event in the immediate past and to sustain the interest and suspense even though newspapers not yet crisp in the files have told us the outcome. Another problem was to make the necessary technological materials interesting to a multitude of readers whose active interest in hydraulic engineering ceased with the last childhood attempt to dam the rain-water racing along the curb of a home-town street. And yet another problem was to find a means of artistic unity.

On the first count, the book stands up well. Crisis after crisis comes and goes; will this dike be filled in time? will that break be repaired in time? will the savage, gnawing tide finally put the desperate work of months to naught? There is early promise of eventual crises between characters: the chief engineer seems opposed, intermittently, to one of the contractors, but nothing develops; the John-Doe insurance salesman who represents the little people of the island seems headed for trouble when he, together with his wife, is forced by the water to live in a sister's second-floor apartment; but the fight stays on the level of sarcasm. The salesman himself is the only character who changes: he discovers a new self-importance and bravado in his work in the Up-with-Walcheren Committee; he throws off domestic tyranny; he consequently feels "let down" when the final dike repair succeeds and he is threatened with normalcy.

On the second count, excessive "writing down" is avoided in the explanation of the engineering problems and projects by having the experts explain in dialogue to people who might even have trouble with an article in *Popular Mechanics*. The placing of brushwood mattresses used to tie down the bottoms of the gullies is described as if only a little more complicated than the sinking of a lily pad with a stone. Numerous devices, such as the crane operator's description of his work in a letter to his sweetheart, are used by this journalist-novelist to maintain a sense of reality which would be lost if the story were interrupted with deliberate explanations.

In making fact good fiction, the problem of unity—if the problem is still recognized in the writing of novels today—is met by relating everything and everyone to the sea. One and one-third billion gallons of salt-water pouring into and out of the 45,000-acre saucer with each cycle of the tide come as close to taking on a collective personality as they could be expected to do. The frequent switch to the present tense to create a sense of the immediate suggests that the translator follows the Dutch quite literally in this respect. The physical point of view jumps about fast enough to damage the sense of reality at times; an example: the words, "successive aerial photographs showed almost no change in the big gray areas and the small black areas," take us, perhaps, to a darkroom or staff headquarters, but it is obvious that the author has no such intentions. He is more artistic in his use of details: beetles crawling up a wall give the creepy premonition of coming flood; calves bawling suggest the cry of drowning children.

Trade jokes and stories are used moderately. The map on the fly-leaf, unlike most of its kind, is one you really use as you read. Profanity in the dialogue is translated into realistic American English; it does not flood this novel as profanity so often does in modern novels. Aside from this, the book will be kept out of most church libraries because of the spirit of the following quotation from the chapter (not well integrated with the story) named "The Sermon": "Many of them (the parishioners) are brought up in the sombre doctrine of Calvin; and on leaden Sundays they read in a heavy voice the harsh words from the craggiest part of Scripture, the Old Testament, and feel themselves weighted down with the grievousness of their sins."

If the publishers have not brought a piece of enduring literature to America, they can at least be commended for one boon, unusual in these days: they offer an attractively bound book for less than a cent and a half per page."

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