French Calvinism
A New Journal

Political Action
A Christian Duty

Preaching the Word
For Our Day

Christian Education
Wanted: A Philosophy

Abraham Kuyper
Forgotten and Radical?

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VOL. XV, NO. 11-12  TWO DOLLARS  JUNE-JULY, 1950
THE CALVIN FORUM

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La Revue Reformee

One of the tragedies of the history of Protestantism is the almost complete annihilation of that faith in the country which gave birth to John Calvin. The mere mention of the Huguenots recalls a glorious chapter in the progress of French Calvinism, but that same name is linked inseparably with the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the scattering of the persecuted French Protestants to various parts of Europe and, in fact, to the four corners of the globe. The result has been that the average person in our day will associate the names of Paris and France with Roman Catholicism, with Deism and Atheism, but hardly with Protestantism and Calvinism.

Yet, small as they are, there are groups of French Calvinists today in the country where Calvin was born and where at one time the faith associated particularly with his name struck such deep roots. At the Reformed Ecumenical Synod held at Amsterdam last August at least two such groups were represented. Pasteur Ch. Atger from Marseille was present from an Evangelical group in Southern France. He delivered an address in his native tongue (promptly translated into English) on the difficulties with which his brethren in the faith on the shores of the Mediterranean had to contend. Also present was Pasteur Pierre Ch. Marcel of St. Germain-en-Laye, representing the French Calvinistic Society and a Calvinistic group of Northern France, around Paris. Our readers will recall the informative trio of articles which Pasteur Marcel contributed to our pages in recent months on the Calvinistic Society of France, of which he is a Vice-President.

We of Calvinistic persuasion rejoice to know of the existence of these groups in the country where the principles of Calvinism once took such firm hold, only to be uprooted by bigotry and bitter persecution. Especially do we rejoice in the appearance of literature that serves as a vehicle for the spread of Calvinism as a living faith for our day among those who speak the French language. Recently there came to our desk a copy of Etudes Evangéliques ("Evangelical Studies"), a quarterly published at Aix-en-Provence (Southern France) by the Free Faculty of Protestant Theology of that place. The particular issue that reached us, a double one, consists of over one hundred pages of interesting material of a distinctly evangelical type. This particular copy (the magazine is now in its tenth year) also contained advertisements and reviews of recent French books on Calvin and Calvinism.

With special joy do we welcome the initial number of a new quarterly, La Revue Reformee, published by the French Calvinistic Society. This is the product of a group of Calvinists in northern France, in and around Paris. The editor is none other than Pasteur Marcel (see above), who is also our Calvin Forum correspondent for French Calvinism. Perhaps we should say that he, together with Professor Hoffman and Dr. Schlemmer, constitutes the editorial committee. The first issue of this new magazine contains an editorial on "Our Aim"; an article by Dr. Schlemmer on "Reformed Christianity: A Universal Order of Thought"; a French translation of Dr. Stuart Bergsma's article, "Did Christ Die of a Broken Heart?", originally published in The Calvin Forum; a devotional article by Pasteur Marcel on "Gethsemane"; three letters on Calvinistic groups (Holland, America, and Hungary); and five pages of book reviews.

In the editorial statement entitled "Notre But" (Our Aim) the significance of Calvinism and its ecumenical character, both in history and as to idea, is stressed. Then the objective of the magazine is stated in these terms: "To give to the Protestants of France a sense of a Reformed ecumenicity; to set forth the teaching of the Reformed Faith and all its practical implications in language understood by the largest possible number of believers, elders, and pastors, so that God may receive the honor and glory, this is our aim!"

We hope there will be some American Calvinists, able to read French, that wish to subscribe to this new magazine. The subscription price for foreign countries is 750 French francs, which amounts to about $2.25 in American currency. Subscriptions should be sent to: M. Jean Marcel, 31 rue de Noailles, St. Germain-en-Laye (Seine-et-Oise), France.

And so this month, just fifteen years after the first issue of our own magazine made its appearance in Grand Rapids, we greet and welcome this new venture to propagate the Faith dear to us to the people of France and in the language which Calvin spoke and in which he propagated his thought and preached his sermons when not using the common vehicle of ecclesiastical Latin.

May many more voices be raised up which—each in its own vernacular—join the difficult but urgent struggle to propagate by word and example the God-centered faith of the Scriptures which in history has come to be associated especially with the name of John Calvin.
The Symposium Goes Forward

There is widespread interest in the current symposium begun in the February issue on the question as to the practical realization of our Christian duty as Calvinists in the realm of government and politics. An Illinois subscriber sent in four new subscriptions and tells us that the current symposium is "what really sold these people on the Forum." He adds his own comment in these words: "The symposium has been very stimulating to me. It is my sincere hope that every Calvinist worthy of the name may find an avenue of action very soon, because in this country, too, I believe it is later than we think."

As the symposium goes forward in this issue, we pause to make a few observations. The article by J. C. Mathews presents the cause of the Christian Amendment Movement, a cause which for many years has been championed by Covenanters among the Presbyterians and has of late again received nation-wide publicity. The other article in this month's contribution to the discussion is a more comprehensive exposition of the standpoint which Professor Justus M. VanderKroef maintained in his first article in the February issue. If all contributors to this symposium would come back in a second round with articles the length of this second by VanderKroef, we would not only be at a loss for space, but our readers might lose interest.

Nevertheless we place this second article in full. It is a frontal attack upon all Christian political action. This standpoint challenges the correctness in the name of Calvinism of the very foundation upon which such a Christian political party as that of Kuyper and Colijn rests. We believe the reading of this article of VanderKroef can serve admirably to make clear to Calvinists what the issue is for our day. The charge, already made by more than one participant in the symposium, that the entire position of Prof. VanderKroef is anti-Calvinistic and has close affinity with Barthianism can here be tested and seen in its practical implications and applications.

Is the author giving us, as he claims, the true interpretation of Calvin's views in their bearing upon Christian political action? Or is he hopelessly entangled in an Anabaptistic conception of the relation of church and state, of soteriology and ethics, of the Christian and the world? Is this genuine Calvinism? Or is this the old Anabaptistic world-fight in a slightly modern garb, drawing its sanctions from Kierkegaard and Barth? Is the identification of the state as state with the beast of Revelation thirteen sound biblical interpretation and wholesome ethics? Is there room for common grace in VanderKroef's interpretation of Calvinism in its bearing upon public life, and does there seem to be any place for this distinctly Calvinistic (yes, and of Calvin—See Herman Kuiper's Calvin on Common Grace) teaching in this interpretation? Do the numerous quotations from Calvin's Institutes really bear upon the point under discussion? How does the actual experiment of Geneva as the city of God under Calvin fit into this construction that VanderKroef would have us believe about Calvin's true attitude toward politics and governmental affairs? Is it not significant that, despite the—somewhat weak—disavowal of Barthian influences by the writer, he begins his article with an extensive quotation from Barth and closes it with the suggestion that true Calvinism should be a return to Kierkegaardian inwardness?

We believe a series of questions like these may aid our readers in getting the full import of the contribution which this article makes to the discussion. At least, we hope it may serve this purpose. Meanwhile, what we want is a clash of views, the free expression of convictions that may not be capable of harmonization, and the clearing up of our own convictions on matters of such transcendent importance as these with a view to our Christian duty. If the symposium serves this purpose for intelligent, thoughtful Calvinists, it will indeed be worth while.

C. B.

Discontent

It was like this when I came here last
Men plowing the earth, sowing, reaping the grain.
The same wind blows, the same crow flaps past
In the late afternoon falls the same slanting rain.

Nothing has changed, it is only myself
Back from the towns, neoned and new.
All else is the same, enjoying the same health,
Men plant the same fields, crops grow as they grew.

Grand Rapids

MARIE J. POST

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JUNE-JULY, 1950
Calvinism and Political Action:
A SYMPOSIUM

THE Symposium on "Calvinistic Political Action" has peculiar significance because of the confused thinking of our day on the relation between politics and religion.

If Calvinism has no clear note of leadership at this time, where shall we turn? It is hardly necessary to remind Calvinists that, "History is eloquent in declaring that American democracy was born of Christianity and that that Christianity was Calvinism." (Boettner, Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, p. 383) If the principles of Calvinism which contributed so much to the foundations of our nation have no remedy for the evils which now threaten those foundations, it is tragic indeed.

The fact that Calvinism is a system of truth derived from the Word of God which seeks to apply the will of God to every interest in life should justify the consideration of Calvinistic political action. Dr. A. A. Hodge says, "It is our duty, as far as lies in our power, immediately to organize human society and all its institutions and organs upon a distinctively Christian basis." (Popular Lectures on Theological Themes, p. 327)

The demand for such consideration is widespread. Gerald Monsman (April CALVIN FORUM) says, "There is further the testimony of those who have had occasion to observe that there is a 'veritable ground swell' of discontent among our Christian public from coast to coast, especially among our laymen, with the small influence which Christian principles are exerting on civic life." This statement is borne out in the experience of the Christian Amendment Movement in the use of a thirty-minute radio transcription, a Round Table Discussion of a proposed Christian Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This transcription has been on the air on 300 or more radio stations in the United States from coast to coast within the past year. The response has been overwhelmingly favorable to a larger recognition of Christianity in our government, and there has been an oft-repeated declaration of opinion that nothing less will avert the dire tragedy which looms so large on our national horizon.

So far the Symposium has considered what—if any—are the political responsibilities of individual Christians. Little consideration has been given to the responsibility of the state to God in its corporate capacity.

Dr. Stanford Reid (April CALVIN FORUM) rightly calls attention to the fact that Christ is NOW King over all things so that the church must teach the duty of the state to obey Christ. But he holds that there is nothing that can be done in bringing the state to do its duty to Christ except in the proclamation of the Gospel and in the leavening influence of Christian character in the body politic, since many citizens and the state itself exist in the realm of common grace.

"Calvinism is based on the conception of the universal sovereignty of God. In the exercise of that sovereignty authority is delegated to various institutions for the realization of the Divine purpose. Among these are the family, the institution of personal relationships, the church, the institution of spiritual relationships, and the state, the institution of human rights and relationships.

The foundation of the family is in the fact that God created man male and female. The foundation of the state is in the fact that God created man "a political being." The existence of the nations is the result of the development of man's nature as created by God. When sin entered into the world it destroyed man's spiritual life. It put a curse upon but did not destroy completely his social nature. The origin of the state is in the nature of man and the purpose of God. The Scriptures declare, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Civil government is a Divine institution. The ruler is a minister of God. He has authority delegated to him by God for leadership and supervision in matters of human rights and relationships. Dr. Abraham Kuyper says, "...God's supremacy is to be recognized by confessing His name in the Constitution as the Source of all political power ..." (Calvinism, p. 103)

A nation has a corporate responsibility to God as well as a responsibility to its citizens since the nation is the agent of God in administering the authority delegated to it by God. The nation exists as a moral organism because its existence and authority are from God and its purpose is the regulation of human relationships in harmony with the will of God. Any nation may deny all relation and responsibility to the sovereignty of God but in doing so it cuts itself off from the fountain source of its very life and signs its own death warrant. The nations
which forget God are turned back into Sheol. (Psalm 9:17)

The Calvinists of Scotland early recognized the distinct functions of the church and the state, but insisted that Christ must be recognized as King of the nation as well as Head of the church. These two great truths taken together must be the basis of civil and religious liberty.

According to the principles of Calvinism the sovereignty of God applies in the sphere of the state. What is the purpose of God for the state? How is that purpose to be realized? We have been told by Dr. Reid that it is the duty of the state to obey Christ, which implies that it must first recognize and acknowledge Him as Lord and King. Is it possible for the state to do this? It would seem presumptuous to intimate that God has required something of the state which because of His sovereign dispensation of grace to individual citizens is impossible of attainment. The state in its corporate capacity has a responsibility to God, a duty to perform. Has the God of nations not made provision for that duty?

Dr. A. A. Hodge, writing on “The Kingly Office of Christ,” says, “The allegiance we owe is not to a doctrine, but to a Person, . . . our mediatorial King . . . The foundation of his authority is not our election, but the facts that he is absolutely perfect and worthy of absolute trust and obedience . . . His authority therefore does not depend upon our faith or our profession. It binds the atheist and the debauchee as much as the believer or the saint. No man can plead immunity because he is an unbeliever. Nor can we who are believers be excused from the consistent ordering of our whole lives according to his revealed will because the majority of our fellow-citizens disagree with us.” (Popular Lectures on Theological Themes, p. 284)

In Psalm 2:10-12, God addresses the official magistrates of the state, who manifestly are in disobedience, and challenges them to submit to the mediatorial Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.”

How, then, shall the principles of Calvinism be implemented in the realm of the state? By proclaiming the manifold wisdom of God through the church? Yes! By the leavening influence of true Christian character? Yes! But there is another means of accomplishing this end, which is peculiarly the function of the state. That is the rightful recognition and exercise of the Divinely delegated authority of the state in accordance with God’s revealed will in the Scriptures. The fact that Satan persuaded man in the Garden to rebel against the authority of God does not disprove the essential benevolence nor discredit the actual civic value of government and law.

It is not the function of the state to seek the salvation of its citizens. Provision has been made for that in the sovereignty of God, through the church. It is the function of the state to administer authority in matters of human rights and relationships as the agent of God. This, indeed, cannot be done without a recognition by the state of its Divine institution and consequent accountability to God. But it must be done by citizens and/or rulers of the state—not by the church or any ecclesiastical party. When such recognition is made in the prescribed legal way by citizens as their own will and deed, it will be the act of the state in the only way in which a state can make such recognition. Thinking Christians will realize that a pagan or secular state cannot be expected to make proper recognition of Divine authority nor administer civil authority in harmony with the will of God. Any movement in behalf of Christian civil government must be grounded on the hope of national repentance and spiritual revival.

Not all citizens of the state will be numbered among the redeemed, but the redeemed are numbered among the citizens of the state and should have the knowledge and ability to assume leadership in working for Christian civil government. Christian leadership in our nation with its knowledge and ability to discern spiritual things together with the Calvinistic conception of the Kingship of Christ over the nations and the recognition of the greatness of the sin of a nation’s rejecting God’s sovereignty hold promise of a remedy for the threat of prevalent secularism which considers that all civil authority inheres in and is derived from the people.

It would seem to be a mistake to try to compress this Christian leadership into the limits of a political party. Let the redeemed of the Lord, Calvinists and others, stand together in testimony for the truth of God’s Word regarding the recognition and administration of the authority and law of Christ in the realm of the state, for the glory of His Name, and they will thus become instruments through whom the sovereignty of God may implement itself!
I

IN HIS recently translated lectures on dogmatics, Karl Barth has given a description of the character of modern political life and of the State, which appears to me a suitable point of departure for an answer to some of the well-informed and provocative criticism that has been made of my views on political Calvinism. In discussing the relationship between Christ and Pontius Pilate, Barth writes:

"In the person of Pilate the State withdraws from the basis of its own existence and becomes a den of robbers, a gangster State, the ordering of an irresponsible clique. That is the polis, that is politics. What wonder that one prefers to cover one's face before it?

"And if the State has for years and decades long shown itself in this guise only, what wonder that one tires of the whole realm of politics? In fact the State so regarded, the State after the pattern of the Pilates, is the polis in its sheer opposition to the Church and to the kingdom of God. This is the State as it is described in the New Testament, in Revelations 13, as the Beast from the abyss, with the other beast of the great muzzle which accompanies it, which the first Beast is continually glorifying and praising. The passion of Christ becomes the unmasking, the judging, the condemnation of this Beast, whose name is polis."

One of the perennial problems in the history of Christianity is precisely the relationship between the Christian and the Beast of Revelation, it is particularly evident in the attitude of the early Church fathers towards Imperial Rome and lies also anchored in all the realm of controversy between sacerdotium and imperium, Church and State, spiritual man and worldly man. As I have indicated, in this conflict the Christian must unhesitatingly turn his back on the State in the interests of his faith. He must abstain from the amorality of polis and politics, for his objectives cannot be reached by any devices that the State has to offer. This remains the essence of the old Christian tradition.  

Agreement and Disagreement

This view has been criticized by Professor Donald Bouma as a "talent in the napkin technique," which by virtue of its retreat is in "complete disregard of the clear teaching of Christ in Matt. 25:34 ff. (Then shall the King say . . . come ye blessed of my Father . . . For I was hungry and ye gave me meat; thirsty . . . drink; stranger . . . took me in; naked . . . clothed me; sick . . . visited me; in prison . . . came unto me.)" (March issue) True, the command to render assistance and comfort to the poor and afflicted is incumbent on all Christians. But in order to give meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty and clothing to the naked, is it necessary to participate in political life? Were the miraculous acts of charity performed by Christ sanctioned by any political party of the day? And is there finally not the even greater objective of the Christian as laid down in Matthew 6: 31, 33: "Therefore take no thought saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." In my belief it would be difficult to find a more explicit scriptural sanction than this for the statement I made in my previous article: "The Calvinist's first and last concern is not with a place in the sun, but with a possible place in the Kingdom of Heaven." This is the true dichotomy essential to the Christian outlook. Professor Spoelhof has objected that this emphasis upon the spiritual and the negation of the secular would logically "lead . . . back to the monastery." (March issue) But I have written that if necessary the Calvinist should dwell in the ivory tower of his faith. an actual physical return to the monastic life is not only contrary to Calvinist doctrine, it is also unnecessary for purposes of the constant spiritual devotion which is inherent in Calvinist practice. Man need not shut himself up to stay free from the corrupting influences of the world. I therefore agree entirely with Professor W. Stanford Reid (April issue) that the Christian requires "a clearer note from the pulpits of the land" and that not Calvinist political action but a more intense realization of Christian ideals, outside the corrupting influences of political life, is necessary. It cannot be stressed sufficiently, in my belief, that the social connotation of Christianity can and should be exercised beyond the realm of the State and can be lived to its fullest extent in the family, the group, the community and all of humanity at large. We are asked to lead the Christian life, we are not requested to make over God's creation in the image of our transitory political ideals. The chaos of our historical past—the inevitable consequence of the Fall of Man—lies within God's design. To tamper with that design, no matter how brutal and unbearable it appears to us, is and remains contrary to the will of God.

Calvinistic Dichotomy

Calvin himself is certain on this point. He, like Luther, urged his followers to consider the dichotomy in their lives, which Professor Spoelhof finds

2 Cf. Kenneth M. Setton, Christian Attitude Towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century (New York, 1941), pp. 212-218. I am inclined to believe with Adolph Deissmann, Licht Vom Osten (4th ed., Tuebingen, 1929), p. 124, that Christ's dictum "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" was made "in silent protest against the Emperor Cult."
so displeasing. Calvin begins his study On Civil Government in the Institutes with: "Having already stated that man is the subject of two kinds of government, and having sufficiently discussed that which is situated in the soul, or the inner man, and relates to eternal life—we are in this chapter to say something of the other kind, which relates to civil justice and the regulation of the external conduct." And again: "... the spiritual kingdom of Christ and civil government are things very different and remote from each other... it is a Jewish folly, therefore to seek and include the kingdom of Christ under the elements of this world." To me such statements indicate a clear dichotomy, yet Spoelhof writes that "Calvinism does not admit of a double focus as van der Kroef suggests—a setting up of a dichotomy between the inner life of an individual and man's social life." It is certain that Calvin wishes to preserve civil government and terms those who seek to abolish it "inhuman barbarians." But he is also explicit in his views that the State and its rulers or magistrates are part of God's design (... they have their command from God, they are invested with his authority and are altogether his representatives ...). Calvinists may take no action of any kind to oppose their magistrates (... it is impossible to resist the magistrate without at the same time resisting God himself ...), and must willingly submit to even the grossest injustice and tyranny of their rulers (... wherefore if we are inhumanly harassed by a cruel prince; if we are rapaciously plundered by an avaricious or luxurious one; if we are neglected by an indolent one; or if we are persecuted on account of piety, by an impious and sacrilegious one—let us first call to mind our transgressions against God, which he undoubtedly chastises by these scourges. Thus our impatience will be restrained by humility. Let us in the next place consider that it is not in our province to remedy these evils and that nothing remains for us, but to implore the aid of the Lord, in whose hand are the hearts of kings and the revolutions of kingdoms). I find it impossible to reconcile such exhortations of Calvin with the desirability of any political action designed to alter the affairs of state.

Mr. Richard Postma's notion, for example, that "upon Christian citizens rests the duty so to labor that whatever in this world conflicts with the ordinances of the Lord be reconstructed in accordance with the expressed will of the Lord." (April issue) is a total contradiction of Calvin's political views.

Calvinistic Political Action Prohibitive?

The very structure and character of the modern state makes any Calvinist political action prohibitive. I have written that a Calvinist political party could only operate in a society which is wholly Christian and on a plane of conduct which is consistently moral. Calvin himself conceives of the State as having essentially such a moral function ("... this civil government is designed, as long as we live in this world, to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion, to defend the constitution of the Church ... its objects also are that idolatry, sacrileges against the name of God, blasphemies against his truth and other offenses against religion may not openly appear and be disseminated among the people") and he is highly critical of that type of State, with which modern political theory is acquainted: "all laws are preposterous which neglect the claims of God and merely provide for the interests of men." The modern State is essentially so concerned with "the interests of men", particularly the United States with its heritage of the "inalienable" rights of the individual that the moral-religious function of the State has ceased to exist. These "inalienable" rights are chiefly derived from the principles of jus gentium and the rationalist philosophies of the Enlightenment. Calvin is clear on his opinion of such rights: "for some deny that a state is well constituted, which neglects the policy of Moses and is governed by the common laws of nations. The dangerous and seditious nature of this opinion I leave to the examination of others." The function of the State in Calvin’s thought is to supplement the religious guidance offered by the Church and to that end, the State must remain in the service of God and instruct its citizens not in human law and human interests but in divine law and divine interests. It seems unnecessary to point out that nigh the entire realm of modern political conduct is a conscious ignoring of divine precept. The havoc which such contemporary political thinking produces, is and remains as Calvin showed, the chastisement visited upon men by God. To resist this chastisement is to resist God. Any concern with political and economic problems to the extent of...
seeking a change in the temporal order is, therefore, contrary to Calvin’s instructions.

It is for this reason that the activities of the United Christian Citizens in Baltimore, as outlined by Mr. Gerald Monsma in his stimulating critique, must remain outside the orbit of Calvinism. Also, the very program of Christian action which he provides is marked by the complete absence of concisely defined principles, and is more indicative of enthusiasm than of a precise understanding of Calvinism as a religious principle. He writes that one of the objectives of the Baltimore group is “Working for the full registration of the Christian vote.” What is the “Christian” vote? Are we to understand that for the sake of political action we are to unite with Roman Catholics? Or with Unitarians? If so, for the Calvinist there can be no such cooperation, the chasm of first principles divides us and this chasm cannot be bridged without surrendering Calvinism in its entirety. Mr. Monsma writes again that the Baltimore group strives to get “the best persons, judged by generally accepted Christian standards nominated and elected.” What are these standards? Are we to view them through the clouded glasses of that conditioned reflex humanism which so often passes in our day for Christianity? Or must we not first insist upon first principles, upon which our entire Calvinist outlook is based? The danger that lurks behind Mr. Monsma’s appealing program is that it upholds the necessity of Christian morality and ethics and yet wishes to stay aloof from Christian eschatology from which the morality cannot be separated. In so doing Mr. Monsma might just as well insist upon some other morality in politics, say Roman Stoicism or Confucianism. For the true character of modern political life is primarily its amorality, the absence of any moral code whatever in its operation. Thus one begins to insist upon Christianity, because of its morality, a very dangerous inversion. It is well to remember Eliot’s remark made in just this connection: “It is not enthusiasm but dogma that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society.”

Kuyperian Calvinism a Paradox?

In this light one should also consider the basic premises of Kuyperian Calvinism, a term, which by Kuyper’s own admission is not entirely free from paradox. Calvin’s views of the State and the existence of the Anti-Revolutionary Party are in essence contradictory. But the trouble with Kuyper’s views goes further and lies also in the realm of practical politics. I have written that for the Calvinist there cannot be in the end a separation of Church and State, nor can the Calvinist subscribe to a program of civil liberty, which by its professed tolerance implies that one religion is as good as the next. That this is the traditional Calvinist view Professor Spoelhof admits, for he writes in this connection that “... it would not be too difficult to defend van der Kroef’s point from some of Calvin’s own pronouncements, and from history and from an article in the old “Calvinist Confession of Faith.” Yet Spoelhof maintains that despite all these historic affirmations, my view “unreservedly contradicts a dictum of Kuyperian Calvinism.” Whereupon, it may well be asked, is Kuyperian Calvinism really Calvinism? Is a movement, which does not hesitate to change its platforms with frequently dazzling speed and which is not averse to political cooperation with Rome, at all representative of genuine Calvinism? In the first decade of its existence perhaps yes, but by now I believe that all the insidious secularism, which has also crept into Gereformeerd religious thought just as it has enveloped the Anti-Revolutionary Party, should be thoroughly weeded out if any Calvinist tenets are to be retained. To disregard the dichotomy of Calvinism and to make an attempt to justify political action, although this is contrary to Calvin’s own precepts, is not a contemporary phenomenon. For in the era immediately following Calvin’s death the deterioration of Calvin’s political views began. The later Dutch, French and Scottish Calvinists developed a critical attitude towards the State by attempting to distinguish between government as a divine ordinance and the particular form of government under which they might live at a given period. This opened the way for political action, and with the rise of the contract theory of government Calvinists plunged headlong into the affairs of State. They continued to have respect for the State as a matter of principle, but contrary to Calvin’s wishes they began also to believe that they had the right to undo whatever political abuses they imagined were harassing them. Thus, while Calvin had declared that tyranny was the chastisement of God inflicted on man, later generations of Calvinists maintained that opposition to tyranny was a lawful pursuit. In the course of time, and in particular with the advent of Kuyperian Calvinism this erroneous idea became so firmly entrenched, that it now appears that Calvin’s own beliefs have been conveniently forgotten for the sake of establishing an unchaste union between the modern national state with its ever increasing demands upon individual loyalty and the precepts of what is now termed “historic” Calvinism. Thus the dichotomy is denied and the formerly dual realm of action of man is now reduced to a single mire of confused

10 T. S. Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, (New York, 1940), p. 59. I fear that this must also apply to Professor René de Visme Williamson’s suggestion that “individuals who are authentically Christian... should penetrate and eventually permeate all groups,” including “political party organizations.” I cannot emphasize enough that words as “authentically Christian,” are entirely meaningless without defining their dogmatic affiliation.

worldly aspirations and traditional religious sentiments which no longer are based upon immutable dogma. Kuyper's ideal, therefore, of "a free Church in a free State," rests upon a priori weak foundations. First because the Church is never in another entity (State), but stands universally above any political organization. The State is transitory, the Church never is. Secondly because such an association of terms has created the impression that both have equal standing and that both can make justifiable demands on the individual. Since Calvin made it clear that the State is primarily to be *endured*, the Calvinist's role in the State must remain a passive one. But in the Church he is required to be active, both the soteriology and the social ethics of his faith require him to appear in the arena of humanity at large. Finally the concept of "a free Church in a free State," cannot but lead, as it did in the case of Kuyperian Calvinism, to an increasing concern and participation in the secular realm of human conduct, an increasing worldliness and an effacing of dogma. "Civil government" thus received an emphasis which Calvin himself never placed on it. The result has been that much of the implied social ideals of Calvinism are given far greater attention than the soteriological and eschatological principles, as the underlying sentiment in the critiques of Messrs. Spoelhof and Postma indicate.

**Calvinistic Soteriology and Ethics Divorced**

This has been particularly true in the United States and the historical imprint of Puritanism on the American scene provides a fitting illustration how Calvin's soteriology came to be diluted. The principal channel by which Christianity was imported into America was that form of Calvinism known as Puritanism. In the course of its development in America this Calvinism was gradually divested of those tenets which conflicted with the buoyant self-reliance of a frontier-society. The original famous "Five Points" of Calvinism with their insistence on human depravity, became infamous. Calvinism came to be identified with an intolerable view of divine vindictiveness, with bigotry and intolerance and with ecclesiastical tyranny; and so construed it was rejected. "In the course of time it came to be regarded as a hereditary mental disease for which a cure was sought in psychoanalysis—an anti-Americanism lying at the heart of America, and the cause of a peculiarly American psychosis." Specifically what was here rejected was Calvin's soteriology, the unlimited sovereignty of God, predestination and the Lordship of Christ, the notion of sin and the depravity of man.

But at the same time, as Perry has indicated, there was another part of Calvinism, congenial to American individualism. It comprised the discipline of the will, personal accountability of failure, thrift, frugality and industry combined with the accumulation of wealth. This idea that wealth both implied the favor of God and a duty to be the instrument of divine beneficence is the Puritanism inherited by the Rockefellers, Carnegies and Fords of later times. While thus the secular ideals received increasing attention and while historic Liberalism reached the height of its political prestige, Calvinism's eschatology became little else than a redundant phraseology interpreted in terms of an evolutionary *rationale*, which somehow regarded Calvin's own dogma as slightly out of date and much too "harsh" for modern consumption. The basic dichotomy in Calvinism came to be effaced. This is the state of affairs in which much of Calvinist thought has remained, for the new orthodoxy of early Kuyperian Calvinism has not been able to withstand the pressure of secular demands. It has sought to give the Calvinist faith new meaning by projecting it into the forum of political affairs, probably believing that between the Church and the Beast of Revelation cooperation is possible. But I believe it has proved to be a Faustian union.

In my previous article I emphasized the need for a greater concentration on the soteriological element in Calvinism and less concern for the transitory and relatively insignificant problems of our time. I have said that our major concern should be with the perennial problems of sin, salvation and grace. When Professor Spoelhof writes that "the Calvinist is concerned with the honor, majesty and sovereignty of God and not solely with his own salvation," I fail to see how the nature of sin and predestination can be divorced from the sovereignty of God, for these are mutually inclusive concepts, inclusive because of the Atonement. This consideration of the soteriological is not Barthian "crisis theology," as Mr. Postma believes; at best I hope it partakes of Calvinism—without qualification, neither "historic," nor "Kuyperian." If anything, it should be a return to Kierkegaardian "inwardness." It is also an unequivocal return to Calvin's dogma, without which the religious thought that bears his name would be but a mockery of his life and work.

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12 Notwithstanding Calvin's explicit injunction: "... that there never was an action performed by a pious man, which, if examined by the scrutinizing eye of Divine Justice, would not deserve condemnation." *Institutes*, III, XIV, 11.


14 Cf. particularly *Institutes*, II, XVI. 1-2.
Church Proclamation and the Modern Mind

Under the pressure of crushing historical realities, people today are asking religious questions with an earnestness that is new. An afternoon spent in the public forum of any large city should be enough to convince anyone of this. Twenty-five years ago newspapermen would have regarded an advocate of religious discussion in the newspapers as a man with a paper-head. Today ministers write newspaper columns, and a Monday synopsis of a Sunday sermon is regarded as news demanded by the public. Orthodoxy has for too long used its orthodoxy as an excuse for not gaining a hearing. The confusion and perplexity of today has reached such an intensity that men are willing to lend an ear to anything. If in the present cultural, political, social disintegration, orthodoxy cannot at least gain a hearing, the fault is her own and consists either in the fact that she does not speak, or speaks aloofly from outside life in tongues strange and irrelevant. In the past Calvinism lost the field to liberalism and fundamentalism; today she is losing the floor to "neo-orthodoxy" and sectarianism. Three characteristics of the peculiar mood of the modern world must suffice as illustrations of how the Church must take a reading of the situation in order to speak to it. The modern mind is seized by a sense of loneliness, of futility, and of irrationalism.

The Sense of Loneliness

Ever since the days when Leibnitz declared that men are spiritual monads, without doors or windows through which communication can be established with other monads, men have come to live in lonely solitude. While Leibnitz declared there was a natural harmony between individual men and the Absolute Monad, Kant's reading of the matter declared that the world of God lying behind our empirical world is unknowable. Thus man was led by Leibnitz to define himself in terms of an individualism that isolated him from his fellows, and Kant isolated man from his God. Man was thus left spiritually alone and metaphysically homeless. He was set adrift as an alien in a friendless universe. The universe is no longer to be regarded as paternal to him and friendly to his hard gained values. Challenged to create his own meaning in a meaningless universe, he was admonished not to be disheartened because the night winds sweeping out of the void would soon snuff out his flickering tapers. This idea of sheer individualism, and the idea of an unknowable God, became a compound out of which, by the hands of Locke and Rousseau, democracy was wrought. This liberalistic rationalistic loneliness of soul was intensified by the technological advance which swept men into areas of industrial opportunity, creating large soulless cities where men walk alone without neighborliness, community, or shared desire—except that of making a living. This new and utter loneliness of the western soul should move the Church to compassion and prompt her to speak clearly of the fellowship of God in Christ and of the communion of the saints.

The Dread of Nihilism

The modern soul is also gripped by a sense of fear and futility. Evidence of the unparalleled dimension of fear in modern life is the fact that someone has said, and many have remembered and repeated, that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Only in a time of great fear do men fear fear! Never before have we heard so many prophets of doom, or perceived such an undertone of fear in modern writings and public utterances. Much of this fear can be laid to that agitation of the atom that produced the atomic bomb. What fear and dread will not be produced by the proposed hydrogen bomb, which raises the destructive power of the atom bomb to its thousandth power?

Yet, it is not so much fear, as dread which is eating away at the vitals of the modern soul. Since fear has an object, strategies can be laid to overcome the peril. But dread has no object; the object of dread is nothingness. Contemporary man has a sense of dread, an uneasy sense that nothingness is the final truth about human existence. Modern man is afraid of the void, the abyss of nothingness, of the vacuum. Once men recognized problems within existence; now existence itself is the problem. Once men doubted the value of certain aspects of existence, today men doubt the value of existence itself. Living in metaphysical solitude, threatened with the total destruction of all meaning, the souls of modern men are pervaded with a sense of despair and futility, with the uneasy presentiment that all
of our historical struggles and achievements add up to ultimately nothing. It is this dread of threatening nihilism which constitutes one of the new ingredients of the modern mind. In the words of Tennyson, whose time of greater optimism could advise “no moaning”, the time of man’s historical existence may be clocked as that time “when that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home.”

The Cult of the Irrational

Closely akin is modern man’s surrender to the irrational. Since life has no meaning, man’s individual and collective existence is regarded as essentially irrational. Never in the history of the western world has a despairing belief in irrationalism so completely supplanted the belief in the ultimate rationality of life. Almost every area of cultural expression betrays the surrender to irrationalism, the capitulation to the conviction that God’s good creation is slipping back into its primaeval waste and void. The darkness is said to be reappearing out of the deep; the tohu wabohu of Gen. 2:1 to be returning to its own.

Evidences of this basic irrationalism can be detected deep in the theology of Barth, Brunner, and Tillich; in their substitution of myth for historical events, primeval history for ordinary history, essential paradox for incomprehensibility. An ugly irrationalism lies deep in the heart of modern existentialism, where, as in Jean Paul Sartre, “becoming” is so glorified that “being” does not emerge until the moment of death—in which moment both “becoming” and all “being” are devoured. It became destructively apparent in totalitarianism’s glorification of strife, and in Marxist glorification of economic drives as the key to the solution of the mystery of life. Dionysius is conceded the victory over Zeus.

The same irrationalism lies at the bottom of modern impressionistic art with its insistence that true meaning attaches to subjective impressions and must be discovered prior to the moment in which they receive rational form and structure. Once the true meaning of the subjective state is given definite pattern and structure by the rational consciousness, meaning and value is thought to be obscured. Rationality is obscuration, and the irrational is truth! Small wonder then that we benighted rationalists see nothing but humor (or tragedy) when a combination of inked-chicken-foot imprints embellished by the brushings of a feline tail, hung either vertically or horizontally, can attract and hold the serious analysis of the art critics.

Acceptance by modern fiction and drama of the abnormal as the normal stuff for the construction of plots is similar evidence. Literary preoccupation with human physical and spiritual abnormalities, with the club-footed and neurotic, is stark evidence of the irrationalism eating away at the body of our culture. That “horrible fascination” of homosexuality and prostitution for modern writers and playwrights, their morbid concentration upon twisted souls and distorted mentalities, upon the deep dark irrational forces of the subconscious, their adoration of relentless fate whose sovereignty operates through blood and inheritance, their glorification of the eccentric features of genius (Cf. Life, Jan. 16, “The Dark Wine of Genius”) and unbounded faith in psychoanalysis are all indications of the dark murky waters of irrationalism flowing through modern life.

Despair is its product. After Kant tolled the death knell of rationalism, philosophy left only with a legacy of irrationalism, could become rational only by defiance. From this point onward, philosophy becomes a “philosophy of meaning,” and the great man is no longer the “thinker”, but the “hero” who defies his irrational fate to create his own meanings. Out of this same matrix of irrationalism was born that modern theological terminology which defines faith as “a leap into the dark,” as a risky but courageous jump into the unknown, and defines God as a desperate existential (not moral) postulate. Once again an irrational fate hangs over the world, and as the ancients, present day man defies his fate with the false power of despair. When Dionysius triumphs over Zeus, when the God of reason is lost, the demonic draws again from out the boundless deep and all human values and meanings turn again home.

Theology Divorced

It should be apparent to all that the Church’s proclamation will not be greatly effective if it ignores these and other relatively new ingredients of the tortured modern soul. It is true that sin has existed in every age. But it is also true that the form in which sin expresses itself is not always and everywhere the same. Sin, no more than the sinner, is an abstraction. It must consequently be met, fought, and overcome in its specific flesh and blood expression. It is to be feared that the preaching of the Church has been too abstract; that she has too often addressed sin as though it were an abstraction detached from actual life. Not only the missionary in non-Christian areas, but the Church in a nominal Christian western culture must ever struggle with the difficult task of speaking the Christian message in a non-Christian world. Difficult as the task admittedly is, it is and remains the task of the Christian Church and her ministers.

Theology Arrested

There are, I believe, disturbing indications that we as Reformed Churches have not made vital contact with the swirling streams of life about us. One
such indication is our theological sterility. We have sought, and with perceptible success, to maintain the faith, but we have not sought to develop it. At best we have translated our heritage from the Dutch to the English language. We have received tradition, if it is to be and remain a living tradition, but we have not sought to develop it. It can only occur in the vortex of our tradition, must constantly be "re-incarnated" in the flesh and blood situation of those who hold it. A tradition is something of the past and as such is constantly moving toward its grave and will find a final resting place, unless it is constantly renewing itself through repeated resurrections.

In the abstract we are not, to be sure, opposed to theological development—but theology does not develop in the abstract! A theological tradition may not out of a sense of fear or complacency create the illusion that its processes are completed, that theology is accomplished. Removed from life by the "it-is-finished" attitude, theology dies. Only by refusing to arbitrarily arrest the theologizing processes on the one hand, and by maintaining a vital nexus with the issues and problems of human existence on the other, can a theological tradition become and continue to be a living and developing tradition. Theological progress cannot be mechanically or artificially induced. It can only occur in the vortex of the swirling currents of the streams of life. No great theologians lived in ivory towers; only mysticism and pietism is fostered in retreats far from the avenues of life. Every great theological advance from Nicea to Chalcedon, from St. Augustine and Calvin to the present, was forged in the fires of life.

This does not mean that theology receives its content from empirical history. Theology has its own content. But it does mean that theology only gains new insights and understandings of its content when it is agitated by man's experience and history. When "uitlegging en toepassing", explanation and application, are held apart, not merely logically, but existentially, theological development is rendered impossible. When practical theology ceases to be theology, it becomes mere technique; when theology ceases to be practical it dies or survives merely as academic gymnastics. Divorced from life the content of theology becomes frozen, its language and terminology inflexible. Its development thus arrested, the writing of theology becomes a mere matter of translations into the vernacular, and when these in turn are avidly and brilliantly digested into surveys and outlines the whole business becomes easier and easier until nothing is left to be done—and nothing is done. Then the once difficult lifetime task of becoming a theologian, becomes a mere matter of learning definitions and memorizing theological timetables. Theology is then breathing its last, and a living, nourishing tradition is slipping through the fingers of the Church. With conviction I venture the judgment, that our unconcern about current theological developments, our neglect and ignorance of the history of the theological processes by which our own traditions came to be, our hapless attitude toward contemporary social and cultural crises, our indifference toward the radical political-economic changes of recent years, and our failure to take a reading of the modern mind are the main tributaries from which stagnation enters and enfeebles our theology. How different is the virility and concern of many of the theological productions of some of our brethren in the Netherlands!

Theology Stimulated

Surely the necessary external stimulation for theological development is not lacking in America today! American Liberalism has reacted to the events of recent years—even though the reaction has merely moved in the direction of going "beyond liberalism." Even American Fundamentalism, traditionally monastic and given to world-flight, has developed an uneasy conscience over her social unconcern and theological neglect. The times have roused her, and she is beginning to show exciting promise. American Reformed orthodoxy alone has remained largely unconcerned and untouched by her situation. We have but little spoken to our times in the language of her agony and distress. As a consequence of our aloofness, Reformed theology has enjoyed little perceptible development in America for a long time.

One may object to the attitude for which I plead, declaring that we ought to be interested in the Church—not in the world, and that we ought to have no illusions about solving the world's problems. Even if this be granted as true, it is foolish and heartless to forget that our people do not live in church but in the world, and that they too suffer and bear the problems of the world. I firmly believe that those people in our churches who are less than enthusiastic about Heidelberg Catechism preaching, do not really object to the truths of the Catechism, but to a manner of preaching which makes no wide application of its truths to them in the wide context of their everyday life and problems. The only thing that will quicken enthusiasm and love for that which makes a church strong, is a new theological attitude, an attitude that will drive theology back into life.

Our present confused and weary world is willing today to listen to anything and everybody; to the liberal, to the sectarian, to the lunatic fringe, even to the orthodox, if we come out of hiding and are willing to speak to them in the idiom of their lives and problems. The thing that is new is not that the world has problems. What is new is the growing admission that she has no answers. The Church
Desperately Needed --
A Philosophy of Education

Henry Schultze
President Calvin College

IT IS assumed and declared by many prominent
American educators that it is the chief business
of education to prepare individuals for useful
service to their country and to prepare them es-
pecially for the particular crisis in which the nation
may find itself at a given time. The implication of
such a position may not be essentially different
from that of the Russian state which admits train-
ing its citizenry to be of the greatest possible ser-
vice to the fatherland. Such a philosophy may be
an exceedingly dangerous one and it becomes all the
more odious to us in the face of the persistent
clamor for federal support of the public educational
institutions of the nation. Many educational ad-
ministrators welcome the proposal of federal aid
because it assures them of an approximately ade-
quate budget for running the school. The teachers
also look with favor upon it because it promises
them funds for facilities and for salaries somewhat
commensurate with that to which they are entitled
by virtue of their training and the importance of
their position. However, all the assurance that the
schools will not be federally controlled fails to set
at ease those who hate regimentation in any form
and who know that federally financed education
will inevitably mean federally controlled education.
A highly respected American policy is expressed
in these words: "Whoever pays the piper calls the
tune." There is a great deal of evidence to attest
to the fact that the American public which is taxed
for the support of the schools may dictate their
policies, and often does. Under the present situa-
tion, if federal aid is given, the dictation of educa-
tional policy may presumably be confined to Wash-
ington appointees.

It is, I think, a sad commentary upon American
education that our schools reflect very little more
than the ideas of the taxpayer. Educators who are
experts in the field have, after all, very little to
say in the matter of giving courageous and effec-
tive leadership in this area of human interest. The
most popular and successful educators have been
those who possessed the genius of catching and
articulating the vague and unexpressed philosophy
of the American people. For instance, Dewey's
strength and influence follow from the fact that he
has caught in words the attitudes and ideals of the
American people. The same principle holds true
in the case of the parochial and other Christian
schools. I am not at the present time interested in
approving or condemning the situation but merely
in calling attention to it as a background for the
observation I wish to make.

Education Dedicated
to Peace

When I attend the various educational confer-
ences—whose number is legion, read articles on
education, or study the proposals for educational
endeavor, I am struck with the general idea that
educators feel that all their facilities must be dedi-
cated to the ideal of peace. That is what America
wants, and the teacher must promote it. Indeed,
the taking over of the educational facilities of this
nation in the interest of peace is as avid now as was
the utilization of the schools during the war in the
interest of Mars. And, with characteristic Ameri-
can activism and disregard for the deeper principles
involved, we are harnessing all of our resources to
that ephemeral thing called peace. It is a matter of
"peace at any price." At a recent conference of
the American Council on Education, held in Chi-
cago early in May, the theme adopted was: "Amer-
ican Education Faces the World Crisis." The thrust
of the addresses delivered on that occasion was

would be less than the Church of Christ should she
show no compassion for multitudes that are as sheep
without a shepherd. Let us speak kindly and cou-
rageously of a sovereign Lord who is a Father, of
a God not irrational, able to give meaning to life
and through Jesus Christ to bid fear and futility to
vanish. Let us speak in terms of today wherever
men will listen, in theological circles, in Rotary
Clubs, in secular and religious publications, in any
pulpit open to us. May we cease to be afraid of the
world! Let us halt the retreat! In the courage of
our confessed convictions, let us declare roundly
that Calvinism alone truly understands and is able
to answer the world's problems. Since the Word of
God never returns void, we shall not continue to be
ignored, if we dare to speak. If only we dare, we
shall be heard. The results we can afford to let
rest in the hand of Another, but we can ill afford
not to speak clearly and courageously.

[This article completes the discussion begun last month under
the title: The Church and her Proclamation.—Courts.]
that educators must commit themselves to the proposition of promoting the spirit of international unity. Particularly the forces of science, history, and sociology were dedicated to drive the gods of war off the face of the earth. The faith of America in the power of education as a panacea for all the world's ills remains strong in spite of the fact that education is quite generally held responsible for the present crisis; in fact, it is said that bad education caused World War II.

Lack of Moral and Religious Motivation

There appears to be also a growing concern for the lack of moral and religious emphases in our educational program. It has been frequently observed that we have run far ahead in the development and teaching of science. The lag in moral and ethical training has led to what men will want to call an imbalance that tends to feed the martial spirit in the crisis now upon us.

At a recent meeting in Chicago, Dr. Zook, for sixteen years president of The American Council on Education, made a desperate plea for the introduction of religion and morals in the American educational program. He contended that without these elements in our education the crisis will deepen. In the early history of American education there were no such crises as we face today largely because religion was an important, if not determinative part of the school program. However, the intensified conflicts between the various religious groups and the subsequent emphasis upon the separation of church and state, particularly in the area of education, led to the gradual elimination of religion from the curriculum. This left a void in our training program which was gradually filled by what has been called democracy. A political slogan became a way of life. It seemed to square with what is expressed by The Golden Rule. After a fashion it was regarded as a form of making practical the Law of Love. It did justice, so it was asserted, to the idea of the dignity of the individual. But, as Zook declared, it proved inadequate. He therefore pleaded for a joining of hands on the part of religion and education. He pleaded for the teaching of religion in the schools and was confident that the differences in religions could be tolerated, just as in the teaching of government no questions are asked as to the political sympathies of the educator. However, Zook's plea obviously made little impression upon the delegates. The general impression remained; namely, that knowing each other and sharing with each other constitute the twin remedy to lift us out of the crisis and into a more abiding peace. All relationships were thus horizontally considered. The perpendicular relationship between man and the Supreme Being was not even mentioned. Apparently, there was no room for an authoritarian principle and, consequently, for an Authoritarian Being to help bring in a bit of unity amid the variety of ideas that clamored for a dictatorial position in our educational system. The need of an adequate conception and statement of a philosophy of education was obviously desperate.

Christian Schools Also Need an Adequate Philosophy

May I insert here that the same general need, though not quite so acute, is felt in the area of Christian education. Judging from the activities in this area, the Calvin College faculty and the authorities in the National Union of Christian Schools are intent upon doing something about it. Though there is far greater unity of thinking there than in the public school system because of an agreement on the basic principles, it took deliberate study on the part of the thinkers in these groups to reveal how much at variance the Christian school leaders are. We are not even agreed as to the exact bearing that a Calvinistic conception of the Covenant has upon the principles, methods, and purposes of education. We must come to a clear conception of the basic thinking back of our Christian school movement before we shall be adequately prepared, for instance, to take upon ourselves the tremendous assignment of the preparation of textbooks. One may well wonder whether, at this stage of our Christian school development, it would not have been wiser to select excellent textbooks, accompanied by teacher manuals, so that the spirit of critical judgment toward the foes within the curriculum. This left a void in our training program which was gradually filled by what has been called democracy. A political slogan became a way of life. It seemed to square with what is expressed by The Golden Rule. After a fashion it was regarded as a form of making practical the Law of Love. It did justice, so it was asserted, to the idea of the dignity of the individual. But, as Zook declared, it proved inadequate. He therefore pleaded for a joining of hands on the part of religion and education. He pleaded for the teaching of religion in the schools and was confident that the differences in religions could be tolerated, just as in the teaching of government no questions are asked as to the political sympathies of the educator. However, Zook's plea obviously made little impression upon the delegates. The general impression remained; namely, that knowing each other and sharing with each other constitute the twin remedy to lift us out of the crisis and into a more abiding peace. All relationships were thus horizontally considered. The perpendicular relationship between man and the Supreme Being was not even mentioned. Apparently, there was no room for an authoritarian principle and, consequently, for an Authoritarian Being to help bring in a bit of unity amid the variety of ideas that clamored for a dictatorial position in our educational system. The need of an adequate conception and statement of a philosophy of education was obviously desperate.

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The students throughout the land have also manifested the same general spirit of confusion. Already a decade ago the student publications in various universities began giving expression to the general idea that they were “fed up” with the smatterings of materials that were dished out to them. The schools offered a large variety of courses. Colleges were like many stores that advertised: “What you don’t see, ask for. We’ll see that you get it.” Slowly—almost too late—it dawned upon the university authorities that the elective system introduced by the great man of Harvard was one that could work with at least a degree of success when the courses offered were limited in number and were selected by virtue of certain educational principles, but that it was doomed to failure when the offerings began to include everything from tap-dancing to usherring. The general results of the system were to convey to the student a confused and confusing mass of disconnected bits of alleged learning.

**Increased Emphasis upon Counseling Programs**

This almost universal confusion was also reflected in the growing need of counseling programs. Many universities developed vast and costly facilities and personnel for counseling. Batteries of tests and scores of trained men with fully equipped offices were established on the campuses. The program as a whole failed to work out as expected. The number of men working on these projects has been greatly reduced. There is a growing respect for the application of common sense in the area of counseling. However, the students continue to want expert advice on what to study, how to study, and how to meet their financial, social, and health problems. They are looking for an easy way to meet the problems of life. This matter of student counseling is now regarded as having been greatly overdone. Student counseling is seldom regarded as a way of teaching the students to stand on their own feet. They are taught to run for help in the face of a problem when they should be prepared to meet it headlong and courageously “on their own”. However, they have no standards of judgment and, therefore, no standards of determination when a difficulty looms ahead. Even in Christian colleges one may find this undue clamor for a counseling program which, I think, should be resisted to the point of discouraging students to look to others for a solution of their personal problems. Let us develop a generation of students who can stand on their own feet and see their way through because of their commitment to an adequate philosophy of life. I fear that we are developing men and women who are standing on the highway of life, looking anxiously for someone to tell them where to go and how to get there. It is significant that at a meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers, held in New York last December, the students who were guests of the Association clearly expressed themselves in favor of security rather than opportunity. There was something wrong there which many of us felt. There was obviously a lack of courage to go out “on their own.” There was no idealism there. The students felt that they were facing a very critical period in the history of the world, which they regarded as being exceedingly uninviting. Is there here an unexpressed fear of what lies ahead because of the want of a guiding philosophy of life? Is this a reflection of the spirit of hopelessness that seems to be enveloping the world?

**Material Objectives Overstressed in Education**

Is not this enervating lack of idealism also reflected in the emphasis that we place upon health programs? Dr. Zook intimated in his address that this phase of education was being quite adequately taken care of; in fact, it would seem that we are more concerned about the body than about the mind. The combination of “a weak mind and a strong body” would appear to be regarded as an achievement that is not unworthy of educational endeavor. This approach is principally the same as that found in a nation which attempts to guarantee security by maintaining a military ostentatiously for the purpose of securing the peace. But the effort will be in vain as long as internal peace is not made secure by a unifying philosophy. You cannot train students to follow peaceful objectives by strengthening them physically without giving them a unifying idealism. The emphases upon the material aspects of life are likewise exceedingly confusing. Materialism of necessity develops, it seems to me, a pluralistic philosophy, chiefly because it cherishes selfish and varied ideals.

This article is meant to be suggestive. We have not arrived at any educational unity in this country—not even in the areas of Christian education. Ancient Greeks were decades ahead of us because they were motivated and guided in part by system(s) of philosophy that were meaningful in their educational endeavors. The Peerless Teacher of Palestine had an all-pervasive principle of education. He molded his students by the greatest of ideals; namely, the Kingdom of Heaven. The qualities of devotion to an ideal, of straightforwardness in purpose, of an all-out effort were developed. His system trained men to be thoroughly furnished to every good work. We need to re-think our educational philosophy and to put into it a permanent, unifying, and moral-religious element, which the president of the American Council of Education felt was lacking. We need to seek first of all the Kingdom of Heaven; then all the other things will be adequately provided.
Abraham Kuyper: Forgotten Radical?

We have seen [cf. article in previous issue] that Kuyper had an acute realization of the seriousness and danger of the social question, the class struggle, and warned that unless it was faced and solved, unless Christianity intervened, "so too, (like Rome), our Western civilization will also collapse."

We have now to consider the answer this great Calvinist gave to the problem; it involved a radical critique of the nineteenth century middle-class synthesis.

"Improvement undoubtedly lies", cried Kuyper, "in a socialist—I do not shrink from the word—direction; provided that you do not now mean by socialistic the program of Socialism, but merely express by this word... a God-willed community, a living human organism." 1

And quotations could be multiplied. Kuyper, in his angry critique of Revolutionary "free enterprise" and individualism, strongly emphasized again and again the communal, the social, the corporate, the collective aspect of society, as ever against the atomism and egoism of the nineteenth century theorists.

Kuyper saw society as made up of different collectives or corporations ("spheres"), all depending ultimately on the family which is, rather than the individual, the real building-block of society. 2 Kuyper's application of this idea in different fields—e.g. to intellectual life, where he posits control of education by the family, not the state, and not the church—is most interesting, but we cannot examine it here. We are concerned solely with the spheres or "collectives" of business and labor.

The duty of the state in Kuyper's system (and here it compares favorably with Catholic corporatism, which always tends towards state corporations) is negative and mechanical. Its essential duty is to see that the balance between collectives is maintained, 3 and if the balance has been disturbed, to restore it. The state is not to impose a plan on society; it is to protect the weak individuals, and the weak collectives, in society and allow the collectives which make up society to grow and develop. 4

Now, as applied to the oppression of the workers by the upper classes, Kuyper's theory resulted in far-reaching conclusions. As early as 1874, Kuyper was calling for laws on child labor; in Ons Program (1880) he called for an extensive labor code, regulating wages and hours and so forth. He fought for this all his life, and it finally became law, after bitter opposition by the Liberals, in the period just before the First World War. Compulsory insurance for workers was another battle-cry of Kuyper's ("social security").

Kuyper also helped develop the right of labor to organize, and as early as the '30's, Protestant unions were rapidly growing. 5 Kuyper realized that only in organization had the workers any real chance to deal on equal terms with the large-scale industrial organizations which had grown up.

Some realization of how far ahead of his day Kuyper was may be obtained by reflecting on our own reaction to Social Security, the Wagner Act and the NRA, or on the average Calvinist business man's notion of the rights of unions today.

Kuyper did not even stop here, however. He viewed sympathetically the corporatist idea of a collective franchise, that is, giving a vote, for example, to labor unions per se. This follows naturally from his idea of the franchise as given to the family rather than the individual. It is a logical outcome of any idea of independent "spheres" or collectives. 6

1 Kuyper, Sociale vraagstuk, 14, footnote.
3 See, e.g. his Calvinism, 91-92: "In a Calvinistic sense we understand hereby that the family, business, science, art, etc., are all social spheres, which do not owe their existence to the state, and which do not derive the law of their life from the superiority of the state... we do not conceive this society as a conglomerate, but as analyzed in its organic parts, to honor, in each of the parts, the independent character which appertains to them... these different developments of social life have nothing above themselves but God." The whole discussion, 91-99, is a good introduction to Kuyper's theory.
4 See, e.g. Calvinism, 97; or the longer discussion in Ons Program, #286 ff.
5 Ons Program, #288, 292. Kuyper saw this as the only defense against the Monopolistic State of capitalism and the Caesarism of Socialism.
6 In Europe, where the trade unions were Socialist, this was a necessary step. Kuyper and his followers did not subscribe to the idea of class war; Kuyper foresaw that this meant only a new aristocracy and a new tyranny—as we can see in Russia today.
7 Kuyper, Calvinism, 98: "(It is asked) whether it is desirable to place by its side a corporate right of franchise, which will enable the separate spheres to make a separate defense... voices arise which clamor for the juncture of the right of franchise with these (labor and business) organizations. I for one would welcome such a move, provided its application were not one-sided..." Cf. also Ons Program, #281: "... we voted for a guild system, leading to a corporate state, and for a system of voting by families, with a cumulative vote." And see the discussion in Winckel's Leven en Arbeid van Dr. A. Kuyper (Amsterdam, 1919), 85 ff. and 110 ff.
Thus Kuyper's system resembles, on the one hand, the ideas of the Christian Guild Socialists in England, and on the other, the ideas of Catholic corporatists like Le Play, Von Ketteler and others; and, I think, a system much more thoroughly worked out, more flexible, and more adaptable to modern life. Kuyper had materials to work into his system, of course; it is based partly on Julius Stahl, the Lutheran thinker; partly on the Socialist thought of the nineteenth century; and partly on the ideas of Bilderdijk, Da Costa and Groen van Prinsterer. Kuyper worked them into a synthesis which is a coherent, Calvinistic and effective attack on "free enterprise" as well as Socialism. Kuyper's thought is (or should be) to Calvinists what Leo XIII's encyclical was for Catholics; a charter of rebellion against bourgeois Liberalism and Mar­xian Socialism both.

But Kuyper did not claim that his system was final. On the contrary, he was most aware of its deficiencies; and he called for further study on the part of Calvinists. Listen to this savage indictment⁰ of the Calvinists in the Netherlands—who did more in a generation than we Calvinists here have done in three generations since then:

"... What have we sacrificed for these thousands (of oppressed) so that instead of the caricature of the Christian religion against which they now utter their curse they might have some understanding, even the least, of the real love of God which is in Christ Jesus? What has been done by us, Christians in the Netherlands, while more and more the poison of the French Revolution unnoticed ravages the veins of the body social—what have we done to stop this poisoning of the social life blood? ... Not until now are we making our first weak attempt, in a social congress, to examine the death-need of society, when our Christian thinkers should have been laboring already for twenty or thirty years ... to plumb the depths of this desperate situation."

The Catholics, cried Kuyper, are far ahead of us:⁹ the social need has long existed: "it becomes a matter of guilt, and moves us to humiliation, that when so dreadful a need became apparent, we did not long ago act in the name of Jesus."¹⁰

Although we cannot be Socialists, we must face the problems which the Socialists face. As Groen van Prinsterer said in 1849, "The Socialists rightly desire a change in society whereby an end might be made to the evil and heart-rending contrasts between surplus and scarcity, wantonness and hun­ger, pleasure and need."¹¹

And this duty applies not only to Calvinist lay-

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⁰ *Sociale vraagstuk*, 23.
⁹ "Indeed, very far ahead" says Kuyper. "Recall what has been done by such able thinkers as Le Play and Von Ketteler; by a whole series of significant congresses in Germany, France and Belgium; and recently by Leo XIII in his encyclical." (Sociale vraagstuk, 6 and footnote). Today, of course, the indictment still stands; Catholics are producing effective Christian action; Calvinists are not.
¹¹ Quoted by Kuyper in his *Democratische klippen*, 76.

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*Do not men ask continually what the church can do to quiet the social disturbance? And is it not sad to see how seldom the preachers have felt the cutting power that is the power of the Gospel to call the rich away from their capitalist inclinations and the poor away from their socialist inclinations? ... And hence our call now goes out to the servants of the Gospel, not only in Christian Reformed but also in Dutch Reformed circles, that they may have the courage to no longer suppress the word of their Lord about the needs of society."

"Even the Rothschilds [for 1950, substitute the DuPonts] with their titanic capital have found defenders among us," continues Kuyper. "This makes our heart weep, for it destroys the honor of our confession..." For modern capitalism and the Gospel are opposed to each other: "(In the case of the rich young ruler) the opposition between capitalism and the Kingdom of Heaven is complete. The capitalist can indeed become saved, but only if God the Lord gives him His wonderful grace; just as the camel might so go through the eyes of the needle."²³

We are committed then, says Kuyper, to work for the "civitas Dei", to criticize constantly the structure of our modern worldly society, to avoid both the "capitalistic" and the Socialistic answers to the deep and terrible problem of the class struggle; we are committed to study, to study, to study; and to act, to act, to act; perhaps, in the future, to suffer.

And for Kuyper, the Calvinistic answer lies along "a socialist direction"—but a Christian socialism, a Calvinistic socialism; a society built on autonomous collectives ("spheres") which are prior to and more important than the state; only thus can we escape Statism; only along these lines, says Kuyper, can Calvinist social theory develop.

These considerations would lead me to call Kuyper a radical, and his Calvinistic social theory a radical social theory; if it is not radical, then I do not see what could be called radical. Kuyper's at­tack on society is more far-reaching than Marx's; and his solution, a Calvinistic variety of Corpora­tism, a more radical solution.

On the other hand, we must not forget that this social theory also makes full provision for the de­velopment and protection of the individual. Kuy­per's synthesis, it seems to me, is one which should be developed further.

I had meant to make some comparison between Kuyper's concern with social problems, and our own general unconcern; it will, I think, not be need­ed. The contrast is too evident, too obvious, to need pointing out.

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²³ Kuyper, *Christus en de sociale nooden*, 54-55.
²³ *Ibid*, 47.
SYNOD REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Olivet Reformed Church
Grandville, Michigan
June 9, 1950

Dear Dr. Bouma:

T HE One Hundred and Forty-Fourth Regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America has just been held at The Inn, Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania. May I sketch for the readers of The Calvin Forum some of the highlights of the Synod in which they will be interested.

In accordance with a general custom which has developed through the years, an "eastern" minister, Rev. Henry A. Vruwink, D.D., of Brooklyn, N. Y., was chosen to succeed "western" Rev. A. Rynbrandt of Grand Rapids as president, and a person well-known to Forum readers, "western" Rev. Bastian Kruithof of Holland, Michigan, was elected Vice-president.

The veteran Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, missionary, scholar, author, and teacher was in charge of four morning devotional services. This 80-year-old but still dynamic Christian leader spoke with characteristic originality and insight on the themes: "Listen to His Voice," Luke 8:8; "Look at His Hands," John 20:20; 'Behold His Feet," I Cor. 12:25; and 'The Light of His Countenance," Psalm 90:8. Those present reported these to be soul-stirring messages of an exceptionally high order.

Church Union

The question of the feasibility of union with the United Presbyterian Church which had been under consideration for more than four years was decided by the vote of the Classes and Presbyteries prior to the meeting of Synod. The plan had called for a favorable three-fourths vote of the Reformed Church Classes and the United Presbyterian Church Presbyteries as necessary for adoption.

The report of the Church Union Committee was presented by its chairman, Dr. Lester J. Kuyper. The Committee reported that nineteen classes reported a 75% plus vote, and that twenty-three classes reported less than a 75% vote. The popular vote of all the classes is 621 ayes and 597 nays, which amounts to 51% in favor of union.

General Synod voted to send our greetings and hearty Christian affection to the Assembly of the United Presbyterian and Christian family, with a view to exploring ways and means by representatives of other churches of the Reformed and Presbyterian denominations, and to bring back a recommendation. The two matters are:

1. The joint letter from the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. and the Reformed Church in America, extending an invitation to unite with us in our program of acquaintance and cooperation and in the plan of union which we are jointly developing;

2. The recommendation from our own committee on union with the United Presbyterian Church, which recommendation reads as follows: "That we keep the possibilities of union with the United Presbyterians open, and that the Committee on Fraternal Relations be instructed to inform General Synod when occasions for union with other Christian brethren arise."

Although the Reformed Church in America has decided against organic union with the United Presbyterians, your committee does not interpret this decision to mean that our church is in principle opposed to any and all concrete proposals of possible union that might be made in the future. In view of this decision, however, we deem it not wise at this time to accept that part of the joint invitation of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. and the Presbyterian Church U. S. to unite in their plan of union which they are now developing. But in view of the fact that we are constrained by the Holy Spirit to seek the well-being and prosperity of the Church of Christ and to make our unity in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior more visible in His Body and more persuasive before the world, we are glad to accept that other part of their gracious invitation to unite with these brethren in their "program of acquaintance and cooperation."

Your committee therefore recommends that General Synod's Committee on Fraternal Relations be authorized to enter into conversations with representatives of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. and of the Reformed Church U. S., and with representatives of other churches of the Reformed and Presbyterian family, with a view to exploring ways and means by which these churches might be mutually helpful to each other, and to report their conversations to the General Synod of 1951.

South African Segregation

The Classis of Ulster overtured "the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to compose and communicate a firm expression of regret to the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa on its decision to endorse the program of segregation in South Africa, and urging that church to
review and recall that endorsement that it might rather give its witness and spiritual power to the solution of its aggravated problem upon the higher plane of Christian responsibility and Christian love 'for the least of these.'"

On this matter the Synod instructed its committee on resolutions to draw up a carefully worded communication to the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, permeated with the spirit of brotherly love, expressing the deep regret of the General Synod at her endorsement of the program of segregation and requesting her to reconsider the action she has taken in this matter in the light of the Word of God. And that the Stated Clerk forward this communication to the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa in the name of our Synod.

**Missions**

The Committee for Foreign Missions reported that during the past year 14 new missionaries have sailed to our mission outposts, and four more are to sail before September. Total receipts of the Board this year were $821,482.95. Receipts for the regular budget reached $623,319.83, the highest figure in the history of the Board. However, because of the decreased value of the dollar, the total income today provides for a missionary force of only 146 as compared to almost 175 some 25 years ago. Synod urged our people to share in community-wide campaigns for funds for the proposed Christian University in Japan.

The Committee on the Board of Domestic Missions reported that during the past year 99 churches have been aided, and the total amount paid out to pastors, synodical, and foreign speaking missionaries, amounts to $142,000. During the last two years, in spite of the very great need, only $82,646.47 has been raised.

The first annual meeting of the Chiapas Presbytery in Mexico, reported that during the past year 398 adults were received and 400 children were baptized. Two new congregations were organized into churches, making a total of eleven consistories connected with the Presbytery. The Committee on Canadian Work reports that they will soon have ministers in some seven places. The Kentucky Mission is this year celebrating its 50th Anniversary.

**Evangelism**

Synod endorsed the program of the United Evangelistic Advance sponsored by the Federal Council and the projected program as proposed by our Department of Evangelism. This program includes the following:

a. We urge every local congregation to share in a "Preaching Mission" during Reformation Week, October 29-November 5, 1950, either alone or in union with other churches in the community.

b. We urge every local congregation to share in a week of Lay Visitation Evangelism during the week of December 3-7, 1950, either alone or in union with other churches in the community.

c. We recommend to the several churches of our communion, a vigorous program of Conservation Evangelism this coming year.

d. We urge all pastors and consistory to make increased use of trained, consecrated lay men and lay women in the work of reclaiming inactive members, winning the lost, and shepherding the flock of God, over which He has made us over-seer.

e. We authorize the Board of Domestic Missions to set up a system whereby members of our several churches, who have moved, can be directed into our churches, or other sister evangelical churches, in the communities where they now reside, that none be lost to the church.

**Other Items of Interest**

The Classis of Illiana overruled the General Synod as follows: "that we request the State Department to cease considering recognizing the Vatican as a secular state and refrain from nominating any ambassador or representative to the Vatican."

The committee recommended that the General Synod make this request to the State Department along with a concise statement of the reasons why we make such request, and send it also to the Federal Council.

The Elders' Meeting was held on Sunday afternoon, Dr. Wynnand Wichers presiding. Elder Frederick Bauer led the devotional service. The Rev. Bert Brower outlined his plan for the Reformed Church Men's Brotherhood, and showed the chart he had prepared to present in a visual way the whole program of the Church. The chart was enthusiastically endorsed, and the more than 100 elders present pledged their active assistance in promoting the work of the Brotherhood in the coming year.

In order to increase the efficiency of our Synod, the Committee recommended that Synod advise the Classes to appoint their delegates to General Synod at their Fall Sessions and forward their nominations to the President of Synod without delay; that the President of Synod then appoint the various committees as soon as possible; and that all materials to be acted on by the various committees be sent to the members of the committees as soon as they are available so that the members of committees may give careful consideration to them before they come to Synod.

Synod voted to adopt the calendar year as the fiscal year. From May 1, 1950, to Jan. 1, 1951, will be an eight-months period, and reports for the next General Synod will be made for the calendar years.

Wm. A. Swets.

**REFORMED CHURCH OF CEYLON**

The Presbyterian Church Conference

This annual event which took place this year during the third week in January gave evidence of a revived interest towards it, to judge by the attendances at the meetings. The feature of this year's conference was that it was entirely "Presbyterian" or "Reformed", the speakers at the meetings being the Ministers of our church and the subject the Reformed Church—its history—its government—its doctrine—its discipline—its liturgy. The interest evoked was doubtless due to the subject for the conference, which lay near to the hearts of the people, in contrast to that of the past two years when the union of churches was the subject proclaimed to us by advocates of it from other churches.

In the first week-day meeting, the speaker very ably and lucidly sketched the history of the Reformed Church through the centuries but refrained from mentioning its history in this Island; yet cast a taunt at her that she had made no progress not having added either a prayer to her liturgy or even pronounced a heresy. The method adopted in stitting a reply to this challenge of the speaker was certainly contrary to the character of a conference; however it is well to inform the speaker, if he did not know it, and remind ourselves too, that it is this Dutch Reformed Church of ours that first translated the Bible into Singhalese and Tamil. Is this not sufficient answer to his challenge?

The Talk on the Government of the Church which followed on the second day of the conference was received with evident approval and although comments and questions were invited none were forthcoming. No doubt because there was general agreement that the beauty, dignity and simplicity of the Presbyterian system, based as it is on the Word, is without equal.

On the third evening the consideration of the doctrine of the Reformed Church produced some controversy when a questioner tried to draw a parallel to the doctrine of Predestination with the fatalistic teaching of Islam. This was unwarranted because the speaker of the evening had made it

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clear that our doctrines were squarely based on what the Bible revealed. It was apparent that the superficiality with which this doctrine is reviewed, and the humanistic standpoint so prevalent in the mind of many a "Christian" results not only in the failure to grasp its true import, but deprives the soul of the assurance and comfort it conveys to the true believer.

The need for, and method of exercising discipline in the Church was practically set out and explained on the following evening. However, there was one voice at least that sounded a warning and cited the incident of the woman taken away to battle with herself for victory; nay, rather do we see in this the attainment of the result aimed at in all Church discipline, the sinner repentant, forgiveness assured and restoration to the fellowship of God's people. Assuredly then even this becomes an incident that both upholds Church discipline and sanctions the manner and means employed in the exercise of it.

The final conference meeting which took place on the Saturday was in reference to the Liturgy of the Reformed Church and the speaker raised the point that our liturgy is deficient in certain respects and lengthy in others, and called for some form of revision to rectify its defects (7). As to the deficiencies in our liturgy it was pointed out that ours is a semi-liturgical Church which provided in her liturgy for such services as are essential to the preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments, the proper ordering of the government of the Church and the exercise of discipline. All that falls outside of these is incidental and has in consequence to be arranged for shortening of the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, for it was admitted that the reading of it took only 20 minutes. What we should like to know is whether it is at all possible to retain the character of the form while reducing its length appreciably in respect of the time taken to read it. There is something to be said in favour of the shortening of the form if it is considered that after conducting a service with the preaching of the sermon, the minister is called upon to read out this form for another 20 minutes; but so far there have been no ill-effects noticeable and considering that it takes place with any one minister from 6 to 8 or ten times in a year the demand for shortening almost borders on irreverence. When we come to consider that we are here preparing for an eternity to be spent in the presence and fellowship of God, the desire to reduce by 10 minutes (this is the utmost it will be possible to save in time) our occasions of communion with Him here, at His Table, is nothing short of dishonouring Him. Can those, who would resort to reducing our occasions of communion with the remembrance of the Lord here on earth, contemplate with complacency the hope that is set before us of entering into His rest?

The conference was brought to a close with the evening service at Bambalapitiya Church on the 22nd of January. The Rev. John O. Schuring was the preacher and his subject The Reformed Church, its message for today. The service was very largely attended and gave evidence that within the hearts of the people there lie embers that can be kindled by the true Reformed message. The discourse itself was truly inspiring and no doubt left a deep impression in the hearts of the hearers that theirs is a great responsibility to live out their faith and uphold its truths before a world, that is in dire need of the truly Reformed way of life in order to combat its humanistic tendencies. And so ended a week of evening conferences in which our membership had the joy of reminding themselves of their glorious heritage in the faith of our fathers and going forward to add further glories to it.

May this year's conference be a pattern to be followed in the conferences that are to follow in years to come.

Editor, "The Old Paths"

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN STUDENT CONFERENCE

The following advance publicity has been sent out on the International Christian Student Conference to be held this summer in the Netherlands under the general auspices of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students and under the specific auspices of the Dutch Student Movement known as the "Calvinistische Studenten Beweging."

Calvinistische Studenten Beweging

“All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth”. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke these words in a world in which there was hardly a place for those who wanted to follow Him. Since they were spoken the situation has changed but little. Though the Gospel has been preached in the greatest part of the world, yet in public life it is hardly a factor taken into account. Nevertheless the words of our Saviour have retained their relevance. Jesus Christ is King in heaven and on earth. This fact should be the real basis for all our action and thinking and should urge us to ac-
complish our task as Christians in this world with fidelity and with joy.

During the International Student Conference, which will be organized from August 18 to August 26, 1950, at “Woudschoten”, Zeist, the Netherlands, by the “Calvinistische Studenten Beweging” (the Netherlands organization linked with the “International Fellowship of Evangelical Students”), we desire to witness to this fact and to consider at the same time the question of what belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ implies for our conduct in different departments of human life.

Therefore we shall pay special attention to the Holy Scriptures, in which the Lord reveals Himself, in order to get a better understanding of the riches we receive in Him and of His plan for us.

PROGRAM

Theme: Jesus Christ, King of the World.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18:

16.00 Arrival.

20.00 Welcome Meeting.

Addresses by the President of the C.S.B., the President of the Conference and Mr. C. Stacey Woods, General Secretary of the “International Fellowship of Evangelical Students”, Geneva, Illinois, U. S. A.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19:

9.30 “Jesus Christ and the Re-Creation of the World.” C. Veenhof, Professor at the Theological Faculty of Kampen, the Netherlands.

20.00 “It is finished”, Ole Oystese, Travelling Secretary of the “Norges Kristelige Student og Gymnasiastlag”, Oslo, Norway.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20:

9.30 Members of the Conference will be free to attend local churches.

20.00 “Justification by Faith”, Dr. Oliver R. Barclay, Assistant Secretary of the “Intervarsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions”, London, Great Britain.

MONDAY, AUGUST 21:

9.30 “Jesus Christ, King of the Church”, Dr. G. C. Berkouwer, Professor of Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

20.00 “Jesus Christ and our Sanctification”, Henry Brus­ton, Professor at the Free Faculty of Protestant Theology of Aix-en-Provence, France.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22:

9.30 “Jesus Christ and Social Life”, Dr. Jan D. Dengerink, Foreign Secretary of the C.S.B., Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

20.00 “Assurance of Faith”, Ad Kuiper, Director of the Reformed Youth-Centre, Huis ter Heide, the Netherlands.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23:

9.30 “Christian School Education”, Dr. C. Jaarsma, Professor of Education at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, U. S. A.


THURSDAY, AUGUST 24:

9.30 “Christian Religion and Scientific Thought”, Dr. H. Dooyeweerd, Professor of Law at the Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

20.00 “We expect the Return of the Lord”, the Rev. W. A. Langenohl, Rheidy, Germany.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26:


20.00 Final Meeting.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26:

9.30 Departure.

Conference Staff

Senior President: Dr. G. Ch. Aalders, Professor of Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. President: Dr. N. Okma, Professor of Law at the Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Vice-Presidents: Melle Janine Paris (France), Peter Haile (Great Britain), Jean-Jacques Dufour (Switzerland), Ferdinand Immer (Germany), and Ole Oystese (Norway).

Notices

The lectures will be given in the English, French or German languages and will be translated into the two other languages respectively.

The afternoons are free for reports on Christian Student work in various countries, discussions, excursions, walks, sport and singing.

“Woudschoten” camp is about 12 k.m. from Utrecht and is best reached by bus from the station (direction Veenendaal, bus stop Woudenbergsestraatweg 54).

The cost for the conference per person will be f. 35. (thirty-five guilders).
Book Reviews

FICTION WITH CATHOLIC PROPAGANDA


The readers of Simon and Schuster, having enviously heard the ringing cash registers as the The Robe and The Big Fisherman sold by the hundreds of thousands, must have looked upon each other “with a wild surprise” as they handed about the bulky manuscript of The Cardinal. Yes, this had all the popular ingredients—drama, tears, and even laughter. The meteoric rise of Stephen Fermoyle out of an ecclesiastical milk-route of a slum parish to a red hat in the Sistine Chapel would be an escape and an imaginative fulfillment for millions of harassed citizens who lead lives of quiet frustration. The Cardinal with its directness, melodrama, and canny mixture of slums and courts would succeed.

This is not to suggest that Mr. Robinson is no more than an astute exploiter of a glowing opportunity. I believe in his basic sincerity both in his reverence for the Catholic church and in his portrayal of the gifted priest. He says in his foreword that “as a writer,” he was “struck long ago by the wonder and awe of the priest’s function.” About that function, he has written reverently, if somewhat externally. I feel somehow that Mr. Robinson has observed rather than imaginatively experienced many of Stephen’s reactions. Furthermore, Robinson says that the book is “neither propaganda for or against the church.” I believe the avowal but doubt the effect. The pictures are there, hundreds of them, and they are often convincing; but the pronouncements are there too, and they often seem staged. Although, therefore, The Cardinal is primarily the story of a Catholic priest and his church, it hardly escapes the impression of propaganda because in it many prominent Catholics make involved and faintly pontifical characterization be inadequate, and if that rise be absurd, the probability of his phenomenal advance.

That such a man will rise is obvious, that circumstances often have the bite and tang of real life. Stephen’s first experience as a confessor hurls the reader into the raw and bitter world of sin; his rugged apprenticeship in the haggard cut-over pine forests of Maine makes one value the devotion of the good priest. The underworld of Boston, the pomp of the “princes and prelates” of the Catholic church, the suave countenance as well as the internecine feuding, the anticlassicism of the Deep South; one has both the “handful of ashes” and the sweeping procession.

Although the plot as a whole is unrealistic, the situations often have the bite and tang of real life. Stephen’s first experience as a confessor hurls the reader into the raw and bitter world of sin; his rugged apprenticeship in the haggard cut-over pine forests of Maine makes one value the devotion of the good priest. The underworld of Boston, the pomp of the “princes and prelates” of the Catholic church, the suave countenance as well as the internecine feuding, the anticlassicism of the Deep South; one has both the “handful of ashes” and the sweeping procession.

Although Robinson does not intend the book as propaganda, or at least avows no such intention, he can hardly escape the charge because of his treatment of such traditional red herrings as the Catholic attitude on birth control, papal infallibility, and similar subjects. The statements on these issues have a distinctly polemical edge, and the feel of apology. The utterances are too long and strident to be without persuasive intention. They are also bad art; the characters sound off and preach. One does not gather the ideas by overtone and implication; the speakers pound the table.

The Cardinal is a popular novel; it is a good yarn and will please many as did The Robe and Anthony Adverse. It has the bulk but not the greatness of Heart's celebration; it has the narrative charm but not by any means the master­piece like Woolf's To the Lighthouse, wherein everything fuses into a delicately synthesized organic whole. It does not have the bouquet of a minor masterpiece like Woolf's To the Lighthouse, wherein everything fuses into a delicately synthesized organic whole. It does not have the tragic power, the heart-rending pathos of Cry the Beloved Country. The Cardinal is somewhat sprawling and amorphous; it is occasionally dull as in the book "Seventh Station" with its long unravelling of papal intrigue. As a work of art, a well-integrated articulation of meaningful and coherent experience, it is not first-rate. But it has rewards. The pagantry, glitter, and unmistakable glory of the Catholic church is compellingly portrayed. The reader feels that this church, whatever its occasional grossness and superstition, is yet the bearer of a great tradition, that its basic loyalties are unimpeachable, though its methods may, at times, be questioned. Furthermore, the book bears testimony to an eternal order that overarches man's fate and not a blind web, and the orderer and weaver is God.

I might add that I thoroughly welcome Simon and Schuster's Reader's Edition of the book at only one dollar. Three and four dollars is too much for most novels, and even a school teacher can risk a dollar now and then.

This book will be widely praised as Christian realism. This, Mr. Robinson would say, is the life of a humane and devoted priest in a soiled world. To such a world the church through its priests brings blessings and cleansing. The soiled world is
presented without obscenity. (I am using the word in the legal sense.) Robinson errs through sentimentalism, "tear-jerking", rather than obscenity. The villains are never bad; every last one of the discreptables has redeeming qualities. They emerge gray, and end white. There is a fatuous sentimentalism running through the book. It is as if Eddie Guest were prompting the audience with his little tag, "There's so much bad in the best of us. There's so much good in the worst of us?"

Calvin College.

JOHN TIMMERMAN.

THE PLAGUE OF THE NEGRO


FIVE short novels depicting the terrible plight of the negroes in the modern south land of a free nation called the United States of America. The negroes in Richard Wright's novels are portrayed as living beings worthy of consideration as creatures created in the image of God and living under the same rights and freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution. Mr. Wright, a negro himself, seeks to make very clear in these five novels that the negroes of the modern south are still forced to live the Jim Crow life. Mr. Wright has made a contribution in presenting the world from the negro's point of view, and sees the lynchings, beatings, insults from whites. In these novels you hear the lash of the whip, the crash of fists, smell of burning flesh and tar. One reads disgusting and sexy scenes, the rape of negro women by white men, etc. The solution of the race problem is not attempted, and this is a decided defect in these five novels.

Grand Rapids.

R. J. DANHOF.

WHAT ABOUT TELEVISION?


THIS is an exceedingly timely book. Television is with us at last. What to think of it: that is the question which naturally arises in the minds of all who realize, if only to a degree, that this recent invention is bound to affect life on its moral and religious score in no small measure. Dr. Carnell appears to have given much serious thought to the problem which television has added to the heavy load of problems which we are already carrying. Those of us who have not yet studied the situation born of the advent of television, but are deeply interested in it for reasons of a spiritual nature, and are, accordingly, desirous of studying it under the guidance of a teacher at once competent and impartial, will find Dr. Carnell to be the instructor we need.

It is very evident that Dr. Carnell has carefully studied the subject under discussion from its distinctively moral angle. He is not occupied with the scientific and technical aspects of television. He does not undertake to say how television is effected. He is concerned with television as an instrument that, strangely enough, brings things definitely out of sight ordinarily, by reason of their great remoteness, into such clear and bold view as if they were in our immediate presence.

In exploring his subject he discovered—and this he tells us in the sub-title of his book—that television is in possession of capacities that can make it either our dutiful servant or our tyrannical master. He is not slow to add that it is really not the television set that determines which of these two alternatives, servant or master, will crystallize into fact. What do we want television to be: our tool or our lord? Human nature being what it is, presumption is that television will gain the mastery over men, barring special provisions against its usurpation of power over us. However, television itself is innocent and neutral: it offers no resistance if we assign it the role of a servant.

One of the merits of the book—and not its least virtue—is that its author impartially registers the possibilities of television for good and evil, respectively. His judgment is balanced and, by that token, sane indeed. And he treats both possibilities after a rather exhaustive fashion. The only critical observation the present reviewer chooses to make is, that the writer confines himself to stating the divergent possibilities of television rather abstractly. He might have declared that on general principles it is more likely than not, that television will enslave the majority of men, with respect alike to the things visualized and attendance upon their visualization. Mammon is going to have a voice in this chapter. And let it be borne in mind, that there is rampant much relish and keen, for what, according to Christian standards, is far from holy and by no means good.

The book is a truly fine treatise on a subject that is deserving of our close attention. May it find a wide sale: it is reading of the mutat class, and many folk would do well to read it twice. For television is an inscrutably potent cultural factor; and it is here to stay in ever widening circles.

Calvin Seminary.

S. VOLBERDA.

MIRACLE AND MYTH!


HERE is a book that will appeal to many ardent believers in the Bible. The author apparently marshals evidence to show that the miracles recorded in the Old Testament have actually taken place and are remembered in the literature of all peoples. The plagues in Egypt, the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea, the extraordinary happenings in the desert, the day the sun stood still, and other similar events were the results, says the author, of certain catastrophes. If he is right, then this book will give the lie to those who claim that these miraculous events recorded in the Old Testament are but prophetic ecstasies or highly imaginative accounts of ordinary phenomena written by Hebrew mystics in the throes of religious trances; if he is right, these events have impressed and shaken not only the nation of Israel, but every nation of the heathen as well. The potentialities of this book have been recognized by publishers of several magazines who have given considerable space to discussion or condensation of this volume.

According to the jacket of the book, the author has had a varied educational background. His scientific training appears to have been mainly in medicine and related fields. He is not a world-renowned scientist, but that need not detract from his argument. Perhaps we have been myopic in these matters in focusing our eyes only on famous scientists. For if Velikovsky is right, then science has certainly overlooked a very fertile field of information, a field which even now it refuses to survey because of "scientific" prejudice.

The author's explanation of all these extraordinary events is this: in the early history of the earth there were near collisions between comets and our planet. These collisions caused violent disturbances in the "normal" functioning of the earth. The rotation of the earth about its axis was affected and changed, huge areas of the earth were shifted, the length of the year was altered. These are but a few of the results of these collisions. The first comet that is discussed approached Hezekiah's reign, and the huge destruction of Sennacherib's army. This comet also settled down and is now the planet Venus. The book is a truly fine treatise on a subject that is deserving of our close attention. May it find a wide sale: it is reading of the mutat class, and many folk would do well to read it twice. For television is an inscrutably potent cultural factor; and it is here to stay in ever widening circles.

Calvin Seminary.

S. VOLBERDA.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JUNE-JULY, 1950
be an indirect compliment to the power of the author's argument. Undoubtedly the work of Velikovsky will continue to be the object of sneering comments for his basic assumption is very jarring to many present-day scientific theories and assumptions. He admits that his explanation sounds radical, but he maintains that a satisfactory explanation of many past events can be obtained "only at the cost of giving up certain notions now regarded as sacred laws in science—the millions of years of the present constitution of the solar system and the harmonious revolution of the earth—with all their implications as regards the theory of evolution." And again, "Tradition about upheavals and catastrophes, found among all peoples, are generally discredited because of the short-sighted belief that no forces could have shaped the world in the past that are not at work also at the present time, a belief that is the very foundation of modern geology and of the theory of evolution." This is a bold departure and such iconoclasm will not be appreciated by the brotherhood of scientists.

On what does the author base his theory? Can he defend it? Will it stand up? The author's method is somewhat unique. He does not set up an array of what is commonly called "scientific" evidence such as the rates of erosion or of deposition. Such scientific evidence as is produced deals mainly with astronomy and since the manuscript has been scrutinized by astronomers, this evidence is undoubtedly not in dispute.

The method of the author can best be summarized in his own words and beliefs. His basis is the daily experiences of the people. What he has observed and witnessed must have been commemoated in traditions or literary monuments. For instance, when Joshua commanded the sun to stand still the day was longer than usual there in Palestine. If so, then the night must have been longer than usual on the opposite side of the globe. So Velikovsky delves into the mythology and lore of the civilizations that have existed in the antipodes to find whether there was a tradition of an unusually long night. This is but an illustration of the method used.

In addition to this, the author takes the mythology of the various civilizations (in which he includes the Old Testament for the Hebrews) and gives a more literal interpretation than usual. Referring to several passages in Isaiah the author says: "A reading of the literature indicates that no exegesis has ever been so foolish and blind as to read sky for sky, stars for stars, brimstone for brimstone, fire for fire, blast for blast." He then proceeds to give a literal interpretation to these passages. His point seems to be that the ancient writers did not use as much imagination as commonly supposed. For instance when in Daniel 2:21, Daniel says, "And He (God) changeth the times and the seasons . . .", Daniel, according to Velikovsky, meant just that, e.g., he referred to an actual event that had occurred and that was remembered by the peoples of that time.

What of this method of approach? One's estimate of it depends a great deal upon the estimate one has of the validity of literature. If one believes that the literature of a people stems from that people's experience; if one believes that the literature of a people is conceived from a union of daily life and creative imagination and is born in the travail of man's earthly sojourn; if one believes that the writing of a people is meaningful and not merely fanciful; then one will have to go along—at least part way—with the writer of Worlds in Collision. And the very least one will then have to admit is that the literature of all peoples of ancient times records catastrophes in heaven above and earth beneath unknown to modern man and impossible of explanation by modern man on the basis of his present assumptions and theories. If literature does reflect the experiences of a people, and if all peoples of ancient times record these experiences, is it not logical to conclude that these things did happen, and that modern man is being blinded by his assumptions and theories to the point where he no longer even allows the evidences of man's recorded experience to speak?

If only "scientific" evidence can convince you, then you will undoubtedly dismiss this work as that of a crackpot. However, you must then face this question: is it valid for you (scientist or non-scientist), to base your conclusions on only one type of evidence, or should you, if you are committed to the search for Truth, include all the evidence—even the evidence of literature? The book is abundantly annotated so that any argument will not center around the authenticity of the quotations from ancient writings, but rather around the value to be attached to them for a project such as this.

It is impossible at this time to determine the validity of Velikovsky's hypothesis. Hypotheses are introduced in order to explain facts. The more facts a given hypothesis can explain or account for, the more likelihood is there that it is the correct one. And, as Christians, we should be careful that we do not immediately subscribe to a new theory merely because it is in accord with our interpretation of the Scriptures. The fact that we deny certain aspects of the theory of evolution does not mean that we must accept this hypothesis. Neither should we dismiss this theory because we have a preconceived notion as to just what methods God must use in order to work His miracles. Is it any defamation of the glory of God that He who created the heavens and the earth and established their workings, uses the stars and the planets and the processes of His universe to shake the heavens and the earth and to make men everywhere to fear and to record in writing the terrors of His doing? Is it not glorious to think that He can use His creation as He wills and that He can accomplish any purpose that He pleases?

It is well to wait for further evaluation of this theory by researches of other men and in other fields. Confirmation will not be easy to obtain, however, because the author dismisses the time-process aspect of the evolutionary theory. By dismissing this he can allow for more facts than the evolutionist can. For example: if the rotation of the earth has been going on at its present rate or even if it has been undergoing gradual change, then it is impossible to allow for the occurrence of a single extra long day as recorded in the Bible when Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still.

Here is but an example of the impasse that will be encountered. Was the extra long day a fact which must be explained or is it a figment of the imagination? Velikovsky takes the former position that that day is a fact—a fact attested to by the records of all ancient peoples—and if the evolutionist cannot explain it on the basis of his theory there must be some way around his objections. Velikovsky is not necessarily committed to the infallibility of the Scriptures. My impression is that he is not. Nor does he in this book profess any interest in the spiritual effects of these catastrophes. The evolutionist in taking the latter position (that the long day is a flight of fancy—because he cannot explain it) is, in effect, determining what facts shall be allowed. For this very thing Julian Huxley has recently taken the Russians to task.

However, granting the author's method to be legitimate, there is still the possibility that his explanation is inaccurate. Further study and research may reveal a different series of events that give a better account of these facts. At times Velikovsky has been a bit too literal in his interpretations. Perhaps no orthodox Christian would subscribe to the theory that the archangel Michael is to be identified with the comet (now planet) Venus, and that the archangel Gabriel was suggested to the people by Mars!

This book is rewarding. It makes one eager to read the author's next work. It should instil a bit of humility in the evolutionist and in the Christian alike. There is much we do not know. And we are so complacent about it. It is possible that the heavens and the earth have been literally shaken out of their places, that the evidence has been before us these hundreds of years and that we knew it not. Worlds in Collision will make us read our Bibles once again with a renewed interest. That alone makes it rewarding reading.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

T. P. DIRKSE.
THE formation of the new state of Israel in Palestine has brought to expression the Chiliasm hopes cherished by many Christians regarding the future of the Jews. It is for that reason that the recent study of Prof. Aalders of is of importance. His findings are submitted in this brief yet comprehensive study. In De Reformatie Professor Aalders in the years 1930-1932 submitted a series of articles on the Chiliasm of the Old Testament, and in 1933 these articles with extensive appended notes were published in book form under the title, Het Herstel van Israel volgens het Oude Testament. The question naturally arises whether Professor Aalders was mistaken in 1933, and did he now revise his views in the booklet under discussion? Has the formation of an actual state of Israel prevailed upon the painstaking Old Testament scholar of the Free University of Amsterdam to revise his conclusions on certain Old Testament prophecies regarding the future of the Jews?

The Zionist movement received quite a stimulus at the close of the first world war. England was given a mandate over Palestine. The fierce and bloody persecution of the Jews instigated by Hitler drove out many Jews to seek a native land? A careful examination and exegesis of all passages dealing with the Chiliasm of the Jews instigated by Hitler drove out many Jews to seek a native land. The fierce and bloody persecution of the Jews, and that the era of a thousand-year-reign of a separate state of Israel. From these recent developments regarding the Jews, and that the era of a thousand-year-reign of a separate state of Israel and the predictions of Christ on earth will soon begin.

The second question raised by Prof. Aalders is: Does the formation of the state Israel comply with and fulfill the predictions which many cherish and try to read in many O.T. passages dealing with this question have led Professor Aalders to the only possible conclusion that the new state Israel is not the realization of the prophetic utterances regarding the Jews in the Old Testament. The national restoration of Israel according to prophetic predictions was fulfilled at the end of the Assyrian-Babylonian exile.

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inspired by the devil presumably after the Beast and the False Prophet are already in the lake of fire? Was not the reign of the Beast terminated by the coming of Christ? What is the relation between Gog and Magog and the Beast (20:10, cf. 19:20)?

The author rightly demands that Scripture must be compared with Scripture. Any one worth his Protestant salt will instantly concur. What Scripture must be compared with the Book of Revelation? That is the crux of the problem. It is an oversimplification to say: "the language is very clear for any one who is willing to compare Scripture with Scripture". This amounts to this, if our opponent were only willing, he would see eye to eye with us (p. 30).

The writer places the emphasis upon witnessing, and, consequently, finds this book an explication of the "Missionary Command" of our Lord with the experiences the church will undergo when loyal to it. We welcome this as an emphasis if it does not become too exclusive.

There are other possibilities. Do we Amillennialists pay sufficient attention to the name given to our Lord, "The Lamb of God"? Almost exclusively this name is used. Why then could we not compare the book of Revelation to the words of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world"? Then Good Friday wins out. With this thought we could add the suggestion of Bernard that the Book of Revelation should be compared with the kingdom parables of Matthew 13. Then the emphasis falls upon the corporate body of the Christ, unified by Him as the Lamb. This must then color all New Testament piety. The purpose of this book is: Christ is coming (Rev. 1:7). Witnessing is urgent and consequential, but that is the pastoral diapason note in the book. The theological note should come in bold relief: All history is in the hands of the Savior, and He shall allow none to snatch anyone out of His hands. This book could serve as a text on ecumenicity as well as on witnessing.

This emphasis upon the royal Eternal Lamb would also give a more forceful reason that songs sung in heaven are included in this book.

The other two chapters are "The Dragon's Allies" and "Jerusalem the Golden."

The second lecture calls each Christian to a life of vigilance and reminds him of the deep antichristian structure of modern life that is in need of constant invasion and control of the Christ. Illustrations are used in such a way that we know we are wrestling with the allies of the Dragon this very day.

The last chapter is an inspiration to all who know there is a homegoing after the day of battle has come to an end. In this chapter the glory of God is emphasized and also that of the Lamb of God. From a biblical theological point of view perhaps we could make more use of the "Shekinah", common to Jewish and Christian theology.

This popular book with its good exegetical background should serve a very good purpose in this day of exegetical quandary.

Holland, Mich.

JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

EPHESIANS AND PHILIPPIANS


A NY one who has mastered the Dutch language will find the series "Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift" one of the finest examples of short commentaries on the Holy Scripture. Although brief, for popular and semi-scientific usage, much learning has been poured into these volumes. They are written in the Dutch vernacular of today. The new translations prove the study of the original, but the reader is never wearied by a display of learning.

"The Ephesians" and "The Philippians" are bound together in one volume. The author is the exegete of no mean ability, the Dr. S. Greydanus, known to us from his outstanding commentaries on Romans and Revelation. This volume is a reprint with a few minor changes and corrections, according to the author.

Dr. Greydanus is of the opinion that the epistle of the Ephesians was not intended specifically for the Ephesians, but that it was to be what we might call an encyclical letter. He ventures to suggest that the copy that became the possession of the church happened to have "to the Ephesians", and thus the majority of our manuscripts have so handed down to us. It is agreed that most of the manuscripts do contain "to the Ephesians." Circumstantial or internal evidence seems to militate against this conception. Here is an old and interesting problem of priority. Should we give the documentary or the internal evidence the priority? Our exegete states his case very well, but no doubt does not give the final answer.

The main question centers around the interpretation of Ephesians 3:16, 4:31, "if so be that ye have heard, eye's.

According to one school of thought, to which Dr. Greydanus belongs, these passages indicate that the readers were strangers to Paul. That members of the Ephesian Church should be strangers is considered an impossibility since Paul labored at Ephesus for several years. It is in this city that Paul broke down singled-handed the paganization popularized by the temple of Diana. How could the readers not know Paul? But the question is: is that construction of the phrase, "if so be," the only one? According to Hodge and others, "it is only a more refined or delicate form of assertion."

No matter what our interpretation may be of these verses, an encyclical letter does not remove the difficulty of accounting for strangers to St. Paul. A little historical imagination would soon reveal that no one could be a stranger to this powerful iconoclastic apostle, St. Paul. If these verses cannot apply to the Ephesians they cannot apply to any one since all members of the churches in that territory were somehow related to such an outstanding person as Paul.

No matter what position we adopt we will have to come to the conclusion that there is something unusual about this epistle in its heavenly elevations with no personal references to friends, a peculiar fact for a church in which Paul experienced much.

The author is certain of Pauline authorship. He defends this position in a convincing way. Whether encyclical and thus indirectly to the Ephesians, or directly to the Ephesians, this will not affect the interpretation of this epistle.

The purpose of this epistle is not primarily to give intellectual insights into the truths upon which our faith rests, but to be an admonition to proper Christian living. This living is a loving, pure, God-fearing conduct in unity, full of holy joy and piety.

The first part, the doctrinal, sets forth the glory of God's sovereign grace, and constitutes the basis for the second part, the admonitory.

The quest for unity is not the main purpose of this epistle, according to Dr. Greydanus, but a very important subdivision. This high but not chief emphasis upon unity is different in degree from the current use made of this epistle in the study of ecumenicity. Perhaps modern ecumenicity has opened our eyes to unity in this epistle as the main thrust, or, perhaps, it has biased us. Apart from contemporary ecumenicity, exegetes have found unity to be the main thrust. (cf. L. Berkhof, who divides this epistle into: I. The Doctrinal Part, treating of the Unity of the Church; II. The Practical Part, containing exhortations to a conversation worthy of the calling and Unity of the Readers). Both agree that unity is very important in this epistle.

No doubt the doctrinal section of this epistle should be related more to the teaching of unity which follows in the practical section. These doctrines are: election in Christ, the new man, the Trinity, the doctrine of Christ, and the Church. By emphasizing unity as the main thrust of this epistle rather
than an important subdivision we obtain a theology for sound ecumenicity.

The epistle to the Philippians defies the common Pauline division of doctrine and conduct. It is reminiscent in character, has doctrinal scarcity except for the "kenosis" passage, 2:5-11. Its emphasis is admonitory, the encouragement against heretic teachers. True unity is presented as urgent.

These volumes are simply commentaries, unlike the Barthian method as found in the Romans. We must make the applications today, and in doing so we shall find ourselves a debtor to his prince of exegetes.

Holland, Mich.

JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

BARNES' NOTES

NOTES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT, EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL.

PSALMS, Volumes I, II, III, 421, 448 and 408 pages respectively. $3.00 per volume.

The Notes on the Psalms represent the ripest scholarship of Albert Barnes. Therewith, he tells us, he has sought to complete his labors in explaining and illustrating the sacred Scriptures. In a sense this undertaking was also the most difficult one because the piety of the Church has been fed for thousands of years by these lyrical outbursts of God's gifted poets and prophets. The Psalms have a universal appeal for the people of God. To this universal note the words of Mr. Gladstone attest when he said: "In that book for well-nigh three thousand years, the piety of saints has found its most refined and choiceest food, to such a degree, indeed, that the rank and quality of the religious frame may in general be tested, at least negatively, by the heights of its relish for them. Here is the whole music of the human heart, when touched by the hand of the Maker, in all its tones that whisper or that swell, for every hope and fear, for every joy and pang, for every form of strength and languor, of dissipation and rest. There are developed all the innermost relations of the human soul to God, built upon a platform of a covenant of love and sonship, that had its foundations in the Messiah, while, in this particular and privileged book, it was permitted to anticipate his coming." It is not merely because the Psalms are so well known and readily understood but also because many have written before on this sublime subject that this is a particularly hazardous undertaking from the point of view of originality and usefulness. Of making many books there is no end, but there is an end to piling up commentaries on a given Biblical text—especially if one has Calvin and Spurgeon available. Besides, this work is not critical or linguistic, hence the average pastor will find very little of real value here. However, that need not deter the average layman, who may gain much practical value from just such a study.

Since the name of Barnes does not come to us without contamination so far as his orthodoxy is concerned, I have been at special pains to check his attitude on justification and his exegesis of the Messianic Psalms. For those who wish to check my intimations of heresy see The Presbyterian Conflict, pages 14, 15 and the Encyclopædia Britannica, 11th edition, (1910-11), Volume 3, page 412. Dr. A. A. Hodge lists Barnes among those who deny limited atonement in his book entitled Atonement. Although tried before a church court on the charge that he denied "that man is depraved and separated from God because of his relationship to Adam," Dr. Barnes was never convicted of heresy. This was due to a great extent, to the fact that Hopkinsianism was in control of the General Assembly. (Cf. above citation)

To my delight Barnes does accept the forensic idea of justification as expressed in Psalm thirty-two. How any man can consistently believe in the imputation of Christ's righteousness when he denies the imputation of Adam's guilt is another question. In regard to the Messianic Psalms Barnes accepts the orthodox view that they do indeed refer to the Christ of prophecy. However, the Davidic authorship of the Psalms is repeatedly subjected to the test of other external evidence. One of the most ingenious defenses of the "Imprecatory Psalms" is presented. Since David was king and punishment of evil is right and governments are instituted of God for the punishment of evil-doers, we ought not to be surprised to hear David praying for the destruction of the wicked. Since it is lawful and proper for a government official to pray—whether he be a detective officer, juryman, judge or hangman—pray, that is, that God will prosper his business, that he may be successful in his calling—so the prayers of God's servants in the Psalms need not be gauged to the rails of personal vengeance or hatred of one's enemies.

But this to my mind provides a rather weak solution and does not come to grips with the basic presupposition of the common objection against the "Imprecatory Psalms"—viz., that it is immoral to pray or wish for the doom or destruction of another (Cf. Westminster Journal, Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 123 ff. where the whole problem is treated at some length by one of the keenest theological students of today, the Rev. Johannes G. Vos.) That fundamental assumption is wrong in the light of God's revelation found in the Psalms and the teaching of the apostle John, who is commonly known as the apostle of love, that "there is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request". It is a question what weighs the heaviest with us, the glory of God or the welfare of mankind. If there is a conflict between these two ends the former ought to outweigh the latter on the Calvinistic interpretation of Scripture.

But space forbids further excogitation on this theological problem. Suffice it to say, that although this reviewer believes Barnes to be a good practical commentary for the average layman, a careful perusal of its contents only points to the need of a good, Reformed commentary of the entire Bible in the English language.

Calvin College.

HENRY R. VAN TIL.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH


In THIS book of 168 pages Dr. Koole, a minister of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, presents an analytical survey of the church of the apostolic age, with special emphasis as the title of the book indicates, on public worship and the officiary of the church of that era. In sixteen chapters he deals with as many pertinent subjects.

The author has compressed a vast amount of material into relatively few pages. In view of the spatial limitations that the author imposed upon himself, the reader must not expect a full treatment of a period of church history that is as fundamental as is the apostolic age and whose record, notably in Acts, is a part of the New Testament canon. What Dr. Koole gives leads one to believe that he might have written a far larger book on the subject that engages him. However, his compendium—and that his book virtually is—may serve a good purpose. Being of the size it is, the book will not frighten the interested layman away. And the author's popular style as well as his avoidance of scientific terminology, will encourage the untutored reader to read and study the book. Liturgie en Ambt is rewarding reading for all who delight in searching the Scriptures.

What lends special value to Dr. Koole's book is that its author is consistently exegetical in his study of the apostolic age. Throughout he works almost exclusively with the New Testament itself. His many references to Scripture offer eloquent proof of the soundly biblical character of his investigations. The book is a reasoned presentation of the data con-
cerned: these data have been organized into a unified view of the earliest history of the Christian church. Naturally, his interpretations are, in some instances, open to question. But by and large the book will commend itself to the minds of intelligent students of the church-historical period under review.

Calvin Seminary.

S. VOLKERT

JOHN CALVIN AS PREACHER


JOHN CALVIN has been great in so many ways that his outstanding accomplishments in the art of preaching have all too frequently been overlooked. A. M. Fairbairn, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, makes the bold claim that "modern oratory may be said to begin with him and indeed to be his creation (Cambridge Modern History Vol. II, p. 372)."

Calvin's sermons are uniformly rich in thought and of sound judgment. They reveal an originality of ideas and a warmth of expression. As one might expect of Calvin his text is other parts of Scripture to elucidate his thought, and his sermons are in God's great heart of love. They are not in the other parts of Scripture to elucidate his thought, and his sermons are

The average length of his sermons, if we may speak of an average, would not be more than a half hour. But the 150 sermons on Job were much greater in length. The sermons on the doctrinal epistles are on the whole of the shorter type.

In method he was expository, unless one should understand that term to mean a running commentary of the text. Calvin selects the main thought of the text, as e.g. in the sermon on "The Mystery of Godliness" dwells on the doctrine of God's sovereignty in love and sovereignty in power. Its conclusion is, "But the form of this doctrine is so far from being a concept of passivity, that it always has been an instrument of God's power for doing good."

The publishers are to be commended for this undertaking, whereby they have introduced an important part of Calvin's work, his preaching, to the American public. The volume is put up in a neat form, with clear legible type, attractive to the eye and attractively bound. May it find such a ready market that it will warrant the publication of other sermons of this great master in the near future.

Calvin College.

H. HENRY MEETER

ADVANCED CATECHISM MANUAL

CREDO. HOOFDPUNTEN VAN GEREFORMEERD BELIJDEN EN LIEVEN. By J. Prakken, Kampen: J. H. Kok, N.V.

This booklet devotes three or four-page discussion to some eighteen topics of general interest to a church member. It raises questions as: Why am I a Christian, why a Protestant, why a Reformed man, the doctrine of election, the covenant of grace, church, church order, missions, ministry of the Word, etc. At the close of each discussion a few pointed questions are appended as an aid to further discussion. While the contents are not intended to be at all comprehensive or even a systematic treatise, the book does focus attention upon points which every intelligent churchmember should know. It therefore serves a useful purpose for post-conference classes in catechism, for which this booklet was intended. While it is written for members of another denomination, the Reformed Churches of Netherlands, and in the Holland language, it will prove useful as a handbook for ministers in the Christian Reformed Church who may desire to introduce a similar course in their church.

Calvin College.

H. HENRY MEETER

THE SHORTER CATECHISM


The genesis of this booklet is found in the action of the Session of the Pryor Street Presbyterian Church of Atlanta requesting an explanation of the catechism. The Committee of Religious Education and Publication acted favorably and requested Professor Robinson to prepare an exposition of the Shorter Catechism. The purpose of this exposition-and-answer publication is primarily intended for the indoctrination of Intermediate groups. It will also serve ably for adult groups and persons preparing to make their confession of faith.

The pamphlet is prefaced with a brief introduction by the author and a brief history of the Shorter Catechism. In addition to the questions and answers of the Shorter Catechism Professor Robinson has added a brief commentary to illustrate the doctrinal content of each question and answer. Use of apt illustrations taken from ordinary life and from history are a valuable aid supplied by the author to grasp the doctrinal implications. The doctrine of divine election is presented in the traditional Reformed way as motivated by the sovereign mere good pleasure of God. The author states, "God had His reasons for just the ones He does save, but these reasons are in God's great heart of love. They are not in the elect. None of us deserve the least bit of God's mercy", p. 20.

We wish for this booklet a wide sale both within and outside of the Presbyterian church. It is a healthy sign when a church seeks to introduce systematic courses of study of the true faith for their membership. The 9 x 4 inch size will appeal to catechumens.

R. J. DANHOF

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • JUNE-JULY, 1950
**IS CALVINISM RELEVANT TODAY?**


This little book does not intend to provide the reader with any summary of the salient points of Calvinism applicable for today. Dr. Wurth raises questions which are uppermost in the minds of several in Holland today, asking whether the Calvinistic action of Dr. A. Kuyper and others of one and two generations ago has not passed its crest and is a lost cause, or whether Calvinistic action in Holland still has a future.

In his judgment it indeed has a future. As evidence he would characterize Calvinism in contrast with the growing influence of Humanism as follows: (1) Calvinism of history is not only the profoundest but also the broadest type of world-and-life-view. (2) It distinguishes itself as advocating the strictest adherence to authority as well as the greatest freedom for the individual. (3) It couples complete rest in God's plan with the most potent activity of the human will. (4) It combines the greatest hostility to the world with the most courageous world-acceptance.

These theses he develops in the book in telling phrases. For those who might have questionings concerning recent Dutch Calvinism, as no doubt some of us do, the reading of this little book may prove informing.

H. Henry Meeter.

Calvin College.

**LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE**


This is the enthralling story of Christian Protestant missions. Not a complete record of spiritual conquests in all of its details: it does not so purport to be. Its compass is the span of time from Christ to Carey. Its aim is not to furnish a chronicle but to interpret the missionary story in the light of the original objective, to wit, the mandate that the disciples go forth to witness in the power of the Spirit until Christ comes again on the clouds of heaven. And as the panorama of missionary history is unfolded, whereby these torch-bearers of the gospel contact the fanatical religiousists of Judea, the proud philosophers on Mars Hill, the fierce tribesmen who sweep over Europe in the early Middle Ages, the representatives of every strata of society over the globe, the author (the President of Wheaton College, who prosecuted this work under terms of an alumni grant of that institution) seeks to plot the trend and note the divergencies and changes that ensued in the course of the centuries. Needless to say its approach is Protestant and hence there is but scant reference to Roman Catholic missions in the Orient and in America.

The threefold division of this copiously notated and extensively documented work follows the traditional "ancient-medieval-modern" pattern with the following respective delineations: "The Light that Shone," "The Light that Failed," and "The Light that Shone Again." In so doing Edman departs somewhat from Latourette's pattern of alternate waves of advancement and recession. (cf. E. S. Latourette, The Unquenchable Light, Harpers, 1941, where the author depicts the period of 950-1350 AD as an era of advancement.)

At the initiation of the first period, described as "The Light that Shone," there was a tremendous burst of missionary enthusiasm. All Christians under the enduement of the Spirit and with the objective of "winning souls" witnessed effectively by lip and life. And as the light of the Roman empire flickered, the light of the gospel gleamed increasingly brilliantly. But that first flame did not retain its undimmed brilliance. Already in the 3rd century the layman began to recede into the background, philosophy began to compete with the Word, education began to loom as a rival to evangelization, and sacramentalism approached magicalism. And after Constantine opened wide the door, secularism entered in volume and the light of the gospel began to flicker appreciably.

The 2nd period, coextensive with the medieval era, is designated "The Light that Failed." And it did fail, not entirely it is true, but the gospel wick burned dangerously low. The church lost sight of its original marching orders. Churchianity was substituted for Christianity, superstition and magicalism for the Scriptures, and the penitential process for repentance before God. The policy of "adaptation" to pagan weaknesses was studiously pursued. Mass conversion and compulsion replaced persuasion and personal witnessing. The layman virtually became a non-entity and the hierarchy assumed overwhelmingly dominant proportions.

In the Protestant Reformation we see "The Light that Shone Again." And the resurgence anew of the evangelical flame meant a return to the method of witnessing, a return to the infallible Bible, and a return to the emphasis on repentance and faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Edman's work has much to commend it. The author tells the story interestingly and well. He does full justice to the historical setting in which the drama is unfolded, for even though "the missionary message and motivation are divine, the scene is very human." He hews to the line of historic Christian tradition. In other words, there is nothing of the spirit of Rethinking Missions in it. Missionary activity according to Edman (and according to Scripture) is neither a human enterprise nor a philanthropic undertaking; it is rather the divinely ordained and divinely directed work of God bringing men to a saving knowledge through Jesus Christ. God's Spirit, God's Word, and God's people constitute the conference of vital factors that are involved.

A few strictures ought to be made. One has to do with the Biblical principle of the depositary of the trust of missions. That work is committed to God's instituted Church. Upon His Church rests the responsibility of bringing the good news to the ends of the earth. Edman seems to assume that if missionary work is done in the right way, it makes little difference who sponsors it. Fact is that the disciples of Jesus, as nucleus of the first Christian church, were invested with its responsibility. Hence the Church as institute must disseminate the gospel. To leave that pivotal task to independent societies is to be grossly derelict in duty.

A second stricture, more serious than the foregoing one, is that there is a higher and grander objective than Edman envisions in the romance of Christian missions. That ideal is the glory of the sovereign God and of His Christ. "Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things." "Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatever ye do (and that includes missions surely) do all to the glory of God." Although the "winning of souls" is Scriptural, it is not the ultimate. There is no command in the Scriptures to "win the world for Christ." Our aim is not in the first place to "win for the Lamb that was slain a reward for suffering," for no mortal can ever garner that reward for Him, but to magnify the God who revealed His gracious purposes at the very dawn of human history and in the unfolding of missionary history displays the matchless glory of His sovereign grace.

John H. Bratt.