Political Action
Symposium

The Christian Church
Her Message

Abraham Kuyper
Forgotten Radical?

Visiting Greece
Then and Now

Junior College
What Kind?

Letters

Book Reviews

VOL. XV, NO. 10
TWO DOLLARS
A YEAR
MAY, 1950
The CALVIN FORUM

Published by the Calvin Forum Board of Publication

VOLUME XV, NO. 10            MAY, 1950

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Address all editorial correspondence to Dr. Clarence Bouma, Editor The CALVIN FORUM, Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. Address all subscription and circulation correspondence to: The CALVIN FORUM, Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

The CALVIN FORUM is published monthly, except from June to September, when it appears bi-monthly. Subscription price: Two Dollars per year.

Entered as second-class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at Grand Rapids, Michigan, under the Act of March 3, 1879.
Christian Social and Political Action

W e are pleased with the reader interest and appreciation manifested in the Symposium on the outlines of a Christian Social and Political Program that can be viewed as a satisfactory basis for people of Calvinistic persuasion in facing the problems of the world of our day. We are not at all discouraged by the diversity of viewpoint expressed, though it is quite clear that the participants in this Round Table are not agreed on many important points. It is all-important that such diversity of opinion is brought to light. We shall come to clarity of thought and action only after intelligent and patient discussion. Your Editor gladly yields the extra space of his editorial pages once more to this instructive and stimulating Symposium. This month we listen to three of our readers who responded to our general invitation to give us the benefit of their point of view as they reflect on the preceding discussion.—EDITOR.

T he Forum's symposium on "Calvinism and Political Action" was, in my estimation, an unusually good one. For one thing, it got beyond the customary platitudes. At the risk of myself supplying these platitudes, permit me to make a few remarks with respect to some of the points made by the writers.

The belief that the social rather than the supernatural aspect of Christianity contains the solution of contemporary problems, seems to me to be an unfortunate one. If, for example, Christianity seems to imply a republican theory of government, it can only be because of the conviction that any man, as an object of God's concern, has a unique and infinite worth. Treating men as equals stems from a belief about something supernatural, the belief, namely, that man is created in the image of God. And so to the question, has Calvinism in action any relevance to the political and social realities of contemporary America? the answer must be that all depends upon how many Calvinists there are in America. In other words, Calvinism in action would seem just a bit silly if it did not include the winning of converts. The expression, "Evangelize or die", is one for which at least some of us have of late acquired considerable respect.

That much in American political philosophy is the product of eighteenth century Enlightenment is hardly open to dispute. Much of the language of the Declaration of Independence, the preamble to the Constitution, and the Federalist Papers could have been taken bodily from Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws and Condorcet's Rise of the Human Spirit. And the American belief in popular sovereignty is certainly not Christian. On this score Mr. Vander Kroef is right, although he does overstate his case somewhat. That the American program of civil rights implies that one religion is as good as another, is at least debatable. Anyway, a Calvinist should experience no difficulty subscribing to this program on the grounds that no man may be deprived of fundamental rights merely because he holds to religious beliefs which, from the Calvinistic point of view, are either partly or wholly in error. Here the Calvinist's duty would clearly be to witness to the truth, not to deprive a man of his rights. Incidentally, witnessing to the truth will probably be the chief activity of a Calvinistic political organization in this country, anyway. That "the structure of our government", to use a quotation cited by Mr. Spoelhof, "bears the imprint of the religion of John Calvin", contains some truth, but one could hardly regard it as a significant description of political realities in America today without an enormous dose of wishful thinking (not that I accuse Mr. Spoelhof of this). We may as well make up our minds that, barring "acts of God", a national Calvinistic political organization is just about predestined to play a very minor role in American public affairs, unless it can demonstrate the ability to produce a disproportionately large number of men outstandingly superior in character and intelligence, thereby getting the attention of larger political groups.

Mr. Vander Kroef makes much of the conflict between religion and politics "made inevitable by the double focus of moral life" (quoting from Niebuhr). No one who really appreciates the moral implications of Christianity has ever denied this conflict. Contact with the political and economic realities—in short, the rank materialism—of contemporary America could be a source of danger to future Calvinistic political leaders. But this is equally true of, say, the leaders of a parliamentary socialism. In both cases the necessity of co-operating and bargaining could easily lead to "broadmindedness", the neglect of original commitments, and personal ambition. Good examples are to be found in the history of socialism and labor politics in Europe—MacDonald, Snowden, Briand, Millerand, to men-

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tion but a few. And so the Calvinistic emphasis, like any other emphasis, carries with it peculiar dangers; but the conceivable degenerations to which Calvinistic action might fall heir do not, of course, constitute Calvinistic action. A Calvinistic political leader, therefore, should be on his knees not only in church but everywhere. And if this makes for un-realism in national politics—and it probably does—that a consistent Calvinist must regard as a judgment upon the nation and as just another aspect of the cross which he, as a disciple of Christ, is supposed to take up daily.

It seems to me that for the present a Calvinistic political organization would do well to pattern its course somewhat after that of the independent voter, giving its support now here, now there, depending upon the stand which the major parties appear to take on critical issues. Of course, should they skirt such issues, as they frequently do, the only course open would be that of choosing, under protest, the lesser of two evils. It should act as a vigilance organization, examining issues, publishing information, and passing judgment upon candidates as to their fitness for office. Should the “better man” happen to be a Calvinist, well and good, provided this be regarded as a coincidence. Its main concern should be issues, not jobs. Under our form of political organization we have two major groups organized in large measure for the purpose of controlling office and patronage; obviously, to Calvinistic political action a political “reality” such as that should be beyond the pale. And should a Calvinistic political organization ever begin to think and act in terms of political power and office holding, it would at once, and rightly so, become the victim of the sort of suspicion that now, rightly or wrongly, attaches to the Catholic Church. Again, it would clearly be our duty to contact and co-operate with other groups taking a stand significantly similar to ours. A good example out of the past is the united action achieved by Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and other groups on the occasion of the Wayne County Civic Association’s attempt to outlaw parochial, private, and parent controlled schools a few decades ago. Finally, any organization, political or otherwise, is both created and sustained in part by acting with respect to issues; and for the American Calvinist there would seem to be plenty of them. Incidentally, many if not most of the questions put by Mr. Smedes are of the sort that can be answered only in the course of actual political conflict.

I am just a bit afraid of Mr. Strikwerda’s assertion that the long run impact of the public school is wholesome. I believe I know what he has in mind, but to me the question keeps coming as to whether it can be called wholesome from the Christian point of view. And when he says that the public school belongs to the forces that enable Kingdom institutions to function more effectively, I suspect he is keeping a weather eye on that futile verbal debate known among us as the common grace issue. After all, it can’t be denied that public education in America, by omitting positive religious and moral training, by implication stands for the doctrine that one can be adequately educated without religion.

In closing I should like to touch upon a somewhat ticklish matter, namely the handicap connected with such terms as Calvinistic, Calvinistic action, Calvinistic party, and so on. I realize that Dr. Abraham Kuyper in his Stone Lectures classifies practically all non-Lutheran Protestants as Calvinists. This, as most of us who have lived in contact with the American religious world for more than a few years keenly realize, is a most optimistic, most sweeping, and most misleading generalization. The vast majority of Protestant “laymen” in this country know next to nothing about Calvinism. The average Presbyterian, for example, knows only that, whatever it is, he is supposed to believe it; whereas the average Methodist knows only that, whatever it is, he is not supposed to believe it. The non-religious know nothing about it except that it is supposed to stand for “a kind of fatalism”. Those who happen to know a little more about it invariably associate it with a “humorless and fanatical little Frenchman” by the name of John Calvin, who approved of burning those who disagreed with him; with the revolution in England under the regicide, Cromwell; and with the more unsavory features of the New England theocracy, including the Salem witch hangings. And try to stamp this out!

I am afraid, therefore, that the term Calvinistic is about as hopeless for American practical political purposes as the expression Fas et Jus. Incidentally, our Catholic fellow citizens, in so far as they are politically organized, have shown real wisdom by not referring to themselves as a Catholic party. I believe that Calvinistic actionists could profitably make a study of how Catholic action groups manage to get results within the strictures of this most secular democratic political system of ours. Not that we should imitate them but they could, I think, offer us some valuable hints, having been at this sort of thing for a good many years.

Witnessing to the will of God for man—here, I believe, we have the center of the matter for Calvinistic action. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross...” To a Calvinistic political actionist in contemporary America that is almost sure to mean that for him political ambition and political opportunity are out. Unless, of course, he is quite willing to accept American political realities on their own terms, in which case his Calvinism would almost surely be a problematical entity. I don't mean to deny that he might somehow still manage to squeeze through the “pearly gates”, but I do deny that it would constitute Calvinistic action.
HAVE with a great deal of interest read the articles of Mr. Lewis B. Smedes and Prof. Justus M. Vander Kroe in the February issue of The Calvin Forum, as also the Symposium by various contributors in the March issue. Although the C.L.A. was twice mentioned by Mr. Smedes I refrained from comment in order to have the benefit also of the articles that were to appear in the Symposium. Now, however, I would appreciate having the opportunity to write an answer to some of the questions raised by Mr. Smedes.

There is, of course, much in Mr. Smedes' article with which I am in complete agreement. I appreciate the keenness of his thought. Nevertheless even Mr. Smedes fell into the error of not making a clear distinction between the work of the Instituted Church and the activity that ought to be carried on by Christians independently from the Church in its organized form. While discussing methods to influence non-Calvinists he states: "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?" If Mr. Smedes had made proper distinctions those questions would not have been asked. The work of the instituted Church is clearly to preach to the unsaved by means of the Back to God Hour and missionary endeavors. But the Church has not the duty to be active in a program of Social Action which is, after all, what Mr. Smedes was discussing. There is no conflict at all between the work of the Church dealing first of all with the salvation of sinners, and the action of saved individual Christian men and women who join minds and hearts and hands in the promotion of a Program of Action in social life aimed at the recognition and glorification of the God whom they serve. In so doing they will of course also influence individuals who are not Christians in the more restricted sense of the term. When viewed in their proper relationship to one another organized activity by Christians is not only relevant but a very logical and consistent consequence of the work of the instituted or organized Church.

In discussing action I prefer to speak of Christian social action, rather than Calvinistic action, provided of course that the term "Christian" is used in its narrow orthodox sense. If there is ever to be such action in our nation Christians of all faiths will have to be rallied to the cause, regardless of their particular Calvinistic or other confession. A Christian on his knees before God, recognizing His authority in all things, is in that respect a Calvinist. With such we can co-operate in a program of social action based on the recognition of God and His revealed will. It is also because of that that I do not agree with Mr. Smedes that before any program can be formulated there must be more years of study on the question of what Calvinism is and how it ought to be applied. If we do not know the basic principles of applied Christianity now we never will. Knowing the principles we must be concerned with their application to current problems. For that no program can be written. The program is application! The question is how? That can be determined only by organizing Christians and arriving at answers to problems through study and conferences. Since Christian principles are never in a flux, but history constantly is, a program of principles can be written, but the program of application must develop as social conditions change in their historic setting.

I am particularly interested in Mr. Smedes' two suggested programs to Christianize society. The first, that of individual influence within so-called neutral organizations and institutions, is the one so popular in the American church world. It has been preached for centuries, and the result is in evidence: witness the spiritually dead churches and the Godless institutions and organizations that control our social life. My contention is that individual witness has failed to accomplish any positive good. It has failed miserably. Perhaps because the goal set was no higher than that set by Mr. Smedes, "there to exert Calvinistic influence by setting a moral and intellectual pace for other members of the institution to follow" and "he would help set the moral attitudes and ideals by which the leaders would have to determine their activity." What, pray, is Calvinistic or Christian about that? A high moral and intellectual pace or high moral attitudes and ideals are possible without Christianity. They were found in ancient civilizations even before the birth of Christianity. The Christian goal in seeking to influence society must be much higher than that. Nothing less will do than a spiritual impact upon organizations and institutions that will change them from their so-called neutral, but actually God-ignoring, position to recognition of God and subjection to His word!

If that can be done, then I agree with Mr. Smedes that the C.L.A. would not be necessary. But, the record in our own nation, and the experience of Christians in other nations has been that it is impossible to exert such influence. Instead there is abundant proof that those who enter such institutions and organizations are themselves influenced to their spiritual detriment. This is true of the in-
tellectuals as well as the working classes. I remember with sorrow the testimony of a minister, given a few years ago, who was laboring in a University city, that he would not dare to recommend any one of a considerable number of professors in that university who had a Calvinistic background for office in the Church because of his serious doubts about their adherence to the Orthodox Christian faith, and the added testimony that he had not been able to detect any positive Christian thought in their courses of instruction. That speaks volumes.

Nevertheless, in spite of such failures, if that were the God-directed way to witness it ought to be continued. But is it? I say, NO. I cannot find any instruction in the Scripture to the effect that we, Christians, who believe in the Biblical, God-centered view of life, must enter so-called neutral institutions and organizations in order to attempt there to exert Christian influence on a neutral basis in which God is ignored if not denied. The foolishness of thus trying to build a house on sand is clearly taught. Why are we so unwilling to accept that clear teaching of the Bible, the call to separation, which is depicted in the history of Israel, and in numerous passages in the Scriptures, among them Psalm 1:1, Luke 10:10-11, 2 Cor. 6:17, Rev. 18:4, to mention but a few? Why are we so reluctant to accept the clear consequences of the antithesis to which we pay lip service? Is it perhaps because of the cost?

Separation need not mean isolation. Mr. Smedes when he presented the separate organization alternative forgot to be entirely objective, began to raise obstacles and questions, even went so far a little later in his article as to place the C.L.A. in the isolationist camp. We refuse to be thus stamped. It is not only possible to operate a separate Christian organization within the framework of a "secular" society, but it is the only way in which to escape responsibility for the evils of such a society. Mr. Smedes in his statement forgot that even in that secular society there is a general operation of the Spirit of God, having a restraining and reformative influence upon mankind. (That operation must be clearly distinguished from the regenerating, special operation of the Spirit in the life of the Christian. I am not saying anything new there but I underscore because that distinction is so often forgotten. So many are accepting the results of the general operation of the Spirit as evidence of the special operation of the Spirit! In other words, too many confuse morality and culture with Christianity! Even Mr. Smedes came very close to it when he set a high moral and intellectual pace and high moral attitudes and ideals as the goal of Christian influence in secular institutions.)

Thus, while we must be careful to make proper distinctions, there is through what we choose to call common grace a point of contact which we have with the secular society through which we can operate within its framework and yet remain separate from its evils. A Christian labor organization can operate under the existing labor laws by accepting the protection they afford, while not taking advantage of certain legal "rights" which the law allows under a moral code of justice but which conflict with the stricter Christian code of justice. It can co-operate with other movements in the promotion of moral good, viewed by a "secular" organization as legal, moral good, but by the Christian organization as spiritual, moral good: obedience to the law of God. Thus there can be contact, even cooperation, in the promotion of that which is in harmony with the law of God, without bearing responsibility for that which conflicts with it. That is separation without isolation. Absolute isolation is demanded when it is apparent that the general operation of the Spirit in the promotion of moral good has been withdrawn.

On the other hand, it is not possible, within the framework of a program aimed at the application of the Calvinistic philosophy, to give recognition to a certain position of neutrality in which the question of whether or not there is a God is left unanswered. The challenge to the Calvinist is to compel recognition of God. That cannot be done by joining hands with the "neutrals" on a basis of non-recognition of God. The only way in which it can be done is by remaining aloof from the so-called neutral position and very definitely witnessing for the positive, Christian position.

Such action has brought results. Witness what has been done through such organized activity in the Netherlands! Humanly speaking, if it were not for that activity the Netherlands would be under Communist domination today.

In our nation we have made a beginning. We have a Christian school system, and Christian hospitals, and a C.L.A., small though all these movements may still be. Incidentally, why did Mr. Smedes not mention also the Christian schools when he stated that under a program of individual witnessing the C.L.A. would not be necessary? After all, they are both based on the identical principle of the recognition of God.

I am inclined to agree with the writers in the Symposium that a separate Christian political party, operating as do other parties, is not possible at this time. Neither is it possible to exert real Christian influence within the existing parties. On the local level we can accomplish something in non-partisan elections.

But that is not enough. What then can be done? We can begin by drafting a statement of principles, to be followed by the establishment of a national organization to promote their application. Such an organization can publish a good Christian weekly, it can promote conferences for the discussion of current problems and the formulation of the pro-
program of action. It can have lobbyists in Washington and State Capitols exerting influence upon legislative bodies. Such Christian lobbyists can do more good than a handful of Christian representatives in a large body. All that we can do. The results might be surprising! On the other hand, if we fail to do that there is no future for Christian institutions and organizations in America.

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Today Calvinists are receiving repeated challenges for action. Recent articles by Mr. Lewis Smedes and Mr. Vander Kroeef plus a symposium on the subject indicate that we feel the need to make a distinctive contribution to the solution of the pressing problems in American society. We are not satisfied with the efforts made to date. We feel that we can do better than we have, that we have much more to offer if we can only get started.

Often a group fails to recognize when a start has been made. We are in that position if we think exclusively in terms of initiating a program of action. The program is already started. The C.L.A., home mission program, Christian social work, and personal evangelistic work carried on by many individual Calvinists are all the grass roots of an action program that is already in progress.

However, the problem of developing a social action program is not solved merely by expanding these existing efforts. There are many Calvinists who feel the need to do something, but not in those particular activities. They are highly motivated, but have not found the activity into which they can channel their energy. For them the need is to find their place in such activities or develop new ones in which they can participate.

A further barrier stands in the way of developing an effective action program. There are many Calvinists who have an attitude amounting to defeatism which is symptomatic of low morale, zero motivation, and in some cases, virtual rejection of Calvinism as a solution of the basic problems of society today. These people form a large reservoir of potentially action-oriented Calvinists, but at this time they are an obstacle which must be taken into account in the development of an action program.

The problem of developing an action program has many complexities, three of which have been described above. The problem is essentially that of integrating and expanding present action into a more concerted force, finding outlets in which to channel the energy of those who are highly motivated but do not know how to begin, and finding ways to motivate those who show varied degrees of resistance to exerting themselves in an action program. These problems of integration, channeling, and motivation are problems lying within our own group. We cannot hope to contribute a distinctive solution to the external problems in American society unless we find a method of solving our internal problems.

There are certain conditions that must obtain in order to solve our internal problems and release our energy in an effective program of action. In the first place, this program will be most successful when everyone who wants to can see his place in it, can see the opportunity to make a contribution to it, can play a significant role and see that he is needed. Everyone must have the opportunity to belong to it, to have a part in it. This condition must be present in order to motivate those who are unmotivated and to direct the energy of those who are highly motivated into the most effective activities.

To illustrate: In an effort to revitalize the church, the Baptist General Conference of America organized what they called "God's Invasion Army". This group was intensively trained in evangelism and group leadership. They then went out in teams of fifteen or twenty to various churches, where they organized week-long projects to bring the gospel to the community. These projects involved organizing youth groups, holding inspirational meetings, Bible classes, making individual contacts in the neighborhood.

This undertaking was meaningful to the young people in terms of service and experience and gave them a significant role to play. The home-church people participated by furnishing food, shelter, encouragement, and in turn received benefits from the inspirational meetings. The ministers of the individual churches had the chance to act as counselors and do follow-up work. Through the training aspects of such a project a wide variety of people could contribute their skills.

The above illustration does not mean to imply that everybody must contribute in one such particular activity of the entire program. An action program must include enough varied activities so that the contributions from widely divergent fields of Christian endeavor can be assimilated and put to use.

To develop such a wide program is the responsibility of leaders on the one hand in that they must see to it that everyone has the opportunity to contribute his talents in a way that is satisfying to him and beneficial to the program. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of each individual Calvinist to assess his own talents in order to find where he can contribute most effectively to the program.

This first condition suggests a second: that the goals of the program should be stated in terms of the needs of the individual Calvinists, not in abstract, generalized terms. This condition is necessary be-

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cause each Calvinist is acting or will act from a complex pattern of individual needs probably felt as a vague but persistent need to do something—to change things. This is good and leads to action. To attempt to verbalize these needs in terms of generalized, long range goals is to run a serious risk of losing our potential for action or of allowing the verbalization of goals to become the action.

Having goals for this action program is extremely important. We all have them in our world and life view. They are unformulated, but are operating nevertheless. Because of our similar Calvinistic background, our basic individual goals are also fairly similar; that is, we want similar kinds of basic changes in American society. Some of us see the possibility of working toward our goals by taking political action, others evangelistic, others scientific, others artistic, still others social.

Formulating goals takes place as we get into action and must verbalize our goals in order to evaluate our action and plan further action in the light of our evaluation of past action. This suggests that goals, per se, are not the psychological bases for action, but that they develop with the program and should be functioned to the clarification and direction of action.

In order to solve our own internal problems as efficiently as possible, a third condition is necessary: the opening up of channels of communication. Not only must we communicate ideas and information, but also feelings and emotions. One of the greatest functions that can be served through communication is the building of morale and the reinforcement of social action. For example, it reinforces our efforts to hear that Calvinists in other communities are making similar progress, are facing similar obstacles, are wrestling with similar problems. Not only is it helpful to get information and ideas from them on how they are solving their problems, but it is socially reinforcing to share common feelings and attitudes about these problems.

Communication can be formal or informal. It can take place through the formal media of Calvinistic publications or through private correspondence or informal meetings in face to face conversation. The latter is by far the most potent means of communication. There is no better way to communicate a message than through a human being, I believe. Such informal communication is the foundation of high morale and should be increased among individual Calvinists and among groups of Calvinists.

A fourth condition is one which is well recognized by Calvinists in the abstract, but which is very difficult to implement. That condition is the conscious recognition of the part played by the sovereign God in the development of a program of action. So far, very little has been written about where we expect God to fit into this program or about the necessity for Divine wisdom, strength and guidance in its development. We see clearly that American society needs the wisdom of God to solve its problems and we hope to impress society with this great fact. But how much do we see this same need for ourselves? We have not expressed a clear concept of the relationship between the satisfaction of our basic personality needs as human beings working in an action program and the demands that God makes upon us. These basic needs, I believe, are rooted in us, on the one hand, as totally depraved beings seeking for their exclusive satisfaction in actions which are out of line with the demands of God. On the other hand they are also rooted in us as bearers of the image of God and are satisfied when our actions are in line with what God expects of us. It is all too easy for us to suppose that we are behaving only in response to God's demands when in reality we are acting primarily to satisfy our own needs with all the danger that involves. It is necessary for us continually to test our actions against the Bible to ascertain whether our needs, of which our actions are but symptoms, are in line with God's demands on us. However, our dilemma as human beings arises from the fact that our basic needs are really impossible to ascertain and hence uncontrollable since they have their genesis in our personality development and unconscious life; but at the same time these same needs are often the most potent although unconscious motivating forces for our actions. Consequently we are entirely dependent on the sovereign God to control our humanly uncontrollable, but ever operating needs which are motivating us also in the development of an action program and to bring the action resulting from these needs into line with His demands that we behave according to His Word with all the implications for action involved therein.

In terms of priority of action, it becomes imperative that Calvinists everywhere, but especially those involved in the program, pray for all phases of the program, and especially for guidance in the actions they perform. This is the only sure antidote, and the only necessary one, for the control of those uncontrollable needs which, if allowed to go unchecked by the Spirit of God, will surely hinder the program. The prayer role is one which everyone can play. We can all start now, if we have not already begun. It is a function which should be performed publicly, privately, in prayer-day services, informally and at meetings of Calvinists everywhere.

The group-need right now is for action. What can each one of us do to satisfy this need? I have pointed out some of the conditions which I think must be met if we are to act with concerted force as a group. I have suggested that some attention be paid to the securing of these conditions within our group. To do this each one of us can:
1. Pray for personal guidance and for the success of the program in general.
2. Assess our own strong and weak points both introspectively and by talking to others in an attempt to find the most suitable place to work in the program.
3. Help others do the same.
4. Communicate wherever possible our feelings and ideas about action with others who are interested in action.
5. Seek out and meet with those who have similar interests in Calvinistic action in order to find possible channels for personal action—and then act.

The Church and her Proclamation

The task of the Christian Church is to preach the Gospel, in such language that the world will not be able to misunderstand, and in such terms of the world's problems as will prove helpful if the world is willing to believe her message. The Church has always been aware of the difficulties inherent in the execution of this task. Almost from the moment of entrance upon her world-wide mission, the Church grappled with the problem of language and terminology. The Trinitarian and Christological formulations of the early Church were not, as Harnack contended, an attempt to make the Church's message intellectually respectable and therefore acceptable to the Greek mind. On the contrary, Nicea and Chalcedon were attempts to state the faith of the Church in Greek concepts and thought patterns so that the Greek mind would not misconstrue the Church's message. This, on the one hand, prevented the Church's message from being scaled down and assimilated with pagan Greek thought, and on the other, compelled the Greek mind either to belief or rejection. It was this same motif that prompted St. Augustine to write his City of God, John Calvin his Institutes of the Christian Religion, and Guido de Bres his Belgic Confession. By such efforts the Church fulfills her obligation to speak to her social context in language clear and comprehensible to her contemporaries. If the gospel is to be preached to every man, then the Church, following the example of Pentecost, must speak the language of the people. In Reformed Protestant thought at least, neither the sacraments nor the Word operate impersonally; faith comes only by a type of hearing which involves understanding and a sense of relevancy.

The Problem of Language

It must be recognized, however, that in speaking a contemporary language for the purpose of being understood, the Church at this very point runs the danger of having her message misunderstood or not understood at all. Obviously, if she is to be understood at all, she must speak in the vernacular. Yet words and concepts are never, like telephone wires, mere channels of communication. Words and concepts have their own connotations—usually shifting connotations. Language is never simply a vehicle; it is always part of the cargo. Words are always symbols, symbols of their own given content. The Church is compelled to speak the "koine", a language which is not Christian. She is compelled to speak of the "world above" in the language of the "world below," of the "world of grace" in the language of the "world of sin." The Church must, for example, declare that "God is love" in a world where love is defined exclusively in terms of the romantic and sentimental. If she employs an antiquated terminology or coins a brand new idiom, then like the Existentialism of Kierkegaard or the Barthianism of Karl Barth's Romerbrief, her world-proclamation becomes quite unintelligible. It was not purely accidental that Kierkegaard and his burdensome terminology lay forgotten for a century. If, on the other hand, she employs the language of her contemporaries she runs the danger of concealing the uniqueness of her message.

This double danger ever shadows the Church in the execution of her task. It is inescapable. It cannot be by-passed; it can only be passed through. The Church has, however, evidence that it can and must be done. In the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, the Church has evidence that she can and must draw near to the world to speak her message. The reality of the Incarnation is proof that the truth of God can be conveyed and spoken in intelligible human forms and language without obscurcation or confusion of content. For the Incarnation is revelation, not obscurcation. Hazardous though the matter may be, no finitum non capax infiniti or peccator non capax verbi divini, should make us doubt the possibility of containing God's Word in the human words of proclamation.

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The Incarnation and Homiletics

In clothing her message in contemporary idiom, the Church is simply following the example of the ancient prophets, of her Lord and his apostles. The Old Testament prophets were no early versions of Drew Pearson; their most exciting interest was not in “prediction of things to come.” Their primary task was to address God’s Word to the at-hand-situation. If their message possessed relevance for the future, they did indeed speak to future times. But the prophetic word was first of all apropos to the “here and now”; it had relevance first of all to the situation in which it was uttered. Our Lord was the master par excellence in the usage of the language of the people. He employed common speech, and the common people heard him gladly. Our Lord’s parables were a pedagogical method of throwing his truth alongside concrete realities for the purpose of getting close to the empirical situation.

Like Paul, Jesus became all things to all men. We see Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, in the midst of the merriment of a wedding feast where the wine ran short; we see him conversing with women-of-the-street, with that common class of special designation, sinners. We see him at homes and feasts of Pharisees and publicans, mingling with guests that numbered its share of corrupt politicians and wardheelers. Paul states with approbation that he became all things to all men in the attempt to think himself into the thoughts and moods of his fellows. The Pauline approach on Mars Hill is a classic illustration of the Pauline usage of the pedagogical principle of the Incarnation, of meeting people where they are, at the level where they actually think and act. In the Incarnation, God stooped to the level of human existence. Following the example of her God, the Church must also speak at the level where people live. Her word must address itself to, and in terms of, the concrete situation. Neither she nor her message is of the world. Yet she is in the world, and in the world must speak to the world. She may not turtle-like remain in her shell and from out of its depths utter a muffled word, or on occasion, momentarily thrust out her neck to speak. She is in the world to speak to the world and must remain there until God takes her out.

Characteristics of Biblical Proclamation

Even a casual study of the preaching of the apostles and prophets and of our Lord, reveals two things of significance. First, their clear and direct address to the existing situation evoked a recognizable, positive response. The hearers either believed or were offended. Hearing the Word of God in their own tongue, they were brought to decision. They either followed the preacher or sought his elimination. Biblical preaching evoked a dramatic demonstration that the Word of God does not return void, that it is always, when rightly preached, a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. The Biblical record shows that that proclamation which evokes no response is less than conventional. We who are modern bearers of the divine Word would do well to keep an eye to this index of genuine preaching. In self-defence, we may write off the lack of faith in the modern world to unbelief; but how shall we save ourselves and modern preaching from criticism when the unbelief our preaching allegedly evokes, shows no evidence of offence?

Second, is it not significant that the most successful attempts of the Biblical preachers to speak in the idiom of their day, constitute what are frequently for us the most difficult parts of Scripture: the predictive elements, the parables and proverbs of Jesus, the address on Mars Hill? Is not this very difficulty an indication that the proclamation was not done in timeless “puristic” language, but in language that fit the mood and situation of the day?

Drawing Nigh to Preach

To speak to the problems of the day, to address the moods and attitudes of the modern mind of Christians and non-Christians alike, a living sympathetic knowledge of the religious intellectual climate of the world is prerequisite. The Church, like Jesus, must know a compassion for the masses. Like Jeremiah the Prophet, like Huss the Reformer, she must know a concern for the nation, for the world. That the world in every age lies in sin is not to be denied. Yet the inadequacy of general cure-all remedies, prescribed for sickness in general, may also not be denied. The world’s sickness is always sin, yet sin like sickness has a history, it follows lines of development, goes through periods of crisis. The good physician has various applications for various moments in a disease development. So, too, the Church, representing the Great Physician must not merely deal with sin in general, but with sin in its various expressions and consequences. A medi eval sermon will not gain a hearing in the mid-twentieth century—not because it possesses no relevance, but because it relevance would not be perceived. To re-establish the relevance of the Gospel, the Church must know its situation; it must know the “signs” in order to know the “times”. Knowing the climate she lives in, the air she breathes, the Church will be in a position to show the relevance of the Gospel in terms of the moods and problems, the fears and hopes of her times. She must give the answer in terms of the question; she must present God’s solution in terms of the world’s problems. Otherwise the answer will appear not to be in the sphere of the question!
Too frequently the Church has abstracted the individual from his concrete existence and then addressed him in artificial isolation from life as he actually lives it. The inevitable consequence of such abstraction is that the individual regards the Church's preaching as abstract, and her Gospel as irrelevant. Then occurs that anomalous present day phenomenon, religious philosophers, novelists, and poets enjoying greater hearing among the people than the Church. C. S. Lewis, an Oxford literary don, is credited with a greater religious audience than any churchman in Great Britain. The religious poets T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden enjoy more religious influence than many an American clergyman. The explanation lies in the fact that they have taken a firm purchase in the actualities of contemporary life. The same explanation largely accounts for the extensive popularity of Reinhold Niebuhr. His lack of orthodoxy does not explain his wide hearing, first, because his unorthodoxy is not apparent to the average hearer, and secondly, because he does in fact present his gospel as the Gospel. Niebuhr's audience is legion in spite of the fact that much of what he proclaims is not calculated to soothe modern itching ears. The same might be said in even stronger language about the Barthians.

If today's Church is to speak to her times in the clear idiom of the people, if she is to remove the general feeling of the Gospel's irrelevance, she must not from behind her protective walls, merely sing "in parables new deep truths shall be heard", but she must also dare to speak her truth in that "parabolic" form that answers to the need and anguish of her present hour. In this sense preaching must be existential.

[This discussion will be carried forward next month in a concluding article under the title: Church Proclamation and the Modern Mind.—EDITOR.]

Abraham Kuyper: Forgotten Radical?

A BRAHAM KUYPER is generally recognized as the greatest modern Calvinist; but the ignorance of what he actually said and thought is rather widespread. Insofar as he is known in "our circles", he is known as a Victorian, a man who was against the radicalism of 1789, a supporter of the status quo, a conservative.

This is a misinterpretation. Van Paassen's evaluation of Kuyper as a "radical democrat" is much nearer the truth. This brief sketch can obviously not go at all thoroughly into Kuyper's thought; nor into more than one aspect of the political-economic-social-intellectual Calvinist corporatism ("souvereiniteit in eigen kring") which he developed, and which was one of the acutest criticisms both of "laissez-faire" Liberalism and of Marxist Socialism penned in the nineteenth century. We know Kuyper as the "man of the antithesis": we forget that what he was fighting was the nineteenth century synthesis, the bourgeois synthesis, the synthesis of "free enterprise", imperialism, individualism, "progress"; the synthesis which still exists in America today (summarized daily in the Chicago Tribune), although it is rapidly being replaced in Europe by the Socialist Caesarism which Kuyper also foresaw and feared, and fought.

Kuyper had a vision, a vision of a Calvinist "civitas Dei"; and by that vision he condemned society as it existed in his day (and still exists today); he was in opposition to society; he desired change, and radical change; he gave an "architectonic critique" of society. The extent of our misjudgment of him can be seen in his attitude towards the French Revolution. We regard his as a conservative opposition; but Kuyper was opposed to it because it brought Europe under the "rule of the bankers." We think that Kuyper opposed it because it overthrew the Bourbons; actually, he opposed it more because it betrayed the workers.

17 Barth and Brunner rank with him, but are too "Neo-" to be called true Neo-Calvinists. Leierf and Doumergue in France were important, but not in the same class. Likewise Colijn, Smeek, Vollenhoven and other followers in the Netherlands; none have his scope, his breadth, or his greatness. Bavinck had a great mind; but Kuyper was the man who, as Van Kroef says, "placed a stamp upon the civilization of the Netherlands which it was never to lose." (See Church History, 17 (1948) 4:p. 2.)

20 Pierre Van Paassen, That Day Alone (New York, 1948), 210. This, coming from a man far to the left in politics, is significant.

21 Kuyper's main opposition was, of course, that it dethroned God. But we forget the other side of his critique: it enthroned the individual. As Groen van Prinsterer said in 1850, "It will do us no good to give power to the middle classes. They too are a new aristocracy, a new privileged class . . . it is this which ends in tyranny by the rich and rule of the bankers." (Quoted by Kuyper, Sociale Vraagstuk, p. 7) Cf. Kuyper, ibid, p. 23, " . . . the equality of which men had dreamed turned out to be an even more shocking inequality; and instead of the promised fraternity, they received a revised version of the fable of the wolf and the lamb . . . (well might they complain) that a new aristocracy, an aristocracy of much lower calibre, an aristocracy of money, now puts its foot on our neck . . . ."
Kuyper had an overwhelming sense of the "social question", the maldistribution of wealth, the class struggle, rich against poor—call it what you will. He felt that it was rocking Western civilization to pieces, and unless solved, Europe would fall as Rome fell.

This social question, or class struggle, as we would say, results primarily not from the growth of modern industry, but from the atomistic individualism, the perverted "free enterprise", the denial of social values, the disdain for religious regulation of life, which mark the French Revolution. The class struggle is not a superficial thing. "If such a thing as a social question is going to exist for you," says Kuyper, "... you (must) have an insight into the untenability of the present situation, and explain this untenability not from accidental causes but from a fault in the very foundation of our social life ... whoever thinks that the evil can be exorcised through the cultivation of more piety, through greater friendliness or more charity ... a social question does not exist for him ... the social question has become the burning issue ... it is the assertion of the organic nature of society."

Kuyper warned that "the social problem will permit nations no rest until a solution is found. And if you do not apply your principle to it then it will nontheless be brought to a conclusion, but in a spirit hostile to you." Or, in other words, if you "decent" people don't face this problem, Stalin will solve it for you. It would be pleasant to give other quotations to show what Kuyper meant by the social question—his condemnation of manufacturers for industry, but from the atomistic individualism, the Rome fell.

the organic nature of values, the disdain for religious regulation of life, solve it for you.

The struggle is er friendliness or more charity ... a social question ... a fault in the very

real good.

may be brought home to us by considering Senator Taft as a typical Liberal in this sense; which he is. "The Socialist leader, Domela Nieuwenhuis, who broke with the basic law for every social relationship. The thirst and the
did it (Liberalism) offer the workers, as the Liberals would do: ... the palliatives of Liberalism, which would offer the people a lecture in political theory, the worker a smoking room and a library, which has no other cure-all than the public school and the savings bank." Or, again, "What did it (Liberalism) offer them (the workers)? Reading, writing and arithmetic! ... What did it withhold from them? Trade schools, and a share in capital." Kuyper's criticism may be brought home to us by considering Senator Taft as a typical Liberal in this sense; which he is. And we have already noted Kuyper's scorn for those who thought a mere Fundamentalism would do any real good.

Does Marxian Socialism offer any answer? Kuyper answers with a resounding negative. But the reason is this: Socialism rests on the same presuppositions as Liberalism; it enthrones the individual.13 It is, in a sense, too conservative!13 The Socialist State is really the individual in the mass enthroned; the logical outcome of the individual enthroned; monopoly capitalism and revolutionary socialism are really much alike (i.e., in our terms, Stalin and Mussolini are much alike). Both result in the omnipotent state—the nightmare of George Orwell's recent 1984. Since most of us would agree offhand with this dislike of Socialism, we will not elaborate on it; except to remark that Kuyper's criticism is of a far different order than the common dismissal of Socialist Caesarism as "godless atheism." It is a searching analysis, similar in many respects to Gasset's in his Revolt of the Masses.

Nontheless, Socialism is not all wrong. Socialism is in part justified: "... (it is) one gigantic protest against the existing order of things ... there are thousands upon ten thousands who would rather demolish and annihilate everything than continue to bear the burden of existing conditions," said Kuyper. Marx and Bebel analyzed the social situation better than the "classical economists" (Ricardo, etc.), said Kuyper; Marx was a competent scholar, not a wild-eyed revolutionary; and the Antirevolutionary leader Talma even had kind words for the Marxian "class-war" interpretation of history.14

But Marxian Socialism is not the answer. What is the answer? We will examine Kuyper's Calvinistic answer in a second article; it is, briefly, a sort of Calvinistic socialism, or Calvinistic corporatism. Let us, however, end this section with another of Kuyper's statements of the problem, the burning problem, which Calvinism and Christianity must answer. (And which still exists today!)

"... The French Revolution could not but become the cause of a deepseated social need. This followed from the double and intrinsic characteristic; first, to represent possession of money as the highest good; and second, in the struggle for money, to set every man against every other ... he pursued. It is therefore not only related in spirit to the Socialist, but as over against the Socialist, he is wrong ... " (Sociale Vraagstuk, 24, footnote.)

11 Thus, Kuyper says "The ruling classes (idees) ... stand in a direct genetic relationship with the theories of the Socialists." (Ons Program, #281.) And again, "The Liberal makes a stop which is wholly arbitrary on a road that in accordance with his system has to be pursued. He is therefore not only related in spirit to the Socialist, but as over against the Socialist, he is wrong ... " (Sociale Vraagstuk, 24, footnote.)

12 The Socialist leader, Domela Nieuwenhuis, who broke with the Socialists because they were too conservative, wrote Kuyper, "There are whole sections of your writings I could take as my own ... " (Kasteel, 140-7 and 162-5 for Nieuwenhuis.) In 1938, the antirevolutionary party supported Nieuwenhuis, then a Socialist, against a Liberal, much to the consternation of the Liberals. (As may be imagined; consider the reaction of the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce if Kuyper's present-day followers had supported Henry Wallace against Tom Dewey.)

13 Kuyper, Calvinism (Grand Rapids, 1943), 173.

14 See respectively, Kasteel, 207 and Van Paassen, 212; Kuyper, Sociale Vraagstuk, 27, footnote; and Barnouw, Holland Under Queen Wilhelmina (New York, 1923), 37.

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chase for money, the holy apostle taught us, is the root of all evil; and as soon as this angry demon was unchained at the turn of the century, (the upper classes tried) ... through superiority in knowledge, position and basic capital, to acquire money and ever more money at the expense of the socially weaker ... On the side of the bourgeoisie, there was experience and insight, ability and association, available money and available influence ... The result of this struggle could readily be foreseen. It could not end otherwise than in the absorption of all calculable value by the larger and smaller capitalists, leaving for the lower strata of society only as much as appeared strictly necessary to keep alive these instruments for nourishing capital—for in this system, that is all the workers are held to be. And so a social condition found previously only among the Jews—at the one end of the scale, millionaires; at the other, ant-poor drudges—has gradually come to be that of all Europe ... A well-to-do bourgeoisie rules over an impoverished working class ... which is doomed, when it can be of no more value, to sink into the morsels of the proletariat.”

So says Kuyper, the Calvinist; and if this is conservative speech, the definition of conservative must surely be changed! Such is the problem; and we have it today; Rockefeller, DuPont on one end of the scale, Grapes of Wrath on the other; in Chicago, the Gold Coast only a few blocks from dirt-poor slums. In the second article, then, we will examine Kuyper’s answer, the answer of a great Calvinist.

**With Paul Through Greece in 1950**

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In the bomb-shattered harbor of Pireaus, six kilometers southwest of Athens, lie side-by-side the coastal trading boats of the Greeks. These vessels are solidly wooden and the auxiliary sails are now reefed. Their blunt prows will push heavily through the lashing waves as they ply to and from Macedonian ports, Turkey, Italy, the Mediterranean islands, or Egypt, or Palestine.

The barefoot sailors and longshoremen, treading from vessel to shore, form a human conveyer system, each man with a sack on his back, or a box, or a basket of fish, for they unload cargo after this fashion. The men do not speak.

On the deck of one boat preparations are being made for sailing. The fifty or sixty foot boat has been loaded. The auxiliary engine is idling, and she will ease out of her snug berth into open water and then hoist sail. In another ship four sailors in pants and shirt are eating “merethes” (tiny fishes, and you’ll eat a hundred for lunch).

“Kalimarasa,” (Good morning) we say to them, and we are extraordinarily friendly, for we love these people with oriental understanding. And they are friendly and they ask us to come aboard, and to sit down with them and take a handful of fishes from the common pot. We see two fried flies mixed in with our little fish, and we eat the fish and ask for more. We see that our friends notice how much we are enjoying our feast, and a piece of bread is broken off and given to us by a man with a knotted and dirty hand. A little boy pours us a cup of “retsina,” and this wine is made today as it was two thousand years ago.

The ships, and the Greek sailors, and the sailcloth for the sails, and the ships from Tarsus and Caesarea, Thessalonica and Cyprus and Crete, and from Italy and Spain and Egypt—and the little fishes—nothing has changed, no change whatsoever ... in two thousand years.

**Enter Paul**

Two thousand years ago Paul was in Troas in Mysia, the western seaboard of present-day Turkey. There was a vision of the man of Macedonia and the man pleaded, “Come over into Macedonia and help us.” The apostle with a companion (perhaps Silas) was constrained by the Spirit of Jesus not to preach in Mysia but to go straight away. Here we infer that Paul went to the harbor and asked of the captains of the small wooden vessels, “Will you sail for Macedonia soon? And if so will you have room aboard for us?”

They sailed with a straight course, touching the magnificent and rocky island of Samothrace first and the next day crossed north west to Neopolis (modern Kavalla, then a small town but now a thriving port city of northern Greece) and directly to the then large city of Philippi, perhaps traveling by donkey or on foot. For some days they stayed at this city of commerce and on the Sabbath went to the small river that flows today as it did then outside the city. On a level piece of land near the river were some women in their beautiful oriental costumes, meditating and praying. Paul and his companions greeted these women, soon speaking of those ideas of Christ which have since changed the hearts and minds of millions of people. Philippi today is a small town where shepherds and farmers are followers of Christ through the Greek orthodox church. Their meagre incomes from their small tobacco and wheat farms sustain life in spite of wars and high taxes.
Before Christmas Day there is fasting, then services on Christmas morning, then Christmas dinner, and the joy over the birth of the Savior—whom Paul first preached two thousand years ago. But in those days they cast Paul and Silas into prison, for, through the spirit of Christ, a certain girl who had been exploited for money by a group of unscrupulous masters was set free of the unhappy spirit which gave her power to make money by soothsaying.

**Thessalonica and Berea**

Now Paul traveled to Thessalonica by an overland route—after he had made converts, in Philippi, who would spread the glad tidings of the Redeemer from this important trading center. The companions traveled west on foot and perhaps partly by donkey-back over the dusty road some 150 kilometers (nearly a hundred miles). They waded the brooks that flowed into this part of the Aegean sea. They stopped momentarily at Amphipolis and Apollonia, and the irregular meals of bread, oil, and occasionally fish and meat sustained them for the journey.

Entering Thessalonica (now more popularly Saloniki with its stores and shops, its many churches, its American and British Consulates, its restaurants, its refugees in broken school buildings and its waterfront wharf of concrete) Paul and Silas were filled with the spirit of Christ and went on Sabbath days to the Jewish Synagogue, reasoning with the worshippers there that the Christ had truly come and suffered, died, and had risen again. The Spirit touched those Jews and many of the Greeks who had been, in God’s plan, prepared by various means to receive and to live by the new truth. But some Jews did not believe—arrogant, envious fellows they were, no doubt having some little power, under-handed, consorting with those of a “baser sort.” These Jews said Paul and Silas were turning the world upside-down. Were they? We have only to look down from a certain kindly doctor’s living-room window on Saint Sophia Square of a Sunday morning. People are coming in from all directions to attend divine services at the church of Saint Sophia, a great church of Byzantine architecture. The people worship there; they profess a zealous belief in the Christ preached to their ancestors two thousand years ago. We stroll around town; everything is closed except a few restaurants. All these thousands of people have been to church this morning. Perhaps tonight many of them will go to an American movie. Why not? Who is there to tell the Greeks they should not patronize American movies on Sunday? Certainly not the movie producers.

Paul and Silas leave Thessalonica and travel to the agricultural town of Berea (now Berria, a country town which did not escape the raids of the Andartes, or communist guerillas) which claimed among its citizenry many noble Jews. They had traveled over the dirt road some seventy kilometers and straightway went to the synagogue of the Jews, and there preached, and there made converts of Jews and Greeks.

Now imagine the viciousness of the enemies of the truth of Christ in Thessalonica, who, hearing of the successes in Berea, traveled fast to that new stronghold of the risen Christ, stirred up many people, forcing Paul to leave.

Some converted Greeks and Jews left their farms and their businesses and at once conducted Paul to the nearest Aegean port some fifty kilometers east, probably Korinos. They proceeded at once to the great city of Athens. Arriving there, Paul gave instructions to his new friends to return to Berea to tell Silas and Timotheus to travel fast and come to Athens.

**Paul at Athens**

Paul meantime waited. He mingled with the people, and whether it was winter or summer, he would be out in the sun. He would go to the agora (market place) and walk among the planetrees, willows, and poplars, and he would see the ornamental fountains and the statuary in marble. He would hear the incessant calling of the merchants and sellers of cloth, spices, and provisions quite as it is today in another part of Athens. There he saw bankers, dealers in old books, hairdressers, perfumers, exporters. Also men of letters, orators, artists, politicians, philosophers, sophists. When the Apostle of Christ gazed to the east, he saw the majestic Acropolis crowned by the famous Parthenon constructed more than 500 years before and dedicated to Athene, a pagan god. And as the sun might be setting in the west, the shadow of the great temple of Thesseus would be there to flaunt the spirit of humility of the Christ for which Paul lived.

Paul went to the synagogue while he waited for Silas and Timotheus. There he found people who took the traditional Jewish point of view. Paul disputed with them. Later he met these same people in the agora, and again Paul discussed the matter of the Christ, His death and resurrection. The brilliant philosophers, some Stoics and Epicureans, who believed that man must develop his own power and goodness of living, overheard Paul. They called him a “babbler” and said that Paul was talking about some strange gods. They were interested. They asked Paul to speak to them. A crowd gathered—a speaker with a strange new doctrine.

Let us go to the Areopagus (Mars Hill) a short way off, but to the west and almost beneath the Acropolis with its tremendous pagan temples. Life
was easy for these listeners, and they were surrounded by the statuary and beautiful objects of art that they or their forebears had fashioned. Paul spoke about the unknown god to which they, the Greeks, had dedicated an altar. The Greeks were worshipping, and we making the laws. We, men schooled in the brilliant idea that man must develop himself in strength and wisdom. There is more personal satisfaction in building a beautiful idol and worshipping it, building a temple to that idol, a magnificent temple really: we building, we worshipping, and we making the laws. We, then, can do as we please. We can never please and appease our egos. Of course, in the plan of God, perhaps it is reasonable to suppose the Greeks would ask Paul to come again one day. But not now!

**Athens in 1950**

We go to Athens in this year, 1950. The plane is dropping out of the sky. There is Lykavitos, the highest point in the city, crowned by a church dedicated to the Christian religion. There are many other Christian churches.

We land at the airport, go to a hotel in the newer section of Athens. We listen to the Greek people. They are polite and attentive to our wishes. (We suppose they want us to spend our dollars there.) On a night when the moon is full we shall walk to the Areopagus. (You wish to take a taxi? I should say not!)

We pass the Roman Catholic church, go on to Constitution Square. The orange trees are set out in neat geometrical figures and amongst them the Greek people are sitting at tables having some coffee. Crowds are in the street, and the street cars and buses are bursting with people hurrying home, for it is seven o'clock and the offices and stores are closing. We turn to the west to see the church attended by the King and Queen, the Metropolitan cathedral, a beautiful edifice with a great picture of Christ standing out boldly. We back-track to Amalia Avenue and continue south, the beautiful National Gardens on our left. There is the English church (Episcopal) and then the Russian Orthodox church. Keep on going south. The temple built to the god Jupiter is in ruins. We turn west on Areopagitou, and we continue to walk to the Acropolis. We have picked a night when the moon is full for we want to see the Parthenon reflect the light from its ancient marble columns. We pay the fifteen cents admission to see these great ruins. The beauty of the great temple is there, but we cannot catch the spirit of the worship here.

We walk by a circuitous route near the ancient market place, the Agora, long ago buried under eight or ten meters of lava and dirt, but now being excavated. There are your remnants of the great and glorious Athens in the days when Paul, bursting with the living spirit of Christ, said that “God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

And now the little hill, the Areopagus. There we see nothing or hear nothing that might not be seen in any American city which has a park. But here are living trees, cedars and pines, as though to keep ever fresh the memory of the discussion that took place there. Here are the dirt trails which generations of friends, walking arm-in-arm, have worn into the soil. Did we go all the way to Greece to see a little hill and some cedar trees? (And not even a hot-dog stand around?)

**Old Corinth**

Paul left Athens. He went to Corinth, now known as Old Corinth. He met the tentmakers Priscilla and Claudius. Here again Paul went to the synagogue where he persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. He was joined by Silas and Timotheus who had come from Macedonia.

The great commercial center of Old Corinth, with its large market-place similar in spirit with the Agora of Athens, has during recent years been excavated by the American School of Classical Studies. There is the Odeum (Hall of Music), a large theater, and the seven remaining columns of the temple built to the god Apollo, standing on a hill above the market-place.

Old Corinth with its idolatry and corruption had, over the centuries, been covered by dirt and rubble, and only now can we view the place where the apostle Paul made converts who would travel over the known world of that time. It was a great commercial city.

**Two Thousand Years from Now?**

Paul's third journey, his second to what is now Greece, covered somewhat the same cities. We think of his life of endless perseverance. The great hero brought the truth of the word of God to the distributing centers of the intellectual world of two thousand years ago. Witness today that the truth of Christ has been carried to every nation. Must man today improve with science and art as did the brilliant Greeks of two thousand years ago? And with science and art alone, where will be the little hill with the evergreen trees—two thousand years from now?
A Junior College, What Kind?

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The Junior College is being considered by the people of the Christian Reformed Church. References to such a college have appeared in various issues of The Banner, its denominational weekly. This issue has importance for the entire Christian School movement.

Junior Colleges have served to excellent purpose in many places throughout the country. The people of Grand Rapids, Chicago, Los Angeles, and many other cities have had splendid opportunities to see junior colleges in action. Apparently what they have seen has satisfied them. These schools are frequently excellent within their respective limits.

The advantages of the junior college cannot be denied. However, there is an aspect of the junior college which is not as apparent as its advantages. The organization of the junior college has undergone a revolution both in terms of the theory underlying it and in terms of resulting practice. This revolution has taken place so quietly and so gradually that the general public is not altogether aware of what has happened.

As with all revolutions, there is an alignment of forces on each side of the question. Thus, fifteen years from the beginning of the change, there are still junior colleges which continue to be organized in the familiar and still accepted pattern of the past.

The newer organization of the junior college departs from the pattern of the past by providing broader offerings to a larger segment of high school graduates. The emerged and emerging junior college provides all the advantages of the institution of the past without stopping there. The junior college of the present and of the foreseeable future places stress (1) on terminal education which will serve to prepare youth better to find their places in jobs and (2) on the provision of the first two years of academic college training.

Anyone who has attended junior college, who has been a school administrator in a city which has a junior college, who takes the trouble to read about junior college developments, and who will discuss junior college functions with a wide range of the school administrators who have had the most experience with them, will be convinced that the junior college as it has been known is doomed to lose its place. Junior colleges have a secure place in the educational scheme of the near future only if they are revamped to meet the demands of today and of tomorrow. The implication is clear for those who are beginning to organize a junior college.

Past organization of the junior college did not only make it an academic school with rather narrow appeal, but it also made it a separate institution of college rank. Today it is generally recognized that the first two years of college on an academic basis and also the two years of schooling of a terminal nature are functionally part of secondary education. The emerging junior college is recognized as an extension of high school training. A name suggested for the combined high school and junior college is the "Community College."

Everyone has a pretty good idea as to what the academic pattern in the junior college was. It was merely a provision of the first two years of regular college education. The academic part of the junior college is not changed under the new organization. Terminal education is added to the old in order to provide the new organization with its broader appeal and its expanded purposes. Because terminal education will be attractive to many who are not interested in a four year college plan, it may receive a major emphasis in terms of the number who are served.

What is this terminal education? It is education for trades, technical and industrial occupations which do not require four year college preparation, commercial training (such as may be found in many two year business colleges), the fine arts, and homemaking. Among those who would take the terminal course are those who wish to be receptionists for doctor's or dentist's offices, practical nurses, draftsmen, photographers, bookkeepers, accountants, stenographers, secretaries, artists (commercial and other), homemakers, store clerks and other store workers, and those who wish to learn some trade under the direction of and with the cooperation of the school. The foregoing listing is not complete. It is intended only to clarify the nature of the objectives which are attainable through terminal education.

Enrollments in a college that provides terminal education will be larger than in the more limited junior college. Increased size permits provision of a broader choice of subjects with greater over-all economy. Economy and efficiency of operation are assured still further by making the college an extension of the high school, housed in the same building or on the same campus as the high school. The combined senior high school and junior college with terminal education planned as part of the program encourages the use of highly qualified teachers with-
out duplication of staff. One teacher may serve in his field of specialization where otherwise it might be necessary to employ one for the high school and one for the junior college. Similarly, duplication of building facilities may be avoided in several areas.

The combination of the senior high school with the junior college in the provision of secondary education evolved in Pasadena, California, from the familiar pattern in 1920 to the emerging plan since 1935. The concept of terminal education in the junior college is accepted pretty much throughout California. The larger cities have started out with separate buildings for their junior colleges. They now find these buildings to be stumbling blocks to acceptance of the more desirable combination organization. One can become a slave to the organization to which he is committed by the buildings which have been built.

Any group which contemplates organizing a junior college may well acquaint itself with the new emphasis on terminal education as part of an extended secondary school. Such a group may well study the experiences of other schools in the effect of type of organization. The group may well inquire as to what school administrators would do if they had to do over again what has already been done. Perhaps experiences of others will provide guide posts to the development of a school which will serve better than any other the purposes which the organizers have in mind.

The new organization offers opportunities to provide greater educational advantages more efficiently and at a lower relative cost. The base of support is broadened because the school can serve the needs of more young people; those who want a regular college education and also those who can benefit by two more years of work beyond the 12th grade. Unnecessary duplication of buildings and of personnel may be avoided.

Unhampered by the fetters of past mistakes, those who wish to organize a community college which will contain some combination of high school and junior college grades (grades 9 to 14, 10 to 14, or 11 to 14) are in the position of choosing whether they will catch up to the past or whether they will step forward with intelligence and with confidence into the future.

SUGGESTED READINGS

From Our Correspondents

IRISH CALVINIST LETTER
15 College Sq., East,
Belfast, North Ireland,
April 1st, 1950.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

Once again THE FORUM has arrived, packed with good things, and reminding me that it is time I despatched another news-letter. Following up my last letter I would refer to Britain's Recent Election

You may remember that I stated that the Socialists would probably be returned with a reduced majority. Well, I certainly did not realize at the time how greatly the majority was to be reduced. Not only has the majority been reduced, but it is being reduced as Labour members die. An excited Britain watched Labour's majority drop to 10, then to 9, and finally to 7. Attlee said, "We carry on." Since he said that his party's lead has fallen to 4. In the next few weeks almost anything may happen. And no one would dare to forecast future events in British internal politics. Many set July as the dead-line, while others think that Attlee may hold things together for at least a year. Really, it is impossible to say. This morning's newspaper informs me that the Government has suffered its first defeat, although on a minor issue. Yet this is surely an indicator. Obviously the Socialists are uneasy. They have suddenly become cautious and polite. We do not expect any more "vermin" speeches from them while they occupy this unenviable and precarious position. The important point to notice is this,—The anti-Labour vote (i.e., Conservative, Liberal and others) had a majority over the Labour vote of at least 1½ million; and this was out of a poll of 84.1 per cent. The fact is that the majority of the British people, including the people of Northern Ireland, voted against Socialism. In many three-cornered fights the majority voted anti-Labour, but the Labour candidate managed to have the highest number of votes. Thus Labour managed to have a majority of M.P.'s without having the majority of the voters to support them. To your correspondent there is something fundamentally wrong with our system of voting when this can happen. But he also realizes that it is not easy to suggest a better system.

Winston Churchill is obviously enjoying the position, and he is giving his opponents neither peace nor rest. But the question lingers in many minds: Suppose Churchill won a snap-election, would he be any better off then than Attlee is now? Would the Conservatives have a majority of 30 or 40? That would be regarded as a safe majority. As things stand it is hard to say how another election would go, but one can say that the tide is still anti-Labour. We note with sad interest that when the new Parliament was being sworn in, many Socialists pushed aside the Bible, and during prayers a large section of the Socialists are absent from the house. This is also an indicator.

"Missionary Enterprise"
The Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, under the convenership of Professor David McKenzie, is to be commended for having published a most attractive and informative booklet under the above very suitable title. The booklet, (72 pp., 2/6, Free Church Offices, The Mound, Edinburgh,) describes in detail the missionary labours of this Church on three continents, in South Africa, India and Peru,
from 1900 to 1949. It is beautifully illustrated and easily read. To those who are really interested in the missionary enterprise of Calvinistic Churches, this report is indispensable. The Irish Evangelical Church has, for many years, co-operated with the Free Church in missionary work. Most of our missionary offerings go to Free Church fields, and we have our missionaries in India, Africa and South America. In my last letter I reported a "welcome home" for Nurse Annie Dunlop, who laboured faithfully in India for 5 years. On March 23rd, we welcomed Rev. Joseph and Mrs. McCracken, just home from Africa. They received a wonderful welcome, too, and coming so soon after Nurse Dunlop's "welcome home" this meeting turned our minds towards our missionary interests. It is encouraging to know that so many of our people are missionary-minded. Calvinism, when properly understood and acted upon, is always conducive to a sincere and energetic missionary spirit at home and abroad. Missionary Enterprise proves that.

**Authoritarianism**

The Church of Rome in these islands, and probably in the U.S.A. also, has been laying great stress upon her authoritarianism. She is doing this as part of her campaign against Communism, which is so rampant in Romanist lands. In England there is now a whisper that there are Communist "cells" in action. The rumour may or may not be false. We will not be surprised if Communism does come in Eire as the reaction to Rome's peculiar brand of authoritarianism. As Calvinists we agree with Rome that there must be authoritarianism; we dare not despise authority. But surely the question arises, What authority? In Belfast recently, the Redemptorist monastery at Clonard has been playing a fiddle which has only one string, and that string is authority. They mean the authority of the Pope's church. We can only regard this as irrational authoritarianism, because it can only be supported by arguing in a circle. We Calvinists will never bow to the authority of an Italian, or any other more man for that matter. Let us fight for authority by all means, but let it be the authority of the Holy Scripture, our only infallible rule of faith and practice. In this respect Calvinists occupy a position which cannot be shared by non-Calvinists, whether Romanists, Communists or any other party.

Yours in His Service,

**FRED S. LEAHY.**

**AN AUSTRALIAN VOICE**

2 Swindon Grove, McKinnon, SE. 14, Victoria, Australia.

March 15, 1950.

**Dear Dr. Bouma:**

As I am leaving Australia next month on a nine months' trip to the old country, I would be glad if you would forward THE CALVIN FORUM from the next issue till the October issue to "Allendale", Crawfordsburn, Belfast, N. Ireland. I do appreciate your very fine paper and would be sorry to miss any copies of it. I know your Australian correspondent, the Rev. Arthur Allen, very well and am also in correspondence with the Rev. Graham Miller of the New Hebrides. I am looking forward to meeting the Rev. A. G. W. Foenander when my ship calls at Colombo. I read his letters in THE CALVIN FORUM and got in touch with him.

I feel your paper is rendering a real service in linking Calvinists together in a world-wide fellowship. I am looking forward to meeting your correspondent in Northern Ireland, Mr. Leahy of the Irish Evangelical Church, and hope to be able to introduce your paper to our own ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. We as a denomination should be more linked up with the Reformed Ecumenical movement and I hope I shall be able to interest our church in it.

I edit a monthly paper in Australia called "Evangelical Action". It bears a special witness to the fundamentals of the Faith and has a wider fellowship than Reformed Christians, though I seek to eliminate anything that is contrary to the Reformed Faith. I shall see that you get a copy regularly in the future.

With sincere Christmas greetings,

Yours in and for the Faith,

W. R. MCEWEN.

**LETTER FROM THE NETHERLANDS**

Groningen, Netherlands, March 24, 1950.

**Dear Dr. Bouma and Forum Friends:**

I AM happy to begin this letter at this time with the news that our Calvinistic Churches, which in our country are broken up into so many different groups, have in recent weeks seen the beginnings of a reconciliation and a possible reunion between those of the Schilder-group (naming themselves the Reformed Churches ad Art. 31) and these known simply as the "old" Reformed Churches. Recent sessions of our Synod at the Hague have led to a mutual understanding between leading men of the so-called Schilder-Churches (this, of course, is not the official name, but is best understood as a designation for our readers) and the regular Reformed Churches, and this has led to the readmission and reunion of these (six) office-bearers with the Churches which they left four years ago.

To this we may add the glad news that an increasing number of church members are returning after these important decisions have been reached at the Synod of the Hague. Also in my own church of Groningen we have witnessed such returns. And to say there are also a large number who are not inclined (as yet, at least) to retrace their steps. However, we can say that the wall of misunderstandings and estrangements has been initially broken through and that a connecting bridge has been established. It is our fervent hope and prayer that all who at the time considered it impossible to abide by the doctrinal decisions and the church-governmental pronouncements and who on this account organized a new church, will come to the same conclusions and convictions, so that they may be reunited with us.

We view this movement as the initial answer to our prayers, as well as to the prayers of many of you, for I know from my correspondence that also among you many have made the reconciliation and reunion in our midst a matter of earnest prayer and supplication. For this reason I write this, in order that you may rejoice with us and may persevere in prayer in our behalf. There is only one effective weapon against the onslaughts of the evil one who delights in sowing dissension among the brethren, and that is the weapon of prevailing, persevering prayer.

Also in our land Rome is expanding and delights in splitting up and weakening the forces of Protestantism. She knows very well that a divided Protestantism is her only hope. How this Roman Church delights to point to the divisions of Protestantism. She glories in her so-called unity. I am sure this is also true of Anglo-Saxon countries like yours. In view of this, every movement which aims at a united witness of Bible-believing Protestants is to be welcomed. On this account I have also rejoiced at the news in THE CALVIN FORUM that a Society of Evangelical Theologians was organized among American brethren, and that our Editor-in-chief has taken an active part in this movement and delivered a keynote address in which every sentiment expressed was after my own heart.

I sincerely hope that the brethren will go a step farther. Not only do we need meetings of theologians where papers are read and discussed, but we should also strive to bring those churches which have the same confession together into one. Many of these denominations came into existence in the nineteenth century. Nor is that accidental. That was the century of individualism. It was the age when German Idealism was at its height, and did not this type of thinking lead

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with great ease to separate organizations? Was not the true idea of the nature of the Church very much in eclipse? And should not we in our day rise above the evils of this individualism and its accompanying pietistic indifference to the Church as a divine institution?

I believe that the organization of such societies of Bible-believing theologians may serve to create a better understanding among the leaders in Bible-believing churches. In that case this may be the first step on the difficult road of understanding and eventual reunion. Even though these churches may not at once enter into union, they can establish fraternal relations, keep in touch with one another, and eventually unite in the struggle against the forces that threaten the heritage of the Reformation.

These threats come not only from Romanism in our day, but also from humanism and communism. In fact, these isms are all related. Romanism would lead us away from the Word of God, and the others unite to break in even more radical fashion with that same Word. We are living in times that loudly speak warning that it is five minutes to twelve. If we desire to come to some united understanding against a common foe, then we must make haste and not waste our precious time with all sorts of minor differences, which many of us are wont to give high-sounding names.

May God strengthen all of you and all of us to this holy calling, which would be urgent even if there were no threatening clouds in the sky. Under the circumstances all this becomes only the plainer, so that all may see!

Sincerely yours,
DR. PIETER PRINS, H.W. Meesdagplein 2.

[Footnote of Editor: We take this occasion to extend our sincere and warmest congratulations to our friend and CALVIN Forum correspondent, Dr. Pieter Prins, on the occasion of the celebration on April 5 of his 25th anniversary as minister of the Gospel in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Dr. Prins, besides having served such large churches as those of Deventer, Dordrecht, and Groningen, is a regular and generous contributor to the religious weekly and monthly press, the author of a number of works, and chiefly known for his scholarly and exhaustive discussion of the subject of Conscience in his doctor's thesis: Het Geweten: Een Exegetisch-Historisch-Dogmatisch Onderzoek, (688 pages. Delft, 1937, N.V. W. D. Meinema.) Dr. Prins has been a visitor to America and Canada and proved himself a warm and helpful friend and "liaison officer" for Dutch emigrants of the Reformed Faith in Canada.

—C. B.]
WANTED: A PROTESTANT PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION


The history of American education plainly shows that the American public has a tremendous faith in education. In recent years this faith in the schools is being severely jolted. In ever-increasing numbers books and articles are appearing which betray a growing distrust of the current trends in education. Professional educators and laymen alike are taking a look at our schools and what they see there disturbs them. This disturbance is not occasioned by some slight superficial or peripheral defect which can be corrected with a little tinkering; on the contrary, it springs from the conviction that the basic educational theories and philosophies underlying current school practice are not right. American education is sick at heart.

In Christianity and American Education Dr. Rian, vice-president of Trinity University, appraises the development of American education in the light of Christian theism. This book is an expansion of a series of lectures given by the author on “The Contemporary Crisis of Education” at the Princeton Institute of Theology in July 1948. It is “a call to educators to bring American education back to God”.

In Section I the author surveys briefly the history of the public school from the colonial period to the present. He selects such facts as bring into sharp focus the shift in emphasis in public education from the dominant Christian influence in the colonial period to the almost complete secularism of the twentieth century. He traces this growing secularization especially as it is reflected in the educational legislation in the several states and in the present-day philosophies of education. His discussion of the prevalent philosophies of education is highlighted by numerous quotations from the works of the “high priests” of the cult of experimentalism and offers conclusive proof that the prevailing philosophy underlying educational practice in our country is that of naturalism. As a result “the fundamental source of truth and of right has been shifted from God to man and the world” and this shift in turn is inevitably leading to the disruption and disintegration of American culture.

An effective change to this secularism is the one presented by the American Roman Catholics. Citing largely from Roman Catholic writers, the author in Section II of the book reviews the development of Roman Catholic education in this country from its small beginnings in the early days of the colonies up to its present strength and prestige. No small part of this discussion concerns the recurring attempts on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to secure State and Federal support for parochial schools.

At the present time there are in this country eleven thousand Roman Catholic schools—elementary, secondary and higher institutions—with an enrollment of about three million students. The author rightly contends that the power of Roman Catholic education is not to be attributed merely to the close-knit organization but that its dynamic strength flows from a well-developed, comprehensive, all-inclusive philosophy of education, one that is articulated with every aspect of the educational process. This educational philosophy is based upon the Scholastic or Thomistic philosophy of life and is in turn given implementation in the curricula and textbooks used in the schools. It is this thoroughgoing metaphysical approach to the problems of education that has made Catholic education strong. It is this sense of direction that has made possible the rapid advance of Catholic schools in recent decades.

In contrast to this intelligent strategic attack on secularism by the Roman Catholics, the relative ineffectiveness of the feeble attempts on the part of Protestant groups to meet the issue is quite apparent. In Section III of his book Dr. Rian
exposes the weaknesses of Protestant education. The early American colleges established to propagate historic Protestant Christianity have for the most part abdicated to naturalism. Most American Protestants, recognizing the need of Christian instruction on the elementary and secondary levels, strive to meet this need by establishing Sunday Schools, weekday church schools, or released time religious classes. This dualistic compartmentalized approach does violence to the wholehearted loyalty demanded by Christianity and is in essence but another form of secularism. Other Protestant leaders have advanced proposals to include religion as an integral part of the public school curriculum. These are not workable in that such attempts must lead either to inevitable conflict or to the inclusion in the curriculum of a colorless, common-denominator type of ethics which negates the essence of supernatural Christianity.

A few Protestant groups, such as the Missouri Lutherans and the National Union of Christian Schools, have established elementary and secondary schools of their own. A lamentable weakness of these schools, according to the author, is that they have not developed a thoroughgoing unified philosophy of their own with which to combat the prevailing naturalistic views of our time. Since the Roman Catholic philosophy with its dualism of reason and faith, of nature and grace, is unacceptable to Protestantism, the need for a Protestant philosophy rooted in divine revelation becomes all the more urgent. The last chapter of the book is a fervent appeal to Christian educators to develop such an inclusive philosophy and suggests the basic guiding assumptions for such a philosophy.

Though the critical reader might take issue with the author in regard to the details of organization in certain places—e.g., the central thrust of the chapter “The First American Colleges” is none too clear—he is, nevertheless, impressed with the conclusive evidence adduced to support the thesis that American public education has become thoroughly secularized and that, in contrast to the Roman Catholics who have presented a unified opposition to naturalism, the Protestant attack on secularism is inelastic and hesitant. The challenge to the supporters of the free Christian schools is forthright and clear, viz., that to perpetuate and strengthen our Christian schools our first and major concern should be that of developing and formulating an intelligent scholarly all-inclusive Christian philosophy of education.

LAMBERT J. FLOKSTRA.

Calvin College.

COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS


This Biblical exposition was first published by the Wartburg Press in 1942 and is written by the professor of Old Testament Exegesis at Capital University Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. The approach is that of an orthodox Lutheran scholar. But the scholarship does not obtrude and the style is such that the ordinary layman of average intelligence can study these commentaries with profit.

Indicative of the orthodox approach we find that the author accepts the creation account as historical and not as “a marvelous product of the religious creative genius of Israel” (p. 104). He bases this not only upon the general doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture but more particularly in this instance on the prima facie evidence as well as the rest of Scripture, which assumes the account to be historical and literal. Again, in case of the narrative of the fall (on which Barth, Brunner and the modernists in general equivocate if they do not actually deny its historicity) the author affirms, “Without a doubt, things are recorded as they actually transpired; this is a strictly historical account fully approved by the N.T.” (p. 140). Capital punishment is divinely ordained and worldly govern-

ments divinely instituted in Gen. 9:8 (p. 384). In case of the separation of Ishmael from the covenant circle the author indicates the divine element over against the insistence of the higher critics that this is to be explained purely on the basis of an unreasonable envy of Sarah.

The two volumes emphasize the basic principle that “Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture.” Further, the author meets the criticisms of the Infallible Word head-on, but he is very gracious to the opponents of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch when he says on occasion that the critical claim borders on absurdity. However, it is clearly indicated that those who deny the authority and infallibility of the sacred record are hopelessly enmeshed in their own decoys.

For the benefit of the busy minister practical homiletical suggestions have been appended at the end of every chapter. Apologetic treatment of the creation record is discouraged since the attempts to harmonize science and religion are not very successful. At the same time a warning is uttered against allegorizing and mythologizing the sacred narrative.

All in all this commentary has enough of a critical apparatus and reference to the original to make it worth-while for the student trained in theology while at the same time the clarity of exposition and the directness of style will draw the ordinary student of the Scriptures.

HENRY R. VAN TIL.


THE reprint of this well-known commentary was necessitated by the large demand for copies. Need more be said to recommend this scholarly work which is both concise and clear, scholarly and devotional. Especially useful is the up-to-date contact which these volumes give regarding scholarship concerning the book of Genesis. Nor will it teach us to dodge the difficulties, but rather to face them. That is fine. We need this type of work!

L. OOSTENDORP.

MODERNIZING ST. PAUL?


ALTHOUGH what has been said by Dr. Hendriksen concerning St. Paul the Roman Traveller and the Roman Cities (Cf. Calvin Forum, February, 1950) might also be said concerning the companion volume now under discussion, the present reviewer is not so enthusiastic in his recommendation. Archaeologically considered Sir Ramsay has indeed accomplished a great deal. But what are the conclusions theologically?

My criticism in the main is leveled at the tendency of the author to Hellenize (which may very well be substituted by the term "modernize") Paul. The entire first part of the lectures is permeated with this approach. Paul’s sentence against the world by which he puts all under the wrath of God is a force in history. To this end Paul’s philosophy of history is discussed. In Paul’s philosophy, e.g., “the Eastern mind and the Hellenic have been intermingled in the closest union, like two elements which have undergone a chemical generation in history” (p. 4), whereas “in Paul, for the first time since Aristotle, Greek philosophy made a real step forward.” (Idem). The author wants, as far as possible, to set aside the religious aspect of Paul’s ideas and regard him as a force in history. To this end Paul’s philosophy of history is discussed. In Paul’s philosophy, e.g., “the Eastern mind and the Hellenic have been intermingled in the closest union, like two elements which have undergone a chemical mixture” (p. 6).

On page ten the surprising statement is made that for Paul there is nothing real except God and “things are permanent and firm only as they partake of the Divine. All else is evanescent, mere illusion and error and uncertainty.” This great
perception Paul has gained from Greek philosophy. Further, we are told that Paul hated all idolatry since the only reality in the world is God (p. 11) and any serious error concerning the nature of God distorts our conception of the world. Idolatry, then, in the final analysis is an enemy of mankind because it works havoc with human culture and brings about regression and decadence in society.

"Progress, i.e., the perception of truth, is, according to the Pauline view, open to all men. Men are never so utterly corrupt that a return to truth is impossible. If they only wish it, they can choose the good and refuse the evil" (p. 12). Paul's emphasis on New Testament universalism is ascribed to his training in Greek philosophy. The perception of divine truth which was found in the pagan world is caught up and incorporated in Paul's teaching. Paul deliberately aimed at "bring­ing together on the higher plane of Christian thought and life all that was true and real in the pagan world" (p. 14). Again, on page thirty-three the truly biblical conception of history in which all things come to pass according to the counsel of His will is called a "truly Greek idea." Later, political freedom is confounded with the religious, and spiritual freedom in Christ is identified with freedom of the spirit in the modern sense.

But this is enough to indicate conclusively that the Hellenization of Paul by means of the spade tends to the same results that Modernism has achieved by means of "higher criticism." The whole affair reminds one of "Rethinking Missions," in which the best of pagan culture is considered a fitting introduction to the message of Christ. According to Ramsay, Paul in his mature years and fully conscious thought "broadened both Judaism and Hellenism till they were co-extensive with the world and coincident with one another" (p. 79).

This brief survey of the contents is enough to pass judgment upon the author's metaphysics. This reviewer believes that one's metaphysics determines his methodology. If one is interested merely in the measurement of ancient cities and the geographic and archeological data, this is no contribution. But if one wants to study the origin of Paul's religion, he ought to turn to Dr. Machen's critical study upon the author's metaphysics. This reviewer believes that Modernism has achieved by means of "higher criticism," the whole affair reminds one of "Rethinking Missions," in which the best of pagan culture is considered a fitting introduction to the message of Christ. According to Ramsay, Paul in his mature years and fully conscious thought "broadened both Judaism and Hellenism till they were co-extensive with the world and coincident with one another" (p. 79).

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To express this ideal are tremendous. Pacifists themselves have criticized the peace churches for helping the war effort by offering their services to the enemy. This has been the ideal of the church throughout its history. It is positively based on the principle that it is better to live in peace than to fight for victory.

In World War I, the church groups principally involved in this problem were the Mennonites, Brethren, and Friends. This book reports the attempts to solve these problems in the United States during World War II. The experience of the Mennonite Church in this respect is evaluated as follows: "A realistic solution was thus found whereby a non-resistant group could remain a living part of the national body, even in wartime, without self-isolation or hypocrisy, but without public exile or persecution. . . . These are great and historic gains."

The church groups principally involved in this problem are the Mennonites, Brethren, and Friends. This book reports the part played by the Mennonites. It is published for Mennonites by Mennonites. It does not, I think, purport to be completely unbiased; no attempt is made to hide the sympathy of the author and publishers for the peace position of the church. But it meets the demands of fairness in representing the criticisms of government, public, and the church itself against the program and position. One finishes the book with a deepened appreciation, on the one hand, of the self-sacrifice of a religious body in defending a principle which it holds dear; and, on the other hand, of the wonderful freedom of conscience and religious conviction to be found in our democracy.

These two factors have combined to produce a steady improvement in the solution of the problems raised by the peace positions of these churches and the conscientious objections of individuals in other groups. "Civilian Public Service" was the outgrowth of a solution proposed in the interval between World Wars I and II. It consisted in drafting conscientious objectors for non-military work "of national importance." Among the types of service were soil conservation, forest service, service in mental hospitals, and assistance on dairy and fruit farms. Governmental co-operation involved several departments besides the Selective Service administration. The three churches mentioned financed and administered the program, and the objectors served without pay.

Public relations were a major concern. In general they reflected a lesser degree of hysteria than in World War I. Public reaction ranged from open antagonism to the "internees" through tolerance to fervent gratitude. Almost without exception those directly aided were appreciative. Some farmers whose own sons were in service took the Mennonites to consider this an opportunity to make propaganda for their peace position? Generally speaking, however, Service for Peace is a heartwarming book. It is written factually, with no attempt at preachments. But one rejoices that there are men who will undergo personal sacrifice for the sake of conviction; and that there is a land where they are permitted to do so even by a government whose all-out war efforts they are not supporting.

John Kromminga.

CALVINISTIC PRINCIPLE IN SOCIOLGY

CRITISCH-HISTORISCH ONDERZOEK NAAR DE SOCIOLOGISCHE ONTWIKKELING VAN HET BOGENSEN DER "SOUVEREINITET IN EIGEN KRING" IN DE 19E EN 20STE EEUW. By Dr. J. D. Dengerink. J. H. Kok, N.V., Kampen. 281 pages. f 5.50.

"We've heard many a battle cry against totalitarianism. For the most part, the trumpet has not given a very certain sound, but the last few years they have taken the matter too seriously. In the safety of America, we have trusted to the Constitution, the bill of human rights, distribution of state and federal authority as adequate guarantees of individual liberty. Not uncommonly, moreover, have these been considered the distinctively Christian principles of freedom. These historically acquired rights of the liberal tradition are not to be identified with the greater Christian principle of sovereignty in the individual sphere. At least so thinks Dr. Dengerink.

Sphere sovereignty basically holds to a limitation of authority. Home, school, church, state, each has its own law or principle of sovereignty under God and therefore each has a relative freedom. The claims of each must be vigorously maintained; the limitations of each sphere as conscientiously observed. But more important for the present study is the social rooting of the whole conception of sphere sovereignty in Christiant theory. If this is the universal law of creation founded in the Sovereign Will of God, sphere sovereignty may and must be advocated by every Christian. A most sure weapon will then be ours against every perversion of liberty."

Dr. Dengerink traces the development of the concept of limited sovereignty from the German Lutheran Dr. F. J. Stuhl, through the historical links with Groen Van Prinsterer, Abra­

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H. J. VAN ANDEL

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE


The presence of "historic peace churches" in a nation at war has consistently given rise to problems. This book subtitled "A History of Mennonite Civilian Public Service," records the attempts to solve these problems in the United States during World War II. The experience of the Mennonite Church in this respect is evaluated as follows: "A realistic solution was thus found whereby a non-resistant group could remain a living part of the national body, even in wartime, without self-isolation or hypocrisy, but without public exile or persecution. . . . These are great and historic gains."

The church groups principally involved in this problem are the Mennonites, Brethren, and Friends. This book reports the part played by the Mennonites. It is published for Mennonites by Mennonites. It does not, I think, purport to be completely unbiased; no attempt is made to hide the sympathy of the author and publishers for the peace position of the church. But it meets the demands of fairness in representing the criticisms of government, public, and the church itself against the program and position. One finishes the book with a deepened appreciation, on the one hand, of the self-sacrifice of a religious body in defending a principle which it holds dear; and, on the other hand, of the wonderful freedom of conscience and religious conviction to be found in our democracy.

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John Kromminga.
York. Of the first three, Stahl, Groen, and Kuyper, the author holds that they developed a defective theory of sphere sovereignty. Although they were on the right track, they either did not go far enough or went astray because of uncertain philosophical presuppositions. Georges Gurvitch as a modern pluralistic thinker may be classed as holding a pseudo theory of sphere sovereignty, because his theory is not based in an unchanging will of God in Creation, but in a changing world of phenomena. Prof. Dooyeweerd is portrayed as having developed the most cogent, consistent and useful theory of sphere sovereignty.

Questions might be raised about the criticism of Kuyper especially, but our main interest is with Dooyeweerd. This Professor of Law at the Free University has developed a system of philosophy called De Wysbegeerte der Wetstede. It has been his correlation between the ontology, epistemology and sociology of this philosophy which has given a wholly new slant to the idea of the sovereignty in the individual sphere. De Wysbegeerte der Wetstede contends for the limiting concept in all knowledge. In scientific study we discover definitely created “sides” of reality. Corresponding to these aspects of created reality are the various sciences. Each speaks with authority only about its own side of reality. For the same reason all social magnitudes; state, church, family, factory, etc., have a limited, God-given right. These are never to be deduced one from the other (as the church from the good of the state) nor from a larger whole, but are themselves irreducible spheres of sovereignty established by God. Ideally, each sphere should understand the principles which should govern it by a careful analysis of the nature and function of the sphere. But especially tyranny of one sphere over another or the attempt to make one aspect an appendage of another must be opposed. For example, the Christian must point out not only that an economic (socialistic) state will necessarily do violence and damage to both government and economy because no man can violate God’s Creation ordinances with impunity. But also the Christian must declare the unrighteousness of such a transgression of God-given authority.

The best written part of Dr. Dengerink’s thesis is an English summary. Even this is not easy reading. It seems, moreover, that he has not always reasoned out his theories to make their cogency appear obvious to the reader. He has, however, most emphatically stated his conclusions. If they are true, they may require reorganization of much of our sociological thinking. Any weapon as powerful as this demands careful examination. Totalitarian tides are running high. Historically established institutions wash away with the changing times, but the creation ordinances of God remain. These too may be done violence, foully abused by tyrannical man. It is for us Christians to get a clear idea of what God’s universal laws of creation for each sphere of life are and to tell the world about them. A study of what other Calvinists have thought may really help us. A clearer conception of sphere sovereignty will no doubt be one goal of such study.

L. Oostendorp.

DUTCH CALVINISM IN HISTORY


Few men know Dutch Church History better than does Professor Nauta of the Free University at Amsterdam. One senses, moreover, throughout this popularly written history of the rise, decline and resurgence of Calvinism in the Netherlands a warm, almost tender passion for the Reformed faith. Although this prompts an occasional apologetic word and a bit of nostalgia for the glorious past, it never warps the modesty of the author’s claims for Calvinism nor destroys the objectivity of his historical judgments.

The author rightly corrects the common theory that political maneuvers brought Calvinism to its supremacy after the Reformation in the Netherlands. Rather the deep convictions, zealous leadership, and power of the truth triumphed against many odds. Nor would he have us picture the Dutch as particularly fitted for a Calvinistic mentality, for Calvinism did more to create the Dutch mind and character than vice versa.

What did Calvinism do for Holland at its florescence? By 1650 above one-half of the population were by conviction Calvinists. Leadership was given in theology, education, piety and diligence. Calvinism has been a mighty force in Dutch History.

How did Calvinism come to decline? Perhaps the full answer to this question cannot be given. Elements which according to Prof. Nauta contributed most to decay were Cartesian philosophy, the tolerance of error within the Church, garrulous controversy, and a general decay of spirituality. One wonders whether there were internal weaknesses within Calvinism itself. Hardly may we expect, however, a comprehensive discussion in a brief popular study.

Sometimes the brevity of this and the concluding chapters on the Afscheiding and Doleantie leads to generality which lacks focus. A laudable plea for peaceful cooperation among various Calvinistic groups tends, moreover, toward accentuating similarities rather than differences. The historical scholar may be disappointed by lack of documentation and of sharp distinctions. In fact, all who are genuinely interested in the history of Calvinism in the Netherlands would welcome from the competent pen of the same author a more detailed, documented and critical study on this subject.

L. Oostendorp.