The Christmas Child
King and Saviour

Calvinism's Answer
Spurious Alternatives

Calvinistic Youth
An Anniversary

The Holy Spirit
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THE CALVIN FORUM * ** DECEMBER, 1948
The Newborn King

In this Christmas month of 1948 let us kneel at the manger of Bethlehem and lay our treasures at the feet of the newborn King, the King of redemption.

I know there is not much in this world today to remind you of the kingship, of royal dignity, of humble worship by subjects of a king. Communism, which hates kingship in every form, is extending its tentacles like a great octopus over a large part of the globe.

The Western world, which largely repudiates communism and every form of totalitarianism, is weaned away from the king-concept. It knows and understands democracies. But the Kingdom of God is not a democracy. The King of Bethlehem is not the president of a republic.

If democratic selection would have been the only way to call Him to His high office, there would have been no redemption.

Humanistic theologians are telling us that the conception which we have of God (and accordingly of Jesus Christ) is derived from the terminology which obtains in our own social and political structure. We reflect our own social institutions in our religious language concerning divine things, divine persons, and divine-human relations.

Seeing religious ideas and values are, according to them, the mental projection of the highest social values, and all religion is hence a psychological projection, it is not strange that they should tell us the imagery of the structure of human society determines our religious beliefs.

And so in the autocratic tyrannical form of human society—they say—man conceived of God as a tyrant, an autocrat. Men's religion only reflects their societal organization.

In the next stage of development of human society, the monarchy, man conceived of God as a divine King. First, in the unlimited monarchy as an autocratic king; then, in the limited monarchy as a kingship limited by constitutional provisions.

Today, in the age of democracy, we think of the “Kingdom of God” as a democracy. There is no room for a King. The kingdom consists of human society which rules itself, saves itself, and itself is God.

God and Christ fade out of the picture. Humanity—capitalized—is God. We are and become what we are “by the infinite reaction of all the immanent forces of human society.”

In the Religion of Democracy there is no room for the newborn King, only for the worship of Humanity.

Let us this Christmas season kneel as humble, penitent, needy sinners at the manger of Bethlehem, where lies the newborn King.

And that King will not sit upon an earthly throne—no, not even in Jerusalem. His Kingdom is in the realm of the soul. It is a kingdom of redemption. It is not repudiated but founded on Calvary. And you become a subject in that Kingdom only by way of Calvary.

Do not fail to view Christmas in the perspective of Calvary and of the resurrection and of the ascension. “All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore!”

C. B.

Karl Barth’s Bomb
Shell at Amsterdam

By common consent Karl Barth was the most commanding theological figure at the meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. Apparently his address made a profound impression. Its significance stands forth unmistakably by reason of the volume of both assent and dissent which it called forth. That the typical liberal of the essentially humanistic, social-service type of theology did not find much edification in the powerful thrusts of the Basle theologian can readily be understood. And for this we are thankful. The virtual identification of the Kingdom of God with a socio-political-economic order which humanity, guided by the high moral teachings of Jesus, is to bring in and to achieve is a travesty of the Christian Gospel. On this score every Calvinist, in fact everyone who really understands his Bible, is agreed with Barth. The Calvinist can also applaud when Barth stresses the priority of God; the absolute dependence of the creature on the Creator; the necessity of God’s speaking before man can answer; the imperative need of the vertical line to give real meaning to the horizontal; the utter impossibility of man’s being saved except God do it and do it completely; and the call to humility, prayer, and supplication on the part of man. When Barth stresses all these things he is delivering telling blows against every form of Modernism, Humanism, Activism with its belief in the autonomy of man, its denial of human depravity, its glorified Pelagianism, and its unmistakable autosoterism. That he repudiates a Christian ethic based upon such an unbiblical foundation warms the cockles of the heart of any true Bible-believing Christian.
especially the Calvinist, and when he speaks along such lines his testimony may be said to be all "on the side of the angels". But to be agreed with a man in what he opposes does not necessarily mean that you must agree with him in what he proposes. In other words, Barth may be ever so right in repudiating and blasting the optimistic, humanistic "reinterpretation" of Christianity which Liberalism has advanced in our day, he is not on that account a Calvinist, a sound, Bible-believing Christian in his theology. A vicious strain in Barth and the Dialectic Theology in general is that it is reacting so violently against certain current evils in theology and ethics that it has swung to an opposite extreme, equally unbiblical. That in so doing he can use many beautiful biblical and orthodox phrases should not deceive the unwary. Reacting as he does violently against the immanentism of the older liberal theology with its implied deification of man, he has swung to an opposite extreme in which divine transcendence becomes belief in a "wholly Other" who can be known only when He reveals Himself in a mode that is quite different from that which Scripture teaches. This little editorial is not the place to enlarge upon the Barthian theology, but it is pertinent to point out that this swinging from one unbiblical extreme into another applies also to the Barthian conception of the social task of the Christian in this world. It is perfectly true that the humanistic program of the Ritschlian, social-service type of theology, which has come to development especially in America, and which is readily associated with such names as Rauschenbusch, Shailer Matthews, and the like, is not biblical, is not Christian in the true sense of the word. But it is equally important to recognize that the "passivism" and ethical indifference toward social problems and their solution which Barth would sell us in the name of Neo-Orthodoxy does not do justice to our social task which we as Bible-believing Christians have in this world. To get at least some idea what this means for the practical social activity of those who embrace Barth's views, one only needs to take notice of their stand on a distinctively Christian political and social program and distinctly Christian organizations for the realization of such a program. They repudiate both and . . . promptly join hands with the world in non-Christian political groups like the Dutch Labor Party. Barth knows nothing of common grace and will have nothing to do with it. He does not believe in Christian political action in a systematic organized form. He ridicules the idea of Christian labor organizations. You will hear no plea for the solution of the educational problem in favor of founding Christian schools from the lips of Barth and his followers. If it be true—and true it is—that the "activism" of American liberal theology is no Christian solution for the social problems of our day, neither is there any hope for such a solution in the "passivism" of Karl Barth.

C. B.

Communism and Capitalism at Amsterdam

The idea that biblical, orthodox Christianity on the one hand, and liberal, social service Christianity on the other, though far apart on dogma and theology, are not so far apart in their proffered solution of the moral and social problems of our day has received a severe set-back at the Amsterdam meeting of the World Council of Churches. Perhaps at no point was this clearer than in its attitude toward the issue raised by communism and capitalism. This burning issue was dealt with in Amsterdam both through the channel of addresses and by way of a resolution adopted by the conference in its entirety. As for the addresses, those of both Barth and Hromadka were telling. Barth, who has in his day spoken so courageously and unequivocally against the paganism implicit in the Nazi ideology, speaks of the evil of communism in much more restrained terms. And the address of Dr. Hromadka of the University of Prague can almost be termed an "apologia" for communism. Hromadka, himself behind the iron curtain since the communists took over in Czechoslovakia, had much to say to warn the West and to palliate the evils of communism. This is highly significant. One is ready to make allowance for various factors in judging this attitude. Anyone who has made the acquaintance with Dr. Hromadka during his stay at Princeton cannot but have respect for him as a man and for his sincerity. One can also fully appreciate the position he is in, now that communism has taken over in his country. Moreover, we should fully recognize that one of the reasons why communism has made such advance in certain parts of the globe is (as was the case in the French Revolution) at least partly due to intolerable social conditions that have persisted for years under a capitalist regime. But after due allowance has been made for all this, the fact remains that this attitude toward communism on the part of these speakers at the Amsterdam conference betrays a woful lack of understanding of the real antithesis between Christianity and communism and their incompatibility with one another. This same lame attitude toward the communist-capitalist issue became evident from the stand which the conference officially took in its resolutions. It is true that in Report Number Three five points of contrast are enumerated between "Christianity and the atheistic Marxism of our day", but the force of this is in our estimation overshadowed by the resolution which the conference passed on the compatibility of capitalism with Christianity. It went on record as declaring that both communism and capitalism are incompatible with Christianity. The resolution, which greatly disturbed such leaders as John Foster Dulles, was only slightly toned down when, at the suggestion of Dulles and after some real debate, the general term "capitalism" was given a modifier and became "laissez-faire capital-

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ism.” This introduction of an ambiguity may have satisfied Mr. Dulles, in that a double interpretation of the resolution is now possible, but in reality capitalism stands condemned by the Amsterdam Conference alongside of communism. On the face of it, this means that both are condemned by reason of certain evils that seem to be attendant upon each of them, but that neither is approved nor condemned as an economic system. The question of the right of private property and the ethical tenability of the private ownership of the means of production has been dodged by this ambiguous resolution. The radicals can take comfort from Dr. Hromadka’s address and from the fact that the Conference condemned capitalism as well as communism, and the conservatives can feel encouraged by the fact that communism was “condemned” and that “laissez-faire” capitalism can be interpreted to mean not capitalism as such but the evils attendant upon an economic system marked by unbridled, uncontrolled competition. In this way Amsterdam breathes both hot and cold, and it may well be questioned whether such deliverances on the burning moral issues of the day are of great service to a “poor, blundering, suffering world”.

History Begins to Judge

Four years ago (in the November, 1944, issue to be exact) we expressed our conviction concerning the stature of Franklin D. Roosevelt, then running to succeed himself as President, in the following terms. “To me it seems consummate folly to give ourselves a blow in the face and boost the morale of a cunning and diabolical enemy who is far from defeated (whether in war or in peace) by repudiating the leadership of a wise and masterful pilot who has guided the ship of state through the turbulent waters of world war and international upheaval and commit the rudder to the pathetically inexperienced hands of his opponent.” On April 12 thereupon all America mourned the death of its President and in an editorial entitled, “The Passing of a Great Leader,” The Calvin Forum (May, 1945) wrote these words of tribute: “When on April 12 the divine summons came to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America’s first citizen and the best known world figure, all time breathed his last. His fame was as much due to the unusual point which he occupied at the crossroads of history as to his own powerful personality. He was a man of vision, of statesman-like proportions. He realized that the European War was not a European War merely but a war on all of Christian, democratic civilization. Church weeklies lifted up their voice against this dangerous man who was leading us into war. In the midst of all that the man in the White House stood firm. What if at the bier of this greatest of all our Presidents there still are some among his countrymen who can hardly suppress a sneer. History will judge them.” That judgment of history is beginning to come. At the invitation of Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger of Harvard University, 55 outstanding authorities in American History gave their rating of United States Presidents. (See Life, Nov. 1, 1948, pp. 65-74). The outcome? Two are listed as failures. Six, including Calvin Coolidge, as below average. Eleven, among whom Taft, McKinley, and Hoover, as average. Four, among whom Theodore Roosevelt and Cleveland, as near great. Six were listed as great. Of these Lincoln was number one, Washington number two, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt number three. A respectable voice of history has spoken, possibly sooner than expected. And may we, Americans, who are so readily swayed by our likes and dislikes, learn increasingly to judge the greatness of a man apart from our political prejudices and preferences.

C. B.

Organized Calvinistic Youth

When you see the abbreviation YFC you say to yourself: Youth for Christ. When you see the initials YCF you should instinctively say: Young Calvinist Federation. The Young Calvinist Federation is the recently adopted name for the American Federation of Reformed Young Men’s Societies. This organization, consisting of individual young men’s societies throughout the Christian Reformed Church, has recently held its 25th annual convention in the city of Chicago and will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its organization this coming year. We congratulate the Young Calvinist Federation and especially Mr. Richard Postma, who has been with the movement from the beginning, first as its Vice-President, then as its President, and now as Federation Director since 1946. On another page he has, at our request, written up an informative account of this splendid Calvinistic youth organization. Mr. Postma may be called the father of the Youth Federation movement in the Christian Reformed Church. His vigorous, energetic, and ever-youthful personality has placed its stamp upon the movement and the young men of the YCF respond to his leadership with affection and enthusiasm. When the Second World War broke out, there were many large denominations who had no organization of their youth much to the detriment of the spiritual care of their boys scattered throughout the world. The Christian Reformed Church was in the happy position of having its youth bound together in a splendidly integrated organization with a strong leadership and a paper of its own. When thousands of its boys were doing their duty in army, navy, marine, and air corps, this organization continued to function. The Young Calvinist, its monthly paper, not only continued to appear and did not die of anemia, but grew to larger proportions, offered in addition
to Bible Study and other outlines pages upon pages of letters from the service boys and numberless photos of army, navy, and marine groups from all over the world. The magazine became popular and highly appreciated by hundreds of boys from other denominations. The circulation, aided in part by subsidies, rose to over 33,000. The Young Calvinist with its solid Bible material, its newsy letters, its interesting pictures, and its fine “Letters to Our Boys in Service” from the Editor became literally known in every part of the globe. It was one of the finest spiritual influences that has gone into the making and shaping of the spiritual life of thousands of service boys. No wonder that when they returned home they were proud of their organization and they appreciated their paper more than ever before. It had followed them, had fought side by side with them, and had given them spiritual food and spiritual weapons for a warfare that was greater than the fight against Germany and Japan. All this is the fruit of a covenantal conception of youth, such as the Christian Reformed Church fosters and honors in the light of God’s Word. This democratic young men’s organization is not run by ministers, but by the young men themselves, although they appreciate the spiritual guidance of their pastors and mature leaders. The emphasis is not upon personal testimony, the altar call, and rallies seeking to bring youth to conversion. Having been born and reared in the church, they know themselves as children of God’s covenant, whose parents have assumed solemn obligations of Christian nurture for them when they were only infants—God’s infants. As they grow up, they come to the consciousness of God’s favor and grace in their lives and, being trained in the things of God in the home, the church, and the school, they also band together for self-training in their democratically organized societies. You cannot combine Youth for Christ with the Young Calvinist Federation. They are different. YFC fits into a fundamentalist, typically Baptist, individualistic, and revivalistic type of Christianity and Christian nurture. YCF is the fruit of a Calvinistic, genuinely Reformed, covenantal, catechetically trained type of Christianity and Christian nurture. The Young Calvinist Federation, together with the American Federation of Reformed Young Women’s Societies, which is its fair-sex counterpart and is of somewhat later date, together constitute a great and well-organized and deeply spiritual youth movement in the Christian Reformed Church. May it flourish for years to come and become a blessing increasingly to many.

C. B.

Modernism—Romanism—Fundamentalism—Calvinism

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Although this apparent divisiveness amongst orthodox Protestants has called forth much unfavorable public comment, particularly by the Modernist forces, it must be realized that back of it all is something more than the cantankerousness of a few fanatics. Often very devout people, the “come-outers”, are faced in their denomination with something which is beyond their power and comprehension to restrain. They are faced with a doctrine which calls itself Christian, but which is in fact a humanistic rationalism. The new teaching is based upon the idea that man is capable of solving the ultimate problems of the universe by means of his own brain. This doctrine assumes the genuinely creative power of man’s own thought. Man, therefore, proceeds to make a god in his own image who will satisfy his own desires and measurements, subject to the human whim of every day. Modernism has in this way come to a fundamental denial of true Christian theism. The basic ideas of the great Protestant creeds are rejected; and instead the views of Kant, Schleiermacher, and others have become the dominant theology. Christianity as well as all
other religions, like everything else, must come before the bar of human reason which is the final judge. The result is a religion which is reduced to nothing more than human categories.

The basic reason for this development has been man's ever-continuing search for unity of thought and experience. Man is looking for a world-and-life view which will give to his thought and action some meaning and cohesion. At the same time, particularly since the Renaissance, man has usually asserted that his philosophy must be entirely conformable to his own unaided reason. It must be brought entirely under the categories of human logic. This is the sine qua non of all thinking. If the human mind cannot grasp and contain it, if the human mind cannot explain it, no interpretation of the universe can be true. As the old farmer remarked on first seeing a giraffe in the zoo: "There just ain't no such animal." Thus if one sets forth a philosophy which has its roots outside of man's experience it will be rejected. The modernist will accept only what is consonant with his reason. It is today's way of thinking, and when applied to the matter of religion, man's worship becomes nothing more than the worship of man himself.

Romanism and Modernism

These views, however, are not merely a Protestant aberration, for Modernism has had its day also in Roman Catholicism. Under the leadership of such men as Loisy, Tyrrell and others, it at one time seemed about ready to take over and reshape Roman Catholic dogma. It was stopped, however, or at least driven under cover. Pope Pius X took such vigorous action against the new tenets, that new leaders of the movement were obliged either to recant their views or get out of the church. Today, therefore, the Roman Catholic church feels that it is relatively free from the scourge and menace of modernistic unbelief.

There would seem to be little doubt that one of the reasons for the, at least outward, success of the Roman Catholic authorities in dealing with the modernists, is the organization of the church itself. With its centralized and authoritarian point of view it was relatively easy to strike a quick and decisive blow at the new views. Although, had Pius X succumbed to modernist blandishments, the story would have been very different. The Protestants, however, were under greater difficulties. For one thing, some of the Protestant denominations were so vague doctrinally, that they did not realize or did not care about the innovations. On the other hand, the Reformed (Calvinistic) and Lutheran churches, while quite clear on their doctrinal views, because of a more or less democratic form of government which requires extensive processes in their church courts, found it harder to act quickly. The result has been that while the popes have been able to take strong action to eject those who had strayed from the straight and narrow way of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, the Protestants have found it much more difficult to deal with such people.

A good many Roman Catholics may hold that an admission such as this effectively proves the Roman Church to be the true one. This, however, is not necessarily so. It is true that authority has been asserted, the modernists having either to submit or get out. But is this a real solution of the problem? It would seem that it is the only one premitted to the Roman Catholic Church, seeing its very point of view is one which favors the development of Modernism, for the Roman Church regards as valid all man's thinking up to the limit of revelation. Only when he steps into the area of specifically Christian doctrine must he find his way by faith. Perhaps this can be most easily seen by turning to the Thomist concept of the relation of reason and faith, whether it be applied to the external world, to moral and ethical questions, or to the general problems of metaphysics. To those who are prepared to entertain a dichotomy of thought, the Thomist position may solve the problem; but for those who, commencing with Thomist assumptions, desire unity of philosophy, the only answer is a modification of Roman Catholic dogma in the direction of Modernism.

Thomistic Dualism

The Thomist position, whether taken from the Summa Theologica, the Summa Contra Gentiles or from Aquinas' more recent interpreters such as Gilson, would seem to have within itself an essential contradiction. There is in all Thomist thinking the basic assumption that when man deals with this world, his thinking is neutral. He is able to approach the phenomena of the universe with a completely open mind as to whether or not a god exists. In this neutrality he thinks truly (logically) and is able to reason from the particulars to the universals. He can thus reason from nature to nature's God without any insurmountable difficulty. He can also reason from experience to moral laws which are really "natural laws." There are, of course, certain truths always hidden from mere reason, such as the Trinity, Creation, Revelation, etc., which must be accepted by faith. But over a good part, indeed the larger part, of man's thinking he is independent, and without committing himself to believe or not to believe in the Christian God, he can reason quite adequately for himself, reaching even to the Ultimate.

The Thomist apparently fails to realize, partially due to his inadequate doctrine of sin, that such neutrality is in truth sin, for it is a fundamental denial of the fact that when man says that he can think truly without reference to God, he is by that very position denying God. Thus in Thomist teaching
man has been given his independence of God, throughout a large part of the universe. D. J. B. Hawkins, referring to *Summa Theologiae* I, qu. 84, art. v, points out that "the intellect is by its nature a participation of the divine light, and, once created, it has in itself all that is needed for the fulfilment of the purpose for which it is naturally intended."

Rev. John A. O'Brien's tract *Evolution and Religion* is an example of the same point of view. Thomist thinking permits a man to be an atheist, or at best neutral, up to the borders of Christian doctrine, and after that he must believe. Is this the way to solve the problem?

Roman Catholic theologians have thought that by accepting a position such as has been outlined, that they would be able to protect their faith. But the fact of the matter is, if man is allowed to assert his independence in one part of the universe, he will go on to assert it everywhere. He will feel that if by neutral reasoning he can reach out to God, who has the right to say that such neutral thinking is invalid when it begins to deal with the nature of God, His actions in time and His ultimate meaning? If man from an atheistic position is able to reason to the true God, if he has that power without any help from God, why can he not also reason out all other truths concerning God? Moreover, is it not natural that he will claim, and quite logically, that any doctrines concerning God which are not capable of being subjected to human logic must be rejected? By weight of authority, Modernism has been driven underground in the Roman Catholic Church, but that church still cannot escape from the basic tension of thought produced by its own theology. Reason having been given its head by Roman Catholic thinkers, who can object if judging all things by human logic and experience, it refuses to stop at theological boundaries? The only possible consequence is Modernism. Purely human reason and Christian faith cannot get along together, for human reason, commencing with complete faith in its own ultimate power and capacity, will never accept anything which it cannot understand or explain.

**The Impotence of Fundamentalism**

In Protestantism we see something of a parallel phenomenon in the school which is known as "Fundamentalism." While this is not true of all those who are blithely labelled with that ticket by the Modernists, a considerable number have the same dichotomy of thought. Many of them seem to regard their religion as something separate from the problems raised by economics, sociology, and the natural sciences, except where these fields of study make a direct attack upon Christian doctrine. In ordinary life they deal with their business as though they can be neutral about it, while their Christian faith is kept in a separate compartment. There are also, of course, the anti-intellectuals who believe that all education is relatively bad and should be avoided as far as possible. Most of them, however, have a dichotomy of thinking which enables them to regard the world and its affairs "neutrally", while in the sphere of religion they follow the traditional Christian lines of thought.

This means that by and large in the Protestant communion the Fundamentalists are not very effective against Modernism. Not infrequently, if they are in a denomination controlled by Modernists, they become virtual isolationists, ignoring the rest of the church and interesting themselves only in their own immediate group. When this becomes impossible, they not infrequently pull out of the denomination, either organizing or joining an independent group which feels that the historic denominations are going to perdition, and the sooner the better. The result is that Fundamentalists today offer relatively little opposition to the inroads of Modernism in the Protestant churches. They tend to run away from the problem. Or, on the other hand, following the ostrich's example, they simply stick their heads in the sand.

**The Calvinistic Position**

But do the Protestants have an answer to Modernism save that of Fundamentalism? They do. This affirmative answer is to be found in the Reformed theology. The Reformed school of thought does not agree with the Thomist surrender of certain areas of man's activity to the absolute control of man's own sovereign intellect. It holds instead that at whatever point in the universe man commences his thinking, if he would think truly, he must begin by presupposing the Christian God. Moreover, he must realize that he is dealing with God's facts, and must treat them as such. This applies whether he is dealing with astro-physics, Hototot customs, road-paving, or buying stocks. At the same time, Reformed thought holds that man, because of his sin and corruption, naturally starts with the assumption of his own normalcy and the irrelevancy of the demand that he commence with the presupposition of God. He adopts the idea that he does not assume anything in particular, but can follow the facts "whithersoever they may lead." Thus, his starting point is not really that of neutrality, but by virtue of his denying the necessity of God, it is actually anti-Christian. Through this his whole logic has been put out of joint for he feels that he can reason creatively by his unaided reason, reaching even unto ultimates, so that there is nothing which the human mind cannot understand and judge.

Calvinists therefore believe that man, on what we might call the purely horizontal, cannot but end
up in intellectual disaster, for he does not of himself see anything truly. He is limited by the effects of time, space and sin. Many, (in refutation of such a position), will immediately point to human progress and accomplishments in diverse fields. If man cannot think straight, how has he been able to achieve so much? It is true, of course, that he has accomplished much in the field of natural science, social science, art, and literature, as well as humanitarian endeavors. But his ability to do this despite his perversion through sin, is due not to man, but to the grace of God, who partially restrains man's sin. He gives gifts to men whom He enables to employ them effectively. Did He not do so, human thought would fall to pieces, the result being hell on earth. This grace, given in some measure to all men, is known in Reformed thought as Common Grace, since it is received by Christian and non-Christian alike.

Yet, even with the restraint imposed by God's Common Grace, man does not reason very far without getting into trouble. Common Grace enables man to reason accurately about some of the things of this world, but he is still reasoning horizontally. In his fundamental humanism he eventually assumes that he can make statements on the basis of his own limited reason and experience which are universally valid. (He may even deny that there is any ultimate truth, thereby contradicting himself.) The consequence is that he very soon claims the right to judge all things, even religion, by his reason. His judgment, however, being limited to experience in time and space, he is eventually forced to adopt the position that he cannot reach ultimate truth. Therefore, there is no such thing. Everything in the universe is relative, and thus fundamentally irrational. He therefore makes the universal judgment that only chance is ultimate. Communism, Hitlerism, Existentialism, Surrealism, Modernism are all inevitable results of such a process of thought.

The Only Solution

How can such thinking be overcome? The Reformed thinker would reply that man must have a changed point of view: what Christ called regeneration. He must be brought to see that behind all things stands the sovereign Tri-une God of the Christian faith, the creator and sustainer of all things. He must see that he is a sinner who in all his thinking has denied God, and that only through self-committal to Christ as redeemer can he be saved from the corruption and penalty of sin. This faith, however, is not attained by reason but only by the grace of God, opening man's eyes and enabling him to see it revealed in the Scriptures. Moreover, we must realize that this is not merely a matter of understanding and accepting certain philosophic and religious propositions. Man must be prepared both in mind and will to trust himself to Jesus Christ as his savior from the consequence of his sinful attempts to ignore Him. But even when this has been done, man's corruption does not completely depart. The Christian does not immediately begin to think in entirely Christian categories. Instead he must fight throughout his life the tendency to think merely on his own level. He does, however, see the error of his way, growing gradually into the Christian point of view so that he increasingly discards his sinful humanism for true Christian theism.

As he develops, the Christian begins increasingly to think truly. He commences with proper presuppositions, and follows the true method. He assumes as his starting point, the Christian God. What is more, his method is one of implicating himself into the facts of God's self-revelation in nature, history and above all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. He does not think of himself as devising something new, as though his thinking is truly creative. Rather, he realizes that if he thinks truly, he is really thinking God's thoughts after Him. Only as man thinks this way in every field, the Calvinist feels, will he be able to obtain true results. Only as he thinks in this way will Modernism disappear.

The Roman Catholic and the Protestant Fundamentalist both leave men a certain area in which his thinking is independent and absolutely valid. They feel that in certain areas man can be neutral as to the existence of God, and as to the logic which he employs. This is the position of the Contra Gentiles, and of much Fundamentalist apologetics today. The result is a serious tension in thought which becomes apparent as soon as one arrives at the borders of religious belief. The foundation of the house turns out to be a different shape than that of the superstructure desired. The result is bound to be conflict, with humanism usually gaining the upper hand.

If we wish to maintain man's independence of God in a large part of his thinking, we have two possible solutions. We can agree to a dichotomy of thinking in which man is a humanist when dealing with the world, and a Christian when dealing with religion; or we can surrender the whole sphere of human thought, including that of faith, to human rationalism. By and large, the former position is that of the Roman Catholic Church and Fundamentalists, while the latter is that of the Modernists. Both sides inevitably end in confusion and chaos. The dichotomists have an unresolvable tension, the modernist an irrational rationalism. From the Reformed point of view, the only method of thought is that of starting with the Christian God, and taking Him into account in every field. Only when that is done will modernism, rationalism, materialism be defeated. This is the rock upon which we must build.
Salvation is a far greater matter than is commonly supposed. Not a few seem to have the conception of salvation that it is something for the soul, that it offers forgiveness of sins and deliverance from hell and the prospect of a happy home in heaven, but that it has no solution to offer for man’s social ills or his physical ailments, and that it does not deliver him from his ignorance and enable him to drink at the fountain of knowledge. But such a conception is very narrow. The fact is, that very salvation of the Christ born in Bethlehem aims to be the effective solution of all the problems with which a human being has to wrestle. It presents itself in Scripture as the panacea of all man’s ills. As Dr. A. Kuyper has once in effect said: “We shall never know the full significance of the salvation of Christ until we realize that He is not only the Saviour of the individual but the Saviour of society as well.”

The apostle Paul in the text under consideration places all emphasis upon the breadth of scope of the salvation which Christ came to bring. He wishes us to know that it is the open sesame that unlocks the treasures of heaven and pours its blessings upon man and locks for him the gates of hell and frees him from all his distresses. This wonderful salvation, he tells us, hath now appeared. It has now come to light.

For us who live in the twentieth century it is not easy to grasp the astounding nature of the thought which Paul is here uttering, when he states that the salvation has appeared, has come to light. For we have been dwelling in that light for ages. But Paul lived in the day when that salvation had just appeared above the horizon. The gentile world had been living in the darkness of heathendom. And as for the Jewish world, while it knew all the while that that salvation was to come, it was enveloped in symbols and shadows. But now, says Paul, that salvation has appeared, it has come to light, it is here!

Note how Paul stresses the universality of it. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” It is not a salvation which is given to all men, as some might misread this passage. It reads that this salvation has appeared, which is something different than if it read “hath been given to all men.” Furthermore the context prohibits us from construing Paul’s words in this fashion. What Paul has in mind is rather that there is no class or condition of men from which this salvation is excluded or for which it is not intended. In the foregoing context he has been addressing aged men, warning them to be sober, aged women also, urging them to be of good behavior, young men and young women likewise, and servants, exhorting them to be obedient to their masters. “For,” thus he reasons, “the grace of God . . . hath appeared to all men.” It is for old men as well as for the young, for women as well as for men, for slaves as well as for their masters, for Gentiles as well as for Jews, for poor as well as for rich, for ignorant as well as for the learned. And to each one of these groups it brings the salvation which their group demands for the solution of their problems. It saves the individuals, it sanctifies the home, it rectifies the relations between master and servant. In short, it bringeth salvation to all men.

Another point which Paul brings forward here is that this salvation is not the product of human effort but is entirely a gracious act of God. “The grace of God . . . hath appeared to all men.” Again we shall grasp the astounding nature of that statement only when we view it in its relation to the time when Paul uttered it. It was a prevalent thought in his day that salvation, man’s deliverance from his troubles, from the things that made his life wretched, and the acquisition of his happiness, of things that make life worthwhile for him, was the work of man himself. It was the work of man that brought salvation, of which they were perenially hoping that it would appear to all men. Such was definitely the thought of the average Jew who expected his good from the keeping of the law, from what he secured by his own accomplishments. But the same underlying thought pervaded the gentile world. They always looked and hoped for an ideal state of things to develop through their own efforts, be it through their own learning and philosophy as the Greeks supposed, or through their wealth or through their laws and world empire as the Romans seemed to think, in each case and always it was man who had to help himself out of the fallen conditions in which he lay. Paul had abundant opportunity to observe how little the sagaciousness of the gentile or the self-righteousness of the Jew would suffice as a solution of his ills, witness the corruption of the monstrous Roman empire of his day.
Paul realized as if by contrast that salvation, man's deliverance from his ills, whether individual or social, was not the work of man but the accomplishment of the grace of God. It was to that salvation which the grace of God provided that he looked for the transformation of human lives, for the elevation of the standards of morals and religion, for the promotion of all that made man genuinely happy, and would make man's future secure, and the erasure of all wrong conditions and relations which caused misery in social life. In Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all".

What was true in Paul's day is true no less today. In our time also the thought is prevalent that it is through man's efforts and ingenuity that salvation is to come to this world. Some envision ideal conditions to be introduced through a league of nations, others through invention and science, still others through labor union activity, again others through a government that is either totalitarian, communist or democratic, but always through change effected by man himself.

But no one need be a prophet or a prophet's son to foretell that if the world keeps drifting ever farther from God and from religion, men may make as many peace treaties as they will, let the laboring classes or the capitalists rule, let there be a totalitarian government or a democracy, and let there be as many secular schools of learning as you please, the danger that today threatens our civilization and security, and that makes men in Europe jittery will not thereby be averted. When men forsake God what wisdom would they have? Even economic problems have their basis in morality and certainly social reform problems have. Moral problems cannot be solved effectively without religion, and religion cannot be solved without Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it is also as true today as it was in early Christianity, that the salvation which Christ came to bring, when suffused in the hearts of men, will free men from the evils that infest society and then man to man the world o'er can brothers be.

It might be well for us to remind ourselves that Paul would not ignore such efforts as men might choose to employ, to regulate the relationships of men in social life, or such efforts as might tend to the general uplift of humanity. But all these efforts are not the essential which will guarantee the salvation which man needs. With the grace of God which brings salvation, these regulations, laws, governments or what have you, may bring great blessing. Without it most anything dreadful can happen to human society.

On the other hand we should not expect too much even from Christianity during this life. We should not look for ideal conditions to emerge by gradual process out of present conditions and expect that eventually we shall ascend to perfection and have a Utopia in this world. It is indeed true that Christianity possesses the potentialities for the transformation of this world and for the development of perfect conditions. In the consciousness of this truth we must ever struggle on for the advancement of God's cause and the propagation of Christian principles. For it is the only remedy for the effective salvation of humankind. But the fact remains that Christianity will never advance to an ideal state in this dispensation, but ideal conditions are reserved for the next world.

This is what Paul has in mind when he adds: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Salvation to him is primarily a matter of the future. He speaks of salvation in his epistles in three distinct ways: "We have been saved," "we are being saved," and "we shall be saved." But the future salvation is primal to him. What Christ first of all did was to save us from the judgment day and introduce us to the salvation which follows after that. Hence to him we are essentially saved by hope, (Rom. 8:24). Whatever we receive of that salvation prior to that time is but a foretaste, the firstfruits.

We are at times inclined to think that the salvation which we have already received is great and in a sense it is. But your estimate will depend upon the viewpoint you take. When you compare the salvation which Christ has brought to the world with conditions such as they were before Christianity entered, then that salvation is indeed great. It is immense! But when you compare the salvation which we now possess either in the lives of individuals or in the life of society with conditions as they will be when the world we are made to hope for will have arrived, then our salvation today is but a foretaste.

We need only reflect upon the thought of what an ideal world would be like in order to realize the truth of Paul's assertion that in this world we must still look for that blessed hope. In an ideal world certainly the blessings of prosperity and riches cannot be short-lived or it would not be ideal. As long as all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave await alike the inevitable hour and lead but to the grave, conditions are far from ideal. Life and immortality must come to light before ideal conditions can be ushered in. Similarly in that ideal sort of world there can be no more sickness or sorrow or any more tears or pain, but perfect and immortal must be the bodies as well as the souls of men. Again, men cannot live in ignorance and stumble for the want of knowledge, but the light of human knowledge must reach out as far as human minds can reach. And all maladjustments in society in which some are poor and ignorant and enslaved must make way for conditions in which we all shall be kings and priests and we shall reign in the earth.
Even the physical world will have to contribute its part and may not have wilderness or infected areas, but the desert must blossom as a rose and the wilderness become a garden of the Lord. And last, but by no means least, man who was made for God must behold Him face to face and be resplendent in His glorious image. It must be evident to everyone that such catastrophic changes cannot be evolved out of this present earth by normal processes, and ideal conditions for man or for the society of men will have to await the renewal of all things in a new heaven and a new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness.

But whether we contemplate the magnificent salvation which is already ours in present possession or the blissful ideal state which will be introduced at the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, it has all been procured for us by Him. Who came to Bethlehem now twenty centuries ago. Well may we rejoice at Christmas with all Christendom, as the angel bade us do when he said: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour.” May the contemplation of the inexhaustible richness and the limitless of this Christmas gift prompt us to witness to all men as it did the Apostle John after he had lived with Jesus: “We have seen and do testify that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”

A Calvinistic Youth Movement

Richard Postma
Director Young Calvinist Federation
“The Young Calvinist”

AUGUST 24 to 26 were important days in the history of the Calvinistic Youth Movement. The Twenty-fifth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Reformed Young Men’s Societies was being held in the city of Chicago. From many sections of the United States and even from Canada young Calvinists had come for the purpose of conducting the business of their organization, to elect officers, to act on proposals, and to make plans for the future. The theme of the convention was A Call to Action.

This convention lasted three days. Hot days they were, but the heat did not dampen the spirit and enthusiasm of these young Calvinists. They were faithful in their attendance at all meetings. They took a lively part in the discussions and in every way showed that they were ready to face today’s issues intelligently and courageously. For this was their convention, the convention of their Calvinistic youth movement.

At the devotional meeting held the first evening they listened with rapt attention to one of their leaders who spoke to them on the subject, “Taking a New Look at Our Heritage.” The following morning the convention was opened officially by their Federation Director who delivered the keynote address. From that time on the delegates addressed themselves to the matters that called for attention. They considered and acted upon various proposals sent in by member societies. They elected new officers and, under the guidance of their leaders, discussed such matters as Youth Action in church, state, and community. As the discussion went on it became increasingly evident that these young Calvinists realize that the time has come for Calvinistic action all along the line. The inspiration they received at the final mass meeting, when they listened to an address on “Calvinism Abridged or Ablaze”, sent them home with the firm determination to prepare for the great task which is laid upon those who call themselves Calvinists.

A Distinctive Youth Movement

What is this Calvinistic Youth Movement? Among the many youth movements of our day it occupies a unique position. That unique position it occupies because of its character, its purpose and its program.

It is a genuine youth movement. Most youth movements are either the work of the churches or of some older persons who gather around them young people for various purposes. Usually in such movements the leadership is entirely in the hands of older people and young men and women themselves are given little voice in matters pertaining to the organization. Older people decide what the purpose is going to be as well as the methods that are to be followed and employed. In the Calvinistic youth movement this is different. Young people organize their own societies. They decide when and where these societies meet, how they are going to work and how they are going to be conducted. Leaders of these societies are not appointed, but chosen by the young people themselves.

While in the larger sense a part of the educational structure, the Calvinistic youth society is not a class but a club. The leader is not the teacher, but rather an equal among equals. He is chosen for his superior ability to give leadership and direction to the work of the society and its members. He retains his office as long as he is recognized and desired by his fellow-members as the one who is outstanding among others. Consequently the members of such societies meet on equal terms. They do not
come together to be taught, but to study, to exchange opinions and to discuss the subject matter and problems before them.

In the organization of their society the young people, of their own accord, act voluntarily. While it is true that in many cases either the local minister or some lay leader or a parent aids in the organization of the society, the act of organization remains a voluntary act. There is no compulsion from the outside. It is an expression of a desire on the part of Christian young people themselves. It is the result of an inner urge in the hearts of young people who desire to be mutually helpful in preparing themselves for the task awaiting them. As Christian young people they naturally recognize the right of parents to insist upon guidance which is in harmony with the Word of God, and they also recognize the right of the church to supervision insofar as matters of religion are concerned and the adherence to the doctrinal position of the church, but this right of parents and of the church does not cancel the essential character of the organization. It does not conflict with the fact that the Calvinistic youth organization is a voluntary and free society of Calvinistic youth for the independent study of the Word of God and of the Calvinistic principles and their application in church, state, and community.

From this voluntary and independent character it also follows that the members themselves propose and plan their own program and determine their own methods of study. They are not told by someone outside of their own group what and how they must study; they themselves decide what shall be the subject matter as well as the method to be employed. Even though it is true that in almost all their societies they make use of the materials provided in their monthly, The Young Calvinist, they do so voluntarily and not by compulsion. In organization, program of work and methodology, the Calvinistic youth movement is a movement in harmony with the psychology of youth. It is a genuine youth movement.

A Well-Defined Objective

As a Calvinistic youth movement it has a definite and well-defined purpose. A youth movement which limits itself to winning young people for Christ and keeping them from the evils of the world cannot satisfy. Calvinism is more than a way of salvation. It presents a consistent Christian view of the world and of life. It stresses the fact that man here is to be God's representative in a sinful world. It maintains that the Christian must be a Christian in every walk of life. It believes that every Christian has definite duties and obligations as a member of the church, as a citizen of the state, and as a member of the community. Calvinistic youth knows and believes this. Young Calvinists realize that such is the great task awaiting them.

They also know that it requires considerable study to find out what the principles we confess demand of us in the affairs of life. So they adopt as the purpose of their youth organization that it serve to mold and to prepare young people for their task in life by a study of the common problems of life through the acquisition of a deeper and broader knowledge of the Scriptures and of the principles and applications of the Calvinistic life and world view.

Consequently the study of the Bible occupies the place of honor in this youth organization. Accepting the Bible in its entirety as the revealed will of God, it is the purpose of the Calvinistic youth society to become acquainted with that Bible, especially insofar as it has special applications to present conditions and as it bears clearly on their particular needs. Carefully guarding against the danger of losing themselves in a maze of details, their thoughts are centered on fundamental and controlling truths in the framework of Reformed principles. In these days in which there is so much instability, so much doctrinal and denominational indifference, so much unsound emphasis and sectarian propaganda, it is highly necessary for young people to become firmly established in their love for and understanding of what God reveals in His Word and of what is believed by Calvinists to be the task of those who know themselves as belonging to Him.

This study in the Calvinistic youth organization is not purely theoretical, but bears directly on every-day life. Since the real purpose of the youth organization is to help young people prepare for the many duties life demands of them, a mere theoretical knowledge is not sufficient. Knowledge to be worthwhile must present practical implications and lead to practical application. Young Calvinists must be active in learning, and they must be learning by action. They face life with all its responsibilities and are getting ready for active membership in the church and for service in the Kingdom of God. Already they must begin to take a place in the complicated relationships of social life and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in the state. So as Christian youth they render assisting service in the church and to causes of the Kingdom in order that they may be trained to become the active workers and leaders of to-morrow, so that they may be able to assume responsible positions in the church, the state, and the community.

Insofar as the Calvinistic youth organization serves other ends than those expressed in their primary purpose, it must be understood that these ends are incidental, though very desirable. The societies do play an important part in preserving young people from the dangers of the world and its allurements. They surround young people with protective influences and help guard them against many of the destructive tendencies of the age. They serve admirably and effectively as agencies to satisfy the desires of young people for social intercourse and Christian fellowship. They help in ad-
justing Christian youth to the various relationships of the social structure and they do this amidst surroundings that are helpful to spiritual growth and development.

Specific Activities and Achievements

During the years of its existence the Calvinistic youth movement has strictly adhered to its task and in this adherence to its task and purpose has been the secret of its success and accomplishments, not the least of which has been that it has kept “our young men and women from wandering upon Methodist paths”. (I. Van Dellen in De Wachter of August 24, 1948.) It has been a strong force in training young men and women for active service in the church and various Kingdom causes. Many of those who in past years were active members of these youth organizations are now leaders in church and community. They serve as elders and deacons, as teachers in Sunday Schools and workers in missions. They serve as board members in Christian educational and philanthropic institutions. They have been and are the builders of Christian homes and participate in all kinds of Christian activities.

Through the medium of the official monthly, The Young Calvinist, safe and sound guidance has been given throughout the years. That paper has served and still serves as the voice of Calvinistic youth in our country. It has provided valuable study material for the work of the societies. In it have been published many articles of interest and abiding value. It is the only paper of its kind published in the United States. From every point of view it is worthy of commendation and appreciation. During the war it was sent free of charge to more than 13,000 of our young men and women serving in the armed forces. As a result of this service Young Calvinist Clubs were organized in a number of camps and even on foreign soil. It kept our servicemen and women in contact with one another and it served as a great force in keeping them loyal to the faith.

Organized in local societies and district organizations or leagues, and nationally as the Federation of Reformed Young Women Societies and the Young Calvinist Federation, the Calvinistic youth movement plays an important part in the building of a strong and vital Calvinistic movement. It conducts liberally to the Back-to-God Radio Hour and the National Union of Christian Schools. It publishes annually Vital Issues and other worthwhile publications. It calls together once a year its membership to inspiring national conventions. It is ever engaged in the challenging task of instilling and maintaining in youth a love for the Calvinistic faith and its meaning for life.

A Calvinistic church and a Calvinistic program of action needs a Calvinistic youth movement. No other youth movement can satisfy and adequately fill the need. That it is possible to have such a movement has been convincingly demonstrated.

The Blasphemy Against the Holy Ghost

THE most manifest evidence of our Lord’s divinity, which deeply affected even the unbelieving world, was His sway over the souls of men. By this power He freed wretched men from the physical, moral, and spiritual fetters of the devil, and subjugated even the prince of devils, Satan himself, causing him to obey Him.

The synoptic gospels display this divine power of our blessed Savior through His healing acts and through the liberating of souls from physical bondage in such a way that the spiritual background of such bondage and deliverance is made unquestionably clear to ear and eye witnesses, thus inducing those who see and hear, doubt and disbelieve, those who are ignorant and those who would philosophize, to acknowledge and recognize the divinity of Jesus Christ.

In the gospel narrative in which the passage of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost occurs each evangelist presents the same order of events. 1. A man possessed by the devil (daimonizomenos) is brought before Jesus. 2. He takes pity on him and cures him. 3. The believers wonder, but the unbelievers accuse Him of having an “unclean spirit” (pneuma akatharton echei), Mark 3: 30, which according to the conception of that time meant that He was the incarnation of Satan. 4. Our Savior declares this diabolical accusation to be a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and therefore an unforgivable sin. He repudiates the accusation and condemns its conceivers to everlasting damnation (Mark 3: 29).

The Scribes and Pharisees attacked Jesus with the skepticism of the partly learned and educated people and said: “He hath Beelzebub and by the
prince of the devils casteth He out devils.” (Mark 3:22; Matthew 9:34; Luke 11:14). The name “Beelzebub” is of decisive significance in the argument of our Savior as He repudiates the attack of Scribes and Pharisees.

The Meaning of Beelzebub

Bible translators probably accept the name “Beelzebub” from the T-codex (codex Borgianus; Gregory 29), as well as from the B-codex (codex Vaticanus; Gregory 03) in the Syrian and Latin texts. In assuming this form of the name the translators were in all probability influenced by the name of the god of Ekron (Hebrew: “baal zebub”), who, according to the research of some exegetes, was worshipped as “deus averruncus muscarum” (i.e., god removing flies), to whom Ahazia, king of Israel, sent messengers in his sickness to ask for oracles (2 Kings 1:2, 3, 6, 16). The Greek esteem of “Zeus apomyios” and “Theos mylagros” was of a similar character, i.e., the god to whom flies were sacred animals. (See Baethgen, Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte, 1898, p. 25.) The Hebrew word “zebub” can be found in Isaiah 7:18 and in Ecclesiastes 10:1. In the latter “zebube mavet” meaning: “deadly poisonous blow flies”. But “baal zebub” (i.e., “dominus stercoris”) meaning lord of flies or lord of decay (putrefaction) is only of secondary importance in the Gospels. More scholars (also Cheyne in Encyclopedia Biblica, 1899-1903, p. 407) consider this name to be misrepresented.

The codices that have preserved the Gospels in their entirety, namely ALEPH (codex Sinaiticus; Gregory 01); C (codex Ephraemi rescript.; Gregory 04); D (codex Bezae; Gregory 05); K (codex Cyriacus, Gregory 017) and THETA (codex Gregory 038)—and the Greek translations based on the foregoing render the word as “beezebul”, better still, as “belzebul”, the original Hebrew form of which was “baal zebul”, meaning “lord of the dwelling”. One of Jacob’s sons was called Zebulun, i.e., dwelling place (Gen. 30:20). We come closer to the proper understanding of the term when we consider that the original meaning of the verb “baal” is “to take possession of the dwelling”—in this case: to occupy it.

With such a meaning this name “baal zebul” fits precisely into the saying uttered by our Lord: “No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house” (Mark 3:27; Matthew 12:29; Luke 11:21-22). According to the divine revelation the body, the constitution of man, is the abode of the soul, its dwelling (Luke 11:24-26). When the indifferent, weakened, apostate, and fallen soul has emptied itself of its strength-giving (“kabod”) glory and dignity for which it had been created, it falls an easy prey to Satan, “the lord of this world”, who is a personal reality, who occupies the human nature and begins to rule over it.

God, however, does not forsake man, but takes pity on his damnation-bound soul struggling so piteously in the claws of Satan. To deliver him from evil He sent His only-begotten Son, who in His holy incarnation assumes our human nature in order that He, the stronger One, the second Adam, may in the frail and mortal form of God’s likeness, bind the usurper of the house and take from him that most precious and most tragically fallen of heavenly values—the soul of man. The speech of our Savior directed to the Pharisees and Scribes proves the necessity of His assuming a mortal frame. He had to come in a body resembling ours in order to accomplish the sacred work of our deliverance. The key to the understanding of this is given by the name “baal zebul”, “usurper of the dwelling”.

The Application

The above argument shows clearly why the accusations of the Scribes and Pharisees, the unbelievers, are false. Just as a house cannot have two lords, so a body cannot have two souls. The constitution that harbors this dual and partitioned personality is diseased, a danger to itself, and bound to fall to pieces. But Jesus has no need of help, of foreign aid, for all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). If He were not stronger than the first Adam and Satan, who subjugated man, His coming would have been of no avail. To suppose that “an unclean spirit dwells in Him” and that “Beelzebul is with Him and He casts out the devils through the help of the prince of the devils”, would be denying His Messiahship, His divinity, and would be the underrating of His strength against the strength of the prince of darkness, which would be tantamount to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, for whatever Jesus does is not accomplished through human nature, bodily strength, and physical constitution (“physis”, “sarks”), which He had in common with us, but through the divine Spirit, the “ruach Yahveh”, the Spirit of Jehovah, who is co-equal with the Father and with Him.

The acknowledgment of Christ’s divinity is the acknowledging of the Holy Ghost, even of God, who is Spirit (John 4:24); its denial is damning blasphemy, because it involves the denial of the most perfect spiritual Reality, the divinity of the eternal Father as well. The consequence of such a sin can be nothing less than everlasting damnation. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.” (Isaiah 5:20.)
ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

No doubt the writer will be pardoned for writing on the subject: "Ecumenical Activities of the Christian Reformed Church". The CALVIN FORUM is not a denominational organ. The purpose of this article is not to underscore the Christian Reformed Church, but the "Ecumenical Activities". This fact lifts our observations out of the denominational into the sphere of the ecumenical.

The Acts of the Synod of 1948 practically constitutes the basis of this article.

Ecumenical Benevolence

The ecumenical activities of a church are broader than the mandates handed down to its committee on ecumenicity. The avenues for ecumenical expression are becoming legion. God's people as people can engage in that work being impelled by the irresistible power of love. Love requires no mandates to act. Educated in God's Word love sees its duty and follows the summons. Consequently it is not surprising to read encouraging reports of the sacrifices our people have made for our brethren elsewhere. May the nerves of sympathy ever be sensitive to the cry of the naked, the instituted, the prisoner, for Christ's sake.

The Synod of 1948 instructed the Seminary Faculty to interest classes to support needy German theological students of Reformed persuasion. There are students who can speak English and not Dutch. Such students would profit more by coming here than attempting to learn the Dutch first. The committee of Synod called this body's attention to the encouraging fact that there is money on hand to cover travelling expenses. What is needed is funds for tuition and board while in Grand Rapids. This decision is a modest attempt to influence the spiritual life of Germany. It may seem very insignificant, but who would doubt the writer will be pardoned for writing on the subject: "Ecumenical Activities of the Christian Reformed Church". The CALVIN FORUM is not a denominational organ. The purpose of this article is not to underscore the Christian Reformed Church, but the "Ecumenical Activities". This fact lifts our observations out of the denominational into the sphere of the ecumenical.

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Reformed Missionary Council

One of the most touching passages of God's Word is Revelation 7:13-17. We see a great multitude out of all tongues redeemed out of the great tribulation. How did this mixed group come unified before the throne of God? The simple answer is: Missions! Missions spearhead ecumenical movements, but also bring with them ecumenical problems.

The Synod of 1948 reversed the decision of the Synod of 1946. The latter Synod had decided not to cooperate in organizing a Reformed Missionary Council as recommended by the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod. This new decision, the reversal, is a source of great joy to the writer of this article. It removes misunderstandings. One critic some time ago wrote that the desire for such a council originated with theorists. It gives us now an opportunity to say that none other than a man of the calibre of Dr. P. J. S. De Klerk, a man who received his doctor's degree in missions, sired such a Council. It also removes the misunderstanding that such a Council will involve extensive travelling expenses. Even this is not true. Airmail has made Amsterdam and even South Africa our next-door neighbor. Besides that, we use the argument of finance only when we are not of sufficient about a thing. We do not mind spending sums of money for other causes.

We can see a great future for such a Council. Modern life will force all of us to reevaluate our positions and to come to conclusions that are applicable to all missionary work. In talking with a few outstanding missionaries we know that some in the Netherlands would have appreciated our judgment in matters pertaining to mission work in the East Indies. The Netherlands is facing the problem of centralization or decentralization. Africa is confronted with the race problem. All of the churches will face the problem of continuing our denominational on the mission field or of training our converts in the faith and then having them face their own problem of a new or of a cooperative church of that nation. A Council could solicit the aid of Christian sociologists and economists who could assist the converts in a new manner of living to the glory of their Lord. Such a Council could even spread the principles of missions so that such knotty problems of the duty of the church and the new social needs of converts will be faced. Poor convert Western science without God, the old manner of living without the heathen god, the acceptance of the Christ without the Christian education to use all airtight! Let the Reformed world join hands to help him!

Organizational Ecumenicity

Synod appointed three delegates to attend the coming Ecumenical Synod to be convened the summer of 1949 in Amsterdam. These delegates are Professor Clarence Bouma, the Rev. J. K. Van Baalen, and Dr. R. Wierenga.

Another matter of great interest, although unknown to any at the time of Synod, is Synod's attitude toward the invitation of the ACCC to send an auditor to an international conference initiated by them. In this age of slogans forged by initials we use such headings as FCC, NAE, and ACCC. The ACCC (American Council of Christian Churches) presented a very sensible request. If Synod could have seen the onward march of ecumenicity and its golden opportunity to give to it some direction, Synod might have delegated an auditor to the World Council, the international meetings of the ACCC and of the NAE. Even though this was suggested in The Banner, if we remember correctly, Synod entertained no such a mind. This is the more regrettable since one of our members was in Europe this past summer.
We do believe that the reply Synod gave is very unfortunate. Synod said that this movement did not warrant the expense. This was only an improper way of saying that the movement did not amount to anything. In fact, we do not believe that the expense bothered a generous Synod very much. What would five hundred dollars have amounted to a membership of 135,000? It would have been a far more courteous reply had we stated our reasons for non-attendance. By stating our reasons we would get somebody who did not only feel for too little returns! Who calculated it? It was not worth $0.0037 per individual, less than half a cent.

Let no one be deceived, Synod had its reasons. As early as 1943 Synod was placed before the choice of NAE or ACCC. Synod wished that it did not have to choose; that there were no doctrinal differences; and that their aims were not too different. The reasons that Synod chose the NAE were: The NAE appears to be the stronger. At that time it had about 500 delegates. The ACCC had only 15 members. Then, too, the NAE had its own paper. The ACCC made use of a paper read at Clarens, Switzerland. We do not know what Synod felt about that paper, personally we felt too proud of its sensational approach to the news. The NAE leadership was more representative, and it had a more democratic set-up. The Synod of 1948 evidently saw no good reason to change its stand, and consequently did not honor the invitation of the ACCC at this time.

Both the NAE and the ACCC had their international meetings in Europe this year. True to the ACCC tactics it planned its meetings in Amsterdam in competition with the World Council of Churches. This has brought upon its head the label given to it by the reporter of the Christian Century (reminiscent of the "Rump Parliament" in Macaulay's History of England). The NAE met in Clarens, Switzerland.

It is obvious that since we are members of the NAE we were represented at Clarens, although the church does not seem to be overly conscious of the fact. Hence we did not accept the invitation to come to Amsterdam. How could we? Why saddle two horses? An interesting subsequent development has taken place. Our Dutch observers have become enamored of the new international council sponsored by the ACCC. This council in short is the International Council of Christian Churches. They seem to wonder why we did not send an observer to this Bible-committed international. We and they are sister churches, bedfellows in the new venture of ecumenicity. But we are members of the NAE, and the NAE is the initiator of the International Conference of Evangelicals.

The complications are these that the Dutch observers chose the ICCC and are generous in their praise of its initial success. These two brethren are well known to our readers: Dr. G. Ch. Aalders, and Mr. A. Warnaar. Perhaps they will recommend to their General Synod to join this ICCC. We are members of the NAE, and thus were represented in the international at existence. One of the Dutch observers at this conference was Dr. A. H. Oussoren, minister of de Gereformeerde Kerk at Middelburg. He is enthusiastic about the "ICE", the International Conference of Evangelicals. Dr. Oussoren is a member of the same church Dr. Aalders and Mr. Warnaar are. Hence it is possible that there will be two recommendations at the General Synod of the Reformed Churches. Moreover, we are to meet with the Dutch churches in an ecumenical Synod next year and one of the questions on the docket is the relation of our churches to other orthodox churches. Would it not be a sensible thing that before Dutch churches would act, we first discuss this at the Clarens synod so we do not become divided at the beginning. Perhaps this picture is a bit confusing, but let us all remember that Reformed Ecumenicity will not fall out of a clear blue sky ready made. We are making ecumenical history, and in the making there should not be undue rush.

The Dutch observers at the ICCC have decided the issue on the principle that the ICCC is a council of churches, and the ICE a conference, and a movement. Bible Schools, Mission Boards, and individual churches can be members of it. This raises at least two questions: First, is there no room for segments of a modernistic church that love the faith of the fathers, and who need the supporting fellowship of believers? Shall we leave them on a limb? The second question is: Is there not a difference between a Council and a Synod? It is very definite that Synods must be represented by churches, but does this apply to councils also which do not purport to be of potential Synods? No doubt the Reformed Churches will have to face the issues involved in this interesting difference of opinion.

There is another angle to the question for the Christian Reformed Church to consider. It is true that we were represented at Clarens, Switzerland, but none of our men were there. Delegates presumably were chosen from the NAE at large. If the ICCC amounts to anything each participating church can send delegates. This mode of representation will assure the churches of a voice. Perhaps ICE intends to have each church represented. To have a representation from the NAE at large will not please anyone in the long run. As far as we know there is no record in the Acts of 1948 that the NAE had invited our church to send delegates to the Conference at Clarens.

At any rate there is a real issue. Do we want two organizations aiming practically at the same thing? The ICCC will request that the Churches represented will not be members of the World Council of Churches. (Hungary, we believe, was represented at the World Council and is a corresponding church of the Reformed Churches). The ICE will follow the method of the NAE evidently in proclaiming the will of Christ positively even though other members of the same denomination may belong to the FCC. It is first of all a movement, a conference. One can only express deepest regrets that two internationals are in the offing. How will 1949 end? We hope Synod will not miss the ecumenical boat. There will be three delegates in Europe this summer.

Our Attitude Toward the NAE

Enough has already appeared in the press regarding our attitude toward the NAE. The question is often presented this way: Can a Calvinist cooperate with a non-Calvinist who loves the same Lord and the same Word of God? Theoretically no one has any difficulty on this score. Practically another question arises: Can a non-Calvinist cooperate with a Calvinist, honoring, of course, some of his most treasured convictions? Do the Fundamentalists desire our support, but demand freedom in propagating their brands of fundamentalism? What influence can our denomination wield, anyway?

We believe all are glad that Synod has decided to place this question in the hands of a representative committee. This committee will not have to face the question whether or no we wish to be ecumenical. We pay at least lip service to that. It will have to face the question whether there is a distinctive Calvinistic way to realize ecumenicity, or whether we should try to continue along the way we have been doing. At any rate, let us do something besides sending in majority and minority reports. We hope the Synod of 1949 will do something to forge ahead. This is no hour for indecision!

Holland, Mich.

JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

CHRISTIAN STUDENT WORK IN CHINA

Shanghai, China,
July 20, 1948.

Dear praying friends, if China ever needed Christ, it is now!

The Dark Side

After ten months of absence, I find my people overshadowed by the defeatism of the ever-increasing inflation, the unsteadiness of the political situation, and the spread of civil war. This month one U. S. dollar has been worth five million Chinese currency. A large part of the students are penniless and their dissatisfaction results in political strikes. In North China
where the see-saw civil war is going on, vast fields are laid waste, and refugees flood into the Yangtze Valley, adding to the serious food problem. People ask one another how long things can carry on.

Our Problems

Political parties are attempting to arrest the attention of Christian students, until a few have begun to complain that the Christian Gospel is “too other-worldly” and teaches escape from reality. The counter-attacks from the liberal camp are active and aggressive. The doctrine of the substitutionary death of Christ is a medieval theory. The faith in verbal inspiration of the Bible is criticized as “Bibliolatry” — idolatry of the Bible. Thousands of students are to be evangelized, and hundreds of seeking Christian students need to be taught. Macedonian calls are pouring in, and we do not have the staff to meet the need.

The Brighter Side

One of our Chinese proverbs says, “When a person is hurt, he cries for mother, but when he is poor, he cries for Heaven.”

The sufferings of China are the means of bringing our people to a real sense of dependence on a Higher Power. This is why the door for preaching the Gospel is more widely open than it has ever been before.

China Inter-Varsity has work on 80 campuses, 65 of which are registered members of the Fellowship. Individual membership comes to around 4,000. This summer eight regional conferences took place, with about 1,500 students training for campus leadership. In answer to prayer the Lord has provided the funds for a headquarters building in Nanking, and a student-center in Shanghai. We hope to have these buildings ready this fall.

The situation in China is challenging to the Christian public of the world. After five weeks of English Bible class in Chi-nan University, 36 out of the 42 students present, quietly raised their hands during an invitation to accept Christ as Saviour. They had no previous knowledge of the Gospel, and while we thank God for the harvest, we need to provide spiritual food for them. Conversations are taking place constantly throughout our fellowships.

We thank you for remembering the China student work, and we pray the Lord to continue to lay our needs upon your hearts.

Sincerely in Christ,
CALVIN CHAO, Gen. Secretary
China Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACE PROBLEM

University College,
Potchefstroom, South Africa,
October 25, 1948.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I am not going to apologize for the fact that I am once again at our most urgent South African problem, viz., the racial problem, and more particularly the so-called native problem, i.e., the relation between the whites and the non-whites in South Africa.

A New Government Policy

I have in the past had occasion to touch upon this problem more than you people over there might like. But circumstances, especially political conditions, have changed over here so radically that I am forced to raise this topic again. The overthrow of the Smuts regime with its liberalism and its anti-Afrikaner tendency has had the consequence that the Afrikaner element with its clearcut political thought, especially on this urgent problem, has come into power. And this new government has tackled the solution of this difficulty immediately and earnestly. When the Nationalists came into power after May 26, 1948, the world, and you in America, more particularly, were told that South Africa was in for alarming revolutionary actions.

This new government has now been in action for more than five months and nothing of this sort has happened. It has tackled with knowledge and decisiveness all the problems that were avoided by the old government, and it has tackled them on constitutional lines.

The present government has up to now shown what it intends to do as regards the racial problem, the relation between white and non-white. There are two underlying ideas in its policy: guardianship of the white over the non-white, and segregation (“apartheid,” apartness) between them. Both these principles need some elucidation.

An Indispensable Bit of History

As regards the idea of guardianship. A brief historical argument will clear up this matter. When our forefathers came to South Africa in 1652, their intention was the institution of an intermediate refreshment station between the Netherlands and the East Indies. As you may know, the occupation was undertaken on the initiative of the Netherlands East India Company. The first temporary settlers found over here coloured uncivilized peoples, especially the Hottentots and the Bushmen. They were roaming people with very little settled occupation of the land. Very soon the Company found it necessary to occupy the Cape permanently, and the first free burghers settled in the country in the vicinity of Cape Town harbour. Gradually more free burghers settled here, and the colony extended more and more inland. In the course of the late eighteenth century our forefathers came into contact with a new human race, black men moving south- and westwards. These black men, like our forefathers, were not the original owners of what was later called the land of the Cape of Good Hope (the Cape Colony). They were coming from the north downwards. The blacks were — like the coloureds — barbarians and heathen, whereas our forefathers were civilized and Christians.

Our forefathers were, like ourselves today, Calvinists, and were immediately concerned about the spiritual welfare of the non-whites they found in South Africa. Naturally they felt that these barbarians and heathen should be taught the message of Jesus Christ. Missionary and educational work immediately started. Our forefathers felt themselves to be the guardians of these “children” of nature. The aborigines were treated in the most humane way possible right from the start. Although slavery became a kind of institution over here, all slaves were imported: not a single South African white or black — was ever enslaved. When slaves were set free during the early part of the nineteenth century, only imported men and women were concerned. Hottentots, Bushmen, and Black men were as free as before.

One other point should be made. When our forefathers came here, they found aborigines fighting amongst themselves and one race after the other was exterminated. This applies more particularly to the warlike Blacks — the hordes coming from the North were not peaceful in their intentions. Black warriors were carrying everything before them; they were destroying all forms of human life as far as they went. To this destruction the white men put a stop, and thereby saved not only themselves from extinction, but also the blacks. When the “Voor­trekkers” came into the Orange Free State and the Transvaal areas, they found immense countries totally unoccupied, practically all inhabitants having been murdered out by the Zulu hordes. In these parts they found only remnants — and fleeing remnants at that — of various black and coloured races. And they put a stop to this vast and brutal human destruction. They accepted their rôle as guardians of the partially destroyed non-white races. That the black races have progressed in South Africa is solely due to the part the whites have played up to now. If things had gone on as they did during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, very few black people would have been left over. The Zulus were not only destroying all non-Zulu races, but they were actually “eating one another”: one
chief fighting to the death against another. To all this an end was made when the "Voortrekkers" broke the military power of the great Zulu king, Dingaan, on December 16, 1838.

The Policy of Guardianship

From a political point of view, the whites must be considered the real guardians of the non-whites. They have protected them from internal extermination by destroying the military power of the great barbarian kings. But they have done more. They have given the non-whites a form of government under which they learned to live peacefully and orderly and under which they thrived as human races and human beings.

From an educational point of view, the whites must also be considered as the real guardians ("parents") of the non-whites. Whatever form of education the non-whites have received, it all comes from the activities of the whites. The very first school that was started in South Africa was a school for non-whites: only in 1683 one for whites. And ever since that day, education for the non-whites has been an ideal with the whites. Today a very comprehensive system of schooling for non-whites is in active operation, but more than mere secular education was and is provided. The conversion of the non-white heathen to Christianity has been a set policy of the whites right from the start. During the regime of the Netherlands East India Company the chief aim (and content) of the ordinary school education was religious. And towards the end of the eighteenth century missionary societies as well as the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa started active mission work. Today a very elaborately system of missionary work amongst the non-whites is in active functioning.

The definite policy of the white man in South Africa is the uplifting of the non-white. This is an inherent part of at least the Afrikaner view of life: as Calvinists we feel that we are responsible for the uplifting of the uncivilized and less privileged non-white, because they, like we, are creatures of the Almighty Creator. Before God we all stand equal; also they have souls that have to be saved, also they have been created in the image of God.

This letter has become a bit long. In my next letter I shall state our ideal of apartness—an ideal not of destruction or oppression, but of parallel and independent development.

With kind regards,
Sincerely yours,
J. CHR. COETZEE.

FROM THE NEW HEBRIDES

Teachers' Training Institute, Tangoa, South Santo, New Hebrides, 15th July, 1948.

NEVER in seven years in the islands have we had better news to pass on than that which we give here. On the first day of July, during the session of Synod just completed, the native church was inaugurated as The Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides, thus taking her place in the fellowship of Reformed Churches which hold the Presbyterian system of government throughout the world. It was a happy circumstance that we had present, in addition to a full representation of the missionaries on the field, official delegates from the Australian and New Zealand Churches and Women's Missionary Unions, and New Hebridean delegates from most of the islands for which our Mission has been responsible—that is to say, from about three-quarters of the total area of the Group. The native delegates comprised pastors and elders, a number of teacher-catechists, and several deaconesses and women workers. These had their own special meetings and, in addition, attended many of the meetings of Synod.

The occasion of this Synod was doubly important as we were celebrating the centenary of the coming of the first Presbyterian missionaries to the New Hebrides. John and Charlotte Geddie, of the Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia, Canada, landed at Anenye island—the most southerly of the Group—in 1848. Other workers soon followed from Canada and Scotland, and the Mission Synod was constituted on board the little "Day-spring" in 1857. This body has ever since served the Mission as its Field Council and as the ecclesiastical guide to the native congregations. Many devoted men and women have given noble service in this century of pioneering, growth, and consolidation, and what we now witness in the birth of the self-governing Island Church is surely the most worthy and enduring memorial to those who went before. The very obscurity of this out-of-the-way island field has kept the names of these men and women from the roll of the mighty ones. The one exception is John G. Paton. But many others were deserving of this honour, though they sought it not: Dr. Geddie and Dr. John Inglis of Anetiyum—both mighty men of valour; Copeand and Gunn—on lonely, grim Futuna; the brothers Gordon and Mrs. Gordon of Erromanga—all martyred; Neilson and Wm. Watt of "Dark Tana"; Dr. Mackenzie and Dr. Macdonald—and before them Morrison—on Efate; Peter Milne of Nguna—that man of Aberdeen granite whose work has been so enduring—all these broke virgin soil, or—as the native proverb has it—cut their garden from the standing jungle. And there were many more no less devoted and no less loved. Indeed one doubts if any mission field in the world has been more fortunate in the quality of its pioneers; a singular generation of men and women of the finest qualities;—unflinching purpose amid years of unrelieved disappointment; adaptability in a field which called for the most versatile gifts; undimmed faith beside the graves of their own loved ones; unspoiled simplicity amid the first spiritual harvests. Today we see the ample fructification of those grains of wheat which had first to fall into the ground and die. "To God be the glory; great things He hath done!"

The name Synod will now disappear, and the supreme court of the new Church will be the General Assembly, the first meeting of which has been appointed for the middle of 1949 in Vila. The Church is constituted on a regular system of Sessions and Presbyteries. All ordained missionaries are eligible for membership on these courts. The Constitution of the new Church is a closely-typed document of some seven pages and is modelled on the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, which came into being some four years ago. From every point of view the present has seemed unmistakably to be God’s hour for the emergence to full maturity of the Island Church. Many circumstances have pointed to the desirability of this step: chief among them being the spiritual encouragements of recent years during which we have seen many numbers of Sessions constituted and large numbers of pastors and elders ordained. In sending out its own evangelists to other islands, and undertaking the cost of all such work, it has shown a determination to complete the evangelization of the heathen peoples and to revive the life of those nominally Christian communities which have fallen back through neglect. One may add that this decisive step has not been taken in precipitate haste, but has been the subject of consideration since 1941, and has been taken with the cordial goodwill of the Home Churches concerned.

Coincident with this development is the expansion of the programme of the Teachers' Training Institute to include proper Theological Training for the ministry of the Island Church. Synod has recommended to the Home Churches concerned that Rev. R. C. Williamson, who for the past two and half years has been a missionary of the NSW Church in the Santo area, be appointed to the Institute staff as Vice-Principal thus enabling me to give most of my time to the work of Theological Training. We rejoice in the presence of a new colleague and in the prospects which open up for the College here. During Synod a 72-feet dormitory and class-room, which we built this year from U.S. materials, bought for about £40, was dedicated to the special work of Theological Training, and a preliminary course for Refresher Training will be given next year to suit
able men from all parts of the Church. The Island Church is assuming the total cost of this new department.

I would like to close this letter on a personal note. It was one morning during the recent Synod that I was handed the radiogram which told of the passing of my dear father, in Dunedin. I want to record my gratitude to God for parents whose lives were shining examples of diligence, devotion, and unwavering faithfulness. The old brick manse in North Dunedin—even more than that grey pile of University buildings just opposite—was the college where we learned the larger lessons which have prepared us for life, and have made life rich and glorious. On those now distant—but still memorable—annual holidays he taught us how to catch fish; and no tramp was too tedious if only we could throw out a line at the end. But there was a greater passion—to be a fisher of men. And I have reason to thank God for that night in 1927 when he took me aside into his study and set before me the Way of Life. Humanly speaking I owe everything to that talk. When, some years ago, father gave me a new set of Calvin's Institutes, I was impelled to inscribe it with the words of St. Paul, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers . . ." "His was a heart which guarded jealously its personal life; with Christ; a mind vigorous and ever submissive to the Divine Word; and an unambiguous public testimony which ever sought the greater glory of God. These were the things we saw who were his sons and daughters, and we join with a larger company who rise up to call his name blessed.

With our kind greetings, as ever,

J. GRAHAM MILLER.
The true mysticism speaks today in no clearer accents than Dean and it is in aiding ascent that they find their meaning. This is the Dean’s eighty-eighth.

The phenomenal world, though only a shadow of the real, is yet a true shadow. The Indians err in taking the world of sense as unreal, forgetting that in the mystical ascent to God through the world, “a journey through the unreal is an unreal journey.” The problem of time cannot be ignored, though the Dean grants that he cannot hope to improve on Augustine’s frank despair of solving it. Mayhap one keeps good company in frankly despairing of condensing his discussion of it.

His chapter on “Symbolism and Myth” is the best in the book for power, intensity, and beauty. Here he says that since we live in two worlds “ambibiously”, we need a bridge between them; this bridge is furnished by the world of sense which is “sacramental,” pointing us beyond itself. In Goodness or Love, Wisdom, and Beauty, which “give meaning to family affection, to science and philosophy... to art and poetry, and to... history,” we are in immediate communion with God. These three “are known to us a priori; we cannot get behind them... In them, so far as we can make them our own we are in contact with reality.” And “the earnest pursuit of any one” of them is religious, “and may give rise to mystical phenomena.” As real as Love, Wisdom, and Beauty is the fact of evil, “which no philosophy, in my opinion, has been able to explain.”

In his chapter on “Watchman, What of the Night?” the Dean predicts “a revival of spiritual and unworlly religion in this country, and no doubt in other parts of western and central Europe,” but it is “on the laity that the future of Christianity depends.” He did in the beginning when “there was not a single priest among the Apostles.”

Christian mysticism as the Dean expounds it subordinates Christ and renders orthodox soteriology anomalous. He scores Luther for “identifying faith with a feeling of confidence,” fiducia, a state of mind he finds far-removed from St. Paul. He attacks incidentally the “juridical atonement” and quotes with approval Nettleship’s description of atonement as “a universal being in and for (one-) another.” Again, he refers to “historical dogmas” as “unconscious symbols.” On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Dean Inge recognizes that for St. Paul “the Passion was a sacramental act” which “not only symbolized but effected something,” and that for Paul, the glorified Christ is still living and active in the world. And further, “we can hardly consider too carefully the meaning... of the exception which brought Augustine into the Church of Christ,” namely, that “he came to see that Platonism without the Incarnation and the Cross is not enough.”

However the Dean finally accords the Incarnation and the Cross with his Neo-Platonism, however widely he may differ with the Calvinist on other grave issues, the thrust of this book is by no means blunted by his Christology—or lack of one—and his ‘heterodoxy.’ Who better than the orthodox Christian can respond to this twentieth century formulation of the ancient command to “seek Him with all thy heart” who better than he, convinced as he is that access to God has been vouchsafed the Calvinist on other grave issues, the thrust of this book is by no means blunted by his Christology—or lack of one—and his ‘heterodoxy.’ Who better than he, convinced as he is that access to God has been vouchsafed to himself? The fact that “celebrated occasion in Jerusalem,” can appreciate the significance, assent to the challenge, take inspiration from the vitality of this call to total consecration? A false mysticism might bid him flee institutional forms, escape if he could from the letter to the spirit, and seek solace where words are an impertinence and silence the highest eloquence; but flight and escape are false emotions. The true mysticism bids him ascend; and it is for ascent that religious institutions, at least for the Protestant mind, exist; and it is in aiding ascent that they find their meaning. This true mysticism speaks today in no clearer accents than Dean Inge’s, bidding him seek with all his soul the “way of discipline, meditation, and contemplation, in a word the way of prayer, if we use the word in its ancient meaning, as ‘the ascent of the mind to God.’”

As angels sing again in Christian hearts at this blessed season, this man’s intense devotion to the godly life as he understands it shames us to renewed and rededicated consecration to “the way of prayer,” seeking for ourselves through Christ the mystical communion which “if it could be put into words, would perhaps reveal nothing new except that God loves us, and has given His Holy Spirit to dwell with us, sanctify us, and transform us, as St. Paul says, ‘from glory to glory.’”

LESTER DE KOSTER.

Calvin College.

PATRISTIC AND MEDIEVAL PREACHING

The effect of Christian preaching on the total cultural pattern in our own century is likely not considerable. Yet the recorded sermons bequeathed by this and recent generations of preachers, though they have not been a major factor in the shaping of our current culture, will certainly furnish a significant revelation of the present human scene to its later interpreters. For that period of the history of the Western world, thirteen centuries long, during which the best and the most influential minds were occupied in the service of Christianity, and Western culture was dominated by the church, the extant sermons constitute an even more important deposit of source material for arriving at an understanding of the age they represent. In the belief that these resources have been insufficiently exploited, and that our grasp of the Patristic and Middle Ages is to that extent impoverished, the Duke University Professor of Church History has compiled “a selection of representative sermons designed to enrich the total picture of Christian life in the West from the third century to the Reformation.”

The anthology includes sermons and portions by thirty-two preachers, from the early third century allegorist, Origen, to the French Michel Menot, who died just as the Reformation was beginning to flare up in Germany. The roster is made up largely of the best known great, but also brings out two or three names of the relatively obscure. There is eloquence and dullness, pastoral aridity and mystical exaltation, spiritual edification and excessive eclecticism, popular appeal and homilistic tedium. Yet the compiler has obviously presented the better, and in most instances the best, representatives of these centuries of Christian preaching. Five great names illustrate the patristic period, including, of course, Chrysostom and Augustine. The period of prevailing homiletical sterility, from the sixth to the eleventh centuries is represented by a half dozen sermons that exhibit genuine edifying quality, moral pertinence, and awareness of pastoral responsibility. The final centuries of the Middle Ages, marked by originality of homiletical method, resurgence of prophetic power, renewed emphasis on Biblical knowledge and interpretation, wide use of illustrative materials, and considerable social concern, embrace the remainder of the anthology, and are reflected in a wide variety of sermons which, in general, clearly reveal the sprouting seeds of the Reformation.

For the student of the periods represented, the heritage of sermonic materials is doubly revelatory. On the one hand the subject-matter exposes the spiritual, ecclesiastical, and social conditions which the sermons are designed to correct. On the other hand, the fact that the pulpit continued to exercise this corrective function shows that the leaven of sound spirituality never disappeared entirely. Tracing the witness of the pulpit through the centuries, even within the limitations of this brief collection, one may clearly observe the unbroken, though often thin, line of conscientious Scriptural exposition and application that eventuated first in preaching reform and then in the Refor-
mation itself. In fact the title of this anthology hints at the unremitting warfare waged by the more devout pulpiteers against the ever-present and often ascendant enemies of Christian devotion. Professor Petry notes in his introduction, "Actually, the manner in which Jesus Christ keeps re-emerging from the homiletic storehouse in which he is often incarcerated and from which he is so frequently reappropriated, is one of the most instructive qualities that the anthology has endeavored to preserve."

For the preacher, the value of the book is suggested by the sub-title. Here, for the first time, is a handy survey of the homiletic storehouse in which he is often incarcerated and the ageless applicability of the Bible to the human heart and the human scene. He may derive profit for his own pulpit ministry from a thoughtful study of those popular sermons which moved large masses of people during the years of widespread spiritual and cultural degeneracy. He will not fail to be edified by the recurring emphasis on the grave responsibilities that devolve upon his office. If he is studiously inclined, he will gain an incentive to forsake the too unprofitable perusal of the excess of current sermon publications, and seek a fuller acquaintance with the past.

For the benefit of those whose interest in the preaching resources of the pre-Reformation pulpit has received stimulation, the book contains an extensive bibliography, listing not only a good number of primary and secondary sources for the study of the period, but also the standard collections of sermons covered by the period discussed. The book has many other excellent qualities, too. A 44-page introduction provides the reader with a scholarly, clear, and informing survey of these thirteen centuries of preaching, which is an immensely valuable guide in tracing the trends in the history illustrated in the collection, and provides the historical back-drop against which the sermons must be evaluated. The sermons are arranged by author, and the authors placed in chronological order. A brief identification and characterization of the author precedes the selections from each of the preachers included. The translations, many of which are new, making some of the sermons available for the first time to English readers, are alive and readable. The table of contents lists both the authors, with their respective dates, and the sermon subjects. There is a comprehensive index, both name and subject, covering the introduction, the collection, and the bibliography. Mechanically, the book is unimpeachable.

PETER VAN TUILEN.

Holland, Michigan.

DR. BAVINCK'S MISSION LECTURES

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD.


The present volume comprises the mission lectures which Dr. Bavinck delivered at Calvin Seminary, and others which he gave at various Christian Reformed churches in the fall of 1947. These lectures are at once scholarly and popular; those which he delivered at Calvin Seminary were no less popular than scholarly; and those which he delivered to the masses were no less scholarly than popular. All of them alike are filled with food for thought, and they are informative and inspirational at the same time. When Dr. Bavinck lectures on missions, whether on the platform or in this book, it is evident both that he is well-versed in the theology of missions and that his whole soul is aglow with a fervent love for missions. And this book is a heart-warming book: it comes straight from his heart via his mind. The author is a missionary enthusiast. The book is bright with missionary light indeed. But this light is not cold like moon-beams; it is warm as is the light that emanates from the sun. Would to God that all theology were written so heartily as the volume now under consideration.

But these eleven lectures are brimful of thought well-considered and well-presented. The author knows his missionary theology. Once a missionary in the Dutch East Indies, and since a teacher in a mission training school, he now is professor of missions at the Kampen Theologische Hoogeschool of De Gerem­formeerde Kerken van Nederland and De Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam. He is a Reformed professor of missions: one of few. It is to be hoped that he will one day present us with a Reformed Doctrine of Missions. Needless to say, of this there is great need. We have no Reformed dogma of missions today. Even the impact of Christianity upon the non-Christian world can be evaluated only on the basis of a truly Scriptural, i.e., a typically Reformed, doctrine of missions.

The material presented in the book under review is not, nor was it intended to be, a systematic discussion of the impact of Christianity upon the non-Christian world. Hence it does not give answer to a goodly number of questions which the title of the book raises. It is sufficient to intimate that the subject is far from an easy one. Its methodological angle, from which the author approaches the subject, is the relatively simplest. Psychologists and sociologists are replete with examples and explanations which the author does not need, cannot use.

But they do not tell the whole story. Enough, however, of this. For Professor Bavinck did not undertake to deal with the Scriptural, i.e., fundamental, principles which underlie the impact with which his lectures are concerned.

It might have served a good purpose if the author had seen fit to preface his discussion of the impact of Christianity upon the non-Christian world with a chapter on the place of missions in the world- and time-embracing plan of God. Missions is God's work. But what is God really doing in missions, and in the whole situation now obtaining and in which God has integrated His missionary crusade? The impact of Christianity upon the non-Christian world derives its correct meaning precisely from the proper, i.e., Scriptural orientation of missions in the cosmic enterprise of God.

But the present volume is delightful and profitable reading. May it find its way into many homes and make its contribution towards the hastening of the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever!

S. VOLKEMA.

Calvin Seminary.

THE CHURCH CHOIR


The book before us is a "study in inaugurating, organizing, and administering the Church choral program," more particularly, the choral program of the non-litur­gic Protestant Church in America.

The author of the book has had extensive and intensive experience within this field for the last twelve years or more. His efforts, therefore, represent an analysis of these experiences in initiating and sustaining a choral program in three large churches in the western, midwestern, and eastern sections of our country.

The choral program in the intensely music-minded churches of our land is vastly different than in the majority of average non-litur­gic Protestant churches which maintain the usual volunteer choir with its customary ups and downs. One can imagine the consternation that might prevail in the minds of some church members if one were to advocate, as does Mr. Kettring, if the local situation favors it, a multiple-choir program! And yet that is the trend in American churches today.

Mr. Kettring has done a noteworthy piece of work in describing how a multiple-choir program can be (and was, in his experience) successfully realized. The plan that he has outlined in systematic detail starts at the very beginning, i.e., with...
the reasons for installing such a program (the title of the book indicates the practical reason), and then proceeds step by step to discuss in a very practical way such important items as the background and leadership necessary for carrying out such a program, equipment needed, ways in which he conducts auditions and rehearsals, vesting the choirs, financial administration of the program, the choirs at work in corporate worship, and establishing multiple-choir festivals.

The book is comprehensive in its informative aspect, clear in its outline of procedure, honest in its facing the strength and weakness of the program, and authoritative in its basic approach. Some scattered observations, favorable and otherwise, may not be amiss at this point. While the author has outlined plans for a multiple-choir program, this need not deter those interested only in the single choir plan from reading or consulting this book.

The emphasis given to the use of good materials is a proper one. The average choir director does not spend enough time in selecting his music, for good music has to be searched out.

The section devoted to the conduct of the choir during the worship-service has great merit. A spirit of reverence surely must prevail at all times in the choir loft.

Better preparation and planning on the part of the choir and its director is urged by Mr. Kettring. With this we heartily agree. Two rehearsals per week instead of the hurried, crowded one generally held would most certainly tend to improve the quality of many church choirs.

We regret that Mr. Kettring's basic philosophy of church music is rooted in a liberal theological approach. To those of us of evangelical Reformed persuasion, "The end of good music is" not merely "good worship." "The purpose of good Church music is" not merely "to lift the soul of the worshipper nearer the Worshiped." The object of our praise and worship is a personal, Sovereign God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In love and gratitude we dedicate to Him our talents, which He has given to us.

With voices united, our praises we offer,
To Thee, great Jehovah, glad anthems we raise;
Thy strong arm will guide us, our God is beside us,
To Thee, great Redeemer, forever be praise.

The foregoing paragraph does not, of course, prevent us from highly recommending Steps Toward a Singing Church to all choir directors, church leaders, and ministers, as a serviceable guide.

JAMES J. DE JONGE.

CALVIN COLLEGE.

THE EERDMANS PRIZE NOVEL


The publisher, and Mr. Reynold H. Weidenaar, the artist, have made of this book a thing of beauty. An illiterate may buy it and enjoy it. It looks handsome between a pair of bronze book ends, and I can think of worse reasons for buying a book. Open it and its loveliness continues. The end sheets give the scene of the story, a leaning Texas prairie shack. Above the number of each chapter the artist's pen draws out the narrative in fascinating detail. One sees mystery, storm, sickness, death. Mr. Weidenaar is something for an author to live up to.

But not only has Mrs. Briggs an artist to live up to; she also has a title. She is a brave one who goes to Isaiah for a name. It is no wonder that the story does not quite measure up to the artist or the title.

This novel, as most of you know, has been awarded the $5,000 Christian fiction prize offered by the Eerdmans Publishing Company. That term—Christian fiction—always puzzles me. Just what do we mean by it? Once having suffered from a severe case of Grace Livingston Hill Luts fever contracted at the local church library, I have become allergic to books so designated. Root Out of Dry Ground surprised me.

Mrs. Briggs has a story to tell. She often tells it well. Some of her dialogue is very well done: Janie's "... shut up, Willie," Chrissie's talk to an imaginary Eva, and her conversational wanderings in delirium. These show talent.

Root Out of Dry Ground is really the story of Janie. And Janie is a character study. Janie is deformed and ugly, one from whom men hide their faces. She is starved physically, emotionally, and mentally. She is sardonic and bitter. Yet Janie is strong. When she wishes, she rules the shack. When she speaks Willie shuts up. From her eyes flash the family's only claim to intelligence. The shanty knows no common sense but hers. She cannot read a book, but she has read too long the pitying gaze of well-formed human beings. And she hates them all.

Early in the story the author begins to save Janie from the tragedy which her character would seem to invite. She does so by placing a child in her arms. No easy task when the heroine is a Janie. But the author does it without taxing the reader's credulity. This, too, shows talent.

The second phase of Janie's rehabilitation is her conversion. And it is here that the reader has the uncomfortable feeling that the hunchback is not walking into the tent of meeting on her own two feet, but is being dragged in by the author. It is not the conversion that makes the reader rebel: it is the method that the writer uses. She thereby violates the strength of the character that she has created. It is true that nothing is impossible with the Lord, but it is equally true that the God of heaven and earth, of men and women, knows our psychological frame and converts us accordingly.

It is not the only evidence of Janie's getting out of hand. Mrs. Briggs, I think, has given birth to a literary child who is a little too big for her to handle. And yet, in spite of this, Janie is real. At times she is gripping. You will enjoy making her acquaintance.

RUTH IMANSE.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

Correction: We regret that in the previous issue a line fell out of the review of Professor Henry Van Til, which made that part of the discussion unintelligible. Those of our readers who would like to make the correction are requested to add the following line at the top of the first column on page 79 of the November issue: "To which ought to be added that this study is one-sided from . . ."

The reader is also asked to correct two other errors overlooked by the proof reader in the review of Professor Kromminga's book by Dr. James Daane. They are found on page 76, column one. The word "would" (10th line from bottom) should read "could", and "adequate" (3rd line from bottom) should be "inadequate".
Christmas Suggestion

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