Quest for Peace
Some Moral Requisites

Brunner's Dogmatics
His Idea of God

Calvinistic Philosophy
What the Quest Is

Godless Communism
A Second Islam?

Ecumenical Horizon
Lights and Shadows

Letters
Reviews
Appreciations
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Moral Requisites of Peace

In an approved philosophic fashion I shall begin with the Greeks. However, I don’t propose to stay with them very long. The Greeks defined man, not as a moral and rational being but as a rational and political animal. They all but overlooked the qualification moral, for the very good reason that by and large they themselves were never quite clear about the meaning and importance of the moral. Consequently they underestimated the problem of evil and the fact that besides being a rational and a gregarious animal, man is also a selfish animal, a jealous animal, a suspicious animal, and a fearful animal. They would never have defined man as an economic animal or as a combative animal.

Economic Man
A Sinner

It required, therefore, the Hebrew-Christian tradition to take these more unfortunate traits seriously and bring them to our attention. This tradition did not deny that man was a rational and political being; it simply added that man was also, and pre-eminently, a moral being—and a sinning being. Since he could hardly be a sinning being, unless he were a moral being, and since he could not make his selfishness effective unless he were a rational and a political (social) being, the result was the following definition of man: Man is a moral, rational, and social being who by reason of sin has a tendency to hate his neighbor (for selfishness, fear, and suspicion in the long run breed hatred).

For purposes of this article we can now make the jump to Adam Smith and his Wealth of Nations, a work in which he discusses the so-called economic man. Adam Smith takes a man’s selfishness for granted, asserting that about the only thing he needs is education, in order that he may become intelligently selfish. Applying his intelligent selfishness to the sphere of economics he will, naturally, buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. Furthermore, he will realize that the wider the market the greater the prosperity and that, consequently, the true economic ideal is free world trade. Now inasmuch as a prerequisite for unimpeded world trade is international peace, the economic man by his very selfishness will be an apostle of peace. In short, given intelligent selfishness, the absence of war is practically assured.

Adam Smith apparently failed to see, not only that intelligent selfishness is a contradiction in terms, but also that under certain conditions man’s selfishness just about invariably overwhelms his intelligence. Even before World War I, for example, the peoples of the world were inadequately clothed, fed, and sheltered. To bring the global standard of living up to a decent minimum would have required the concentration of all the energies and resources at the command of the various governments. The governments failed in this then, and they are failing now—for obvious unintelligent reasons. Again, our intelligence tells us that war is stupid. But the fact remains that people are stupid and that much of their energy and wits is spent in devising different ways in being stupid. Suicide is stupid, but people commit suicide, if not directly, then at least indirectly by means of drink, incontinence, debilitating habits of life, and the frenzied, inordinate pursuit of things and money. Our intelligence tells us that the sensible thing for any nation nowadays is to accept U. N. decisions reached by due process of U. N. law. This would seem to be essential not only to U. N. authority but also to the welfare of the united nations. Suppose, however, that our acceptance of a U. N. decision would place Canada or the Argentine, not to speak of Russia, in a position of temporary material advantage over us, would we be inclined to do the intelligent thing for the sake of global good? The probability is that we would refuse to abide by the decision and regard our refusal as just and sensible. Finally, our intelligence tells us that lasting peace involves extreme good will, good will to the point of at least some sacrifice for the sake of others. But would we willingly lower our own standard of living for the sake of India or Korea or even Mother England? If an American statesman were deliberately to sacrifice a United States interest to another nation or group of nations for the sake of global peace, he would probably not go down in American history as a great national figure. The leading nations, dominated by selfishness and suspicion, still rely on their high commands, not on the U. N. And the Atlantic Pact is highly “extracurricular.”

At this point some will ask, Why bring all this up? The answer is that successful waging of the peace necessitates an honest recognition and appraisal of the difficulties. Human nature may not make war inevitable but it does make war difficult to avoid. In the past nations and peoples have rarely solved their problems, economic or otherwise; they have either gotten used to them or started a war. War, of course, has always resulted in more
and worse problems, but people seem to have enjoyed the relief that comes from novelty. Once people want something badly—and this is especially true in the case of economic power—and have no tradition or religion serving to reduce the urgency of the want, there would seem to be but two alternatives: One is to give them what they want, or a portion thereof, and the other is to bludgeon them into a position where they must temporarily forget it because of preoccupation with more immediate and more urgent realities (we are talking about the world of hard international facts and necessities).

Some Requisites of Positive Peace

This brings us to the subject of what for want of a better name we shall designate as positive peace. Positive peace means something more than mere absence of war. Incidentally, most people who talk about peace seem to have no interest in positive peace because, as they say, it is unrealistic—a statement which, in the last analysis, simply means that to them the price to be paid is too high. However, let us consider the nature of the relationships existing between Canada and the United States, where we are given a hint as to what is involved in permanent peace. There will probably never be a fortified boundary between these two countries, nor is it likely that they will ever engage in an armament race. There are two kinds of reasons for this, viz., the coercive or potentially coercive, and the non-coercive, i.e., the moral or spiritual. The coercive reasons every school boy knows. Successful conquest of Canada on our part would not improve our economic and military position; and Canada on her part would have no chance against us. Furthermore, today Canada and we face a common enemy and common dangers, so that we have common military and economic interests. Finally, we can make good use of Canadian resources and Canada can make good use of our money in developing these resources. These same considerations hold, if to a lesser degree, with respect to our relations with our neighbors to the south. In short, we are more or less coerced into peace. Unfortunately, a coerced peace carries the seeds of potential war. The non-coercive factors involved in our peace with Canada, therefore, are more significant and much more reliable. They are such factors as a common language and common traditions, a long history of good will and mutual trust, a genuine attempt to understand one another, and a mutual desire to justify one another's motives and actions. Peace here is the by-product of other factors, in consequence of which no deliberate campaigning and propaganda will be required in order to prevent war.

And now the question arises, How translate a situation such as this into global terms? Unfortunately most Americans appear to be interested in peace only because they wish to maintain the status quo and because they want some assurance against another world war in the near future. Also they seem to believe that war can be averted by mere propaganda for peace, not realizing the significance of an old Roman proverb to the effect that if you can't defeat your enemies you had better marry them (the very thing that happened between Canada and us). If world courts and united nations organizations are to be effective, the nations must be prepared to pay a high price in moral and spiritual coin. Among other things they will have to cultivate a high feeling of international moral responsibility and a desire to seek the good of other nations, realizing that upon their own good ultimately depends. (The Marshall Plan is actually a recognition of the fact that today, for our own good, we must seek the good even of Germany. Suppose we had realized this thirty years ago and had done voluntarily what we are now compelled to do?) Positive peace, once more, demands a price so high in terms of character, intelligence, and self-sacrifice that to most people it will seem utterly unrealistic. Positive peace is analogous to a successful marriage: the parties involved must possess sufficient character and faith to be willing to bet their lives on it. Which means that peace must be waged as war is waged: there must be an all-out devotion, a full use of talents and resources, and a cheerful acceptance of the difficulties. If this seems unrealistic, let us not fail to note that permanent peace on any other basis is equally unrealistic. Before the nations will honestly cease their preparations for war, something in the nature of a determination to pay the price will have to show up.

Misleading Faith in Tools

Incidentally, we Americans have a misleading faith in tools. "There ought to be a law!" or, as in the case of moral education, "There ought to be a course!" We tend to believe that given efficient machinery, our problems are practically solved or, worse, are automatically solving themselves. This faith in machinery amounts to fetishism, and it frequently puts us to sleep. Such of my students, for example, as happen to be interested in the United Nations Organization, upon examination almost invariably show an interest only in its machinery. It never occurs to them to ask, What about the moral calibre and idealism of the millions who must back it up? Are they prepared to bet their lives on its success? Knowledge of the United Nations Charter, of how problems are handled, and so on, is doubtless an achievement, but it is far from being enough. After all, the former World Court at The Hague had first class machinery and expert judges, but it failed to prevent two world wars. The machinery of U. N. or any other institutionalized agreement, is
analogous to a violin: An inexpensive one in the hands of a Kreisler will result in music; an expensive and technically perfect one in the hands of an unwilling or inept learner will result in something worse than nothing. Any dirty little ward heeler can tell you that the best city charter will not stop graft and exploitation if the local citizens do not insist upon good government.

To return to our original topic: Permanent (positive) peace can be had only if and when action to prevent war is based upon a more or less universal conviction that one nation's hurt is the hurt of all. If this is unrealistic, then permanent peace is unrealistic and we shall, therefore, have to put up with the next best thing. To a discussion of this we now turn (on the assumption that the next best thing is good enough, a proposition which no Christian man believes).

The United States as World Leader

Although in a narrow and technical military sense we won the war, the result has not been what we had hoped. We still face entrenched dictatorships and totalitarianism on every side; the principles of free enterprise are widely ignored; there has been no significant spread of the Bill of Rights; and disease, want, and disorder are found over wide areas of the globe. The "old order" is gone—the order that existed, roughly speaking, between the end of the Napoleonic wars and the beginning of World War I, over which Britain presided, the order that has been referred to as the "Indian summer of the aristocratic European regime." The continent of Europe was the center of world government and Western culture. There were, of course, rivalries and wars, but they were fairly well localized. The rulers recognized one another as permanent members of an international society, and the object of war and diplomacy was never the destruction of a great power. There were no total wars.

Today we face, not a new order, but a disorder, and we have almost no conception of what the future shape of things is going to be. Should a new order actually come into being, either Russia or we will play the role which Britain is no longer able to play. Assuming that we are destined to play that role, it becomes at once obvious that we are facing a much tougher job than Britain ever faced. We must conceive and defend an order which does not yet exist, and we have been given only about thirty years to learn our role, whereas Britain had almost two hundred. In short, we must act as a leading world power before we are ready to act. And this involves a number of embarrassing questions. How many of the nations not under communist dominance really believe that their good is tied up with ours? How many of them are convinced that we are honestly seeking the common good, that this will be our permanent policy, and that we are not acting the role of the proverbial devil who "when the devil sick was, the devil a monk would be"? A leader has been defined as one who both knows what to do and can arouse the admiration of his followers. How many leaders and leading groups in the non-communist nations are sure that we know what to do, and how many of them genuinely admire us? Do they look to us with the same apparent enthusiasm as the communist minorities within these nations look to Russia? As a potential world leader we must realize that from now on our domestic issues will have international significance, and that our domestic problems and evils will be severely high-lighted in our foreign relations.

No Mean Task

Again, our responsibility, as other nations see it, will be to establish an international order that shall be characterized by a permanent absence of war; for they sense that we probably can't have another war and have anything like a society of nations left. Now it appears that in the immediate future such leadership as we are able to exercise will be by way of U.N., so that our immediate task will be that of instilling in our own people and the peoples of the world the determination to use its agencies. This will amount to urging upon ourselves and others such difficult things as compromises, sacrifices, and the curbing of national ambitions. That this is no easy matter is patent when we consider that we shall be dealing with shaky democratic governments on the one hand, and entrenched dictatorships on the other; and that over against us there is a strong, ruthless Russia apparently dedicated to opposing and, possibly, destroying our leadership. This matter of atomic fission, incidentally, seems bleak any way one looks at it. It may spell, as some badly want to believe, economic and social salvation; but it may also be the beginning of a real hell on earth. Even when used for productive ends, it may have the effects of any radically revolutionary invention. It may bring in its wake a host of economic, social, and international maladjustments, even to the extent of altering the center of balance between the so-called stronger and weaker nations. We had better not rely too much upon "Science" for the solution of world problems.

Now some of our optimistic fellow citizens seem to think that inasmuch as we have enjoyed the advantages of an unprecedented experience in handling foreigners, even to the extent of making them live together in peace, we are eminently qualified to act as leader and guide of the new international order. They forget, of course, that dealing with individuals is not the same as handling nations. The newly arrived immigrant, despite the fact that he was
exploited, that his traditions, dress, and way of life were ridiculed, and that the basis of his self-respect was all but destroyed, remained with us simply because he had no means of getting away. How translate this into global terms? Others pin their hopes on the analogy of the original Thirteen Colonies and their federation under the Constitution. They forget that these colonies had the advantages of a common language, common racial antecedents, common traditions, common grievances, and common dangers; they felt weak and alone on the international sea and consequently huddled like cattle before the storm. They also forget that the making of the Constitution and the organizing of the Federal Government, however impressive as political achievements, did not prevent the Civil War, a war which could have subdivided North America into a four or five nation continent, with all the economic, social, and nationalistic ills that have forever plagued Europe and have finally destroyed her as the center of world government; and that the Confederacy, rather than face defeat, would gladly have had it so. But just how well would we as a nation stand up as the leader of a new international order? To that question we shall address ourselves in a succeeding article.

Brunner’s Idea of God

THE claim of Dialectical Theology to be Reformation Theology at its best ought to be evaluated more critically than is usually done. First, because its virility and fascination are gaining for it the increased attention of students of Reformation Theology. Second, because its “similarity” to Reformed Theology creates a real possibility of confusing one with the other.

In dealing with a powerful theology, a little knowledge is as dangerous, as superficial appraisals are ineffective. It profits little to merely list the weaknesses of this theology for the simple reason that it is strong in spite of them. Grocery-like lists of the denials of Virgin Birth, Historical Fall, Verbal Inspiration, etc., caution the unwary, but serve little theological purpose. Victory will never be achieved by external observation of the ramparts. Reformed theology will only insure its own identity if it battles from within a thorough understanding of Dialectical Theology, thus revealing the matrix from which the various doctrinal aberrations proceed. Unless this is done, the idea will persist that the aberrations can be corrected within the dialectical framework.

This task is easier to perform since the appearance of Emil Brunner’s The Christian Doctrine of God.1 The book is stimulating, provocative, fresh as originality itself. It will stab the student of theology wide awake. More important, it gives Brunner’s idea of God defined in terms of his basic theological motif.

A Theology of Revelation, Not of the Bible

The Prolegomena demands serious study and reveals what is essential for an understanding of Brunner. Revelation is said to distinguish Christianity from paganism and speculation. The Christian idea of revelation can only be found in the Bible. True enough. But, once the idea of revelation is discovered, it becomes lord over the Bible. A la Luther, the Bible is the cradle in which Christ lies, and Christ is lord over the cradle. From the Bible generally, the dogmatician must glean the Christian idea of revelation, and then evaluate everything in the Bible, including cradle and straw, in the light of this idea of revelation. This is Brunner’s method. Once this is understood, it is easy to understand his ambiguous treatment of the Bible. Those parts which support his idea of revelation, he takes seriously; those which do not, are by theological reflection dismissed as naive.

At this point, the charge of subjectivism must be leveled at Brunner. Reformed Theology too has her concept of revelation (and analogia fidei) but she escapes subjectivism by refusing to attribute to any of her concepts a lordship over the Bible. Every truly Reformed theological formulation remains subject to biblical revision. No Reformed theologian would say with Brunner that his relationship to the Bible is, “one of freedom . . . in no way dogmatically binding.”2 The lordship of Brunner’s idea of revelation ends, naturally enough, in the lordship of Brunner over the Bible. For this idea, subject to no authority that can demand revision, is after all his idea. This subjectivism makes possible Brunner’s distortion of the Christian doctrine of God and, in consequence, every doctrine.

God reveals his Name in Christ. This for Brunner means not merely that revelation is historical, but, and this should be noted carefully: nothing can be said about God except that which is historical. For God himself is historical, existential. Reformed


2 Ibid., p. 34.
Theology claims that God first exists non-historically, antecedent to history, and then makes himself known through history. But Brunner says that to think about God's pre-existence is speculative, for God is essentially and exclusively historical. Metaphysically speaking, God is synonymous with his revelational activity. "There is nothing 'more metaphysical' in the doctrine of God than this: that God's Nature in himself is precisely his Being-for-us. If the doctrine of God as he is 'in himself' is the philosophical formula of 'Being-Subject' then the Christian formula for the Being of God is 'Being-for-us' ... '" Notice, this does not mean that all knowledge of God, even of God as pre-existent, comes through historical revelation. That would be true enough. But Brunner means that there is no pre-existent God, no God as he is 'in himself.' There is no Being of God except that which is identical with his historical revelation. This is the meaning of Brunner's repeated insistence that in revelation God gives himself. God is what he does! This is fatal. If God is nothing more than his revelational activity, the Christian God is lost in metaphysical nihilism.

The essential difference between classical philosophy and modern existentialism is indicated by the displacement of Essence by Existence. Brunner's God is a purely existential God, existence without essence. Having defined God as wholly equated with existence," in which trans-historical realm man can alone truly exist, fall, and be redeemed.

In revelation we learn that God is Holiness and Love. Holiness means that God is wholly other than creation. As the Holy One he draws the boundary line between himself and creation, and as the Holy One he maintains it. When the sinner, to be like God, crosses the line, Holiness breaks forth in jealous wrath in the interest of self-preservation — for God will not give his honor to another.

On the other hand, and in dialectical contradiction to it, the Holy One desires that the earth be filled with his glory, that man enjoy communion with God. Therefore, the Holy One communicates, gives himself to man. This is God's Love. Thus Holiness and Love are neither identical nor wholly separate. They are dialectically related. Thus God's Nature is permeated by a dialectical tension, a tension between Holiness as God's will to maintain the distance between God and man, and Holiness as God's will to traverse the distance to give himself to man. In Christ they are united in paradoxical unity. In Brunner's words, "Holiness creates distance, but love creates communion. Holiness erects barriers, love breaks through them." "This indissoluble connexion between Holiness and Love is the characteristic element in the Christian idea of God." This is the "ultimate dialectic."

### The Freedom of God

The most basic thing Brunner says about God is that God is the Lord, i.e., God is free. Holiness is God's freedom to maintain himself against creation and sin. Love is God's freedom to give himself. In creating, Brunner says, God limits himself, yet since God freely limits himself, and is free at any time to destroy creation, God remains truly free. Brunner ignores the question whether God limits himself when he makes a promise, and whether he could withdraw the promise and end the self-limitation. Again, in love God shows his freedom over the Law. Law and Judgment means that God will have his rights. Yet where, asks Brunner, is the sovereignty of God more clearly demonstrated than in "a freedom which means that, if He chooses, He has a perfect right to ignore the Law and to act freely in another way"? Although Brunner admits that God did not in fact ignore the Law, but took the curse upon himself, yet this redemptive act is regarded as the free act of Love doing what Holiness as Wrath forbids. This will to communion, in spite of Holiness as Wrath, is, declares Brunner, the essence of Christian Ontology.

Space forbids more than a pointing out of the distinctive features of Brunner's doctrine of the Attributes. God's attributes are not a part of God's Nature, they are only God's Nature as it relates (reveals) itself to the world. They are purely relational. Here, too, nothing metaphysical must be said about God. In harmony with Brunner's equation of God and revelation, all the attributes are dialectically defined. Moreover, each is an expression of God's freedom. For example, God is not in himself eternal. God's eternity is only his free lordship over time. The attribute of eternity simply means that God is free.

God's freedom, however, is even greater. Through freedom, God as eternal, as Lord over time, can become temporal and become the victim of time. Thus God's freedom is so totally unqualified that God is free to change into his opposite. This last statement might not seem to be true, inasmuch as, according to Brunner, God's attributes are not God's Nature.

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1. Ibid., p. 192.
2. Ibid., p. 188.
3. Ibid., p. 183.
4. Ibid., p. 280.
but only his Nature as it relates itself to the world. I maintain, however, that this distinction is purely arbitrary, for if God’s attributes are God’s Nature as related to the world, then eternality, for example, must indicate something of God’s Nature.

Thus it becomes clear that in the thought of Brunner, God’s Holiness, his Love, all his attributes, and all his revelation in Christ, is first and primarily an expression of God’s Freedom. Much is sometimes made of the difference between Barth and Brunner. Yet so far as I have been able to discern, the only real difference between them is Brunner’s greater insistence upon the freedom of God.

The Trinity

Brunner criticizes the Athanasian Creed and the biblical baptismal formula because both naively place the Persons of the Trinity “alongside” each other. So regarded, Father and Son are equated, with the result, that the Father can only be what he is in the Son. But in revelation, argues Brunner, we do not have the Father “alongside” the Son, but the Father in and through the Son. Thus regarded, they can be one and yet not identical, and can therefore be regarded as dialectically related. Hence God can be other than he is in Christ. This, says Brunner against Barth, protects and safeguards the freedom of God. Only if the Trinity is properly understood does God remain free to love, to elect in Christ, and free to do his “strange works” of wrath, to reject, outside Christ. In Christ, God must remain free to veil his “otherness”: outside Christ, God must remain free to show his “naked majesty” as wrath. Thus the dialectical Nature of God as Holiness and Love retains its dialectical character in revelation: in what God is in Christ and in what he is outside Christ.

This duality postulated within God utterly disregards the biblical teaching that God has only one Son who is the “express image of his person,” “in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwellth bodily.” While Reformed thought denies that Christ exhaustively reveals God so that no mystery remains, it nonetheless insists that God reveals the “whole” God, that there is no “part” of God totally unrevealed which might indeed be in contradiction to what God is in Christ. Else were faith a risky venture indeed! Brunner’s dualism seriously confuses that awful “intolerable” fulness of God’s glory—which no man can see and live—with the wrath of God which is intolerable of all sin. This Something which God can be outside Christ, seems to be related to that abyss of nothingness, to that realm of sheer possibility and unqualified freedom, which Berdyaev, Barth, and all existentialists place at the heart of Reality. Significantly, Brunner’s last sentence is: “Faith alone knows the abyss from which Christ saves.”

Election

Unless we subscribe to his view of the Trinity, there are, claims Brunner, only two possibilities: Universalism or Double Predestination. Barth’s equation of Father and Son produces a Christian Monism in which Christ is the Elect and only Rejected man. Since God deals with man only in Christ, all men are saved. Barth’s view, says Brunner, “is the most thoroughgoing doctrine of Universalism that has ever been formulated.” This same wrong view of the Trinity made it possible for Calvin to combine a wrong view of eternity, as containing a completed plan of God, and a wrong view of causality, as related to unbelief, and to arrive at that decretum horribile of double predestination, of which, says Brunner, the Bible knows nothing.

Brunner’s view: God only elects in Christ. Election is an event, an event synonymous with God’s self-revelation. Election is God’s free act of communicating himself to man. Thus election and revelation are one and the same event. “Where the Son is there is Election; but where the Son is not, there is no Election.” Election and revelation are, however, also synonymous with faith. “The Son is only present where there is faith.”

This clearly is not, nor ever has been, the Reformed view of election. Brunner himself, moreover, must face the question how on such a view the sinner can reject Christ? If the Son is only present to faith, how can Christ be rejected, if he is not present in rejection? How can the moment of faith and revelation be truly decisive if the possibility of rejection is excluded? Brunner cannot have it both ways. Yet he makes the attempt. To avoid Universalism within the divine-human encounter, and to save the moment as decisive, Brunner contends that the sinner can reject Christ and turn God’s election into his own reprobation. Yet if God’s act of revelation is synonymous with election and faith, in the instances of rejection it would appear that God does after all treat some men differently in Christ than others. But if so, Brunner is again facing Calvin’s double predestination. Brunner makes a Promethean attempt within revelation to avoid reprobation—and fails.

Brunner only avoids Calvin by resorting to his own concept of freedom—at which point he joins hands with the Arminians. God elects but man turns election into actual salvation or reprobation. Thus Brunner’s definition of election, which required his peculiar definition of the Trinity, which

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7 Discounting the Appendix.
8 Ibid., p. 314.
9 Ibid.
in its turn was required to protect the freedom of God, appears at the end to be a theological con­
trivance whose function is to protect the freedom of man. In the Bible, and in the moment of
revelation, man is lord; rather he is lord over the Bible to insure his lordship over God.

Barth has denied Universalism: “The Church ought not to preach Apokatastasis.”10 “When he
denies this,” says Brunner, “he is not altogether wrong.”11 Nonetheless, Brunner contends that
Barth’s view, “is the most thoroughgoing Universal­ism that has ever been formulated.”12

One wonders whether one ought to take Brunner’s repudiation of Universalism any more seriously than
he has taken Barth’s. I Peter 3:19 leaves the door open, says Brunner, for salvation after this life.
Brunner, moreover, does not object to Barth’s Universalism as such, but only to Barth’s confidence of
its actuality. The Bible does not teach it, but, declares Brunner, because God is free it is an open
possibility. In the same breath in which he urges against Barth’s Universalism that, “This doctrine
destroys the dialectical unity of Holiness and Love, and this is the Biblical idea of God,” he asserts that
the Bible allows for the possibility of Universalism.13 That Universalism would, on his own avowal, destroy
the dialectical Nature of God as Holiness and Love, does not deter Brunner. An existential God, who
is what he does, would necessarily be the kind of

12 Ibid., p. 314.
13 Ibid., p. 355.

God, who through decisive action, could freely
change his own Nature!

Brunner averts that Barth ends in Universalism
because of his monistic idea of the Trinity. Brunner
tries to avoid Universalism by positing a dualism
within God by virtue of which God can meet the-sinner-who-has-rejected-Christ outside of Christ,
just as though he had never met him in Christ. To
maintain this original dualism between Holiness and
Love, Brunner must maintain that God’s “strange
work” has “no part or lot in the Son.”14 This dual­
ism, which is the pre-condition for the dialectical
dance, is a denial that the Father does all things
through the Son. It can maintain itself only by a
concept of revelation which in lordly freedom dis­
messes those Scripture passages as naïve which
Teach that the wrath of God is expressed through
the “wrath of the Lamb,” through the Son who shall
“rule with a rod of iron,” and through whom he
shall one day judge the world. Brunner fails to give
theological recognition to the biblical teaching that
God will deal with all men through Christ, and that
even those who never heard of Christ, who knew not
the Way, shall be judged by that very negative
relation to Christ, on the basis of which, though
they perish, they will be beaten with few stripes.

Brunner’s idea of God needs reforming at its base
To be the basis of Reformed Theology at its best;
much Christianizing to be the Christian doctrine
of God.

14 Ibid., p. 234.

WALK IN WINTER

Come, watch with me the falling snow
That lightly sifts across the hill
To wrap in ermine brush and rail
And stuff the fields all white and still.

So soon these whispering hours are done
And darkness drifts from tree to tree,
There is no sound in all this place
But snow-spent wind . . .

and you . . .

and me . . .

Marie J. Post
The Quest for a Calvinistic Philosophy

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SCIENTIFIC, theological, and philosophical theories and disputes do not belong to the competence of synods and other ecclesiastical bodies. Calvin says in his Institutes (Book IV, Chap. 12, p. 8) that the church should cling to the native purity of the word. The Belgic Confession says practically the same in Articles 7 and 32: The Bible is the only infallible rule for faith and life, and, therefore, the church should not introduce any human inventions or laws into the worship of God. This does not mean that scientific theories are useless. They may be perhaps subjects of discussion in our church papers, if this can be done in an adequate fashion. They ought to be analysed in popular scientific papers, if this can be done without immediately qualifying one’s opponent as a heretic. In the course of history different theories have been developed in regard to the covenant, common grace, and philosophy. As long as those who defend such theories stay within the boundaries of the church confessions, and above all submit themselves to the Scriptures on which the confessions are based, they should be heard with patience, even if this may be painful for all parties concerned. Out of a fraternal discussion at last a new point of view may be born which finally satisfies all parties concerned. In many cases part of the truth lies on each side of the difference. It takes time and patience to understand each other. Whoever is conservative will probably defend the old formulas, and whoever is active will welcome the new. With wisdom and love it may be possible to come to a compromise, or at least to acknowledge that, for the time being, there can be no solution as yet, but that the parties concerned should continue to weigh each other’s arguments. In the long run truth will triumph, Augustine remarked; that is, if we are all willing to bow before the Word of God.

One of the problems that confronts Calvinists in the Netherlands at present, and now begins to arouse the attention in America, is the question whether a Scriptural Philosophy is possible. At the Free University there are two gifted professors who for almost a quarter of a century have tried to work out a Calvinistic philosophy which created quite a following, but can find no acceptance in the eyes of the more conservative elements. Both groups appeal to Calvin, and to Scripture. The new movement publishes a quarterly entitled: Philosophia Reformata, that is Reformed Philosophy. One of the opponents wrote a series of pamphlets under the common title: Dreigende Deformatie. The new movement is growing. It counts at present about six hundred members and four hundred donors. The opponents at present keep quiet, and are waiting for new developments. On the other hand, the new philosophy of the Law Idea inspires more and more confidence. Its books and articles show more clarity and line. A third professor in philosophy was appointed a short time ago, Dr. Zuiderma, to teach Logic in the Free University, next to Dr. Vollen­hoven, originally a theologian, and Dr. Dooyeweerd, a law scholar. A fourth professor, Smitskamp, teaching history has just joined the movement. Professor Berkouwer has written very appreciative words about the inaugural oration of Dr. Zuiderma. A fund has been established to pay the salaries for three or more professors in the new Calvinistic philosophy in the public universities of Groningen (Dr. K. Popma), Utrecht (Dr. Zuiderma), Rotterdam (Dr. Melkies), and Leiden, where recently Dr. Westerinck was giving a private course. The future is pregnant with great promises.

What is the difference between the two groups, the reader will inquire. It seems that the differences are basically as follows. The older group maintains that man’s natural reason is able to find the central truths of philosophy with the help of God’s common grace. Those findings must be criticized, that is, corrected or confirmed by Scripture. But philosophy really belongs to the domain of common grace. There is a “general faith” which forms the basis of the central truths, and a “general testimony” of the Holy Spirit which can be understood by everyone. The Bible is the corrective and complement of “natural theology”. The Bible corrects and increases this general knowledge. We must, therefore, borrow the basic principles of a Christian philosophy from Plato and Aristotle, from Descartes and Spinoza, from Kant and Hegel, and we must give these principles a Christian content.

It is impossible, they say, that all the philosophical labor of pagans, and unbelievers should have been in vain. Paul quotes the Stoics in Acts 17 when he says: “In him we live, move and have our being.” Augustine takes over some of the basic principles of Plato and Aristotle, even if he warned that nothing in creation can be understood outside the Trinity. Faith in Christ seems to be only corrective and complementary, even for Augustine. Calvin is a theologian and no philosopher, and Kuyper and Bavinck, though they preached the antithesis of be-
lievers and unbelievers in word and act, are actually to on the track of Augustine. There is between the world and God's people a common ground, a real neutral zone, where they can discuss their circumferential differences.

The "New" philosophy contends that Paul speaks of the poor and beggarly principles of the world, and that he rejects the views of the pagans as false knowledge, as hollow grounds, and vain deceit. Paul and John and the other apostles warn not only against the Gnostics who tried to reconcile the pagan myths with Christianity, but indirectly against Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics and the Epicureans, the Western and Eastern errors. In the first three chapters of I Corinthians Paul draws a sharp line between the wisdom of the world and of the believers, of Christ and of Satan. In Romans 1:20 he grants that the pagans have an idea of the divinity and power of God, but maintains also that they changed the truth into a lie. Therefore, we cannot speak of a general faith, nor of a general testimony of the Holy Spirit which can be understood by all. Mind and heart are both corrupted. They must both be renewed, religiously, morally, philosophically. The Bible is not only a corrective and a complement of our so-called natural knowledge of God, but it is the basis for our religion, ethics, and philosophy, i.e., our speculations and theories. We are not able then to borrow our basic ideas from Plato and his followers. Their work has value, because it shows negatively that unbelief cannot get at any totality, and positively that whatever is usable is only second rate and of a "natural," or "technical" character. Augustine himself felt this when he wrote his books on the Trinity and on True Religion. Calvin, in addition to this, included in his writings the fundamental ideas of a Christian philosophy: of a theory of knowledge, of a theory of relations, and of a theory of culture (art, science, and practical life) and its relation to church and state. Through Kuypers and Bavinck's works there runs a double track. On the one hand, they maintain the antithesis of a science and philosophy of faith over against those of unbelief, but on the other, they continue to build on the foundations of Aristotle and Aquinas. However, there is not a common foundation of the temple of God and the one of idols (2 Cor. 6:16, translation by Grosheide), there is no real neutral zone, nowhere and never. Even if two say the same, it is not therefore the same. This is being repeated by Kuypers and Bavinck incessantly, and that is their great merit. We must design our own Christian philosophy, Kuypers said. We must build our own philosophy on Special Revelation first of all, Bavinck teaches. We must hold on to this truth. In this lies our salvation. Augustine and Calvin have uttered some profound thoughts about this.

If then we want to make any progress, we shall certainly have to return to Calvin. What has Calvin say about the influence of sin and grace (particular and general) on the human mind? (Compare Common Grace by Dr. C. Van Til). But also what has Calvin laid down in regard to the basic principles of a Theory of Knowledge? (Compare Institutes, Bk. I, Chap. 5, 6, 7 and 13). And further, what has Calvin taught about the theories of relations, and of culture? (Compare Bk. III, Chaps. 10 and 19). There are deep treasures hidden in Calvin, especially in his Institutes. This important book has been laid aside by the theologians, even by the Reformed ones. But if we cannot agree to all that Calvin said, in his main principles he is hailed by all as pure and Scriptural. The Greek and modern philosophers have idolized the formula of Plato and Aristotle, that everything can be explained by the chasm of matter and form, (that is: patterning or forming energy,) as if there could be an eternal conflict between God and his creation, and in creation between matter and mind, between the visible and invisible world. There seems to be only one prominent modern philosopher, the English American Whitehead (1861-1947) who has protested against this bifurcation, or dichotomy, and, of course, on the basis of experience. But Augustine and Calvin have pointed out that according to Scripture the creation and its parts can only be understood in the light of the Trinity (Romans 11:36). Calvin has probably laid the basis for a trinitarian philosophy. Professor Doyeweerd has alluded to this in his American treatise on The Transcendentals of Philosophic Thought (1946), when he speaks of the basic theme of Augustine: Creation, Fall, and Redemption. In this theme the motive of the Trinity is hidden. This motive up to now has not received such an interest with the new movement as it deserves. For Calvin this motive is the central doctrine of Scripture, as Bavinck points out in his Dogmatics, Vol II, but it is also the fundamental doctrine of his philosophy, "For, of Him and through Him and to Him are all things," even the fundamentals of true speculative thought (Institutes, Bk. I, Chaps. 5 and 13).

Perhaps someone will remark: but what is left in this way of God's revelation in nature and history? Must all principles then be deduced from Scripture? Our answer is: Calvin believes that nature and history cannot be understood but in the light of Scripture, and that the central doctrine of Scripture is the Sovereignty of the Triune God. From this it follows that there are two kinds of principles, primary and secondary. The primary are all in the Bible. The secondary ones, or "Creationals Ordinances" (Kuypers) must be inferred from nature and history. But this induction can be done according to the Platonic scheme of matter and form, or according to the theme of Augustine: Origin, Being and Purpose. In the first case we arrive at a dualistic system. In the last case we get a trinitarian system. Whoever starts with Plato will have to
finish with him. Whoever starts with the Trinity should continue and finish with it. The inferred principles must be fitted into the Scriptural frame, otherwise the system becomes hybrid. This is no easy task, but with God’s help this difficulty may also be solved. Let us lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. Let us take leave of the “beggarly rudiments of the world”, and of the “profane and silly myths” of unbelief. Let Christ through his Word be our guide. For in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. (Colos. 2:3)

The Second Islam

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The title of this article is a term gaining prominence in church and missionary circles to describe the religious significance of the advance of Communism. The term is apt and presents, therefore, a somber prospect. Consider what the first Islam achieved as an enemy of Christianity. In less than one hundred years from the death of its founder this amazingly virile politico-religious movement conquered Arabia, Syria and Palestine, made itself master of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia, overran all of North Africa, subjugated Spain, and penetrated eastward to the Punjab and far into central Asia. The areas lying in its westward expansion were largely Christian, those to the east contained a number of Christian communities. From these losses to Islam only Spain was regained for Christendom. After five hundred years of uncertain holding of the line new reverses came when the Turks conquered what was left of the Byzantine Empire and established the Crescent in Greece and in the Balkans. Writes Latourette, in what seem to be words of tremendous contemporary import for the present outposts and strongholds of Christianity, “The Christian communities east of the Euphrates disappeared or dwindled to feeble shadows of their former selves. Disasters, dissension and decay of religious conviction in Western Christendom brought weakness and apathy to the once promising missionary enterprise.” Not only by the sword, but even more by the imposition of disabilities, taxes, and by sundry discriminations the strength of the churches in the conquered areas was sapped and undermined until at last they lost vigor and disappeared or became harmless remnants in an ocean of Mohammedanism. That was the first Islam.

Are we now in Communism seeing a second Islam? In the famous words of the defender of Wake Island, it can be said with trembling hope, “The issue is in doubt.” We must, however, face the sober fact that the vast Eurasian heartland of Russia and Siberia, all of China, North Korea, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and several of the Baltic states are in Russian hands. Rome not only grieves over the loss of predominant-slavic Poland, which it has always hopefully regarded as a base from which to launch a conquest of the Russian Slavs for the Roman Catholic Church, but in the alliance between the Russian communist state and the Patriarchate at Moscow it has reasons to fear the claims of “the third Rome” as the legitimate successor of the “second Rome” at Constantinople, and therefore as the legitimate heir to the apostolic succession claimed by the Greek Orthodox Church.

Protestantism has seen substantial sections come under Communist domination in eastern Europe; its promising mission fields in China are lost; its mission effort in Burma, Indo-China, and Malaya stands in imminent danger of being terminated; and, should these areas be lost to the non-Communist world, there would follow the threats to Japan, Formosa, the Philippines, Indonesia, and India. In Africa the Communist and his propaganda are not unknown and its vast resources beckon on to conquest there, too.

Against this impetuous, onrushing flood stands the West, now, as in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, rent by “disasters, dissension, and decay of religious conviction.” If our hopes are in human might alone our fears can only be boundless and without mitigation. In these times as never before the Church must elevate her vision above the horizontal line of danger, defeat, and power politics, to the great Arbiter of human destiny who has said, “Unto me has been given all power in heaven and on earth.” At the same time, we may not, if God has anything at all to tell us in history, remove our eyes from the military and political aspects of the contemporary situation. Christ has time and again exercised his power by subordinating to his own purposes the might and power of the nations. Now, as of old through the ancient prophet, he admonishes us to behold among the heathen and wonder marvelously for he is working a great work in our day. No less than in former times he leadeth the king’s heart as the watercourses to achieve the fruition of his designs. It was God’s providence, operating through the military power of western Europe, that set the bounds of Islam’s westward expansion. Has the

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West now a similar task to perform in holding in check the hordes of atheistic Communism? We would certainly feel much freer in lending to the present military preparations the character of a holy crusade if there were more evidence on the part of Western peoples and their leaders that they depend on more than the might of men to save their civilization. We can and should, however, support these efforts with our aims and motivations and hopes. The antithesis between Communism and the Christian ideal is absolute. Both subscribe to basic world and life views that rule each other out at every point of meeting. Where Communism goes and stays the future of the Church is, as in the time of the Islamic expansion, utterly dismal.

The second Islam is, it should be noted, in some marked respects, different from the first. It opposes not merely the Christian religion, but religion as such whenever and wherever it meets it. Its tactics involve all sorts of cooperation with and toleration of religious bodies, but it errs greatly who does not distinguish between the strategy and the philosophy of Communism. The Communist philosophy, as Mr. Vishinsky has so eminently taught us, allows for and even calls for the use of deceit whenever this furthers the fundamental aim. Truth is what serves the cause, treachery, for the Communist, is not to betray one’s country. Islam, on the other hand, was not only primarily a religious movement, but it initially respected and generally tolerated the Jews and the Christians. It called them “The People of the Book” and treated them more generously than those among its conquered peoples who could claim no divine revelation.

Communism, moreover, exercises an international appeal which obtains for it allies within the camp of its enemies. In most of the western countries there are substantial, sometimes large and at all times dangerous and vigorous, minorities who are only biding their time to strike in a revolutionary self-assertion. From time to time alarming discoveries find men with Communist inclinations in places of influence and authority. This advantage the first Islam did not have, except among sections of Monophysite Christianity which were so weary of persecution by the Orthodox majority that they welcomed the coming of the Mohammedans as a relief from mistreatment suffered at the hands of Christians.

In spite of its anti-religious character Communism advances with a fervor akin to religious fanaticism unknown in its extent in the history of man. It has no basis for morals, but it inspires a tremendous morale which is the sine qua non of all conquest. This paradox is wholly natural. When man does not live with the true God he will make his own god and offer it his allegiance. Western man has rejected the God of the Christian tradition and has become secularized without finding an alternative passion in terms of which to integrate his life. In this predicament he has in his danger nowhere to turn but to brute force alone which, it is to be feared, will not suffice. This fatal weakness in contemporary Democracy is being realized by its leaders and efforts are therefore being put forth to “sell Democracy” as a way of life and as a moral force. But western Democracy has its roots in, and derives its strength in no small degree from, the Christian tradition which is now largely gone. Therefore the stream of Democracy is becoming stagnant because it is cut off from the refreshing and dynamic source that contributed so much to its life. But Communism is true to its evil genius, it lives on it and is constantly developing and applying its implications. It is, therefore, strong and dreadfully to be feared by an opposition that has rejected the rock from which it was hewn.

AS OTHERS SEE US...

Somewhere in Korea.

Dear Friends,

Have just received this blank notifying me of the expiration of my subscription. Thanks for doing so, as I certainly do not want to miss any issues of this fine paper. Received my first copy here this morning, and have but had time to scan it; hope the press of time gives time to read it thoroughly. Am enclosing two dollars in cash; no money order with within seventy miles of us here on the Northwestern Front. Am enjoying the best of health, and God’s richest blessings are ours also on our much-needed work as Chaplains to these young men here in Korea. God bless you!

Dick J. Oostenink, Jr.
Chaplain (Capt.) USA.

The Calvin Forum’s monthly call is always the signal for me to drop all my work. I greatly enjoy the contents, particularly the fine book reviews that have appeared. The Symposium feature is also a good one.

Ralph Wildschutz,
Falmouth, Mich.

For the past year I have been reading with much interest and satisfaction your most excellent theological monthly. While I am not up on Calvinism as I might, I am progressing. Your book reviews are the best that I have ever read, for you are not afraid to make a stand for the orthodox locus, which is too often lacking in many reviews appearing in periodicals these days.

Carl J. Scheyer,
American Lutheran Church,
North Tonawanda, N. Y.

Would not miss THE FORUM for anything. Keep up the good work. God bless you.

William Diephuis,
Ripon, California.

Thank you greatly for continuing THE CALVIN FORUM for me. I enclose Two Dollars for it. Its scholarship and Scriptural character are appreciated away out here on the last frontier, where people major in the superficial and neglect the profound.

Richard F. Barram,
Caruthers, Calif.

Please extend my subscription for another year. I enjoy THE CALVIN FORUM immensely. It is stimulating, scholarly, Calvinistic, Christian in its approach and atmosphere.

Arnold Christians.
Edgerton, Minn.
The Ecumenical Horizon

We have entered upon a New Year. In terms of responsibility this is a tremendous fact. We must match the uncertainties of the future with a vigorous plan, a consecrated determination, and a humble obedience to the will of our Lord. We are looking at the horizon wondering what this year will bring forth. We are sure 1951 will make ecumenical history.

An Ecumenical Calamity

When two evangelical organizations are racing for world leadership at the expense of each other we witness an ecumenical tragedy that should be averted if at all possible. Two organizations are riding on parallel tracks. Perhaps these tracks will prove to be an open switch, and the two trains will jam into each other. Perhaps the two tracks will run parallel for years, but then competition and confusion on the part of the passengers will curtail the effectiveness and the Christian spirit of both. Underneath all the shouting of accomplishments of both organizations there should be the grief of soul—one modernistic World Council of Churches, and two orthodox evangelical organizations vegetating upon each other! He will be the great ecumenical statesman or man of the hour who can avert the catastrophe of two orthodox global organizations speaking for the same general orthodox faith.

The correspondence columns of The Calvin Forum have carried a glowing account of the Genevan Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches (I.C.C.C.) by one who attended its sessions. The seriousness of purpose, the scope of activities, and the indefatigable energies spent call for admiration. Engineers who can handle the throttle were in the cab. This Congress was sired by the American Council of Christian Churches.

New initials are making their way to the headlines of the religious press—I.E.E. This combination stands for the International Association of Evangelicals, sired by the National Association of Evangelicals (N.A.E.), and blessed by the World Alliance of Evangelicals (W.A.E.). Leaders from other nations are cooperating to make this conference a reality, if possible, during August, in the Netherlands.

United Evangelical Action of October 15, 1950, tells us that the W.E.A. is the oldest evangelical organization in the world, that it was organized in England about a hundred years ago, and that it was responsible for the establishment of the German Evangelical Alliance in 1886. This organization has now joined with the National Association of Evangelicals to unite all orthodox forces in the world.

No doubt painstaking preparation precedes the work of the coming conference in August, 1951. The first conference was held in Clarens, Switzerland, 1948; another was held in Hildenborough, England, March, 1950; and a meeting of world representatives was held in Boston, September, 1950.

I.A.E. vs. I.C.C.C.—there is the rub. Will they co-operate, assign specific areas, ignore each other? Does the editorial of the U.E.A., referred to above, have the A.C.C.C. or I.C.C.C. in mind when it states: “An important sector of American evangelical life was early withdrawn from the movement, as it seems to be the settled policy never to co-operate with anything which it does not originate and to brand as heretical that which does not conform to its modus operandi?”

Getrouw, the official Dutch organ of the I.C.C.C. does not hesitate to state the differences between the N.A.E. and the A.C.C.C. frequently. These are kept alive in the minds of the readers. Often the idea is expressed that the N.A.E. lacks the evangelical definiteness found only in the A.C.C.C., and consequently in the I.C.C.C.

We are not called to sit in judgment upon either organization. Both prove, as any human organization does, to have shortcomings. To fix one’s mind is to give permanency to a regrettable situation. What follows are some of our mixed reactions.

At present there seems to be no possibility of coupling all coaches behind one locomotive. In fact there seems to be the breaking of any coupling that did exist. The N.A.E. failed to send auditors to the Genevan Congress. The I.C.C.C. issued a Resolution on differences between the two organizations. The I.C.C.C. accuses the N.A.E.: 1. that it belittles the high purpose of the Church and her purity in its attempt to build a mixed organization; 2. The N.A.E. does not take a clear position relevant to the World Council of Churches. There are leaders in the N.A.E. who are represented by the World Council. No doubt the I.C.C.C. wishes to inform us that it is inconsistent to be an orthodox segment of a church that is a member of the World Council and at the same time to be a member of an evangelical-
Reformed emphasis was fairly well represented at
with such an arrangement? We cannot imagine that
sentation.
association for churches, sections of churches,
obstacle because of the
resolution does not indicate whether the N.A.E.
had an occasion to do so.
We can anticipate the same differences between
the two world councils that we find between the
N.A.E. and the A.C.C.C. One difference is whether
Churches only can unite, or whether there can be
an association for churches, sections of churches,
Bible Schools, and individuals. One of the organiza-
tions will have to change its mind radically before
there can be a union of two. At present both are
cling tenaciously to their own points of view.
The I.C.C.C. demands a Council of Churches only
and still knows that it does not convene as a Super-
Synod, nor even as a Synod. It cannot do the work
of a Synod. Voices were heard at Geneva that the
I.C.C.C. should not take over the work that properly
belongs to a denomination.
The N.A.E. and the coming I.A.E. maintain that
they are associations which allow for membership
of champions of faith fighting for the Word of God
in modernistic churches. The N.A.E. never desired
to keep them on a limb. This is not ecclesiastical
pragmatism. After all it is an association, not a
synod. At the same time it runs the danger of
putting men at ease in their fight against modern-
ism by satisfying their conscience they are in an
association, instead of fighting the battle to the top
hill in their own church. In passing we may
insert here that the Christian Reformed Church did
not repudiate its history by joining the N.A.E. It
has been said that since the Christian Reformed
Church left the Reformed Church of America, and
its Dutch forebears left the State Church, so now we
should join the organization that insists upon de-
nominations and not sections for membership. We
did not stay in a denomination as a purging influence.
The point is, however, that we are not under the
same synodical roof. The N.A.E. is an association
and not a church.
There are other differences, less noticeable. Con-
cerning representation at the I.A.E., if we read
the report correctly, the rule has been adopted that
national organizations shall send delegates to the
international conferences. If we are not mistaken
the I.C.C.C. had representatives of denominations.
We do wonder whether a large denomination in
the N.A.E. will be satisfied, if our reading is correct,
with such an arrangement? We cannot imagine that
our denomination will be. This is an organizational
obstacle because of the "association" conception of
the N.A.E. or I.A.E. There is no doubt that the
Reformed emphasis was fairly well represented at
Geneva (I.C.C.C.) because of denominational repre-

The I.C.C.C. has placed stronger emphasis upon
the exercise of Christian discipline. But the
question is not irrelevant: does this mean the same
to all the constituent members? Is Scofieldism or
Arminianism disciplined as well as ethical sins?
Consistently should not the content as well as the
fact of discipline be emphasized for the sake of
spiritual unity? How is the I.C.C.C. to control the
search whether or not a church actually does carry
out discipline?

The I.A.E. would never, we imagine, plan con-
ferences in the same city the World Council of
Churches meets. Although the leaders of the
A.C.C.C. have done so as an answer to their prayers,
not all will be convinced of the propriety of such
procedure. To some there is sensationalism about
this, to others a daring stroke of faith. Apart from
all that we make an urgent plea to any organiza-
tion: "Do not follow the W.C.C. throughout the
world, but in true statesmanship execute an inte-
grated plan for the spreading of the evangelical
cause." This plea was suggested to the Christian
Reformed Synod of 1950 already as a possibility
for the Ecumenical Synod to superintend. Let there
be statesmanship, constructive planning, immedi-
ately and without hesitation, and our cause will be
advanced.

Ecumenical
Confusion

The foregoing proves one thing, the road ahead
lacks good visibility. But the mist becomes heavier
as we travel this road.

Perhaps there may be a given area in which
there are about seven hundred missionaries who
espouse the evangelical cause. One hundred may
join the I.C.C.C., and the others would like to join
the I.A.E. But they are told if they so they are
compromising (cf. U.E.A., October 15, 1950, p. 7),
and are running the danger of being ostracized.
The Reformed Ecumenical world would do well
to take inventory of the situation as it emerges over
the 1951 horizon. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
is a member of the I.C.C.C., but does not affiliate
with the A.C.C.C. The Christian Reformed Church
of the Netherlands is happy to announce that it is
the first Reformed church in the Netherlands to
join the I.C.C.C., but intends to send only an auditor
to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1953. The
Reformed Churches of the Netherlands have two
strong currents, one for the I.C.C.C. and the other
for the proposed I.A.E., and have members on key
committees of both organizations. It has not taken
any official action as yet. The Christian Reformed
Church of America is a member of the N.A.E., and
as far as we know has not yet decided to adopt
the I.A.E., since the question did not come to Synod.
It did not send an auditor to Geneva (although

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graciously invited to do so) perhaps because it would be inconsistent to do so, or perhaps because the church knows the history of the A.C.C.C., making it superfluous to send a delegate.

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod has appointed a committee of three to face all the facts patiently and fearlessly. Because of this decision the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands have been patient in not rushing to a conclusion. We all know it is easier to entangle than to disentangle. What the solution will be we do not know. One thing is certain, that we will never arrive at a solution by assuming that our position is unassailable and the other church must join the same group to which we belong. The fundamental principles of differences between synods and associations must be investigated according to God’s Word, and who knows perhaps a fearless study of the Church and its testimony may lead to other conclusions than first anticipated? This is still a virgin ecumenical venture and let us start off right.

Ecumenical Benevolence

The soul of a church is impoverished if there is no outlet for mercy. Government benefits seem to make the diaconate superfluous. In post-war years a new facet was disclosed—ecumenical benevolence. No doubt the diaconate has received a larger assignment than ever. Our deacons have become ecumenists, even though the word is alien to them. In fact any one who has contributed a used garment has been engaged in the ecumenical mission of the church.

We had hopes that we could solicit Christian sympathies for Korea. In some countries benevolence is no longer needed. Some countries behind the iron curtains find avenues blocked. Our hopes were to rush Christian love instead of weapons to help Koreans re-establish themselves, but reverses on the battle field have indicated that God’s mysterious way is still unknown to us.

In all ecumenical relief we must bear in mind that we cannot expect the World Council of Churches to supply orthodox and independent seminaries with orthodox literature. If only modernistic literature is poured into a seminary, soon the edge will be taken off orthodoxy. Representatives of the W.C.C., perhaps through one of its auxiliaries, have spoken against the faith that the Bible is the infallible Word of God in the accepted sense of verbal inspiration. This faith has produced Christians in Korea who withstood Shintoism even at the price of death. Now these humble but powerful Christians were warned against Bibliolatry. This “Bible-idolatry” is a new word coined to label all those who accept the orthodox view of the Bible as idolaters. They who use that slurring term forget that exegetically it can be shown that the Bible teaches verbal inspiration, and any departure from that truth is the outgrowth of an alien philosophy surreptitiously imposed upon the Bible.

It is for us who share the same faith to support those who dare to remain true, even though they must live independently from major denominations.

When the sky is clear again we are sure spiritual and material support will flow westward to the land of sore affliction and tears. Nothing helps ecumenicity more than a generous sympathy expressed in a concrete and tangible way. This is a New Testament must.

Ecumenical Calvinism

We believe there is room for an international Calvinistic organization. A few outstanding Calvinistic leaders have expressed agreement.

The question will be raised, what would be the relationship of such an organization to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod? Our reply would be: the same as that of the Calvinistic Action Committee to the Churches. There are two distinctive areas which complement each other.

On a small scale the Calvinistic Action Committee has distributed Calvinistic literature to about fifteen centers of the Reformed faith in the world. It did so as a post-war duty. But it envisaged a greater need. The spreading of literature will unify the Calvinists throughout the world. In passing we may inform the public that letters were received of those who enjoyed the books sent.

This aspect of Calvinistic ecumenicity alone would warrant an international society. Great Calvinistic libraries must be built throughout the world. Scholars could find an organization that would help them compare notes.

“The Calvin Forum”, “Free University Quarterly” (which recently made its debut), “La Revue reformée” indicate that we are pressing toward our goal of an international organ. Perhaps each in its own way will contribute something distinctive. We are getting the machinery, now the flame may not die out. The distinctive man who dares to hold to a position is still the most universal man.

Let us face the fact that the current problems besetting us beg for solution. Platitude unapplied or wishfully given will solve nothing. Borrowing statistics from secular scholars without a true undergirding of principle is unworthy of a Calvinistic scholar. We must build our philosophy of life in economics, sociology, or anything else, from our own inner structure. Unless we dare, we have no answer. We doubt whether there is any group of Calvinists even in the Netherlands who would pride themselves on having a happy solution to modern problems. Such a proposed international organization would bring men together, and that is what we need.

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It would encourage to see life in the light of God's Word. Perhaps the time may come that we will have to defend our Calvinists throughout the world before the U.N.O.!

Are we too late? We see the waves of communism inundating countries and leaving behind only the deposits of atheism, hate, and loss of liberty, the priceless gift of God to man. In the event of a World War III why should noble souls and heroes of faith be isolated from kindred souls and deprived of the blessings of a spiritual community which we all need?

From Our Correspondents

SOUTH AFRICAN LETTER

University College, Potchefstroom, S. Africa, Nov. 11, 1950.

Our institution has suffered an irreparable loss in the passing of our rector on Nov. 4. Since March, 1949, after a severe heart attack, he has been ailing, and we were all hoping that he might be spared for us, at least for the great occasion of our independence on March 17, 1951. But the Lord has willed otherwise. Our rector recovered, last year from the first attack to such a degree that he could conduct his work with his usual efficiency, but we could see that he was suffering. After a very lengthy meeting of our Senate Executive on Nov. 1, he had a second attack which was very, very alarming. On Saturday night at 11:25 he passed away quietly and completely contented.

He had a very strenuous life. Since incorporation of our university college in 1921, he was without any break rector. Next year when we will acquire independence we shall have to start with a new rector.

The burial took place on Nov. 7, and was one of the greatest ever seen in our city. Tribute was paid to him by the authorities of church and school, by representatives of other universities and educational institutions, by leaders in our public affairs. We all felt that in him passed a true representative of Christian faith. He was the first and only rector of the Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education; he was the father of his institution, his staff and his students. We shall miss him—a kind gentleman, this example of Christianity to all, this serious scholar, this inspiring leader. We can but thank the Lord that He gave us such a leader, so true, so gentle, so inspiring, so exemplary, so steadfast.

Dear friend, I am sure that you sympathize with us in our great loss.

With kind regards,
Sincerely yours,
J. GHR. CoRTEZEE

TRIBUTE TO DR. F. POSTMA

From Potchefstroom Herald, November 10, 1950

A quarter of a century ago a young first year student landed at Potchefstroom station in pouring rain and amid lowering skies. The outlook was bleak and the prospects dismal. But youth is unconquerable and irresistible, and with high hopes he set out for his new home on the grassy plain on the northern outskirts of the town. He had matriculated well and fancied his Latin especially. Soon he would conquer new worlds, but alas! Within a few days of his arrival, stark, cold reality brought him down to earth with a bump.

This reality took the form of a stern gentleman who sat behind a plain desk in a corrugated iron building with Virgil’s Aeneid open in front of him. He did not fancy the young man’s Latin and that young man, coming from an English medium school, will never forget how, with a sinking heart, his first effort at translating Virgil and Cicero into Afrikaans was received. During the following months he learnt to his cost that more respect for a translation is not enough, that Virgil’s beautiful phrases should be rendered into no less stirring Afrikaans, that language is a living thing, and that one’s own tongue could be a marvellous instrument of transferring thought and emotion to others.

Poking curiously into the library shelves of the College the freshman found a dusty volume with the title: “De numine divino quad senserit Virgillius,” written by the same man, and he withdrew in awe. Months later there was a colorful ceremony at the University and he witnessed a strange procession with, at the head, an austere and venerable gentleman robed in black. His features were composed and stern. The man was a Roman senator, passing through the forum on his way to a formal meeting with an erring consul. Such was Dr. Ferdinand Postma even at the age of 46, Doctor Letterarius, Chancellor of the Free University of Amsterdam, Doctor a the Potchefstroom University College, and head of the Department of Classics.

Student and Disciple

During all those years he never seems to have changed and in this moment of crowding memories it is difficult for one who was his student and disciple and later a member of his staff to sort out everything properly. One can hardly imagine our University and our town without the imposing and stately figure of Dr. Postma, who in many ways dominated our lives throughout a period of nearly half a century. Auster, aloof, proud, outwardly cold and unemotional, he still appealed not only the utmost respect and veneratio of friend and foe, but also the love of those who knew him better.

Throughout his life there was one thing outstanding, namely the cause of Christian education. For nearly half a century he, with wonderful steadfastness and singleness of purpose, strove after the ideal of a University founded on Christian principles, firmly believing that in the search for knowledge one has to search after the cause of God, and in the light of God’s Word, there being no reality outside the revelation of God in His Word through Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer. That was his credo and publicly as well as privately he lived up to it. Tirelessly and unflaggingly he worked to achieve his ideal and within sight of his goal he went to his well-deserved rest.

Down the Years

Looking back through the avenues of the years I was privileged to work under and with him, I see him slowly and stately walking along the corridors of the main University building. I see him sedately nodding to friends and acquaintances and now and then smiling condescendingly. What struck me most of all was his immense dignity, and his respect for tradition as outwardly expressed in the regalia and insignia of academic life. He would have made a wonderful medieval prince and prince of the church. Summoned to interview him in his office always created the impression of meeting royalty, such was his courtly grace.

I shall always remember with pride and joy his appearance on the platform in the Bloemfontein City Hall on the occasion of the installation of Mr. Justice de Wet as Chancellor of the University. Everybody was instantly and deeply impressed by his noble bearing, his perfect manners, and his scholarly mien. Just think of it, a man of Potchefstroom to do this thing! How my heart beat! One also remembers the tribute paid to him by his friend, the late Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, when he spoke in his honor in the Potchefstroom Town Hall some years ago. He knew his man.

Very Human

With all his seeming coldness Dr. Postma could also be very human. He had a keen sense of humor and in intimate circles revealed himself as an understanding father of his family and personal friend of his staff. He had a deep knowledge of human nature, he was widely read, and he took a keen interest in public affairs although he never actively participated in political life. He had his own convictions, everybody knew where he stood, but with the utmost tact he avoided unnecessary and harmful controversy. He encouraged his staff to take part in
public life and gladly granted leave of absence to any one who wished to address a meeting of national importance.

He did not like the staff to involve the College by taking too active a part in politics, and generally he was tolerant and wise and just. He was the best chairman I ever served under and knew how to conduct a meeting with expedition and ease, often resorting to compromise when necessary. He took an interest in the smallest details of University life, all the different faculties and departments, the academic as well as the administrative side.

Mrs. Postma

Serving as a member of many bodies he often had to be away for weeks on end and dear Mrs. Postma, beloved by all the staff, was perhaps left alone to conduct the meeting and ease, and to shoulder the many responsibilities of the wife of a public man. We pay tribute to her and honor her.

To review the life of Dr. Postma is like reading an absorbing book, and with his passing a chapter of local history has been finished. But he was truly of more than local importance, very a national figure, and a champion for education throughout the country. It is hard to realize that with his death not only the College he was so intimately connected with, but the whole community has lost somebody, who cannot be replaced.

He was quite prepared to go, dying in the Lord, and his words were spoken to the students of the University (St. Paul): "Death, where is thy sting, and hell, where is thy victory?"

D. W. Kuiper

Netherlands Letter

Groningen, Netherlands
December 12, 1950.

Dear Friends of The Calvin Forum:

As I set myself again to write you, I am impressed by the fact that this is a very small world in which we live today. How many lines of interest, correspondence, and contact do not run between us scattered throughout many continents over the face of the globe. We need one another more than ever before. We must strengthen the ties that bind us together, especially as Calvinistic believers. I know of no finer means of keeping up this contact between Calvinistic fellow believers throughout the world than your fine paper, The Calvin Forum. I wish our magazine were read more widely in my own country, the Netherlands. I do not know how many subscribers you have in other countries, but I do know that the number should be much larger in the Netherlands. I know there are financial difficulties, but perhaps your editor will find a way of overcoming these. At least, I am ready to cooperate if he has some suggestions on this score.

Yes, how much we need to strengthen and stimulate an international Calvinism. And in this world group we of the Netherlands are privileged to hold a unique position. Apart from other agencies and forces, we have been privileged to have a Calvinistic University now for a period of 70 years. Last October (the 20th is the birthday of our University) we had special doings commemorating this event. On that occasion an honorary degree was awarded (which is highly exceptional in the history of the VU) to three outstanding men, all of them Europeans, one of them a Dutchman—Jan Schouten, the well-known leader of the Antirevolutionary Party, the successor, as one may partially say, of Groen Van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, and Hendrikus Colijn.

The leaders of the Free University are becoming awake to their duties and responsibilities, especially internationally speaking. Perhaps one of the best evidences of this new consciousness is the publication of a new Quarterly, whose first issue (November, 1950) has made its appearance. This Quarterly is issued in the English language and is as such evidence of the fact that the Free University realizes it should make international contacts through the use of the most widely used language. An occasional French or German article may also be included. The first issue offers news about the University, and is chiefly devoted to a few scholarly papers by men of the University staff. Here are the titles of the articles: The Free University and Its Quarterly (An Introduction by Dr. G. Ch. Audier), On the Scholarly Habitus (J. Waterskikh), The Christian and the Controversial Press (E. H. D. Boer), Science, Materialism and Christianity (R. Hooykaas). This is followed by various book reviews, among which also is found Dr. Geerhardus Vos' Biblical Theology, reviewed by Dr. Audier. This Free University Quarterly appears four times a year in a copy of approximately 80 pages. Subscription price is Ten Guilden, which amounts to less than Three Dollars. Publisher is J. II. Kok, Oosterstraat 5, Kampen. I hope that many of you will take the trouble to subscribe to this new publication. Perhaps some way can be devised by which The Calvin Forum and the Free University Quarterly could mutually stimulate one another and aid each other's circulation.

I must also tell you what has been going on recently in the Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk (Established Church). This is, as you know, the old Protestant Church which from the days of the Reformation was our State Church. Reformation movements breaking with this Church took place in 1924 (the Session under the leadership of De Cock) and in 1936 (known as the Doleantie, under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper). Out of the union of these two reformatory groups the present Gereformeerde Kerken have come into existence. But many members and leaders in the Hervormde Kerk, also those who were sympathetic toward reform, refused to join these "cessionist" movements, staying in the Established Church, in the hope that she might reform herself. Although higher criticism, liberalism, and the complete neglect of discipline had begun to prevail in this body, in recent years a great change has set in. In fact, as I have already told you in some of my earlier letters, an organized reform movement has now been active within the Established Church for the last five years.

First the autocratic synodical government, which was a superimposed and not popularly elected group, was abolished by voluntary withdrawal. Then a new Synod was elected by the various parts of the Church and this new Synod has now for some years been engaged in the drafting of a new Constitution. This new Constitution has now been completed and may be finally adopted in the near future. The approach and language of this Constitution (Church Order) is quite new and different. It states that the Gospel alone may be preached as it is contained in the Scriptures and has been maintained by the fathers. The language used reads: "in fellowship with the testimony of the fathers and upon the basis of Scripture." Moreover, it states that the Church is to resist "everything which is contrary to its testimony." This, if consistently applied, means the restoration of church discipline and the maintenance of purity and doctrine. But this will not be enforced for at least another ten years. The shock would be too great. If, however, this should become a reality before long, this will also place those who broke with the historic Reformed Church before the question whether they should not move in the direction of reunion. At least, if this would have been the stand of the historic Church in 1866, it may well be questioned whether Kuyper would have lent his influence in the direction of a break such as was witnessed in the "Doleantie."

Whatever the outcome may be, we shall pray for the restoration of a wholesome and soundly Reformed type of life in this great historic church of the Netherlands. In this we would rejoice. God bless you in 1951.

Fraternally yours,

Pieter Prins

Evangelical Theological Society

It is commonly accepted that Evangelicals gather to pray, but often forgotten that they also meet to promote genuine scholarship and to give intellectual responsibility to their religious beliefs. Once a year ago in the YMCA of Cincinnati, the Evangelical Theological Society was born. On Dec. 27 and 28 the Society met in second annual meeting in the modest and genial surroundings of Shetlon College (National
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Bible Institute), New York City. Some sixty scholars came from all parts of the country to refresh themselves in the warmth of Christian fellowship, but especially to address themselves seriously to the task of promoting joint scholarly effort among evangelical theologians. The fact that some of the men attended the "Society for Biblical Literature and Exegesis" which was held at the same time in Union Theological Seminary reminded all of the urgency of the challenge confronting the evangelical world. Those who read papers at both meetings could not help but converse as anew of the sharp divergence existing between those who build upon the basis of the Infallible Scriptures and those who try to rest upon the shaky foundation of religious experience in its varied forms.

After a warm welcome by Dr. Buswell of the host institution, Shetlon College, Dr. Clarence Boush (Calvin), the first president of the E.T.S., effectively related this present meeting to the first one held a year ago. He reminded us to address ourselves to a comprehensive view of the theological task, and to implement this view with a constructive and creative offensive against the enemies of the orthodox faith. He urged all to seek a living fusion between genuine piety and scholarly respectability. Evidence that the society heeded its president was seen in the devotional meditations and prayers together with the discussions and papers given at the meeting.

After various items of business were successfully concluded, notably the adoption of a set of by-laws, the men met to discuss the theme of the convention, "The Authority of the Scriptures". The committee on Program and Arrangements made a most fortunate choice in this theme, since it relates to the third article of the Constitution dealing with the doctrinal basis of the society. "The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs". Directly and indirectly, the papers and discussions of the two-day meeting related themselves to the authority of the Scriptures in its various implications. No one cares to deny the relevancy of the problem of authority in theology, in fact in every area of human endeavor.

Panel Discussion

Under the effective leadership of Dr. K. Kantzer (Wheaton), Dr. Turner (Asbury) and Dr. Murray (Westminster) carried forward an instructive panel discussion on the inspiration of the Scriptures. With penetrating insight Mr. Murray proceeded to clarify the concept of inerrancy, and with creative effort demonstrated anew that Scripture must be allowed to speak for itself on this problem. The basic position of the former Dr. B. B. Warfield in Revelation and Inspiration was reviewed by Mr. Turner, and both of the speakers continued to clarify their views. Mr. Turner was asked by the chairman to address himself to a consideration of the status of this doctrine in modern theology. Revealing an intimate acquaintance with the literature on the subject, he pointed us to the various recent publications from France, Germany, England and America dealing with the subject. Subsequent to the panel various members addressed pertinent and puzzling questions to the members in charge. After a time of instructive discussion as to discrepancies, the authority of the early church in its acceptance of the canon, and other questions, the members adjourned for supper.

At the evening banquet our Christian fellowship was knit still more firmly together by the scholarly address of Dr. C. J. Woodbridge (Fuller) entitled, "The Seat of Evangelical Authority". Those present shall not soon forget the historical theological study, and all agreed that the effort expended in coming from various parts of the country was richly rewarded.

Thursday dawned gray and cold in New York but the dispatch with which business was handled added a much needed warmth. After electing new officers, appointing committees, and other matters, the group divided itself into divisional forums. In the Old Testament field Dr. A. MacRae and Dr. E. J. Young acted as leaders. Dr. Earle and Dr. Gaebelein headed the section on the New Testament, and the field of Dogmatic and Historical Theology was ably handled by Dr. A. McClain, Dr. H. Cleveland, and Dr. J. O. Buswell. With varying degrees of success all the discussions revolved around the problem of the authority of the Scriptures.

As To New Theological Developments

During late afternoon we listened to four able men from various fields of theology challenging us to greater effort in the various disciplines of theology. Dr. N. Stonehouse brought us face to face with the needs in the New Testament field, particularly Textual Criticism. Realizing the importance of laying solid foundations he urged the society to sharpen its tools of scholarly research. He insisted that our study of the New Testament problems be related to history. Over against the much vaunted Biblical, theological approach of recent theological scholarship, which is neither Biblical nor Theological, he pleaded that we all renew a vigorous study of Biblical theology as exemplified in the works of the late Geor·hardus Vos of Princeton fame. Finally, the speaker urged special attention to careful exegesis because of its basic importance in the science of textual criticism.

After this Dr. G. Douglas Young faced the group with the challenges confronting evangelical scholars in the field of Archaeology. With reluctance we agreed with him that we lack the properly trained men at present to carry forward this important aspect of Biblical research. Forcefully he pleaded for men thoroughly trained in Egyptian, Coptic, Babylonian, Arabic and other languages so essential for competent work in archaeology. Suggestively he remarked that we might conceivably undertake to sponsor qualified young men and train them for excellence in these languages. Vividly he painted the ideal of the E.T.S. undertaking some original venture in this field, not only the digging for new treasures of information, but also the work of deciphering, transalating and translating already existing documents, and other material.

From the intriguing challenges lying in the past, Dr. Roger Nicole faced the group with the recent developments in the field of systematic theology. In his own inimitable and inclusive manner this theologian informed us of the new creations from the pen of the neo-orthodox theologians. He reminded the society of the monumental program adopted by Dr. G. C. Berkouwer of the Free University of Amsterdam in undertaking to write a nineteen-volume work dealing with the problems of systematic theology. Few of these have already appeared, and he hoped that though they were written in Dutch they would be read and understood by many. Then he surveyed the English and American contributions. Finally, he treated the society with some noteworthy insights into the contributions of the Roman Catholics, more particularly discussing the Assumption of Mary.

Theologians can be practical as evidenced in a paper read by Dr. E. Evans on "Practical Biblical Preaching and Teaching". Surely the message of reconciliation committed to the Church of Jesus Christ ought to be communicated as effectively and creatively as possible. Various helpful insights were given, and many teachers and preachers left the meeting resolved to practice a more convincing communication of God's truth to students in class room and pew throughout the country. The remainder of the afternoon was spent in discussing the next meeting. With conscious awareness of dependence upon God for guidance in the scholarly pursuits as well as daily pietie, the E.T.S. closed its convention with a session of prayer.

Officers elected for the year 1952 are as follows: President, Dr. Merrill C. Tenney; Vice-President, Dr. Charles J. Woodbridge; Secretary, Dr. R. Laird Harris; Treasurer, Dr. George R. Turner. The Society voted to undertake the publication of a scholarly annual volume, of which Dr. Burton L. Goddard was appointed Editor. Membership in the Society is now 116, according to the report of the Membership Committee.

The Outlook

The Evangelical Theological Society is young, yet no one interested in God's Word and its scholarly understanding ought to underestimate the possibilities of advance this society offers to
THE CHRISTIAN RENAISSANCE AND CALVINISM


THIRTY years ago Dr. Hyma wrote a history of the Christian Renaissance, or the Devotio Moderna, as the movement was called in its own day. He aroused a great deal of interest with some scholars, and resentment in others because their "sacred cows" were attacked. Meanwhile in Europe, and especially in The Netherlands (where the movement had been an object of detail study for some time) many manuscripts were brought to light through reprints, articles, and books, some by Prof. J. Van Ginniken of the University of Nijmegen, who had maintained in 1929 that Geert Groote was the author of The Imitation of Christ—without finding scholarly response. And thus the time arrived for Dr. Hyma to publish a new history of the Christian Renaissance.

This volume is not simply an enlarged edition of the first half of its predecessor. It contains a treasure of new information which sheds new light on the causes of the Reformation. The first chapter, for instance, has increased from 25 to 35 pages. And so all along the line the author shows that his research has not been in vain. Here then is a book not only of interest to people of Dutch descent, but to all intelligent Protestants, laymen and scholars, who want to know what happened in the Low Countries a century and more before Luther and Calvin, and how the preaching and teaching and writing of the Brethren of the Common Life partly prepared the way for the Reformation whose origin after all was in Germany and Switzerland.

In five chapters the author covers the ground from about 1380 to 1460. He discusses the life and work of Geert Groote, the Rise of the Modern Devotion through the influence of Groote, Radewijns, Zerbolt, and John Celso, the famous schoolmaster at Zwolle; the work of the Brethren and Sisters of the Common Life in their monasteries and numerous schools in the Low Countries, in Germany, and in France; the reform of other convents through the influence of the ones at Windesheim for men and at Diepenveen for women; and, finally, the part which Thomas à Kempis and some one else—the author suggests Zerbolt—played in the composition of The Imitation of Christ.

Dr. Hyma is of the opinion that the movement to a large extent was Augustinian, and it cannot be denied that the works of Augustine were studied anew by several of the Brethren, and that there was a renewed doctrinal study of the Vulgate, a new interest in the so-called intermittent prayer, and in the emphasis on devotion and the good, or virtuous life. All these elements worked together to create a fertile soil for the Reformation, which aimed at Biblical truth as well as at Biblical piety.

Dr. Hyma further states that "Groote's disciples implicitly believed in the depravity of human nature . . . Groote and Zerbolt had taught that man remained in touch with God, for the cause of Christ in America. One of these possibilities is in the process of realization with the proposed appearance of an annual bound volume of scholarly papers. According to the editorial committee the present plan for such a volume would be to use it as a vehicle for the publication of papers read at the annual meeting, or at least a portion of these papers. The material to appear will be edited by the editorial committee under the able leadership of Dr. B. L. Goddard. The society hopes that the appearance of such a volume will increase the awareness of the American theological world that there is scholarly effort on the part of evangelical students of God's Word.

To predict a great future for this society would be as hazardous as it would be foolish. More information about this organization can be obtained from its secretary, Dr. E. Laird Harris of Faith Theological Seminary. As lovers of God's Word may we support this venture with our prayers and efforts. May it please our God to use this group of evangelical scholars to further His Kingdom and to enhance the praise of His Glory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Alexander C. de Jong.

Peterson, N. J.

BOOK REVIEWS
started to "edit" the first "book" of Thomas by throwing out about 40 per cent or more of its contents and by adding some more tasteful sentences without getting rid of the essential Catholic and oriental flavor of Thomas. Moreover, Zerbolt was a scholar, a librarian and an essayist, but Thomas was a poet, and he uses the same poetical devices in the imitation which he uses in his undisputed works. But this material Dr. Hyma has not touched. To say the least, we are not convinced by his arguments.

But his chapter on the authorship is very pleasant reading, and so is the author's whole work. It is scholarly, but not dry. He makes the past live, and appeals to the imagination as well as to reason. He is an excellent historian, a penetrating student of the human condition, and an essayist par excellence. He has convinced us that the main cause of the Reformation was of a religious nature, and that the Christian Renaissance in the Low Countries was a powerful preparation (even if it was tinged by extraneous elements of Platonic and Oriental origin) for the new devotion. For this work also drew attention to the Reformed principle that the Bible is the final authority for true religion. Hyma's book will be liked by scholars and students.

H. J. VAN ANDEL.

CALVINISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Calvin College.

CALVINISTIC PHILOSOPHY


THIS is a brief and able exposition of the philosophy of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, known in English as the Philosophy of the Idea of Law. Nobody seems to be satisfied with the English title, and the American reader is constantly tempted to suggest a better one. The title "Christian Cosmology" comes to mind, or "The Philosophy of Ordered Levels of Reality," or simply "Calvinistic Philosophy."—all of them doubtless unsatisfactory for some reason or other. Anyway, as Mr. Spier says, the corner stone of this philosophy is the offence of the Cross of Christ.

Philosophy is, from the Christian point of view, systematic thought about the universe in the light of its origin and ground in the creative and redemptive acts of God. To the Christian, therefore, philosophy is a divine calling and not a mere hobby. To philosophize is to be religiously engaged, and prayer has no greater sanctity than Christian scientific investigation. On the other hand, the practice of philosophy is no more pleasing to God than any other human activity, whether it be preaching the Gospel or following a trade. The important thing about Christian philosophizing is just as the important thing about anything else a Christian does, is the fact that it is done to the glory of God as creator and redeemer.

Calvinistic philosophy, then, is Biblical philosophy. But merely to affirm this does not get us very far, for the question is, Inasmuch as Scripture is no more a handbook for philosophy than it is for chemistry, in just what way should philosophy recognize Scripture? Clearly, Calvinistic philosophy is not to be identified with Reformed dogmatism since in philosophy one is largely concerned with seeking out the wisdom of God in His works and, therefore, faces the necessity of working with cosmological concepts. On the other hand, in its study of cosmic variety and cosmic relations Christian thought must recognize the primacy of certain Scriptural concepts, concepts such as the absolute sovereignty of God in all things; the dependence of religion upon a covenant between God and the human race; the corruption of man's heart and mind as the result of sin; life as the gift of God through the redemptive work of Christ; and so on. Accordingly, Calvinistic philosophy must begin with the renewed heart of the believer as in principle the normative religious center of created reality. This beginning, this point of departure, is not a mere theoretical postulate, but rather the necessary religious act which precedes all philosophizing.

Furthermore, this necessary religious act is not something peculiar to Christian philosophy. The fact that man is involved in the point of view of any philosophy; that is to say, the ultimate referent of any philosophy, Christian and non-Christian, is the religious consciousness basic to the thought and action of all men. Thus the unregenerate "heart" will take as its ultimate referent some desired or idolized aspect of the cosmos. And inasmuch as philosophy is itself an aspect of created reality, its delineation in secular philosophy will appear as human reason raised above and beyond the cosmic variety which it presumably explains. In this way a new aspect of reality is absolutized, appearing as "pure reason," or as "objective thought," or as "autonomous reason."

In other words, both Calvinistic and non-Calvinistic philosophy inevitably begin at the "heart of man," the transcendental religious condition of the very being of the philosopher himself, something beyond which his thinking can never rise. Because it is the controlling center and source of his thought, feeling, will, love, faith, and action, it determines his position with respect to God. In fact, in the "heart" of his existence man may be said to transcend time itself. Consequently, no scientific description of the "heart" of man is possible, for the "heart" is the transcendental condition of any description. It may, in fact, be called the first metaphysical existent in created reality.

The antithesis between secular and Christian philosophy is absolute. This is apparent not only as regards the conclusions reached but also as regards the nature of the problems recognized. Many of the questions put by the secular philosophers mean something quite different to the Calvinist; and those which have any meaning at all for him would be differently put. In a word, secular and Christian thinkers philosophize about different worlds. And the Medieval attempt to make philosophy autonomous by effecting a synthesis between pagan and Christian thought only led to the secularization of philosophy. It all ended in the humanism of the Renaissance with its essentially pagan outlook.

The central cosmological doctrine of the Philosophy of the Idea of Law is the doctrine of ordered levels (wetenschappen). One of the first principles of this doctrine is that of the absolute distinction between God and the cosmos. Whatever cosmic autonomies may later be recognized, as when, for example, reference is had to wetenschappen and to the soevereiniteit in eigen krong, are to be regarded as relative. They merely exhibit specific ordinances and norms peculiar to determinate levels of reality. Because science and philosophy are themselves aspects of cosmic reality, they are subject to the laws that pertain to the analytical level. Accordingly, we must investigate only the creature, which exists in absolute distinction from the Creator. This does not mean that God is limited, but only that created things can never participate in the nature of God. God, in other words, can never be an object of philosophical investigation. Theology itself is not the study of God but the study of God's revelation as found in the Scriptures.

The Philosophy of the Idea of Law distinguishes a number of orders or levels of reality known as wetenschappen (ordered levels), and it identifies, more or less provisionally, fourteen of them. They are arranged according to complexity, beginning with the less complex, such as the mathematical, the spatial, and the physical, and ending with the more complex, such as the analytical (scientistic thought), the ethical and the religious. They are analogous to what recent philosophy refers to as emergents or creative syntheses. Each level, except the first and the last, reflects in a characteristic way all the others. The reflected levels of greater complexity are called the moments of anticipation of any given level, whereas those of lesser complexity are called its analogical moments. It appears, therefore, that all created things, however physical or neutral or abstract they may seem, are ultimately connected with the religious level of cosmic reality, and as such point beyond themselves to their origin in the creative activity of God.
Take for example the level of reality known as the organic. In exhibiting the relation of parts to whole it mirrors the level of number; in the necessary spatial qualifications pertaining to an organism it mirrors the level of space; and, finally, in the movements involved in organic life, it mirrors the level of physical motion. The reduction of the higher levels of reality on the organic level is seen in the fact that such things as feeling, thinking, historical development, language, and so on are obviously unthinkable without the substratum of organic life. Inasmuch as all levels of reality point to the religious consciousness of man as their final moment of anticipation, and inasmuch as this consciousness represents a concentration or nexus of all temporal things toward the eternal, it may be said that in man, the highest manifestation of God's creative activity, all levels of reality point to the Creator.

The levels of the cosmos are autonomous in the sense that none can be reduced to, or deduced from, one or more of the others. Thus number cannot be deduced from geometrical space; thought cannot be reduced to language; physics does not apply to ideas, nor are pain and love subject to the law of gravitation; and the laws and facts of the organic level are not reducible to the laws of logic. Nevertheless, their autonomy is relative because each characteristically reflects all, and all have a reference beyond themselves. On the other hand, to ignore even this relative autonomy which the laws peculiar to each of the various levels exhibit, is to find oneself invariably beset with the antimonies that have plagued secular philosophers ever since men began to think. For the non-Christian philosophies can be classified according as they represent attempts to explain the cosmos solely in terms of the organic, or the physical or the ethical, or any other modal aspect of reality.

The present review does not claim to do anything like justice to the wealth of material found even in Mr. Spier's brief survey. The book deals with such topics as the meaning of truth, the subject-object relation, the nature of the individual, the nature of the soul, anthropology, and so on, each of which would require a full article for even incidental treatment. Perhaps the most unconvincing part of the Philosophy of the Idea of Law concerns the treatment of some of the relations of the ordered levels. Many of the so-called analogies and anticipations seem a bit thin and far-fetched, a defect which the conscious farrago of technical terminology does not quite succeed in disguising (this sort of thing may impress the layman but it solves no problems). On the other hand, the general direction of the argument is clear, and future philosophic thought upon what this philosophy calls the "heart" of man could, one feels, lead to important results. It is quite apparent that no Christian thinker seriously concerned with the development of Christian philosophic thought can afford to dismiss the Philosophy of the Idea of Law as a mere translation of Reformed dogmatics into philosophic terminology.

Assuming that Mr. Spier's literary style represents relatively clear and direct philosophic writing, one can only marvel at the apparent unwieldiness of the Dutch language. The following quotation is an example of the effort required to tell the reader that a group of persons organized for one purpose should not act as though organized for another: "Voorwa ver­"

THE NATION AS CHURCH

THIS monograph is an estimable contribution to the history of Reformed ecclesiology: a veritable mass of pertinent material has been worked over. The book concerns the church's development from 19th-20th-century Dutch literature on the subject. As the title suggests, it singles out for special consideration the problem of national churches, or, to put it more literally, the church of the people, that is, of a given country. The connotation of the term volkskerken is, that it is a church embracing the whole nation, by and large, and not extending beyond the land of its habitation.

The conception Volkskerk is not a stranger to church historians. It does not fit into the scheme of Romanist ecclesiology. Rome means to be a universal, not a national church. Hence its use of the term Catholic and its fondness for that designation. And yet, there is an element in Romanist ecclesiology that is akin to the dominant idea of the Volkskerk. It is the notion that the church assimilates itself to the natural structure of life. The Volkskerk does this on a national, that is, a partial scale; the Romanist church does it on an ecumenical scale. The Modernist ecumenical movement is fundamentally Romanist on this score, but not the Volkskerk. The latter is so far forth Protestant; though for the rest it has affinity with Romanism. To put it so, the national church is hybridical.

In principle the Volkskerk is anomalous, as being fundamentally an assembly and hence an accident of the supernatural construction of the church which the N. T. sets forth. The term Volkskerk is virtually a contradiction in terms. Insofar as the people, ethnologically considered, are concerned, it is not a church. Insofar as the church, theoretically or Biblically construed, is concerned, it is not a people in the ethnological sense. The concepts people and church are not in the same universe of discourse: they are separate categories. No people, politically speaking, has ever been a church; no church, Biblically speaking, can possibly be a civil entity such as the constituency of a state. The formative principle of a people politically construed, is purely natural, while that of the church as the Lord's House is distinctively supernatural. All of which does not change the fact, that the natural given of the people admits of the projection of the supernatural church into its organic and institutional life, and that the supernatural given of the church is constitutionally adaptable to the natural phenomenon called the people. But intrinsically and essentially the people and the church, respectively, spring from different roots, and on that account do not admit of such fusion as the term Volkskerk suggests.

One could wish that the author had so seen things, or, to put it historically, had found himself in agreement with the late Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr. In the main—not in every detail, however—he disowns the great churchman's estimate of the Volkskerk. Two facts may be specified in explanation of his failure to see the light. First, tradition, that is, the tradition of his church 1810 to date, holds the author so firmly in its grip that he seems incurably prejudiced against the view of the relation of the church and people that is both historically Reformed and has the sanction of the N. T. Second, he does not explore the concept Volkskerk independently by way of biblical research. Even so, he leaves this reviewer with the impression that he is not altogether sure of himself; that he is in a quandary to a degree; that at times he seems ready to cross the boundary, and that he is almost persuaded of the correctness of Kuyper's repudiation of the Volkskerk. However, when all has been said and done, it appears that, in his opinion, Kuyper was not always consistent and that when at last he definitely rejected the Volkskerk he was basically in error.

Dr. Longman's book is, in effect, a study, not merely of "Kuyper en de Volkskerk", but of the Dutch 19th-20th century history of the doctrine of the church with special reference to the specific problem of the relation of the church to the people of the land. Such a study has its own merits. But if one under-
The second work, by Dr. Witte, shows this even more clearly. For this is a distinctly polemical, and not a merely historical book. A fine polemic is carried on throughout this work, both with Calvin himself and with Reformed theologians of later date. As for Berkouwer, who among recent Reformed thinkers has shown a deep interest in carrying on theological discussion with Rome, his work Conflict met Rome appeared after the text of this work was already written, but of his De Strijd om het Roomsch-Katholieke Dogma the present author takes proper account. Dr. Witte in this two-volume monograph deals with the relation between the individual and the community in Calvin's conception of the norm of faith. The discussion, covering two volumes of more than 700 pages in all, deals really with the problem of the Church and the individual, and the author enters exhaustively into the problems from the exegetical, historical, and doctrinal point of view. As might be expected, the author's main charge against Calvin is that he failed to do justice to the collective aspect of the Christian Faith and its norm (which means, of course, to the Holy Mother Church) and does not escape the individualism with which not only the Renaissance but also the Protestant Reformation is invariably charged by all loyal sons of the Catholic Church. One cannot help being struck by the reasonableness of the spirit and the attitude of Roman Catholic and Protestant polemists in our day in distinction from the lack of it in the days of Luther and Calvin.

CLARENCE ROUMA

REFORMED BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP


This little booklet contains the addresses delivered at the inauguration of De Bundt in the Theologische Hoge­school at Kampen on September 26, 1950. The subject matter is one which is ever timely, and it is here treated in an interesting and effective manner. The author begins by calling attention to the work of H. S. Nyberg, and says that its appearance is "voor velen een opwindende gebeurtenis geweest." Perhaps so. We could wish, however, that Nyberg's caution were embraced by more Old Testament scholars. Nyberg's work on textual criticism is surely of great value. To the material which Dr. De Bundt mentions, we may now add Nyberg's valuable work on Isaiah 66, "Smarteorns man: En studie til Jes. 65, 13—55, 12." It is heartening to read this discussion of Nyberg's work, for it shows that the author is keeping abreast of recent developments in the field.

We read with great interest and appreciation what is said about Kittel's Biblia Hebraica. It is high time that some one came out with a criticism of the principles which underlie this work. We agree heartily with the following sentence: "Niet alleen is het zeer tevreden, dat hij een juistere waardering van de M. T. het tekstcritisch opzicht ontsprokt werd door volkomen wilde beheersking van vaak apodistische verklaringen als definiitie; legendum, een enkele maal gemetende tot het probleem opgelost, zonder dat hierdoor objectieve gronden worden aangegeven; propositum, zonder dat bij het, wanneer op welke gronden dit wordt voorgesteld." It is surely well for a student to be warned about this edition of the Hebrew Bible, and we believe that by these remarks a good service has here been performed.

We are unable, however, to share the author's enthusiasm for the new Isaiah manuscript. There are still too many questions to be answered before we adopt this manuscript in any whole-hearted fashion.

The remarks on exegesis in this pamphlet are sane and helpful. Above all we rejoice that the author regards the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God. "Heel het O. T. is door God geansemd, is vervuld van de Geest van God" (p. 21). The approach toward the Old Testament is that of a conservative scholar; better still, it is that of a Reformed scholar, and we are happy to read of a "Reformed Old Testament Scholarship."
It was a pleasure to read this brief address, and we wish the author God's blessing as he takes his stand among those who today are contending for the position that the Old Testament is the inspired Word of God.

EDWARD J. YOUNG.

SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION


STUDENTS who sat at the feet of Professor Berkhof of Calvin Seminary will be happy to have his notes on Sacred Hermeneutics in a more permanent, attractive, and usable form and can obtain them by acquiring the recently published book herewith announced.

As always Berkhof is clear and lucid in the presentation of his material. The book contains a history of the science of interpretation both among the Jews and in the Christian Church; next it discusses the object of Sacred Hermeneutics, or the Bible; and then follows the main dish dealing with the grammatical, historical, and theological interpretation of the Word of God.

To facilitate mastery of the material the chapters have series of questions appended and to encourage further investigation by the student literature is cited and recommended. Of special value is the material at the close of the three chapters dealing with the grammatical, historical, and theological interpretation of the Bible.

There are indications that the author has revised his original notes and sought to make them up-to-date but there are evidences too that the original has not been completely overhauled. The present status of theological inquiry would seem to demand an expansion of the fourth chapter dealing with the proper conception of the Bible. In addition, the great and positively desperate need of expository preaching, not only beyond our own limited confines, but also within our own group would seem to call for a larger emphasis on the techniques which would contribute to effective Biblical preaching.

Because among our own groups we persist in using the eyedropper to administer doses of the Word of God and are afraid or unwilling or not industrious enough to take sizable chunks with which one must grapple and wrestle, much of that still passes for sound and orthodox preaching is in effect nothing more than topical talking and ethical exhortation.

JOHN WIDENAAR.

ORTHODOX OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES


ORTHODOX Bible histories are woefully scarce in our day. Aside from the two-volume reprint of Ederheim's 1876 work, this century has been marked by a notorious paucity in the production of Old Testament historical interpretations with a conservative slant. Not that the field has gone unencumbered. Volume upon volume has appeared on that subject but one and all they bear the miserable stamp and insignia of the Higher Critical point of view. Hence this work under consideration is a refreshing oasis in the dreary wilderness of modern Biblical historical literature. Its consecrated and scholarly author, who boasts of a long and illustrious teaching career, here presents a sequel to his Notes on Genesis, which appeared in print some years ago. In this volume he treats the remainder of O.T. history in a fashion similar to that of its predecessor, viz., by illustrative and explanatory notes on pivotal sections. It aims to be an aid in Bible study and succeeds right well in that objective. Since it is non-political in design, there is but scant reference to the predominantly popular Higher Critical theories. The author does state, however, in his consideration of the Graf-Wellhausen school that "in the present state of the case there seems no reason why we should feel bound, in intellectual honesty, to accept a view that so seriously undermines the foundations of the Christian faith" (p. 221). That judgment bespeaks wholesome modernity, but to my mind makes too great a concession to Higher Criticism. If, as the author avers, such theorizing is disruptive of the very basis of the Christian faith, it will become necessary, I dare say, to accept its conclusions "in capite neo in membris". One further comment deserves to be made. The author takes the position that the Messianic as well as the Civil and Ceremonial laws were national in character and passed away with them as "an authoritative legal document" (p. 57). "Whatever in the Deutero-Testament is binding upon the Christian," says he, "is as binding; not at all because it is there, but because it has been reaffirmed by the authority of Christ and the apostles as a moral principle of the Christian life" (p. 57). There is, of course, a difference of opinion on this score. For the contrasting position the reader is referred to an article on this subject by the late Prof. D. H. Kromminga in THE CALVIN FORUM (March and April, 1941).

JOHN H. BRATT.

HELP FOR THE BIBLE STUDENT


This above work must be distinguished from the Christliche Encyclopaedia, which appeared in six volumes between the last war and will soon be republished. The present work deals with Biblical names of persons, places, animals, plants, and everything that may tend to make the use of the Bible more readily available to the average reader. This one-volume work does not pretend to speak on dogmas which persons or councils may have inferred from the Bible. There is no reference to church history, philosophy or art from the Christian point of view. In fact, there is no attempt to present anything strictly new, but the authors gratefully make mention of the Revised Westminster Dictionary of the Bible as one of their sources. However, they want to be understood as giving their own views in their style and expressly say that they bow in everything to the supreme authority of the Word. They present the orthodox view without any admixture of modernism and without compromise.

Some of the questions that are unanswered in this useful book are: Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus? How did the Assyrians write letters almost 4,000 years ago? How old are the oldest manuscripts of the Bible? How did King Solomon keep his horses? How were guests received and what did they eat? Which animals and plants are mentioned in the Bible? What can the excavations of Assyria, Egypt, and the Holy Land teach us? This, is, of course, merely a sample of the subjects treated in this book.

Also as to the manner of treatment I find it very adequate for the purpose of a one-volume encyclopaedia. In the case of the term "aanemingslot kinderen" (adoption) we are informed that it is taken from jurisprudence and used by Paul to show how God, for the sake of Christ's work in redemption, makes sinners His children and thereby places them into a different forensic relationship to Himself. Further, the literal Greek meaning of adoption is given and the places cited where it is used of the Jews. In the case of "marriage" the entire history of this sacred ordinance from creation on to Paul's careful prescriptions is summarized in three columns. For all serious Bible students this is invaluable in saving time and effort. I can heartily recommend this volume to all Dutch-reading students of the Bible as a thoroughly reliable help and guide in the study of the Word.

H. R. VAN TIL.

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