Theological Scholarship
A New Organization

Calvinism and Politics
Critical Suggestions

Program of Action
Which Way?

The Atonement
Idealistic Distortion

Mid-Century
Peace or Cold War?

Letters
Books
Verse
The CALVIN FORUM

Published by the Calvin Forum Board of Publication

VOLUME XV, NO. 7  FEBRUARY, 1950

Contents

Editorial

Orthodox Theological Scholarship........................................... 131

Articles

Toward a Calvinistic Program of Social Action.............................. Lewis B. Smedes 135
Calvinism as a Political Principle........................................... J. M. Vander Kroe 139
These Middle Years.............................................................. Earl Strikwerda 142
Strong’s Conception of the Atonement....................................... Warren C. Young 144

From Our Correspondents

The French Calvinistic Society.................................................. 147

From the Calvin Campus........................................................... 148
An American Evangelical Theological Society................................ 149

Book Reviews

Two New Testament Studies........................................................ 150
Religious Encyclopedia............................................................ 150
Is this the Gospel?........................................................................ 151
Humanistic Morality................................................................. 151
Communicating Ideas.................................................................... 152

Verse

Etching......................................................................................... 134
Morning in Winter......................................................................... 138

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1950
Orthodox Theological Scholarship

An Editorial

We have met here in our capacity as evangelical theological teachers, as orthodox scholars. We are interested in promoting theological scholarship upon the basis of the presuppositions of a genuine evangelical Christianity. (*) The need for, and value of biblical and theological discussion societies for the promotion and development of theological scholarship is, I presume, generally granted. In such societies theological scholars meet on a footing of friendship and equality to stimulate advanced theological study and possible authorship. We have various such societies in our country today. There is the Society for Biblical Literature and Exegesis, the Chicago Society for Biblical Research, the American Oriental Society, the Society for Church History, and the American Theological Society, with an Eastern and a Midwestern Section. To one or the other of these societies some of us belong.

It is now proposed that we organize an Evangelical, an Orthodox Theological Society. Is there need for such a distinctive society?

The deepest and ultimate reason for this need, as I see it, is found in the radical divergence between the basis, presuppositions, and consequent methodology of a sound evangelical theology on the one hand, and that of the prevailing types of theology (which may with a general term be designated as modernist) on the other. The antithesis between these two standpoints is so basic and far-reaching that the need for scholarly theological societies on a genuinely evangelical basis is beyond dispute.

What is this deep-seated and basic difference?

It is a difference grounded in all of modern philosophical and theological thought and can be traced to the transformation that has come over Theology in the last two centuries.

The thinker who, more than anyone else in recent modern thought, is responsible for this revolution in Theology is Immanuél Kant, who laid its philosophical foundations. It was Friedrich Schleiermacher who first carried it into the distinctly theological field.

The gist of this revolution may be summarized as follows. The ultimate source and authority for

Theology is no longer sought in the objective divine revelation of Scripture, but in the religious consciousness of man. Theology thus becomes anthropocentric instead of theocentric. As to the Scriptures, these are still recognized as a great and incomparable source for Theology, but only in the sense that they offer us the deposit of the religious experience of the Hebrew people in antiquity and of the early Christian community. Essentially there is no difference between the "sacred literature" of Christianity and that of the great religions of the world. The history of the divine revelation thus becomes merely the history of the religion of Israel. The study of Scripture is approached with no other presuppositions than is the study of the "sacred books" of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam.

In this way Theology loses its character as Theology, and (though as a matter of accommodation the term may still be retained) it becomes philosophical and psychological speculation on the human phenomenon of religion.

This divergence between historic Christian Theology and the currently prevalent modernist Theology—of whatever shape or hue—is so great that the organization of separate scholarly societies for evangelical theologians is desirable.

Here I do not wish to be misunderstood as condemning membership in all societies for biblical and theological study except those which are avowedly evangelical. Nor does this follow from the analysis and characterization just given. This would follow if we were facing the question of church membership. But that is not the issue before us now.

In a scholarly society members of the greatest diversity of convictions and presuppositions in their theological position can benefit from joint discussion. Who will deny that in the empirical field of archaeological findings orthodox and modernist scholars can both be benefited from scholarly reports and discussions in a common society. And as soon as the deeper questions of theological fundamentals come into the picture, there is the possibility that one can be greatly benefited from discussion between those of opposite theological conviction. The benefit will in most cases not be one that flows from agreement, but precisely from disagreement, from a clear and sharp presentation of

(*) This editorial is the gist of a keynote address delivered at the organizational meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society held upon the initiative and invitation of the faculty of the Gordon Divinity School of Boston at the Cincinnati downtown Y. M. C. A. on December 27 and 28, 1949.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1950
fundamentally divergent views. That is, although such a mixed group of theological scholars cannot jointly build up an evangelical Theology, they can mutually stimulate one another through discussion and criticism.

But—this having been granted—it is no less true that the great gulf between Modernism and Orthodoxy is of so far-reaching importance that such theologizing together always remains unsatisfactory, and—what is more important—that certain aspects of that theologizing even on the basis of purely scholarly discussion cannot thus come to their own.

What are some of these aspects?

1. Only upon the basis of faith in the Word of God as the source and norm of all Theology will theological criticism and construction among scholars have the desired criterion and principle of unity. Among liberals you cannot advance scriptural proof in an authoritative sense, because they do not accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God. This robs Theology of its true criterion and principle of unity. Each theologian in that case adopts some philosophical principle as the criterion for the structural consistency of his Theology.

2. Only upon this basis is there a united task in the production of a relevant scholarly evangelical Theology in our day. The united task that one may have in common with liberals in other theological and biblical societies does—at best—not go beyond the empirical and the formal aspect of the subject. That has its value. For scholars in joint discussion it may be very profitable. But we need more than that. And that "more" is all-important. Only an evangelical theological society can supply that.

3. Only an evangelical theological society can furnish that spiritual atmosphere, that morale, that mutual encouragement in the face of the enemy, which we so sorely need to fulfill our modern theological task. We need to strengthen one another on the scholarly level as Bible-believing thinkers and teachers. There is a gigantic task before us. Each will have to carry it forward in his own denominational context and relations, but as Bible-believing scholars of diverse denominational background we need one another and can greatly aid and strengthen one another in carrying out this theological task.

May I illustrate this point of the relative value for the believing scholar of membership in the modernist theological society on the one hand, and the absolute value and need of such membership in a Bible-believing, orthodox theological society on the other, from a recent personal experience of mine. I happen to be a member of the American Theological Society, the Midwestern Section, usually meeting at Chicago. Soon after I joined, I was invited to deliver a paper on the assigned subject: "Calvinism in American Theology Today." I do not know what the Chicago gentlemen had in mind with the paper, but I know what I made of it. After a brief survey of the history of Calvinistic Theology in our country and its present rather sad status in most erstwhile Calvinistic denominations, I proceeded to deliver myself of a plea for the development of a truly God-centered Theology, pointing out that only such a theology was worthy of the name, and utilizing the rather pathetic admissions of many living modernist theologians about the weakness of their own theology as background and fuel for the fire. Recent theological literature had been rather generous in furnishing me such fuel. In fact, some of the gentlemen who, it seemed to me, had made damaging admissions of this kind were sitting right in my audience as the paper was read.

There ensued a most interesting discussion. That is what one could expect with such scholars as Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Henry Nelson Wieman, Daniel D. Williams, and Bernard Eugene Meland in the audience. It was clear that my plea had disconcerted some, but apparently had challenged all. In fact, this was not the end of the paper. In recess two of the editors of the Journal of Religion approached me and to my amazement requested the manuscript for publication in that journal. It appeared in the January, 1947, issue and had the distinction of being accompanied by replies from Joseph Haroutunian and Wilhelm Pauck. The discussion created such interest that it even attracted the attention of Time, whose religious editor wrote a story on it in his column under the title: "Is Calvin Coming Back?" This experience has brought home to me two things: First, one can be greatly benefited and even carry out his God-given duty to testify for the truth through the reading of a paper and its ensuing discussion in a society of modernists; and, second, despite this benefit there is no common ground on which to build a theology and to carry the discussion to a satisfactory conclusion for one who is a Bible-believing theologian. In a scholarly evangelical theological society that end could be attained.

What about the scope and nature of the activities of such an Evangelical Theological Society? I would suggest in general that we do not undertake too much at once. Should such a society undertake to publish a magazine of its own? Should it sponsor the publication of evangelical books, apart from the possible annual proceedings containing the papers read at the meetings? Many other such questions could be asked. With due appreciation of the apparent enthusiasm at this first meeting, I would counsel sobriety on this score. Let us build solidly, not rashly. Whether it is the part of wisdom to issue a new scholarly journal by this proposed Theological Society, I profess not to know. I do believe it is important that all angles of such a possible project should be looked into before we
proceed to action. Studying this proposition for a year will only mature the project if it is really feasible and advisable.

The emphasis, it seems to me, ought to fall on the preparation, the reading, and the discussion of scholarly papers in the various fields of Theology. That ought to be the central and primary objective, it seems to me. That will stimulate us all. It will offer opportunity for mutual counsel and self-criticism. It will be a source of inspiration in the task to which we stand committed. It will also be a great stimulus to spur us on to writing and publication. Joint counsel can be valuable with a view to a division of labor among us and the filling up of regrettable lacunae in the field of evangelical theological scholarship.

In carrying out this task as an Evangelical Theological Society I believe that our approach to and attack upon the theological task should be comprehensive, constructive, and scholarly. A word on each of these three.

1. We should take a comprehensive view of our theological task. We must view Theology as an organism with its various and many members. I do not thereby mean that the whole gamut of Theology must necessarily be the object of study of every such society as we here contemplate organizing today. As a matter of fact, originally the committee on preparations for this meeting, I understand, had in mind a society for strictly biblical studies only.

Since then the scope has been enlarged to include also other phases of theological study, and the invitations have been issued upon that basis. It is, of course, up to you to decide later in the day what you desire. My point here is rather this, that we must regain the comprehensive conception of evangelical theology which we have largely lost through the influence of modernism and the higher criticism. This would be important even if we should break up into specialized societies for the study of biblical subjects and apologetic and doctrinal and ethical studies, for instance. Also when such specialization should be effected, my plea for integration and for the comprehensive view of Theology holds.

One of the sad results of the influence of modern rationalism upon Theology has been its disintegration. Biblical subjects have by the modernist been relegated to the field of historical and archaeological studies; systematics has largely become philosophy; and much of practical theology has been reduced to psychology. This has not only made for the deterioration and corruption, but also for the disintegration of the theological organism. I plead for the restoration of the organism of Theology. Even many fundamentalists have a distorted view of this picture. One form in which this distorted idea sometimes crops out among evangelicals is seen in the assumption that Biblical Theology is the whole of Theology. In this way Dogmatics, Ethics, and Apologetics (to speak of no other disciplines) are readily relegated to the realm of philosophy.

A revived theological sense among evangelicals should lead to a new or renewed appreciation of theological science as an organism. That organism is one and includes four phases: I. Biblical Studies (Isagogic, Exegetical, Biblical-Theological, and Archaeological); II. Church History in all its phases; III. Systematics, including Dogmatics, Ethics, and Apologetics; and IV. Practical Theology, with such subdivisions as: Homiletics, Liturgics, Pastoral Theology, Catechetics, Church Government, Missions. All of these are phases of Theology, even though the term is often, on one side or restricted to only the field of Systematics. It is all-important to recognize that, although the Bible is the sole and special object of study in the first, or biblical, field, it is characteristic of all phases of Theology that Scripture is the sole and ultimate source and criterion for truth. That is an essential characteristic of a truly evangelical Theology, which we must not allow modernism to eclipse.

2. When I plead for a constructive attack upon this theological task of ours I mean to warn against an overdue emphasis on defense. Apologetics has its place, but we should not allow ourselves to be maneuvered into a position where we are predominantly concerned about refuting the opposition. There is a place for apologetics, but it is not the primary or chief place. Perhaps you will not accuse me of bias in making this plea, seeing it is my special task to teach Ethics and Apologetics. I personally am of the opinion that much of our opposition to Modernism has readily encouraged us into being on the defensive. This is a tactical blunder, which is not always recognized as a weakness by evangelicals. It should, moreover, I believe, be pointed out that this overdone apologetic attitude is not so much an evil in the field of apologetics (where it cannot readily be overdone!), as in such fields as Biblical and archaeological study. Nehemiah's men worked on the building of the wall of the holy city with trowel in hand and ready with the sword to ward off the attack of the enemy if needed. There is great need of constructive effort in the field of Evangelical Theology.

3. We must also remember that our task is a scholarly task. This is not an attempt to set scholarship over against piety. The two must ever go together. Their divorce is also one of the evils that much of modern scholarship has fostered. Genuine piety and true scholarship must ever go hand in hand. Was it not Warfield who once wrote the beautiful sentence: "The systematic theologian should ever rest on the bosom of his Redeemer"? But my point now is that the task of us theologians in the proposed theological society is not one of preaching, of devotional stimulation, or of cultivation of the inner life, but primarily a task of scholarly endeavor. Our proposed theological society is
not to become a revival agency, important as revivals are in the Church. Prayer will have its place also at our meetings, I trust, as prayer does not have its place at the meetings of many modernist theological societies. But that does not mean that we should make our society a prayer meeting. Piety cannot make up for lack of scholarship, any more than scholarship can compensate for the absence of the fear of God in the heart.

* * *

Possibly the question might arise in the mind of some whether the diversity in our midst is not too great to allow for a united theological society with a common purpose.

Are we not too diverse? Baptists, Presbyterians, and Reformed; Calvinists and Arminians; Premillennialists and Amillennialists; Dispensationalists and those who hold to the essential unity and continuity of the Old and the New Testament dispensations.

In reply to this I would like to quote you a few sentences written by one of the greatest evangelical theologians of the modern day, Abraham Kuyper, and then I close with four brief observations.

More than fifty years ago this giant among Reformed theologians wrote in his Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology (Vol. II, p. 635, translation mine): “Even now it may be predicted that, whereas the theology of Modernism dissolves into a philosophy of religion or into speculation, and the Mediating theology will either go to seed in mysticism or will find its grave in philosophy, only such a confessional theology [which before he had described as based upon the Word of God and expressed in the classic creeds of the Christian Church] will stand its ground. Already it is apparent that such a Theology will perform a double task. In the first place, it will perform the common task so to investigate the fundamental problems which all denominations have in common that the basic difference between the consciousness of regenerate and unregenerate man becomes ever clearer; and, secondly, it will prompt each group to raise the specific form of its own confessional consciousness to the intellectual level of our age.”

Here are my closing observations on this matter of diversity and unity.

1. There are many denominational differences that need not come into our theological discussion in our proposed society if we keep the great fundamentals of orthodox theology in the center of our discussion. We are together in such a society as we would have this be not as church members, but as theological scholars. In this way we can be loyal to our own distinctive denominational tenets without having in any way to force them upon our fellow-members in a theological discussion society.

2. There are distinctive theological beliefs held divergently by many of us that will influence our theology. On these we can surely listen to one another without having to “excommunicate” anyone. It might even be profitable to conduct a pro and con discussion on such matters, as, for instance, dispensationalism. Surely as evangelical scholars we have enough in common and stand personally and culturally high enough to listen to one another’s arguments and be profited accordingly.

3. We should avoid carrying extraneous differences into our meetings, activities, and possible publications. I think just now of the grouping of many evangelicals on the side of the National Association of Evangelicals on the one hand, and with the American Council of Christian Churches on the other. Surely this organizational difference ought not to enter into that which unites or separates us as evangelical theological scholars in a discussion society. Sympathizers with the N.A.E. ought to be as welcome as those who prefer the A.C.C.C. and our proposed society ought not to ally itself in any way with either the one or the other, whatever your or my personal sympathies may be.

4. Finally, what binds us together is of greater importance than that which separates us. We are one in Christ. We are one in the recognition of the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the only ultimate source and criterion of an adequate Theology. This is sufficient to bind us together.

In hoc signo vinces!

C. B.

---

Etching

Only the seagull's restless flight
Across this worn and swollen land
Eludes the plundering winter wind
That spoils the waves and loots the sand.
Only the seagulls swooping down
And grey hills rising slow,
Only a wind torn, black penned tree
And dark trees blurred with snow.

Grand Rapids MARIE J. POST

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1950
Toward a Calvinistic Program of Social Action

The future historian of the Christian Reformed church will, I think, find the past few years particularly interesting partly because of their many noteworthy challenges for Calvinistic Action. These challenges were evident in many ways: conventions, at least one using the word Action in its theme, sounded the word; many magazine articles were devoted to it; the pamphlet *Youth Speaks on Calvinism* was burdened with it, as were the many discussions which the brochure aroused; a Calvinistic Action Committee was at work. But along with the encouraging calls for a Calvinistic Program of Action there has been, it seems to me, some haziness as to just what that Program should be, just what kind of Action we should have. What is needed now is a rather thorough analysis of certain fundamental ideas determinative of any Calvinistic Program of Action. It would be embarrassing to our historian if he also observed that confusion blurred the sound of his forebears’ call to Action.

The purpose of this article is to suggest areas in which analysis is needed. To be of the greatest service the analysis must be articulated and subjected to intense criticism. I am sure that individuals are even now giving hard thought to these ideas, but there has not been the necessary writing and criticism. I am now submitting the need for public expression on what seem to me questions fundamental to the formulation of a Calvinistic Program of Action.

As for the plea for a Program of Action, such as put for instance in *Youth Speaks on Calvinism*, it usually goes something like this. History is always in flux. Christian principle is transcendent over transitory historical situations. The challenge to every Christian (in our case every Calvinist) is to apply the principle to the immediate historical situation. The present situation is construed to be a crisis. (This is evident in such a book as *Calvinism in Times of Crisis,*.) Since society is in crisis, we must have a Calvinistic Program to meet it. The critical nature of our times makes our ordinary duty an even more imperative one. The problem for us is to keep unchanged our principle while adapting the program according to the crisis. Now the weakness of this sort of plea is its silence about the real nature both of the actual crisis and the needed program.

**The Pattern of Modern Society**

A question preliminary to the definition of a Program of Action concerns the definition of the historical situation which makes a given Program necessary. Just what is there about the modern situation that makes it a crisis? How does the modern crisis differ from any other of the past? The answer can come only after a thorough analysis of our times, of our actual situation in history. Any answer to this preliminary problem must be more than the recital of specific symptomatic disorders of our age, and more than a general undefined characterization of it. One hears the modern crisis described in terms of race conflicts, imminent wars, communism, fascism, and other such symptoms of a more basic ailment. Or one hears that modern society is secular, and that its secularity is the cause of its crisis. But neither a listing of specific manifestations of trouble nor a general characterization of modern society is enough for an understanding of the real crisis of modern times.

Take for instance the characterization of modern society as secular. How are we to understand the term? And it is much more than a verbal matter; it is the diagnosis of a desperately sick patient. As to its source, is secularity a by-product of the reformation or is it a hold-over of the Greek mind passed on to us through Catholic thought? As to its extent, is it a condition of neutrality or does it imply a positive stand against Christianity? Is modern society non-Christian because it rejects Christian doctrine while Christian in that it still functions with institutions and ideals which are part of a Christian heritage? Is modern society anti-Christian so that a positive Christian influence within its framework would be intolerable or is it only non-Christian or neutral so that Christians can still enter its institutions to exert a positive Christian influence? I think we shall see that we have not achieved a defined position on these questions. Yet, they are implied in our preliminary question: What is the modern situation and why is it a crisis? The answer to this must be the foundation for any dis-
cussion of a Calvinistic Program for a time of crisis. The present situation, then, needs full-bodied analysis, involving Christian integrity, historical learning, philosophical awareness. This implies a challenge for intense study, extensive writing, fearless criticism, and then more study and more writing.

Three Possible Aims

What, then, about the Program of Action that many of us have called for? First, what of its aim? I assume that any Program has an ultimate aim which is being striven for, whether or not there is hope that the ultimate aim will ever be realized in history. What are the possibilities that one might have in mind as the aim of a Calvinistic Program of Action? First, it could be our aim simply to influence more and more individual non-Calvinists toward becoming Calvinists. Second, it might be our aim to so permeate the non-Calvinistic, "secular" society with our religious and intellectual way of life that non-Calvinists would be forced to conform to it. Thus we would have a society in which Calvinistic patterns of thinking and living would be dominant, even though the majority of men and women might not at heart be Calvinists. Or, third, we might seek to have a Calvinistic society of our own, more or less isolated from the "secular" society, but standing as a living protest to its non-Christian way of life. These possibilities for an ultimate aim are made much more distant and conventional here than they are as actually existing in the mind of anyone. Actually an ultimate aim would have to be far more complex than I seem to suggest here. But this simplification will do, I think, to point up the question each possibility involves.

First Aim: Influencing Individual Non-Calvinists

Now let us take each possibility for an ultimate aim and ask what kind of Program would be appropriate for it. The first, that of influencing individual non-Calvinists toward becoming Calvinists, assumes that we have a clear idea of what Calvinism really is. Is Calvinism equivalent to Reformed Doctrine or does it include a larger sphere, possibly a distinct philosophical system? Is Calvinism such that all peoples, say the negro, the Chinese, the English, and the Dutch would express it similarly? Is the so-called neo-Calvinism really liberalism or a new expression of Calvinism? These and many other questions would have to be explored and articulatedly answered in order to have what must be assumed in a Program aiming to exert an influence on individual non-Calvinists. It would also, of course, be necessary to continue and strengthen our system of Calvinistic education.

Second Aim: Making Society Calvinistic

The second possibility for an ultimate aim is less simple than the first. It is that of so permeating society with the leaven of Calvinism that society would change its way of life according to Calvinistic ideas. We would thus have a Calvinistic society even though most men and women were not Calvinists. The problem introduced here immediately is that of determining what a Calvinistic society would be like. The tendency for us here is to confuse a particular and transitory form with what should be an idea general and permanent enough to include all peoples and all times. We might be inclined to define the form which institutions of society would take, thus making certain forms co-terminous with a Calvinistic society. Instead we would have to limit ourselves to determining how Calvinists could set the intellectual and religious tone for the operations of any institutional form, so long as the form itself was not repugnant to the Calvinistic way of life, as, say, polygamy would be. Only thus would we avoid the danger of identifying our own economic or political prejudices with a Calvinistic society. I have heard some men naively speak as though, were Calvinism to show the way, we would eliminate the New Deal, turn back the "trend toward socialism" and return to a benign capitalism. Others speak just as naively as though a Calvinistic society would take to itself all the "liberal" trends, become benevolently socialistic. In our study of the idea of a Calvinistic society we ought not be satisfied to ask whether capitalism or modified socialism is Calvinistic, but how either of these forms (or any other) would operate if dominated by Calvinistic thought and ideals. We might ask under which political or economic form of so-

Granted that we have a clear enough idea of Calvinism to be able to distinguish it whenever and wherever (among whatever races or nations) found from all other forms of Christianity, we still have to consider the actual Program of Work. It would in this case seem to be one of church and individual witness to the truth through various direct means of propagation. Would not our Program be one of extending such witnesses as the Back to God Hour, foreign and home missions, the bringing of "outsiders" into our churches, the publishing of widely read journals, tracts, and books? If so, what about the relevance of such calls as are heard for "our own" labor union and other organized social institutions? Would not a Program aiming to influence individuals with the message of Calvinism render irrelevant such organized movements whose purpose is not to influence individuals toward Calvinism but to exercise Calvinistic influence in a social context?
society a minority of Calvinists would be most free to set the thought patterns which determine the actions of individuals and institutions in that society. But we must not identify the Calvinistic society with any one form. It would have to include the possibility of many more than one, for forms change while the Calvinistic idea could not.

The problem remains as to how to go about exerting the kind of influence which could bring about a society conformed to Calvinistic standards. There are at least two methods, both having champions among our people. Both presuppose a society which is not so positively anti-Christian that it would not tolerate a Christian Program within its framework. Neither, for instance, would be possible in Russia, both might be feasible in the United States. Still, each has a different conception of how secular (non-Christian) existing society is.

**By Two Possible Programs**

In the first type of Program we would see to it that we are faithful in preaching Reformed truth in the pulpits, unceasing in our educational programs, tireless in our individual study of the Bible and the best books on Calvinism. Then we would let our influence be felt as we, individual intelligent and enthusiastic Calvinists, went about our individual tasks within the institutions of the present society. Individual Calvinists would take part in labor unions, political parties, business associations, and other institutions, and there influence the institutions in which they are working. This assumes that such institutions are neutral and susceptible to a Calvinistic influence, that they are not positively anti-Christian. Such organizations as the CLA then, would be unnecessary. More and more Calvinists would enter neutral institutions, there to exert a Calvinistic influence by setting a moral and intellectual pace for other members of the institution to follow. This would not mean that a Calvinist would have to be the best worker in any field. He would not have to become, say, the president of a local labor union. But he would help set the moral attitudes and ideals by which the leaders would have to determine their activity.

The second kind of Program has the same ultimate aim as the kind just suggested, but would call for separate, organized, positively Calvinistic institutions. It would mean that Calvinists would not enter the so-called neutral institutions, but would participate in "our own" institutions of various sorts. These distinctly Calvinistically organized institutions would be a positive witness for a Calvinistic societal life and a living protest against the other non-Christian institutions. Individuals, then, could actually carry their principles into their particular work without compromise since they would be part of institutions organized after Calvinistic principles and working according to Calvinistic standards. Also, the united influence would, in any case, be much stronger than scattered individual witnesses.

Those who espouse this kind of program do not define the present secular society as being merely neutral, but, rather, basically anti-Christian; not that it includes a direct and explicit program against Christianity, but that its prevailing ideals and practices are pagan. The basically, though not explicitly, anti-Christian character of the institutions of our secular society make it impossible for a Calvinist to be of any influence within them. In fact, he becomes a partaker in and shares the responsibility of their paganism by his participation in them.

But the supporters of this second type of program are themselves faced with the same argument if they insist on the basic paganism of society. One does not escape participation in "secular" society by working in Calvinistic institutions. The institution itself must in some way conform to the larger social framework of the secular society in which it works. If modern society is so thoroughly anti-Christian that individuals share in its paganism by participating in its institutions, then even Calvinistic institutions would share in society’s paganism by operating within the larger framework of the anti-Christian society itself. The Calvinistic institution in a pagan society might be as futile and as guilty as a Calvinistic individual in a pagan institution.

It may easily be seen that differences in Programs having the same ultimate aim arise from differences in answers to what I have called the preliminary question: What is the actual modern situation? Our differences in determining our Program arise from our differences in defining the situation, the crisis, for which the Program would be intended. Again, this illustrates the need for far reaching analysis: for study, writing, criticism.

**The Third Aim: Isolation**

The third possibility for an ultimate aim of any Calvinistic Program of Action visualizes a strong isolated society within and untouched, in so far as is possible, by the larger society which we call secular. It would be similar to the last previously mentioned Program in that we would have "our own" institutions, but would not be directly concerned about influencing non-Christian society. We would be concerned with building an isolated Calvinistic society comprising only Calvinists. Our influence on secular society would be indirect, by having so strong a society within an impendingly dissolute society that people would investigate us, admire us, perhaps be converted to Calvinism, and then join our society. We would also stand as a protest against the non-Christian character of the
secular society round about us, a society which we have written off as unsalvageable. We would be what someone has called an island of culture in the midst of a sea of paganism. Our influence would be felt as individuals, realizing they were adrift, struck out for our island. We have an example of such an aim in the dreams of Van Raalte when he led his colony to the shores of Lake Michigan.

The obvious obstacle to formulating a Program for such an aim is that we have lost the isolation that Van Raalte wanted, and even purely from a geographical standpoint, it would be impossible to regain it. Besides, once the fences of isolation have broken down, it seems impossible to mend them. On the other hand, it could be argued that the non-Christian world, though not so now, would become someday so intolerant of Calvinistic influence that Calvinists would be forced to withdraw from secular society into isolation. Thus we may as well prepare now for what we would be forced to have sooner or later anyway—an isolated communion.

If this were the aim of our Program we would have to be consistent and work for as complete isolation as possible. We could not be satisfied with a CLA while supporting “secular” business associations. We would have to start with Christian education and work out to every single sphere. The objection one is inclined to raise is that this Program is not possible, the aim is not conceivably obtainable. But we said at the beginning that our aim must be defined and then the Program adapted to it apart from whether the aim is within actual possibility. The definition of our aim is not for the purpose of making its attainment easier. It is only to make us more intelligently active in fulfilling our Calvinistic responsibility. It may be our duty to die for working out a Program whose aim is utterly impossible of attainment on earth. Again, it may be our duty to live to achieve our aim. At any rate, if it is our duty to be at it, it is also our duty to know well what we are at.

What I have said here is almost purely formal. I have said nothing substantial or positive, certainly nothing new, simply because I am not able. I and others like me need a body of written opinion, a public meeting of able minds to help us crystallize in our own minds the answers to the questions I have asked. I have only suggested that we need a detailed analysis both of the present historical situation and of a Program of Action appropriate to it. I am sure that individuals are now studying hard on this; but they are writing little, and criticizing each other’s writing even less. The analysis we need can come only through a process of hard study plus extensive writing and honest criticism. All three are imperative if we who have been aroused by the challenges to action are intelligently and wholeheartedly going to respond.

[This and the following article will be made the basis for a Symposium beginning in the next issue. Various writers will participate in the discussion. The opinion of interested readers is also welcome.—EDITOR.]

Morning In Winter

There was a morning when the winds blew cold And slashing sleet cut in across the plain To tear against the trees that shuddered down Into a world of dark and numbing pain.

There was a morning, bitter cold and dark, Heavy with burdened clouds that moved until The sun broke through to show a crystal world Where magic walked in silence on the hill.

Grand Rapids Marie J. Post
Calvinism as a Political Principle

In certain Calvinist circles and more particularly among the members of the youth groups of the Reformed Church, there has in recent times manifested itself a desire to translate the faith in terms of a more concisely formulated program of social and political action. Calvinist youth is demanding that its religion be brought to bear upon such a diversity of contemporary problems as the atom bomb, labor disputes, modern parenthood and family life, etc. The sincerity with which this demand is made points first of all to the abysmal failure of the Reformed Church and of Calvinism as a mode of religious thinking to show that such contemporary problems always stand in the context of the still larger enigmas of sin, salvation and grace with which the Church should primarily be concerned. The general weariness—again especially prevalent among the young—of a type of religious thought that seems to operate only in the holes of departmentalized theological research and which seems so far removed from the realities of every day living is of course inevitable in times which witness a combination of considerable social and political churning and a general effacing of religious orthodoxy. To point out that the possible disaster of atomic warfare is but an aspect of man’s sinful nature and that this warfare could only be prevented through genuine religious devotion, would not be regarded as a very satisfactory answer, although this would seem to be the correct orthodox approach. It is the social, not the supernatural aspect, of Christianity which is now believed to possess the solution of the tumultuous problems of our day. Whether to divorce the social from the supernatural in Christianity is fallacious does not concern us here, that divorce in the minds of many has apparently already been made. We, therefore, should consider the possible social and political implications of Calvinism as a self-contained sphere of activity, regardless of theological sanction.

I.

But are there in Calvinism concepts which give to its adherents a well defined program of political conduct? Of course we are acquainted with the old concept of the unlimited sovereignty of God (which by itself might exclude political action) and which supposedly underlay the Geneva theocracy. We may also assume that Calvin himself favored a republican form of Government, which however with its restricted franchise would scarcely suit our democratic standards of today. But for the rest Calvin has left us little to guide us in our political affairs. As a matter of fact it would be no exaggeration to say that government and political theory interested him the least and then only insofar as they contributed to or endangered what he believed to be man’s spiritual welfare. We must glance at history in order to discover the workings of the Calvinist state or of the operation of professedly Calvinist parties. It is then that we see not a single Calvinist community—neither Geneva, Cromwell’s Commonwealth, nor the Puritan settlements in colonial America—would stand much of a chance of being held up as the ideal state for modern political man in the West. And even so we are bound to admit that, with the Geneva theocracy as a possible exception, religious motives were not the primary reasons for the establishment of such Calvinist political entities. It seems also clear—and those who raise the cry for a more “dynamic” Calvinism are the first to admit this—that the political problems of bygone days should not constitute the criterion for the possible establishment of a modern Calvinist party today, but that such a party should first of all meet the social and political needs of the Reformed electorate at the present time.

Kuyper’s Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands was for many a revelation, since its successes at the polls showed that Calvinism apparently could be employed in the formation of modern political life and in terms of contemporary problems. To this party therefore many Calvinists today look as a possible model for organized political activity in other countries. But in so doing they have failed to consider the cultural background of the Anti-Revolutionary movement. First of all, it should be remembered that insofar as Kuyper’s party is a religious organization there exists ample precedent in the political framework of the Dutch state for religious movements politically organized, something which is not the case in most other nations and certainly not in the United States. In other words, the political sphere in the Netherlands is—and has been for decades—sufficiently permeated by religious sentiment to make an organization as the Anti-Revolutionary party politically palatable to the electorate. The second reason for much misunderstanding of Kuyper follows from...
this: the role which the historical development of a nation plays in Anti-Revolutionary political theory. For Kuyper, Calvinism was more than just a religious belief. It was to him rather the unique cultural quality of the Dutch nation, conceived and cultivated during the long struggle for Dutch independence against Spanish—and Catholic—overlordship. Again and again the leaders of the Revell movement in the Netherlands, da Costa and Groen van Prinsterer, pointed to the historic origins of a nation as the sole determinants of its political evolution. This belief Kuyper wrote into the platform of his party. In Holland as a result the Anti-Revolutionary Party could bring to bear a huge burden of cultural background upon its political platform. Hence its appeal. As I have tried to show elsewhere, this brilliant synthesis of history, religion, and political theory is not the least of the achievements of the leader who called himself the “Man of the antithesis,” the antithesis of modernism versus orthodoxy and of political Liberalism versus religious Conservation.1

But could such an “antithesis” be drawn from the cultural past of this nation for example? The United States is—insofar as its political philosophy is concerned—largely the product of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, an intellectual movement whose results Kuyper (and Groen van Prinsterer) spent a lifetime in combatting. The cultural roots of the United States, as a nation, lie deeply buried in the soil of religious skepticism, popular sovereignty (which was reinforced by the sociological ethos of the American West) and often genuine amorality. Whatever interpretation is given to Calvinism, and sometimes Kuyper stretched the imagination of his partisans very far in this respect, it remains incompatible with historical Liberalism. To the Calvinist there can not and must not be in the end, a separation of Church and State (at least on this point Calvin himself is explicit); no adherence to a type of government which refuses to recognize the unlimited sovereignty of God and puts its trust in popular sovereignty; and, finally, no program of civil rights which by its professed tolerance implies that one religion is as good as the next. Yet these are but three tenets which comprise much of the very cornerstones of American government.

The philosophy of historic Liberalism in this nation will prevent even the birth of a Calvinist party as Kuyper outlined it. Should Calvinism then make use of Liberalism in its political organization? It is to be feared that this would result either in the emasculation of the faith or of Liberalism. Finally it does not seem likely that the concepts which underlay the colonial Puritan theocracy would provide a feasible basis of political Calvinism in this country. We have the word of more than one New England divine that democracy was regarded in the Massachusetts Bay settlements as “the lowest of all forms of Government.” No historic appeal could be made in terms of this today. There is furthermore the odious ring of the word “Puritan” in modern ears, with all that it implies. As Screw-tape, the devil’s functionary in C. S. Lewis’ delightful little book writes to his protégé: “...“Puritanism...may I remark in passing that the value we have given to that word is one of the really solid triumphs of the last hundred years? By it we rescue annually thousands of humans from temperance, chastity and sobriety of life...”

II.

There are two other factors which would make the establishment and the possible success of a Calvinist political party exceedingly difficult. One is the result of the characteristic fluidity of political life with its rapidly changing platforms, the other stems from the sheer insurmountable task to formulate a set of religious principles capable of coinciding with the economic and political interests of Calvinists themselves.

The immediate objective of a political party is after all: victory at the polls. Consequently the organization of a new political party should always proceed in terms of an as yet unsatisfied demand which is believed to reside in the electorate and which can not be fulfilled at the time by other organizations. Victory at the polls of a party means then that it must have been able to convince the voter that it truly champions his needs and interests. But since these needs vary, platforms often change rapidly and with the greatest of ease. Kuyper’s admitted appeal to the as yet unenfranchised lower bourgeoisie in the Netherlands and later to their economic interests alone assured him the support of thousands. In a political organization which operates in the amoral atmosphere of the modern state such changes in platform can often be made without difficulty, and without offending party members. The program of the Anti-Revolutionary party today, for example, and of four decades ago present astonishing differences, but the party still enlists its support from the same class, whose needs simply have changed and who still find in the Anti-Revolutionary program their ideal. A Calvinist party in this country could operate on the same basis, changing its platform with changing needs. But as in the case of the Anti-Revolutionary movement, sometimes the economic interests of Calvinists might seriously differ. The conflict would be all the more tragic because 1) it would inevitably affect the religious foundation of the party, and 2) precious unity would be lost.

To make this clear let us apply this problem to the existing political situation in this country to-

---

day. A great many Calvinists have long since affiliated their interests with that of the Republican Party, but it seems likely that the younger generation of Calvinists colliding headlong with the problem of the post-war era and not finding in the Republican party, say, the social legislation which it requires, would seek its political salvation elsewhere. This rift would inevitably also be reflected in a Calvinist party. The more well to do members of the Anti-Revolutionary Party seceded under de Savornin Lohman and formed the Christian Historical Union because their economic interests did not dovetail with the lower bourgeoisie which Kuyper continued to champion. Since a Calvinist party in this country would be small enough already, such a rift might well be fatal.

Secondly, there is the difficulty of formulating a religious principle which can become the basis of economic and political action. Precisely what Calvinist standards would be applied? The Calvinist is first and foremost a Christian, and on the basis of the Christian ethic, of sharing one's wealth with the less fortunate, again certain aspects of social legislation, for example, such as more housing, a communal health program, greater diffusion of wealth, even a minimum wage, might well be regarded as mandatory though some Calvinists might possibly be shocked. Communists have repeatedly made a good case for their political system in terms of Christianity. Are Calvinism and non-Marxian Communism then compatible, and if not, why? If we again take a look at the Anti-Revolutionary party and the premiership of Kuyper (1901-1905) with its strike breaking records, its attempts to establish prohibition and its defense program we see little that would generally appeal today. Yet according to Kuyper, these tactics were certainly "Calvinist." Is the party, then, at a time such as ours, to be the bulwark (in the best tradition of Max Weber) of a narrow unbending capitalism, which economically would be infeasible and socially an anachronism?

From these two difficulties arise the curious contemporary problems of having to live on a dual plane of morality, which faces the average Christian in modern society. He may be a Christian and a Calvinist religiously and yet mere bodily survival may force him to live with Mammon. Insofar as historic Calvinism endorses the capitalist spirit there should be no difficulty, but in far too many cases genuine conflicts will arise. As Niebuhr has written:

A realistic analysis of the problems of human society reveals a constant and seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the needs of society and the imperatives of a sensitive conscience. The conflict which would be most briefly defined as the conflict between ethics and politics is made inevitable by the double focus of moral life. One focus is in the inner life of the individual and the other in the necessities of man's social life.

Thus Calvinists may ethically and religiously be at one, while economically and politically at odds with each other most of their lives.

III.

A concern with the political and economic problems of the day should remain the prerogative of the purely political organizations in this country. Calvinists would do well to respect the historically sanctioned dual party system of the United States.

Their political interests, if they are that important to them, would be cared for most effectively by either party. A Calvinist party could only operate in a society which is wholly Christian and on a plane of conduct which is consistently moral. In the absence of these two pre-requisites the Calvinists, as other Christians, will, it is to be feared, have to learn to live in the uneasy atmosphere of Niebuhr's double focus. In doing this the greatest danger to the Calvinist when he organizes himself on the basis of his religious conviction will perhaps in part be removed. That danger is that through contact with the amorality of political life his religious standards would stand in danger of being gradually effaced. For that this danger is ever present no one familiar with the history of organized Calvinism will deny. In fact, the entire history of the Calvinist Churches consists of the record of groups that seceded from a major Church body because of a desire to reinstate a stricter orthodoxy. The very "modernism" which Kuyper once denounced has long since contaminated the Dutch Reformed Church, and many Calvinists everywhere are sinking back into a wish-washy diluted version of their faith. This is the greatest danger, and one undoubtedly aggravated by participation in modern political life. The Calvinist Churches are not businessmen's organizations, nor social fraternities. One is not a Calvinist because "one was brought up in it," nor because "it suits one's emotional make-up," nor because it is "socially desirable." One adheres to Calvinism solely because it is the only truth, and to the Calvinist—how many times should it not be repeated?—his religion is the only true spiritual mainstay. He, who is not with us, is against us.

To those who wish their religion to be made more "dynamic," who fear the atom bomb, deplore inadequate housing, are concerned with the problems of organized labor and who fail to see that such problems cannot be solved outside the religious context of human depravity and divine redemption, Calvinism in practice has ceased to have any meaning. They have already removed from their faith that element which Barth once described as "a matter of mystery," i.e., the deeply personal problem of man's relation to God. There is always the temptation in times such as ours to make of the faith little more than another social theory and to pay too much attention to the difficulties arising out
of man’s relationship to his fellow man. During the meetings of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam last year, no one made this clearer than Barth. By taking social and political action the Christian not only runs the risk of losing much of the supernatural element in his religion, but at the same time he may, as Barth pointed out, be acting contrary to the Divine Plan, a plan which expressly may entail chaos, fear and destruction. The place of the Christian is therefore not in the ranks of the social crusaders, but is there where it has always been: on his knees in Church.

And perhaps oddly enough, in an indirect way the Calvinist can exert a most significant influence upon the development of political life around him. His own religious code can shield him from corruption, if necessary he should dwell in the ivory tower of his faith. Yet the morality of his conduct may ultimately cause a lasting change. In this way Calvinists the world over could universally apply Kuyper’s “antithesis.” They would refuse—as they have in the past—to submit to political tyranny of any kind, believing only in the absolute sovereignty of God. They would resist unto the end the effort of an amoral Leviathan to regulate their spiritual life and their social conduct. And they would do this without actively entering the political arena. Theirs would be the duty of the Protestant at the beginning of the era of the Reformation: the duty not to accept. The duty to draw the antithesis between the religious and the irreligious, the moral and the amoral. The duty to expose the perennial fallacy of intellectual sloth and social materialism.

It may be objected that in this manner the Calvinist may literally be committing suicide, that he would, ostrichlike, refuse to heed a coming Armageddon. And yet this is precisely the point where the faith of the modern Calvinist and of all Christians would be tested. To him who believes, death and disaster are scarcely worth as much attention as the problem of his own sins and of possible redemption. No one again should know this better than the Calvinist, for is it after all Calvinism not the faith which refuses to believe that man can push God in a corner through his social philosophy, his political life or through participation in accepted religious ritual? If God’s sovereignty is believed to be unlimited, organized political action for the Calvinist is about as much as partaking of the sacraments of the Roman Church. The Calvinist’s first and last concern is not with a place in the sun, but with a possible place in the Kingdom of Heaven.

**These Middle Years**

*Earl Strikwerda
Associate Professor of History
Calvin College*

As history goes, these may prove to be very meaningful years. We are living through an interval. It can be an interval between a war and its definite peace treaty. Or it can be an interval between a war and another war. There have been some five or six conferences between foreign offices or state departments, but as yet there has developed no real harmonization of policy on the future of affairs in central northern Europe. Conceivably there can be no treaty. That might be a testimony to the honesty of international politics. But at the same time it would be something of an innovation. It would be a grave innovation, because the wars of modern history have had their way of ending in treaties. We want to assume that there is going to be a definite peace. May God grant it to the unworthy sons of men!

The Past

What intrigues us for the moment is the possibility of finding bits of analogy between the present and the past. What presents itself almost forcefully is the fact that the middle years of other centuries, as we count time in our human way, have found Europe (or the world, for that matter) attempting to reach peace just as we are. The middle years of the 1400s were the concluding years of the Hundred Years’ War. The middle of the 1500s were the final years of a religious conflict in the Germanies which ended in the Peace of Augsburg, 1555. And the middle years of the 1600s saw Europe groping between the War of the Austrian Succession and the tremendous Seven Years’ War.

Maybe a superstitious or “dispensationalist” student would like to make something of this rhythm or cyclical phenomenon. He would find additional “evidences” in the fact that also around the turns of several centuries Europe was struggling with problems of war and peace. About 1700 there were the wars of Louis XIV which agonized to their close in 1713 in the Treaty of Utrecht. About 1800 there were the wars of Napoleon which came to their formal conclusion at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. And shortly after 1900 there was the First World War which ended in the Peace of Versailles in 1919. But these things, though intriguing, are somewhat aside from the point here.
History as history may not repeat itself, but events do sometimes assemble themselves in patterns similar to patterns or combinations of the past. If one is willing to accept this for the moment, we suggest that we of the western world today are reliving experiences for which there are counterparts both two centuries ago and possibly three centuries ago.

Westphalia

Three hundred years ago Europe had just concluded the Peace of Westphalia. After a war or wars of fearful destruction and tragic irrationalities and probably unprecedented loss of life—the Thirty Years' War—Europe had to spend most of the 1640s to bring herself to accept a peace. At the onset, months were necessary to iron out the difficulties of protocol which developed when Venice offered to serve as mediatory. And when in 1642 these preliminaries had been settled, another thirteen months elapsed before the delegates arrived. Then three years elapsed before significant business was transacted—and then partly by virtue of the fact that the enemies met in separate but neighboring towns in order to satisfy the artificialities of protocol and to relieve the intensity of feeling. Three years later, 1645-1646, the treaty was finished—the Peace of Westphalia of 1648.

By such a time table as this the participants in the Second World War are not doing so badly. Maybe the Soviets and the western allies will get around to putting something into writing with signatures attached and ratifications appended. But then maybe not. After all there must be at least a degree of concord if a treaty is not to be a farce. And so far there has been enough honesty between the Soviets and us to preclude the writing of something that will prove to have no meaning.

Aix-la-Chapelle

Right in the middle of the 1700s there occurred something which suggests itself as reoccurring right now. That was the Diplomatic Revolution of 1748 to 1756. It was a development which followed on the close of the War of the Austrian Succession and its Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. In that conflict Britain and Austria had been pitted against Prussia and France. But after the treaty these powers began to jockey and to maneuver into a new set of relationships. The upshot was a new scheme in which Prussia and Britain found themselves pitted against Austria and France, and in these combinations they resumed warfare in the struggle known as the Seven Years' War. The point is that the peace treaty of an earlier war had meaning for only a moment. It provided hardly an interlude. Speaking somewhat flippantly at this vantage point of years, it might have been left unwritten in view of the titanic struggle that followed, and in view of the fact that peace was not a reality until 1763. We of the twentieth century pray that our recent war was not a prelude to something worse to come, as the interlude of 1748 to 1756 proved to be.

The Present

Cautiously we should like to venture that there are ingredients of both the mid-1600s and the mid-1700s in our present impasse. We are experiencing the suspense of Westphalia, though not for the same reasons, and we are witnessing the falling out of friendships somewhat as in the 1700s. The friend of the last war can become the enemy of the future, and the enemies of the last war, Japan and Germany, can very likely be the friends of the future.

If history means something toward an explanation of the present, we should be shaping up a really definitive peace for all of Central Europe by now. Of late in modern history, treaties have been produced with increasing promptness. The Peace of Utrecht of 1713 was only two years in being produced. The Congress of Vienna did its work in some fourteen months. The Peace of Versailles of thirty-one years ago was drawn up in six months. Right now we are either reverting to the 1600s or we are not to have a treaty at all. If there is to be no treaty, are we going to travel exactly the same road as that of 1748-1756, with the onset of a new war with the principals in reversed roles? Here Professor Arnold Toynbee steps in to suggest that if there is to be a war, it will be a "cold" war. This means, supposedly, a war of economics and diplomacy rather than a war of missiles. Such a struggle can go on for decades without a forced conclusion. It is partial, not total. It depresses standards of living, but it does not take life by violence. Western Germany and Japan will be our allies. For Britain it will mean a return to a more historic state of affairs with Russia, namely one of hostility. These two have been allies in two recent wars, but they cannot be real friends. Their interests clash in the Near East and in the Middle East. Essentially, they have been enemies for more than a century. From a geopolitical viewpoint, they are compulsorily so.

We should be honest enough and courageous enough to see things as they are. The war with the Nazis was awful in its actualities, and it was desperately significant in its ideological aspects. But in the long range of European power politics, it was only an incident. It seems that a more enduring structure of international relationships is in the making. We may hope for a Westphalia, but Providence may not grant it to us.
Strong's Conception of the Atonement

By WAY of introduction a word concerning Augustus Hopkins Strong's Systematics will be in order. In 1876 Strong printed his Lectures on Theology which, with very few changes, became the outline for all future editions of his magnus opus. Ten years later he published the first edition of his Systematic Theology which is essentially an elaboration of the Lectures. From 1886 to 1902 seven editions in all were published, each incorporating some modification as the thought of the author developed. Finally, in 1906 Strong published the greatly revised and enlarged edition which is still widely used as text in Systematic Theology.

While the great bulk of the radical changes in his philosophical viewpoint are to be found in the final redaction, many of the changes which are generally considered to be the result of his adoption of idealism are to be found in the 1886 edition. It seems quite evident that Strong was a confirmed idealist many years before an idealistic metaphysics became the official position of his Systematic Theology. This paper will be concerned with some observations concerning Strong's conception of the atonement as set forth in his writings as a whole. Particular emphasis will be given to three points where it seems to the writer that Strong differs from the evangelical interpretation of this doctrine.

Whether or not one agrees with Strong's conclusions, one can hardly impugn his motive. In the "Preface" to the final edition (1906) he mentions that the church seemed to be on the verge of a second Unitarian defection. It was with the sincere endeavor of trying to stem the rising tide of liberalism that Strong devoted many years to this final revision. "I print this revised and enlarged edition of my Systematic Theology," he writes, "in the hope that its publication may do something to stem the fast advancing tide, and to confirm the faith of God's elect." Indeed it was with this very purpose in mind that Strong incorporated theistic evolution and ethical monism into his theological system. In 1889 he wrote as follows, "What the Unitarian calls God we call Christ and if the consubstantiality of man and God had been recognized a century ago by orthodox believers, the Unitarian defection would have been impossible." It was with the sincere conviction that ethical monism best interpreted the scientific and philosophical discoveries of his day that Strong adopted this World-view in his effort to make evangelical Christianity acceptable to the searching mind of the age. In such an attempt, however, with all of its virtuous intentions, there ever lies a most subtle danger, namely, so many concessions may be made to the opposing view that the truth one is so zealously seeking to preserve is lost in the attempt. The baby must not be thrown away along with the bathwater. It is with the conviction that Strong made such overzealous admissions that the question of his interpretation of the atonement is raised at the present time.

I

For Strong, the Atonement is not voluntary but necessary. According to his Ethical Monism nature, including man, is consubstantial with God Himself. "If in the one substance of God there are three infinite personalities, why may there not be in the same substance multitudinous finite personalities?" Nature is just another name for God, or for the working of God, he adds, in another connection.

This identification of man with the divine nature is so real that "Christ the Logos, as the Revealer of God in the universe and in humanity, must condemn sin by visiting upon it the suffering which is its penalty." Further, he says, that Christ as "the Life of Humanity . . . must endure the reaction of God's holiness against sin which constitutes its penalty." The Atonement is not a matter of grace but it has become obligatory on God's part to redeem the world. God is no longer in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, but God in Christ is so united to humanity that He must reconcile the world unto Himself. That such an interpretation is the intention of Strong is confirmed by the approval which he places upon the following quotation from Borden Parker Bowne's Atonement:

"Something like this work of grace was made a moral necessity with God. It was an awful responsibility that was taken when our human race was launched with its fearful possibilities of good and evil. God..."

---

2 Strong, Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism, 84.
3 Ibid., 90.
4 Strong, Miscellanies, I, 229.
5 Systematic Theology, 1906 ed., 714; italics ours.
6 Loc. cit; italics ours.
thereby put Himself under infinite obligation to care for his human family, and reflection on his position as Creator and Ruler, instead of removing, only makes more manifest this obligation.7

Indeed as early as the 1886 edition of his Systematics Strong had raised the question, Why does God purpose that He [Christ] should suffer? To which he answered, "The ultimate necessity is a necessity in the nature of God."8

In this connection there looms another point which cannot be more than mentioned at the present time. If God is obliged to provide redemption for man, would it not be reasonable to conclude that He must redeem all men? The doctrine of the consubstantiality of God and creation would seem to make it necessary that nothing be lost.

The conception of an obligatory atonement is but a step removed from a universal atonement. One contemporary theologian insists that God is responsible for man's ultimate redemption, and that the love of God fails if even one soul is finally lost.9

There is a second aspect of this matter of divine obligation which needs consideration. It is Strong's insistence upon Christ's obligation to suffer for original sin. Christ, he says, is so identified with humanity that His suffering is inescapable. In his essay on "The Necessity of the Atonement," Strong sets forth his theory in the following fashion:

There is one point further. I have shown that Christ's sufferings were necessary, first, because he was under obligation to suffer, and secondly, because his love of God and man made him long to discharge this obligation. Now, thirdly, I would show that being such as he was, he could not help suffering—in other words, the obligatory and the desired were also the inevitable.10

Adam's sin, he argues, belongs to us only because we are actually one with Adam. So also Christ's righteousness is imputed to us only because we are actually united to Christ. Our sin and guilt can only be imputed to Christ as Christ is actually and organically one with the race. Christ took our guilt by taking our nature, by being born of the sinful stock of humanity. The common guilt of the race was His by inheritance. "Guilt," he says, "was not simply imputed to Christ, it was imparted also."11

Strong agrees with Edward Irving in that Christ took upon Himself human nature as it was in Adam after the fall. In opposition to Irving he holds that this nature was completely purified by the Holy Spirit. Christ's humanity was not depraved although Christ did share in the guilt of original sin because of His identification with humanity.12

Strong's emphasis upon the Atonement as obligatory can hardly be said to be in keeping with such passages as John 10:17-18, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I

might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."7

II

For Strong, the Atonement involves sharing as well as substitution. The identification of Christ with the race has already been noted. It is because of this identification that Christ shares in the guilt of the race, and so is able to suffer instead of humanity.

If it be asked whether this is not simply a suffering for his own sin, or rather for his share of the sin of the race, we reply that his own share in the sin of the race is not the sole reason why he suffers; it furnishes only the subjective reason and ground for the proper laying upon him of the sin of all.13

Christ, Strong concludes, is "responsible with us for the sins of the race."14

Secondly, just as Christ shares in the sins of the race, humanity shares in the Atonement for sin. As Strong puts it his conception of the Atonement has "suffered some change."15 While our fathers held to an Atonement as a mere historical fact, a literal substitution of the suffering of Christ for sin, he sees the Atonement as something vastly more, for "we must add to the idea of substitution the idea of sharing."16 Since Christ is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, it is impossible to separate humanity from Him even in His suffering and death. "Christ's doing and suffering is not that of one external and foreign to us."17

This conception of sharing lies at the heart of contemporary idealistic theology. If it be accepted, then the conception of the Atonement as the finished work of Christ—and of Christ alone—vanishes. Strong's attempt to marry the idealistic idea of sharing with the revelational conception of substitution must be rejected, if the uniqueness of the death of Christ is to be maintained. The idea of sharing cannot be made compatible with the doctrine of substitution.

III

For Strong, the Atonement is not a once-for-all event but an eternal process. This conception of the Atonement is emphasized in many of his writings. In Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism (1899) he writes:

I saw that the incarnation and suffering of the Son of God in history were only the manifestation and visible setting forth in time and space of a great atonement by the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world. It was through the eternal Spirit that he offered himself without spot to God, and his historical suffering redeemed the race only because it was a manifestation of an everlasting fact in the being of God.18

7 Strong, Miscellaneous, II, 555; also Systematic Theology, 1906 ed., 796; the quotation will be found in Bowne, Atonement, 101.

8 Systematic Theology, 1886 ed., 417.

9 See Nels F. S. Ferre, Evil and the Christian Faith, 117ff.

10 Philosophy and Religion (1888), 216.

11 Ibid., 218, italics ours.

12 Ibid., 215.

13 Systematic Theology, 1886 ed., 413; et al.


15 Loc. cit.

16 Loc. cit.

17 Loc. cit.

18 Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism, 78-79.
The historical event was but the manifestation and fulfillment of the age-long suffering endured by Christ on account of his identification with the race, and this was “from the very first moment of their sin.” Salvation has been wrought by the Atonement which was always in process, and the suffering of God in Christ will continue so long as sin exists.

It becomes evident that nothing really happened at Calvary, for the Atonement was eternally made in the heart of God. The historical event was but the revelation or manifestation to humanity of this very fact. Actually, for Strong the Atonement is “inwrought into the very constitution of the universe,” while the cross is simply “the focusing, the picturing, and the demonstrating of this age-long suffering of God.”

This conclusion has a distinctly contemporary echo, although, interestingly enough, no references to Strong’s thesis have been noted in the current literature. Donald Baillie in his God Was in Christ, expresses great difficulty in believing that the divine sin-bearing was confined to a moment in time. But at the same time, he insists, the cross is not to be thought of as “an accidental symbol of a timeless truth.” Just as God was incarnate in Christ, so the Atonement was incarnate in the passion of Christ, but the Atonement itself as such is “something within the life of God, wrought by God Himself, and applied by Him to men of every age.” God was already making actual Atonement before this fact was made manifest in the cross of Christ.

Something of the same idea seems to be implicit in the following statement by Emil Brunner:

“The atonement is not history. The atonement, the expiation of human guilt, the covering of sin through His sacrifice is not anything which can be conceived from the point of view of history. The event does not belong to the historical plane. It is super-history, it lies in the dimension which no historian knows in so far as he is a mere historian.”

The cross is more than a symbol but it is not the Atonement. It is rather a revelation, a moment in history, a disclosure of the age-long suffering of God. The essence of Strong’s thesis will be found in the following summarization:

Christ therefore, as incarnate, rather revealed the atonement than made it. The historical work of atonement was finished on the cross, but that historical work only revealed to men the atonement made both before and since by the extra-mundane Logos. The eternal Love of God suffering the necessary reaction of his own Holiness against the sin of his creatures and with a view to their salvation—this is the essence of the atonement.

When consideration is given to some of the current developments in Christology and Soteriology, the significance of Strong’s conclusions looks considerably larger. The cross as such is the means by which the age-long suffering of God was made comprehensible to men but it is not the Atonement as such.

In presenting his interpretation Strong makes very little use of Scripture at this point. The two passages he does suggest, both from the Old Testament, are open to other interpretations, to say the least. No reference at all is made to such passages as I Peter 3:18, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit”; Hebrews 9:25-28, “Nor did he enter to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest entered into the sanctuary, year after year, with blood that was not his own; for in that case he would have needed to suffer repeatedly, ever since the foundation of the world . . .” Others might be quoted also.

One further observation needs to be made, namely, the emphasis Strong places upon the suffering of Christ rather than on the death of Christ. “Those six hours of pain could never have procured our salvation,” he says, unless they were but a revelation of an eternal fact. In almost countless places he emphasizes the age-long suffering of God as the Atonement. The reason for this emphasis upon suffering is not too difficult to see. Since the cross is but a revelation of what God is eternally doing, the suffering of Christ is but a means of driving home to human hearts the awfulness of sin. As Strong puts it, “The historical sacrifice was a burning-glass which focused the diffused rays of the Sun of righteousness and made them effective in the melting of human hearts.” This sounds very much like moral influence, for the cross reveals unto us what sin is costing God for the purpose of bringing us to repentance. In a lecture on “The Relation of Christ to Nature,” delivered in 1904, we find these words:

He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, who has suffered in all human sin, who has been afflicted in all the afflictions of his people, and who has condensed and focused his age-long suffering in the agony of the cross that even blind and stolid hearts are moved by it to repentance and submission.

And in his “The Cross of Christ: A Confession of Theological Faith,” one of his last public addresses, is found this further statement:

In the Christ who was stretched upon the cross we see the pattern and the beginning of a new humanity, the head of a judging, suffering, and saving church. The moral influence of the atonement is a great truth when it is regarded as a mere corollary.
and consequence of the eternal atonement within the
heart of God. But there could be no moral influence
of the atonement, if the atonement itself had not gone
before.\textsuperscript{30}

It will be seen from this brief consideration of
but one doctrine of the Christian faith, that Dr.
Strong, who in his heart remained a staunch sup-
porter of evangelical Christianity, made conces-
sions which are obviously injurious to the Biblical
idea of Atonement. His error may have at least
this virtue, namely, that of serving as a warning
to evangelicals of our day, who in their ardently
search for academic and scholarly respectability,
may likewise be facing the danger of becoming
theological castaways.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., I, 466.

From Our Correspondents

THE FRENCH CALVINISTIC SOCIETY

I HAVE in the previous issue given an account of how, on
December 10th, 1926, Professor Auguste Lecerf founded
the French Calvinistic Society.

The aims of the Society were and still are: “To study and
propagate Calvinism, considered as an element of force and
progress in Christian thought; to make known the person and
works of Calvin and Calvinistic literature; to organize courses
and lectures, the reprinting of the works of Calvin and the
classical authors of Calvinism, the publication of new works,
etc.; to affiliate, if possible, with other societies professing
similar principles, in order to form a universal Calvinistic
Union.”

How, in the past, has the French Calvinistic Society carried
out this programme?

Day and Evening Lectures

For twenty years the principal activity of the Society con-
sisted of lectures held at five o'clock on a Monday, once a month
from November to June. These lectures took place in Paris at
the center of the Society for the History of French Protestant-
ism, and gathered together a heterogeneous audience composed
of old ladies, pastors, students from various faculties and
several persons of diverse professions: doctors, barristers,
soldiers, etc. We used to number on an average between 15 and
30. During the last war the best attended lectures used to
bring together about sixty people. The atmosphere was cordial
and fraternal. There was an exposition of one of the theses
of Calvinism; dogmatic, historical, juridical, philosophic or social.
The lecturers most frequently heard were the four heads of
the Society: Professor Lecerf, Doctors J. Pannier and Beuzart,
and pastor Cadix. There were also some associates, such as
Dr. Schlemmer, Dr. Thévenard, Mr. A. M. Schmidt, (D. Litt.),
and the pastors Romane-Musculus, de Tienda and myself.
Professor Lecerf liked to give the students of theology an
opportunity of speaking to encourage them to study these
questions and attach full importance to them.

During the war, after the death of Professor Lecerf, in
addition to the afternoon lectures, there were evening lec-
tures. Every day we ran the risk of losing our life, and there
were many people who, despite the dark streets and the lack of
all means of transport, came to revive their spirits round
the bright fire of orthodoxy. The evening lectures were given
by Rev. de Tienda and very often by myself. There were no
lectures given in the provincial towns, nor any conferences.
Just one splendid exhibit, organized in co-operation with the
Society for the History of French Protestantism, commemorated
the fourth centenary of the publication of The Institutes.

As to Publication

What about publishing? The Calvinistic Society issued a
“Bulletin” (“Report”), a small publication of 16 pages, ap-
pearing five or six times a year, when there was some money
in hand. It generally reproduced the text of certain lectures.
It was received by several Calvinists abroad. The publishing
house “Je Sers” brought out, in 1934, under the editorship of
Professor Lecerf, The Catechism of Calvin and the text of
the French and Belgic Confessions. In 1935 and 1936, under
the direction of a distinguished literary man and university
professor, Dr. A. M. Schmidt, Followed The Epistle to Sadolet,
The Treatise on Holy Communion, The Treatise on Scandals,
and a series of Calvin’s sermons on the nativity, the passion,
the resurrection and the last coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
At the same time, Dr. Pannier, assisted by a Swiss pastor, the
Reverend Dominicó, was working on a reprint of The Institutes
of 1641, published by “Belles-Lettres” to commemorate the
fourth centenary of the publication of this work. This edition
is now out of print. In 1933 and in 1938 Prof. Lecerf brought
out the two volumes of his Introduction to Reformed Dog-
amics. Dr. Pannier published a number of historical studies
of Calvin and the Reformation. The followers or Friends of
Prof. Lecerf, French and Swiss, (de Saussure, Courvoisier,
Dominicó, Cadier, etc.), also brought out a certain number of
works. The liberals themselves (among them Professor J. D.
Benoit, of Strasbourg), became interested in Calvin. Numerous
students of the Faculties submitted theses on Calvin and Cal-
vinism. The Calvinistic Society inspires many people, espe-
cially the young, but—remarkable fact—it was not directly
responsible for the publication of a single one of the above-
mentioned works. Why?

First, it had no funds. As amazing as were the qualities
of Prof. Lecerf, he was a poor organizer, and this man who
struggled each day for his daily bread did not know how to
ask for money. Here, as often elsewhere, the orthodox
Christians are not generally the wealthy. Never yet has a donation
of any importance been made to the Calvinistic Society, to
make publishing or reprinting possible.

French Misunderstanding of Calvin

There is another reason which explains the lack of action
and “punch” of the Calvinistic Society under the chairmanship
of Prof. Lecerf, of which in all sincerity I must give my
readers an account. In order to understand the Professor’s
attitude on this point, some knowledge of the religious atmos-
phere which existed in France till about 1935 is necessary.
There has not been a single Reformed Calvinist theologian in
this country between Bénédict Pictet and Auguste Lecerf, who
has published any important works. This has been due to per-
secution and the breakup of all tradition. In the sphere of dog-
amics, between the man of to-day and the last supporters
of Calvinism, yawns a gulf of two centuries. The works of the
XVIIth century theologians have been neither translated nor
reprinted. In the way of bibliography and other sources easy
to consult, there is thus a gap of at least three centuries. The
Frenchman does not refer to modern, foreign bibliography. Consequently, for most of them, apart from a few scholars whose works came out at the end of the XIXth century, Calvinism is Calvin and Calvin alone.

Now the very name of Calvin used to make most French Protestants of the time, including those who were truly biblical and evangelical, and this for various reasons, shudder with fear, disdain or hatred. Calvin was viewed as the king of theocracy, dictatorial, dry, lacking imagination, insensitive and cruel: a man belonging to an out-of-date world. In every field: social, theological, juridical, he represented dictatorship, the anti-democratic spirit which enslaved minds, souls and bodies. In the domain of science he represents ignorance and antiquity. These ideas have been—and still are—from the public a source of worry to the reformers, attached to the French mind by the vindication of rationalism on the one hand, and the Revolution of 1789 on the other. Calvin, it used to be said, belongs to the age of monarchy; his system is on a par with it. With the fall of royalty, Calvinism, the divine monarchy, ought also to disappear completely, and it had to disappear.

Public opinion, which passed judgment on the monarchy, condemned Calvinism as well. A Calvinist could not have a good conscience towards the modern world; he was accused of the crime of breaking away from the present time, and of wanting to make modern intelligence revert back to the obscurantism of antiquated, out-of-date standards. The same teaching was found in the Faculties of Theology and often, from the pulpit, in the churches. An anti-Calvinist crusade was considered an apostolic task, undertaken to the glory of God and XXth century man: it was the Reformation's indispensable reformation. While honouring the memory of the Reformers, it is proclaimed that they are dead and must remain so. It suffices, in order to realize the total misunderstanding which reigned with regard to Calvin's way of thinking, to read the book by Dean H. Bois: *The Philosophy of Calvin*; and the *Schismatic Castellet* of Professor E. Giran, shows us the hatred let loose and fostered against the Reformer. In the south of France, even amongst the evangelical Protestants, there is a great distrust of Calvin. Why? Because politically the South European Protestant is in general and has been for generations, Socialist: he is left-wing. For him, Calvin is reaction personified. The orthodox Protestant dislikes calling himself a Calvinist. As can be seen, liberals, rationalists, Christian socialists, evangelists, bible-believers were for the most part anti-Calvinist. Many still are, although, in this matter, great progress has been made in the last 15 years.

**Professor Lecerf's Caution**

Confronted with this general attitude of French Protestantism, Prof. Lecerf feared that if the small band of the orthodox were not prudent, his endeavor to revive Reformed theology would be nipped in the bud by the smashing counter-attack of the opposition. Except in certain courses at the Faculty, and in intimate circles, Prof. Lecerf never made a frontal attack on his adversaries. He dreaded quarrels in the Church. Article 3 of the constitution of the Calvinistic Society specifies: "The Calvinistic Society prohibits all sectarian activity and any action leading to ecclesiastical division." The last sentence of the Professor's testament is as follows: "I have always been for peace within the Church, as announced in the Declaration of Peace, and voted by the Synod." This refers to the Declaration of Faith, of 1938, passed on the occasion of the federation of the different Protestant Churches of France.

This is the reason why Prof. Lecerf used to preach, teach, and lead to conversion, but did not gather together or coordinate his followers. He was reluctant to form them into an organized body. He did not wish to set up a party within the Church for fear of bitter arguments and new schisms. He wanted, as it were, to leave the dough from within. That is why he stayed in the Reformed Church, the most liberal of the French Churches. He desired, without division, that the sound doctrine should little by little enjoy once again in the Church the "freedom of the city." For this he was counting first of all on the action of the Holy Spirit, which he saw at work in many hearts and minds. He noticed that the liberal theses were gradually losing some of their extravagance, and were tending progressively towards the right. It would not do to stop this favourable evolution through a desire to precipitate it. He was counting, too, on time and the general change in mentality due to the first world war. In addition he was relying on his prudence and that of his friends, not to thwart the very work of God, and not to bring water to the mill of a new liberal reaction.

This is the explanation of the apparent weakness of the French Calvinistic Society, the lack of brilliance in its manifestations, its refusal of all initiative with regard to public conferences, etc. It did not want to have "dashi" (punch). I am sure that, at the time, Prof. Lecerf was right. Through lack of that same prudence and for having believed too soon the victory won, the Barthian generation of the last ten years is on the point of setting loose, after psychologically preparing it, a violent and organized liberal reaction.

Until now the brilliance shed by the Calvinistic Society has been more the doing of its members than of the society itself.

**The Outlook Today**

During the last five years all the members of its team of leaders have died. Men thirty years younger than their masters, now have taken their places. Between them and us there is a gap of two generations. The reorganization of the French Calvinistic Society took place in May and November, 1949. Who are the men that have the difficult task of running it today? What are its present aims? What are its plans for the future? That is what I shall try to tell you in my next letter.

8 Rue de Tourville

PIERRE CH. MARCEL

Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Seine et Oise

France

of the French Calvinistic Society.

**FROM THE CALVIN CAMPUS**

"E - P - A - N - S - I - O - N" is the word at Calvin these days!

Since the spring of 1948, sensitive and quiet-loving professors had been harassed by the daily whirring, chugging, pounding cacophony that rang up from the northwest corner of the campus where the huge $900,000 science building was rearing its proud head. No sooner had that task been completed and some hope of peace had settled upon us, than the building committee announced that the contract had been awarded to erect additions to the library building. Without herald or fanfare, during the Christmas holidays, other machinery stole in upon the campus from the southeast and by the time classes were resumed in January, classroom orators found themselves in competition with a businesslike monster whose cavernous maw was busy swallowing yard upon yard of soil around the library, and the cloistered serenity was once more shattered by wholly unacademic carpenters.

But let it not be inferred that we are unappreciative of this expansion. We welcome it gladly, gratefully as the answer to a need that cries for attention.

The first and greatest step in that expansion program has been realized. The new science building is being dedicated on February 6 and 7 with an "Open House" and a huge dedicatory gathering. The service of dedication and gratitude will be at the Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids which comfortably accommodates over 5,000 people. The program will be at 8:00 P.M. on February 6 and will feature addresses by Dr. John De Vries of Calvin College Chemistry department, President Henry Schultz and Board President Gerrit Hoekema of Chicago.

A variety of special music from the college music department, special guests, workers in the expansion campaign from
several neighboring states, the members of the Board of Trustees, coming from the Atlantic Coast, the Pacific Coast and midwestern states—these will all be parts of the gala and festive occasion.

The full Board of Trustees, representing classes throughout the country will be meeting during the same week. Their deliberations will also be characterized by “Expansion.” They will be dealing with needed additions to the faculty at Calvin College. They may have occasion to pass on plans for the next proposed building, a Student Commons. Many other and significant actions will engage their attention during the three-day sessions.

There are 1,439 students at Calvin College. This is about the same level as that of last year. The Seminary has an enrollment that is higher than at any time in its history—70 resident students. This large enrollment causes the Seminary to consider a problem in its Field-Work plan this summer. A part of full seminary training includes summers spent in actual Kingdom fields. But in the relatively small Christian Reformed denomination, the placing of about 60 seminarians for summer work is not easy. But with the full cooperation of every church the hope is that the task may be accomplished.

As the new science building is ready for use, a temporary laboratory building, which had been an army mess-hall, is being vacated. It will be used for a short time as a music building. This will serve to emphasize the need of a separate music building in the foreseeable future. Music has always held high esteem at Calvin. And as its music faculty grows in academic stature, that esteem grows with it. But the individuals and ensembles can hardly put their heart into it if they must be constantly hushed up in favor of lecture sessions. They must be free to vent their tuneful studies out under their own roof and out from under the regular academic rafters.

An interesting issue from the music department is the experimental album of a cappella music that was issued this year. The albums of records by the college choir were available just before Christmas and gift-eager buyers snatched up the first pressing of 500 in a matter of days. A second pressing of 500 albums is now available through the facilities of Eerdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids.

The Christmas season witnessed moreover the most successful rendition of Handel’s “Messiah” by the Calvin Oratorio Society and Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of Professor Seymour Swets. The 5,000 listeners are looking forward eagerly to the “Elijah” which will be sung in March.

The Seminary Choir which sang for several years under the leadership of Dick Van Halsema, now a minister in Monsey, New York, has been guaranteed continued existence through the acceptance by Dr. Henry Bruinsma of the college faculty of their invitation to take over the baton for them.

On October 14, Calvin College and Seminary were hosts to Ambassador and Mrs. Elco Van Kleffens of the Netherlands State Department.

And, speaking of receptions, the college faculty met recently to welcome into their circle, the Rev. and Mrs. John Weldenaar, newly appointed professor of Bible; Dr. and Mrs. Enno Wolthus, who joined the faculty last year to teach Chemistry; and Mrs. Cornelius Jaarsma, the former Mrs. Tille Gelderloos of Chicago, who became the bride of Dr. Jaarsma of Calvin’s education department during the past summer.

Calvin College and Seminary

AN AMERICAN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

To Calvin Forum readers:

ONE of the most significant meetings in our time took place in the downtown Y. M. C. A. in Cincinnati on December 27 and 28. I refer to the organizational meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. Conservative Christian scholars from every part of the United States, some 60 or more in all, joined together in a society, the purpose of which is “to foster conservative Biblical scholarship by providing a medium for the oral exchange and written expression of thought and research in the general field of the theological disciplines centered in the Scriptures.” As a doctrinal basis the following statement was adopted: “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs.” Most of the men present were theological professors from the leading conservative theological institutions of our country.

While the Society is first of all to concern itself with theological discussion, it is expected that in time it will publish either an annual volume or a journal. Forum readers will be especially interested in that the first proposed presentation from Calvin Seminary, including Professors Bouma, Hendriksen, Rutgers, Stob and Wyngaard, and perhaps the most strategic leadership in the organizational procedure was that of the Forum Editor, Dr. Bouma. Dr. Bouma delivered one of the two keynote addresses, speaking on the subject, “The Importance of a Society for American Evangelical Scholarship.” He was subsequently chosen chairman for the organizational meeting and was later given the honor of being the first president of the society. Other men of some reputation in Reformed circles who were present were such leaders as Professors R. B. Kuiper and John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary, Dr. H. Van Eerdmans University, Dr. Lorraine Boettner, author of The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, and Dr. Charles Woodbridge of Savannah, Ga. In addition to Dr. Bouma’s address, another keynote message was given by Professor Edward R. Dalglish of Gordon Divinity School, and at the Fellowship Banquet on Tuesday evening Dr. Carl F. H. Henry of Fuller Theological Seminary addressed the group on “Fifty Years of American theology and the Contemporary Need.”

Papers were read by Alexander Heidel of The Oriental Institute, Gordon H. Clark of Butler University, G. Douglas Young of National Bible Institute, John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary, Merrill C. Tenney of Wheaton College, J. Barton Payne of Bob Jones University, Merrill F. Unger of Dallas Theological Seminary, R. Laird Harris of Faith Theological Seminary, and Warren C. Young of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. Following the reading of most of the papers there was a period of critical discussion.

Membership in the Society is open to those holding the Th.M. or its theological equivalent, as well as to those who have made significant contributions in the realm of theology. Charter membership is being kept open for a period of six months, but applications for membership should be sent immediately to Dr. R. Laird Harris, 1303 Delaware Ave., Wilmington, Delaware. Subscription to the Doctrinal Basis is one of the requisites for membership. Annual dues amount to $5.00.

Officers elected in addition to Dr. Bouma and Dr. Harris, the latter being the Society’s secretary, are Dr. Merrill C. Tenney, Dean of the Graduate School of Wheaton College, vice-president and Dr. George Turner of Asbury Theological Seminary as treasurer. Those chosen to membership on the executive committee, in addition to the officers, were Dr. Harold Kuhn of Asbury Seminary, President Alva J. McClain of Grace Theological Seminary, Dr. George E. Ladd of Gordon Divinity School and Dr. Gordon H. Clark of Butler University. Elected to the membership committee were Professor Kenneth S. Kantzer of Wheaton and Professor R. B. Kuiper of Westminster. Those holding posts on the editorial committee are Dr. Henry, Dr. J. R. Mantey of Northern Baptist Seminary, Dr. Heidel, and your correspondent. The standing committee on program arrangement, Dr. Gordon H. Clark of W. C. Mavis of Asbury and Dr. Frank T. Littorin of Gordon.

For a long time orthodox men have felt the need of an association which would enable conservative scholars to work together on common problems and share with one another the
benefits of their research. For far too long a time we have allowed Liberal books and articles to flood the market and influence the theological thought of the nation. It was therefore very important that something be done so that Bible-believing Christians might encourage one another in the matter of scholarly research and literary production. The burden for the formation of an association dominated the thinking of the men composing the faculty of Gordon Divinity School and they were the ones who took the initiative in getting action. However, there was a spontaneous response to the idea from every quarter and men from approximately twenty institutions, representing many denominations, joined together as one in the organizational program. One guest observer, a scholar in his own right, made the observation at the close of the sessions that this new trend, manifested in part by the formation of the Society, should do much to influence profoundly not only the general religious thought of the country but also the attitude and approach of certain of the learned societies of a more inclusive nature whose interests lie in the field of Biblical and theological studies.

I trust that many of those Forum readers who are academically qualified for membership in the Society will seek charter membership, and that on the part of all there will be much interest in and prayer for this new enterprise. In addition, any who wish may attend the annual meetings and subscribe to the literary production of the Society.

Gordon Divinity School

Cordially yours,

BURTON L. GODDARD

TWO NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES


ALTHOUGH the lectures contained in this book were delivered more than a half century ago, it is not surprising that in many Bible schools, colleges, and seminaries, they still serve as collateral reading material. The works of W. M. Ramsay retain their value because anyone who reads them immediately recognizes that the information here offered is first-hand. The author himself carried on extensive archaeological research in ancient Bible lands. He writes from observation and experience.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that much of what Ramsay has written has stood the test of subsequent archeological investigation. So, for example, scholars are increasingly becoming convinced of the correctness of Ramsay's view with respect to the location of the Galatian churches. Moreover, many so-called "errors" in the book of Acts have ceased to be regarded as such, due, in no small measure, to the writings of this great archeologist. It is especially because of his lifelong study of the journeys of Paul that Ramsay is remembered to-day. Hence, we were happy to learn that the present work about Paul the Traveller, now restored to the public by way of this reprint, will soon be followed by another equally well-known volume which bears the title THE Cities of ST. PAUL.


Dr. A. Sizzo has proved that it is, indeed, possible to write a really scholarly work in an interesting style, and for the general Bible-loving public. The present volume is, in a way, a follow-up work of the author's De Antieke Wereld En Het Nieuwe Testament. Dr. Sizzo discusses various terms which are familiar to any reader of Scripture; such as kings, tetrarchs, governors, etc., and indicates what these designations really meant at that time. His treatment of the cities of St. Paul reminds one of Ramsay. What helps to make the present work very interesting is the fact that again and again the author, who is clearly a master of his subject, brings to light items that are not generally known; e.g., that Salome and Herodias had to call each other "aunt." The sentence to which we refer is found on p. 32: "Thus, Salome's mother Herodias became her aunt, and whereas, as we have seen, she (i.e., Salome) herself was already her mother's aunt, we obtain the peculiar result that mother and daughter could call each other 'aunt.'"

Of particular interest and value is also the chapter on personal names that occur in Scripture. As this reviewer sees it, the closing chapter on Heathen Religion is too brief. It comprises only ten pages, hardly enough to furnish even a summary of this important subject. But what is given is very good, as is everything else.

We would include in our praise and commendation the excellent illustrations which add to the value and attractive character of the book.

W. HENDRIKSEN.

RELIGIOUS ENCYCLOPEDIA


THESE are the first two volumes in a projected series of reprints which will include 13 volumes, including index, of the above-mentioned work. As the title suggests, it is a synthesis of German and American scholarship in the field of religious knowledge. The basis of this American work is the German Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, edited originally by Johann Jakob Herzog, noted professor in Church History at Halle, and in its 3rd edition, appearing since 1896, by Albert Hauck, equally noted Professor in Church History at Leipzig. The original American reproduction and condensation of this famous work was undertaken by the prince of American Church Historians, Philip Schaff, upon the request of Dr. Herzog, and was based on the 1st and 2nd editions of the German work. A fuller and more thoroughly revised American edition was begun in 1903 under the editorship of S. M. Jackson, and brought to completion by a large body of American scholars in 1907. This was called the "New" Schaff-Herzog.

The present publication is a reprint of this "New" American edition. Through the years this encyclopedia has occupied a trusted and highly respected place as a competent and authoritative reference. Though covering the whole field of religious knowledge, its predominating character is that of a Church-Historical and biographical Encyclopedia. It is indispensable as a reference for matters dealing with Church History and as such stands quite alone. It occupies a moderate position between the critical and more conservative tendencies in scholarship, and for this reason makes a wide appeal. The scarcity and relative unavailability of the last published edition makes its appearance in reprint a welcome occurrence.

Though taken from the original plates, the present work is reproduced by a lithoprint process which provides a beautifully
clear copy in reduced and yet eminently readable size. Each
new volume appears in about half the size of the original
bulky and weighty volumes, and its strong and decorative
binding as well as sharp type against clear, white paper makes
it a pride to possess and a great convenience to use. One may
wonder, to be sure, about the value of the reprint of a work
now forty years old. Obviously, a totally revised edition would
be most desirable. But such a project would be a mammoth un-
dertaking and its ultimate cost nearly prohibitive; nor is it
certain that such a work would increase the basic value of
the work in proportion to the effort and cost it would involve.
Contemporaneity in encyclopedic works is desirable, certainly,
but in basic fields of knowledge not as important and all-
determinative a criterion as some would represent it to be.
Moreover, contemporaneous works may provide a more satisfac-
tory catalogue of incidentals and superficialities, such as statistics
and other data. In areas where, with the advance of research,
basic historical judgments must be altered or historical struc-
tures differently represented, we never trust to encyclopedias
or even standard histories in any event, but rely on published
monographs and studies in scientific journals. Contemporaneity
can be achieved to a measure only in encyclopedias with wide
popular appeal, and their “up-to-date” character tends often
to reduce in proportion their more solid and basic values. Who
wouldn’t prefer an 11th edition of the Encyclopædia Brittonica
to the more contemporaneous later editions? It doesn’t satisfy
every curiosity, but it provides solid, scholarly substance with
reference to our basic heritage of human knowledge. The
Schaff-Herzog may be classified as such a reference, and what
it may lack in contemporaneity is well compensated for in
the main by the yet trustworthy and unquestioned scholarship
which lies at the base of it.

But this present publication is more than a reprint. It
strikes a practicable and worth-while median between the mere
reprint and complete revision by making provision for two
supplementary volumes which will bring the Encyclopedia “up-
to-date” to present day scholarship. These volumes are now
in process of preparation under the editorship of Lefferts A.
Loetscher, Associate Professor of Church History at Princeton
Theological Seminary. Dr. Loetscher is a painstaking, in-
dustrious, well-informed, and balanced Church History scholar.
There can be little doubt that the two supplementary volumes
will provide a worthy extension of this valued work.

Calvin Seminary

GEORGE STOB.

IS THIS THE GOSPEL?

THE GOSPEL AND OUR WORLD. By Georgia Harkness. Nashville.

THE church is ineffective today because it does not “pre-

sent the meaning and claims of the Christian faith in
terms that seem vital to the common man” (p. 9). Such
is the thesis of Miss Harkness, who pleads for a closer synthesis
of theology and evangelism in order that the Church’s mission
may be pertinent today. Roman Catholicism, fundamental
Protestantism and Liberalism are consulted in order to yield
a social gospel more firmly grounded in the “basic and ultimate
truths of Christianity” in order to give them practical punch.

(p. 11.)

Miss Harkness has achieved an easy, popular style of theolog-
cal presentation. She is also very direct, honest and never bor-
ing. She comes as an evangelical liberal, a “middle-of-the-
road” in theology. She frankly believes that Christian truth
and character tend often to reduce in proportion their more solid and basic values. Who
wouldn’t prefer an 11th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica
to the more contemporaneous later editions? It doesn’t satisfy
every curiosity, but it provides solid, scholarly substance with
reference to our basic heritage of human knowledge. The
Schaff-Herzog may be classified as such a reference, and what
it may lack in contemporaneity is well compensated for in
the main by the yet trustworthy and unquestioned scholarship
which lies at the base of it.

But this present publication is more than a reprint. It
strikes a practicable and worth-while median between the mere
reprint and complete revision by making provision for two
supplementary volumes which will bring the Encyclopedia “up-
to-date” to present day scholarship. These volumes are now
in process of preparation under the editorship of Lefferts A.
Loetscher, Associate Professor of Church History at Princeton
Theological Seminary. Dr. Loetscher is a painstaking, in-
dustrious, well-informed, and balanced Church History scholar.
There can be little doubt that the two supplementary volumes
will provide a worthy extension of this valued work.

Calvin Seminary

GEORGE STOB.

IS THIS THE GOSPEL?

THE GOSPEL AND OUR WORLD. By Georgia Harkness. Nashville.

THE church is ineffective today because it does not “pre-

sent the meaning and claims of the Christian faith in
terms that seem vital to the common man” (p. 9). Such
is the thesis of Miss Harkness, who pleads for a closer synthesis
of theology and evangelism in order that the Church’s mission
may be pertinent today. Roman Catholicism, fundamental
Protestantism and Liberalism are consulted in order to yield
a social gospel more firmly grounded in the “basic and ultimate
truths of Christianity” in order to give them practical punch.

(p. 11.)

Miss Harkness has achieved an easy, popular style of theolog-
cal presentation. She is also very direct, honest and never bor-
ing. She comes as an evangelical liberal, a “middle-of-the-
road” in theology. She frankly believes that Christian truth
and character tend often to reduce in proportion their more solid and basic values. Who
wouldn’t prefer an 11th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica
to the more contemporaneous later editions? It doesn’t satisfy
every curiosity, but it provides solid, scholarly substance with
reference to our basic heritage of human knowledge. The
Schaff-Herzog may be classified as such a reference, and what
it may lack in contemporaneity is well compensated for in
the main by the yet trustworthy and unquestioned scholarship
which lies at the base of it.

But this present publication is more than a reprint. It
strikes a practicable and worth-while median between the mere
reprint and complete revision by making provision for two
supplementary volumes which will bring the Encyclopedia “up-
to-date” to present day scholarship. These volumes are now
in process of preparation under the editorship of Lefferts A.
Loetscher, Associate Professor of Church History at Princeton
Theological Seminary. Dr. Loetscher is a painstaking, in-
dustrious, well-informed, and balanced Church History scholar.
There can be little doubt that the two supplementary volumes
will provide a worthy extension of this valued work.

Calvin Seminary

GEORGE STOB.

IS THIS THE GOSPEL?

THE GOSPEL AND OUR WORLD. By Georgia Harkness. Nashville.

THE church is ineffective today because it does not “pre-

sent the meaning and claims of the Christian faith in
terms that seem vital to the common man” (p. 9). Such
is the thesis of Miss Harkness, who pleads for a closer synthesis
of theology and evangelism in order that the Church’s mission
may be pertinent today. Roman Catholicism, fundamental
Protestantism and Liberalism are consulted in order to yield
a social gospel more firmly grounded in the “basic and ultimate
truths of Christianity” in order to give them practical punch.

(p. 11.)

Miss Harkness has achieved an easy, popular style of theolog-
cal presentation. She is also very direct, honest and never bor-
ing. She comes as an evangelical liberal, a “middle-of-the-
road” in theology. She frankly believes that Christian truth
and character tend often to reduce in proportion their more solid and basic values. Who
wouldn’t prefer an 11th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica
to the more contemporaneous later editions? It doesn’t satisfy
every curiosity, but it provides solid, scholarly substance with
reference to our basic heritage of human knowledge. The
Schaff-Herzog may be classified as such a reference, and what
it may lack in contemporaneity is well compensated for in
the main by the yet trustworthy and unquestioned scholarship
which lies at the base of it.

But this present publication is more than a reprint. It
strikes a practicable and worth-while median between the mere
reprint and complete revision by making provision for two
supplementary volumes which will bring the Encyclopedia “up-
to-date” to present day scholarship. These volumes are now
in process of preparation under the editorship of Lefferts A.
Loetscher, Associate Professor of Church History at Princeton
Theological Seminary. Dr. Loetscher is a painstaking, in-
dustrious, well-informed, and balanced Church History scholar.
There can be little doubt that the two supplementary volumes
will provide a worthy extension of this valued work.

Calvin Seminary

GEORGE STOB.

IS THIS THE GOSPEL?

THE GOSPEL AND OUR WORLD. By Georgia Harkness. Nashville.

THE church is ineffective today because it does not “pre-

sent the meaning and claims of the Christian faith in
terms that seem vital to the common man” (p. 9). Such
is the thesis of Miss Harkness, who pleads for a closer synthesis
of theology and evangelism in order that the Church’s mission
may be pertinent today. Roman Catholicism, fundamental
Protestantism and Liberalism are consulted in order to yield
a social gospel more firmly grounded in the “basic and ultimate
truths of Christianity” in order to give them practical punch.

(p. 11.)

Miss Harkness has achieved an easy, popular style of theolog-
cal presentation. She is also very direct, honest and never bor-
ing. She comes as an evangelical liberal, a “middle-of-the-
road” in theology. She frankly believes that Christian truth
and character tend often to reduce in proportion their more solid and basic values. Who
wouldn’t prefer an 11th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica
to the more contemporaneous later editions? It doesn’t satisfy
every curiosity, but it provides solid, scholarly substance with
reference to our basic heritage of human knowledge. The
Schaff-Herzog may be classified as such a reference, and what
it may lack in contemporaneity is well compensated for in
the main by the yet trustworthy and unquestioned scholarship
which lies at the base of it.
God and serve your neighbor, to become the gods and the free souls that you were meant to be, to build the kingdom here on earth! But, alas, there is no conception of sin and no Gospel that can set us free from sin. It is purely Humanistic, religion is the servant of morality, and God is the idealized man. There is no faith in God who became man, who came into the flesh, but we are told that “men and women who have become gods, literally, and who have been worshipped as gods, did so through discipline; sustained self-control and self-denial—something the average person of today despises” (p. 177).

This little book illustrates the point that Dr. Warfield makes in his book: The Plan of Salvation, that all other religions except the Christian religion are naturalistic, i.e., they ascribe salvation to man and his efforts. The pathetic thing about this book, and all Modernistic reinterpretations of Christianity, is that it reduces the Christian Gospel, which Paul calls the power of God unto salvation, to an exhortation to moral goodness. We see the Lord’s Anointed reduced to another of the world’s great teachers of religion. Every bit of the supernatural is neatly drained out of the sacred Scriptures concerning Him who said: “I am the way, the truth and the life; No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

“Believe not every spirit (teacher), but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” Thus the apostle of love counseled God’s people of his day. Let us not deceive ourselves that the old Liberalism is dead. It is still blithely and glibly reasserting the worn-out clichés of an outmoded higher critical viewpoint. May we at all times fearlessly apply the infallible criterion: “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God!”

HENRY R. VAN TIL.

COMMUNICATING IDEAS


The process of communication, says the editor of this volume, “is central to our personal integration and our social existence.” Communication has values and presents problems in intra- as well as in inter-personal development. As in older times it was maintained learning was never completely ‘impressed’ until it was verbally ‘expressed,’ so modern psychological studies suggest that facility in oral expression is a significant element in personality development. So also the guidance consultant discovers that his patient’s ability to ‘verbalize’ the nature of his problem is a basic and progressive step in its solution. Viewing communication thus subjectively as an element in personal growth by no means diminishes the attention due it objectively as the exchange of meaning in its broadest sense.

This book deals with both the personal and social aspects of the subject. The objective elements of communication are its media, and the objective problem is essentially that no two people receive exactly the same total impression from any given communication-situation. Indeed, examination of the variety of impressions received by even a small group from any one speech, drama, paragraph or even sentence, makes the fact—if it is a fact—that we understand each other at all partake largely of the miraculous. Various competent people address themselves here to the anthropological, classical, semantic, social and artistic aspects of communication, with attention paid to propaganda, mass media, scientific measurements, and cultural values.

We are reminded that the manipulation of mass communication symbols in our culture is in the hands of those who feel small social responsibility for their validity, in the Sophistic rather than the Platonic tradition. We are warned that the calloused shell one builds to shield himself against the avalanche of conflicting appeals reaching him from all channels immunizes him to the good as well as to the bad, blunts his moral sensibilities, and drives the communicator to ever greater lengths to get attention. In such competition the church and school gradually lose place to other more flamboyant agents as formulators of standards of taste and value. The cynical notion that there is virtue in dubbing every appeal propaganda, and thus striving to become impervious to them all, renders at last every good powerless. The answer lies in community councils, public discussions, increased exaction of social responsibility of those who control mass media; in so far as an answer is possible at all.

Wendell Johnson presents as comprehensible a summary as is available of the weird world of general semantics where, because physiological science is known with exactitude, all else is ambiguity. There are studies also of what constitutes greater and less difficulty for comprehension, of the quality of radio programs (“What appeals to many, and appeals easily, is not likely to be delicate or oblique or ironic or reticent.”), of artistic standards as applied to mass communications (“It is possible that standards for art forms produced by a small band of creative talents for a small and selective audience are not applicable to art forms produced by a gigantic industry for the population at large.”), and of implications for democratic ways of life (“... businessmen compete with one another by trying to praise their own commodity more persuasively than their rivals, whereas politicians compete by slandering the opposition. When you add it all up, you get a grand total of absolute praise for business and grand total of absolute slander for politics”).

For the person interested in speech or writing, this book is a useful and broad study of the problems involved. One of the outcomes is that no effort can be spared by speaker or writer to select his words with utmost care, to prune and trim the worn-out clichés of an outmoded higher critical viewpoint. May we at all times fearlessly apply the infallible criterion: “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God!”

For the one interested in the message, this book is a useful and broad study of the problems involved. One of the outcomes is that no effort can be spared by speaker or writer to select his words with utmost care, to prune and trim the worn-out clichés of an outmoded higher critical viewpoint. May we at all times fearlessly apply the infallible criterion: “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God!”

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1950