World Leadership
   America’s Role

Rethinking Education
   Dutch Experiment

God and Science
   Atom Bomb Reflections

Government Control
   Forced Weapons

Voices
   Letters
   Reviews

VOL. XVI, NO. 8

TWO DOLLARS
A YEAR

MARCH, 1951
The CALVIN FORUM
Published by the Calvin Forum Board of Publication

VOLUME XVI, NO. VIII MARCH, 1951

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

Entered as second-class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at Grand Rapids, Michigan, under the Act of March 3, 1879.
America as World Leader

[Cecil De Boer, Professor of Philosophy, Calvin College]

Just how well would we stand up as the leader of a new international order that does not yet exist? We claim to be an idealistic nation, and this claim may, in a restricted sense, contain some truth. But will others trust it when they observe our obvious practical materialism? To the question of what it is that most of our fellow citizens really want, the answer is that they want something close to what they had four or five years before World War II. They want full employment, high levels of production, and plenty of dollars. As one reads the newspapers one can hardly avoid the impression that the interests of the American people largely concern jobs, strikes, houses, prices, entertainment, sports, and high speed cars. It seems doubtful that one could successfully deny that the actual American way of life is characterized not only by a belief in "the four freedoms" (slightly qualified in the case of Negroes and "fanatical" groups) but also by a religious reverence for money and things, a conspicuous moral and civic irresponsibility (consider what the public tolerates in the way of "literature" and the movies), and a firm belief that the good life can be bought.

Last year, for example, both the baccalaureate sermon and the commencement address which I heard contained impressive statistics with respect to the high percentages of cars, radios, insurance policies, etc., owned by the men and women of the United States. These were pleasant, if purely materialistic, truths. The speakers did not seem to realize, however, that there might be some sinister counterparts to these pleasant truths. Thus one might wish to ask such questions as these. What percentage of the civilized world's annual dead and maimed as a direct result of the high percentage of automobiles, is found in the United States? What percentage of the world's teen-age moral and criminal delinquency directly or indirectly attributable to the high percentage of automobiles, is found in the United States? What percentage of the world's divorces and broken homes is found in the United States? What percentage of the civilized world's thefts, homicides, . . . But why continue these champion percentages to the point of monotony? These questions may point to only a part of the picture; yet they point to a critically important part, one to which the nations we are supposed to lead will pay close attention. Hollywood not only cheapens morals and manners at home but also damages American prestige abroad. Incidentally, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that between sixty and eighty percent of the American people get whatever cultural tastes and moral standards they have from the movies, and that as compared with Hollywood, the direct and lasting influences of the home, the church, and the school are a diminishing quantity. At the level of higher education student interests increasingly concern the so-called practical courses, with the result that colleges and universities, and especially the state universities, are in real danger of being reduced from institutions of culture and learning to glorified trade schools.

Our Spiritual Resources

Can we under these conditions achieve a reputation for justice, sobriety, and reliability that will impress other nations? After all, divorce, irreligion, and materialism make for poor homes; poor homes make for unreliable individuals; and unreliable individuals make for an unreliable nation. An objective and sober appraisal of our assets will reveal two outstanding facts: one, the fact of our enormous material advance, i.e., our scientific discoveries and their amazing practical applications; the other, the fact that that is about the only asset we have. There would seem to be a large element of truth, therefore, in the assertion that in the final analysis Russia and the United States represent two systems of rank materialism, the difference being that whereas Russia has inherited tyranny and terrorism of the Czars, we have inherited the liberalism and republicanism of Protestant Christianity. Of course, no one denies that this is a significant difference, but the fact is that it is not a difference which we have made or earned. Rather it is a difference inherited from our forebears, and there is no telling how easily and how early we may dissipate our inheritance. The fact remains that in our practical materialism we have dangerously much in common with the dupes of Communism. Both we and they are victims of the paradox in the religion of owning things: in the end things have a way of owning us.
The tragedy of practical materialism is that it just about invariably goes together with complacency, self-righteousness, and low moral standards. This was strikingly illustrated a year or so ago by the results of a questionnaire concerning religion sent to the readers of a popular journal. To the question, Do you really love your neighbor as yourself, as Scripture demands? a fantastically large percentage of those who answered, solemnly answered in the affirmative. Now, obviously, such a phenomenon can only be the result of a low conception of what Christianity means by neighborly love. The average American who can with a straight face announce that he loves his neighbor as himself, probably means that inasmuch as it has never occurred to him to murder his neighbor any more than it has ever occurred to him to commit suicide, he must be loving his neighbor as himself. Jesus tells us, at least by implication, that the great destroyer of true religion is not necessarily agnosticism, nor even atheism, but the reliance on wealth and things. Now the destruction of religion is eventually accompanied by the destruction of morals, character, integrity. As the axiological realists would say, "If values have no cosmic significance they can have no human significance." And now the question is, Just how will our reliance on things affect the quality of our international leadership?

Our Russian Problem

As the leading nation in this new order—or disorder—we face another nation whom we can probably neither defeat nor marry. Yet there are some optimists who maintain that there are no international differences, that cannot be settled by peaceful means. They forget that no differences, whether between individuals or nations, are settled until they are forgotten. Our exploitation of Persian oil, for example, is taking place in what Russia regards as her back yard; and there is little doubt that she would seize this oil if she found it expedient. How settle this by peaceful means so that it becomes an issue forgotten? For clearly the issue will not be forgotten until Persian oil becomes a very minor thing in the light of a critically important common objective. But what in the case of Russia and the United States could this objective possibly be? Here some would assure us that the common objective can be found in the common desire to avoid another world war. The weapons of destruction are becoming so devastating that humanity will be unable to stand another total war.

The difficulty here is that fear of war would merely amount to mutual intimidation. Now cowing one another into not fighting may in the end become more intolerable than war itself (many a German has expressed the opinion that the worst days of the war were more tolerable than the best days since). Fear of war has its limits, and it does not take a nation long to conclude, "Anything—including war—rather than this!" And no nation is likely to shrink from the prospect of war for the sake of mankind. To most people mankind is pretty much of an abstraction. The thought of a depopulated Africa or Mongolia or Siberia would be no more intolerable to Americans than the thought of a depopulated America would be to the gentlemen in the Kremlin.

Another suggestion centers about the magic word "compromise". Unfortunately, the principle of compromise is effective only where there exists an agreement on fundamentals. But just on what fundamentals are we and the Soviet agreed? We can hardly be said to think in the same terms. And even if we could be said to think in the same terms, it is patent that each is fundamentally opposed to what the other stands for. Thus we believe—or pretend to believe—that communist and free enterprise economies can live peacefully together in the same world. The Russians, however, don't think so. And for this they may have good reasons. The Russian economy to date has practically compelled Russia to become a plunder nation, reducing every satellite to its own level. Quite possibly, therefore, the leaders feel that communism cannot be successful until the strictures of its economic doctrine are imposed globally; resulting in a somewhat higher standard of living for the Russians and a considerably lower one for the rest of us. Anyway, compromise with the Soviet is not compromise but submission.

Proposed Solution

It is difficult to see how in principle our government could do anything more or better than what it is already doing, namely maintaining adequate military strength in order to keep Russia and her satellites from doing too much pushing, and nursing the nations of western Europe toward economic health in order to reduce the danger of communist complications. It must have occurred to most Americans that in the case of war the Russians can potentially do more damage to the highly urbanized and industrialized Atlantic seaboard than we could do to the Steppes, the Urals, and Siberia; and that whether we won or lost, the individual American would be incomparably worse off than the individual Russian. Depressions, for example, hurt the white collar worker in the city considerably more than they do the mountaineer and the hill-billy.

There are some, therefore, who propose that besides our official policy of preparedness and watchful waiting we also have an unofficial policy, and that we introduce the latter "by the back door." They propose that we Americans as individuals...
organize for works of mercy and follow the example of the Society of Friends, who by shipments of food, clothing, vaccines, medicines, and funds for the rehabilitation of churches and hospitals, try to some extent to relieve the poverty and general misery of their fellowmen in Russia. For, so they argue, it is certainly not the direct fault of the individual Russian that he happens to have the misfortune of being oppressed by an oriental despotism. Furthermore, in doing this we would be living in obedience to the law of Christ and thus win the hearts of the enemy.

Admitting whatever value this proposal may have, let us note that it involves a price that most Americans may not wish to pay. We, of course, would be the givers and the Russians, the takers; and just how long our materialistic fellow citizens would have genuine enthusiasm for that sort of thing is not hard to guess. True, a few years ago we enjoyed the impressive spectacle of an American good will train bound for Europe; but notice that it hasn't been repeated. Furthermore, if the Russian despots are as bad as we are made to believe, they will doubtless misinterpret and therefore forbid our show of good will as private citizens. Now given this perverse suspicion of every move we make, the conclusion must be that only God can make our charity work. And if one considers that the majority of Americans—or at least a significant, leading minority—, in common with the gentlemen in the Kremlin, no longer believe in God, it would seem clear that the outlook for the proposal is not promising.

Christ and UNESCO

And it won’t do to fall back upon the teachings of Christ if one refuses to accept Christ as Lord. Aside from the ulterior motives behind the proposed program of charity, it should be observed that the kind of charity that has its ground and dynamic in nothing more than the generosity and gratitude of men, will generally be shortsighted, short-lived and, therefore, ineffective. Only charity by the grace of God has any efficacy; but the grace of God will hardly be forthcoming in an atmosphere of unbelief. After all, there are and have been events which we call "acts of God," acts of God not merely in the legal sense but also in the sense of events which we can neither foresee nor fully understand and which, in any case, we can do nothing about. But for the heavy fog after the Battle of Long Island, for example, that battle would have marked the end of the Revolutionary War and Washington, instead of going down in history as the storied father of his country, would probably have been hanged as a traitor to the Crown. But for this act of God, therefore, American history and, possibly the history of Europe and Asia, might conceivably have been different. It seems to me, therefore, that only to the extent that we can reasonably expect the occurrence of such events, can we reasonably rely on the efficacy of American charity toward the people of Russia. And we can reasonably expect the occurrence of such events only if and when our charity becomes the result of obedience to the “greatest of all the commandments,” namely, to “love God above all else and thy neighbor as thyself.”

It would not be wise, therefore, to put our trust in what is popularly known as UNESCO. Its program calls for such things as the promotion of popular understanding of science and its social implications, the spreading of literacy and knowledge, and the encouragement of foreign travel, especially among the young folk. Unfortunately, about the only thing to be said for it is that it may not do any harm. Anyway, we should not allow a program of that sort to delude us, for it is really nothing more than a subtle form of an old human weakness, namely the attempt to get something for nothing. Real peace can be ours only at a tremendous cost in terms of religious faith, self-sacrifice, and intelligence. UNESCO's program is based upon the assumption that man will do better if he knows better, an assumption which, unfortunately, works to some extent only in the case of that small minority already in possession of character, intelligence, and the sacrificial spirit. And as for the peace promoting efficacy of scientific ideas, let us remember that scientific and other ideas were in full flow internationally long before 1914. Nor should we put too much trust in education and the removal of illiteracy as a cure for international ills. The moral and spiritual efficacy of education depends upon its content; that of science, upon the spirit in which it is taught; and that of literacy, upon what the literates read. The U.S.S.R. has worked hard to reduce illiteracy in order to insure the continued devotion of future generations to the U.S.S.R. Incidentally, the Fulbright scholarships, in so far as they are intended to promote peace, would seem to be just another waste of Federal funds. Apparently nobody will benefit from these funds except some of the recipients and, of course, Mr. Fulbright himself, who in this way has raised to himself a memorial at Federal expense. Finally, as for the benefits of international understanding to be derived from foreign travel and study on the part of the young folk, let us remember that before 1914 the number of American students annually going to Germany, at their own expense, in order to round out their education must have run into hundreds from the Atlantic seaboard alone. This, however, has not made us particular friends of Germany. Other things determine the issues of war and peace besides young folk travelling.
The Conclusion
of the Matter

Whether we as a nation can any longer significant-
determine the pattern of the future, is a hard
question. It may require a price which we are no
longer able to pay. A civilization relying funda-
mentally upon things, a civilization whose critical
problems and whose preoccupations are almost ex-
clusively economic, may not be able to produce a
sufficient number of great men. Now great men, as
Ruskin tells us, are humble men, not in the sense
of doubting their own power, but in the sense of
a “curious feeling that the greatness is not in them
but through them.” Can a practical materialism
produce men who sense a Divine greatness flowing
through them? The answer is plain. Any nation
or people that leans on and needs the support of
things can neither be great nor produce greatness.
Our trust is still in the great god Mammon. We
expect our billions to procure our peace by paying
the debts of almost every nation in the world and
supplying them with arms, meanwhile gradually
losing our rights at the hands of an ever expanding
Federal Bureaucracy. In short, we tenaciously cling
to the faith that peace can be bought, forgetting
that peace is something that must be earned.

Consider the words of Isaiah: “Go, and tell this
people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and
see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of
this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut
their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear
with their ears, and understand with their heart,
and convert and be healed. Then said I, Lord how
long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted
without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and
the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have re-
moved men far away, and there be a great forsaking
in the midst of the land.”

Well, there it is. Any people that forgets and
almost utterly disdains the religious and moral
fundamentals by which it became great, is in
danger of forfeiting its reason for existence. But
perhaps there remains to us a ray of hope in this:
“Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he
said, I will not destroy the city for the ten’s sake.”

Rethinking Education in the Netherlands

On a clear, sunny morning in October of last
year I dropped in, unannounced, at the Kees
Boeke School, known as the Werkschool,
Kindergemeenschap, (Activity School,
Children’s Community), at Bithoven, Netherlands. I
had been advised to visit this school for it represents
a radical departure from the usual Dutch schools.
Having visited many schools of all kinds, and having
conferred with many educators, I was vitally
interested to see what this school had to offer. I
came unannounced, of course, because I wanted to
see the school in operation under normal circum-
stances.

As I enter the building I look for the principal’s
office. Seeing no sign, I inquire of a young man in
the corridor. I ask for Mr. Boeke’s office. He con-
ducts me to a small room off the corridor. As I
enter I see a gentleman dressed in a sport shirt, no
tie. I walk up to him.

“Mr. Boeke?” I ask, in Dutch.

“Yes, I am Boeke,” he replies in clearly spoken
English.

Why does he reply in English? You see, Europeans
can spot us Americans at a distance, before we open
our mouths.

I introduce myself as a teacher, interested especial-
ly in elementary and secondary education. He
looks at me for a moment, somewhat taken by

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of Dutch education than is your experimental school from the general program of American education. Our work here must be "understood against the background of what you must have seen in Holland generally."

We exchange views on American education for a few moments. From our discussion it became apparent to him what I was particularly eager to see and to try to understand. I want to see this school in operation unaffected by my coming. I proceed to apologize for so rudely interrupting in his schedule of work. But Mr. Boeke doesn't seem to mind. He lays aside his work for the morning, and from this moment becomes a friendly, charming host. Gradually we become more at ease in each other's presence.

School Organization

Before we visit classrooms, Mr. Boeke takes time to explain the organization of the school to me. He appears always very conscious of the fact that I know American experimental schools, and therefore takes time to make comparisons according to what he saw among us.

Mr. Boeke and his wife are the founders of this school. They started in the living room of their home more than twenty-five years ago. Conscious of the intellectualism of Dutch education and the tragic results of mass education by artificially dividing pupils in grades or classes, they began a school that sought to deal with pupils as human beings rather than as receptacles of learning. Through the years their private venture has expanded to an elementary-secondary school. The last two years of the secondary school will be added when they enter their new buildings this year.

Though the curriculum is graduated to meet the learning levels of pupils, there is no grade organization in this school. Group and individual instruction varies according to the needs of learners. Each pupil progresses at his own rate under the guidance of the teacher. There are no failures in the sense of "staying back." There is no remedial work in the usual sense. It is unnecessary. Home work as assigned tasks to be completed for careful checking has been completely abolished.

A modified Dalton plan has made the above possible. Learning units are placed in the hands of pupils for individual and cooperative activity. Pupils follow these at the rate their ability permits.

Teaching assignments are very flexible. The emphasis is placed upon working with boys and girls at certain levels of development. The personality and character of the pupil is always of primary consideration. Knowledge-getting plays a secondary role. Not "knowledge is power," nor "knowledge is virtue" is the slogan. The teacher is the guide in a man-making process. Subject matter is an essential medium, milieu, but never an end in itself. Secondary teachers cannot be expected to be equally well-versed in all subject matter involved on this level. Hence, areas of concentration for teachers are essential. But teachers are never permitted to become subject matter specialists.

Two things are stressed above all else in this school. The first is that the school must be a workshop. Don't let this conjure up in your mind a carpenter shop or machine shop. These too may be involved, though handwork is not the core of the learning process. The school is a workshop of ideas. Pupils must be stimulated to develop ideas and work with ideas to foreseen ends. In the second place the school must function as a community of cooperating citizens. They learn to assume responsibility by being permitted to participate in the development and management of school activities. The school is known as Workshop, Children's Community. The formal classroom with a teacher-dominated program kept under control by external disciplinary measures has been completely eliminated. There is nothing of this in evidence.

I See the School at Work

Having given me this information, Mr. Boeke takes me to the classrooms. They are indeed workshops. No lesson hearing or recitation in the usual sense. Listening? Yes, at times. Especially when group directions are given, or when in an audience situation pupils listen to the reading of good literature. Pupils are working at different tasks in the same room, generally under the supervision of a teacher. Sometimes, as in the case of a foreign language group, they are working together at a similar task in the same room.

And classroom control? Well, let the following be representative of what I observed. We come to a class where the teacher has been absent for a few days on account of illness. No substitute was available. (Where is Mr. Boeke to secure substitutes? Only one familiar with this program and resourceful far beyond textbook knowledge can serve as teacher in this school.) Mr. Boeke tells me to go ahead of him in the classroom, for he does not want the situation affected by his presence. He informs me that he stepped in for a moment at the outset of the morning. I enter. Every one is at work, and from all indication of the work on the pupils' desks, they have been at work for the past few days. I can see what they have accomplished. Here are a group of junior high young people, on their own, working with textbook and reference material according to long-range plan. The teacher has apparently made himself unnecessary. Teachers of professional "know-how" can appreciate what kind of planning and educational insight and skill it takes to accomplish something like this. This is no exceptional situation in Kees Boeke's Workshop and Children's
Community. This kind of thing characterizes his school. It has been confirmed to me by critics of the school. But this is not what they criticize. Every teacher would like to emulate this situation.

The bell rings. This does not mean change of classes, for there are no classes. There are groups at work at various places, all according to their rate of progress.

But why does the bell ring? Recess. Rest period. The day being clear, pupils quietly, or I should say, orderly and very informally go to their lunch boxes for a snack and take a walk outside. No shoving, no pushing, no screaming. Plenty of life, vivacious, too, but always well-controlled. Teachers have their coffee. I am invited to join. (Give me our American coffee; but each according to his taste.) We have a few minutes of pleasant conversation, professional and otherwise. I meet an American teacher, here for the year under the Fulbright Act. She is teaching English and history.

Does Miss Shields like it here? She tells me how much she is impressed. Being of Dutch descent, she has mastered enough of the language to get along. Before she leaves she is determined to catch some of the spirit of this school. She marvels at pupil interest and enthusiasm in a busy program filled with work.

As I go around, I begin to realize how inadequate facilities are for Kees Boeke's program. Classrooms are small and crowded. Corridors are narrow. No neat, steel lockers. (Not in Europe.) Shacks are used to supplement the main building.

But better times are coming. Mr. Boeke takes me to the new buildings, part of which are nearing completion. Extensive grounds with two buildings, the dream of every school administrator who is first of all an educator. Mr. Boeke has a philosophy of education which he is practically working out in his school program. He, not the architect, (the architect was only his assistant as building expert) has planned these buildings around an educational program. No, he didn't have money "to burn." He has secured state subsidy for his school, but appropriations for construction were limited.

On our way back to the present structure we are met by several pupils on their bicycles. They are going to the school garden. A most interesting project woven meaningfully into the school program. "Hello, Kees," I hear several times. Their very voices betray an air of friendliness and good will.

Mr. Boeke feels he must explain.

"You see," says Mr. Boeke, "our pupils call us by our first name. We find this brings us closer together."

"Does it tend to create a familiarity and camaraderie which reduces respect for the teacher?" I ask.

"Apparently not, for we have no difficulty with our young people," replies Mr. Boeke.

"You wouldn't advocate this in the home, would you, Mr. Boeke?"

"No, parental relations fall in another category."

Does what I saw today represent a dependable sampling of Kees Boeke Werkschool, Kindermeenschap in action? I turn to Miss Shields. She assures me it does.

"The longer you see this school in operation the more you will be impressed with the effective application of the philosophy of education it espouses. One may not agree with its philosophy and thus reject its program essentially, of course. But here is a program that works." So thinks Miss Shields.

We Part

As Mr. and Mrs. Boeke come out of the building to meet me before I leave, I film both of them. Modest people they are. One is impressed with their sacrificial service. Mrs. Boeke is credited with having spent a fortune on the school. They have been gracious hosts.

Before I leave, Mr. Boeke volunteers a bit of his philosophy of life. He is a deeply religious man. The will to serve is his religion. Mr. and Mrs. Boeke are high-minded people, genuinely sincere, and consecrated to their convictions.

Why did they begin this school? What they prize most in life, respect for human personality, was, and is still, so little in evidence in the schools of the Netherlands. Personality values are sacrificed to attain intellectual standing. Cruel, Mr. Boeke believes. And to think that this is done in the name of Christianity in certain circles, thinks Boeke.

"One more question, please, Mr. Boeke, before I leave. I realize you do not appraise the progress of your pupils in terms of mastery of knowledge and skills. But your pupils, too, must meet the rigid requirement of state examinations, I understand. Their admission to universities and various vocational pursuits depends upon the outcome in formal examinations, does it not?"

"Yes, though our secondary school is not complete, our people have taken examinations. This was necessary to secure state appropriations for our school. Though the examinations gave our students no difficulty, the preparation for them restricts our educational freedom. The examinations stress intellectual values to the exclusion of other human values. We do not discount the significance of meaningful knowledge. We want to give knowledge its proper place among other achievements."

"Thank you, Mr. Boeke. My visit has been a very profitable one. I am glad I made acquaintance with your attempt to show the way in Dutch education."

Comment

Why do I cite this visit at some length? As an illustration of educational reform in the Netherlands? No, for the Kees Boeke School is hardly representative of educational thinking in Holland. Neither
do I desire to appraise Mr. Boeke's experiment at this time. What Kees Boeke is trying to do is carried on in our country on a much greater scale. It would be more in order to appraise this kind of educational experiment as found among us. I do not want to give you the impression either that Kees Boeke's ideas are meeting with widespread approval, though his experiment draws more attention now than before the recent war.

For more than fifty years Dutch educators, Christian school men and men of the so-called neutral schools of the Netherlands, have called attention to the need for a revitalization of education, especially in the elementary and secondary schools. At every conference and meeting I attended which concerned schools the cry for "onderwijs-vernieuwing," as they call it, was heard. Time and again I was asked, "What do you think of our problem? After visiting our schools, do you feel that we are steeped in intellectualism?" While these educators are talking and writing, Kees Boeke is doing something about the problem. I have tried to give you a glance at his answer.

Books and magazine articles of the Netherlands dealing with educational theory invariably stress the urgency for reform. One author calls it a "dire necessity." A course of study prepared for Christian schools includes the following quotation in its introduction.

"In fact, Christian schools have not succeeded in becoming distinctive without falling prey to the intellectualism of the nineteenth century. There have been those in the Christian school world who saw through this trend, but they were unable to stem the tide. Christian schools have not succeeded in indicating new ways of meeting the threat of this intellectualism. . . . Christian education needs fundamental reform." 2)

Another Christian educator states the problem as follows:

"The sad fact is that in the past we have been content with filling minds with book knowledge that was to prepare for some final examination. . . . How will the Christian school deal with the demand for a revitalization of instruction which we cannot and may not try to escape?" 3)

We too are struggling with the problem of making our Christian schools distinctive. In my visit to the Christian schools of the Netherlands I became very conscious of the problem as our Christian teachers face it there. In reality they have proceeded no further than have we in the solution of the problem. They have more pertinent literature on the subject, however. I have great respect for their leadership. In classroom practice I believe we have accomplished more than they. But they have greater hurdles to surmount than we.

I believe we can learn much from the struggle for reform in the Netherlands that will help us define more carefully our task for today. We must achieve greater clarity of purpose. We are working more intensively at the improvement of Christian education in the classrooms of our Christian schools than ever before. Let us do it with the right perspective.

In the next two articles I shall try to give an account of the need for and direction of educational reform in the Christian schools of the Netherlands. I trust that thereby our own problems will be clarified in a measure.

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1) Van Klinken, L., Noodzakelijke voorwaarden van Schoolhervorming en Onderwijs vernieuwing, p. 5.

2) Vander Zweep, L. et al., Richtingen voor een leerplan voor de scholen met de Bijbel, pp. 3-4.


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THE WOMEN

While His disciples sat, still gripped by fear
Their hearts worn with the unrelenting grief,
The women found what women long have known
That work alone can give the heart relief.

They made their plans to meet and told the hour
One would bring this, another that. Oh, yes,
They missed Him too those long and bitter hours
Yet they must work. Then was their grief the less?

They were rewarded too that golden dawn
Were they not first to know—before His own?
They were the ones to hear the angels voice,
To see the empty tomb beyond the stone.

MARIE J. POST

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * MARCH, 1951
Authority in the Sciences

Enno Wolthus
Associate Professor of Chemistry
Calvin College

ANY men of science make no secret of their belief that we have recently entered upon a new era of human history, the Atomic Age, as they call it. By God’s grace the fearful powers of it were not first wreaked upon us. If we have forgotten the thousands of souls who were blasted into eternity at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we do well to be reminded that a whole new world of inconceivable power has now been exposed to human exploitation, for good or ill. And you and I cannot escape the consequences of such a discovery. It has thrown the world into confusion, and that largely because our current popular philosophies lack the perspective from which to view, and by means of which to evaluate, such revolutionary events. It may be profitable to examine briefly this confusion of the public mind, and inquire into the adequacy of the historic Christian faith to cope with the problems and fears which constitute this confusion.

There is perhaps no single factor which has done more to shape our civilization than the development and application of the scientific method, particularly in the physical sciences. Like all natural sciences, they are essentially descriptive in character, describing in detail the phenomena in the world around us. Up to about a century ago a considerable amount of such knowledge had been gained, but there was a lack of integration of it, a lack of classification and systematization of it into a structure of knowledge. Then the discovery of a few key facts enabled men to erect rapidly the building of the sciences. Using what has now become known as the scientific method, men made a host of careful observations of the physical world, preferably under controlled conditions, and integrated them into patterns, or theories. The latter, when thoroughly tested and found reliable, were elevated to the status of natural laws. Each new natural law so discovered served as a stepping stone for the conquest of new areas of knowledge.

That this method of operation has produced remarkable results in the natural sciences cannot be gainsaid. The material wealth of our modern culture, to mention but one item, is sufficient witness to its effectiveness. But its effect upon us has been far more extensive, and much more subtle than this. To quote A. S. Nash, “In the whole domain of knowledge the predominant mode of thinking has been so deliberately modeled on the natural sciences that it is not an exaggeration to say that the scientist in the modern world receives a veneration which for human credulity can only be compared with the superstitious regard which the medieval peasant paid to his priest. . . . The modern archangel is measurement and gaily do we invoke his aid to measure the immeasurable.” Again, “Perhaps the world will only realize the idolatrous nature of its worship now that, like the Juggernaut of old, its god science, incarnate in the instruments of modern war, destroys its cities and lays bare its countryside on a scale which makes the wars of prescientific ages look like Sunday School parties.”

The method of the sciences has become the measure of all things. Though Lord Kelvin probably did not intend it so, many today nevertheless make his words regarding science their creed for living: “When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers you know something about it, and when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind.” Even in theology, faith was made subordinate to science when, beginning with Schleiermacher, attempts were made to put faith on a scientific basis, so that none less than the Bishop of Birmingham said, “The right starting point for theology is to examine the conception of the world known to science.”

This trend in modern thought gave rise to an unbounded optimism which has been contrasted with the so-called inherent pessimism of orthodoxy. Who could doubt that ultimately man’s reason would triumph over every obstacle to peace, security, and even eternal happiness. So it was that a man like H. G. Wells, with an exaggerated trust in the powers of human reason, could say, that it is in the power of scientists to produce a world encyclopedia for dissemination of their knowledge to all, which will compel men to come to terms with one another. We have seen the power of this philosophy in all departments of living. The methods of education have been revolutionized. The social sciences, psychology, and other fields of endeavor have felt its impact.

2 Nash, Ibid., p. 42.
3 Nash, Ibid., p. 48.

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However, already a number of years ago men began to have serious misgivings about this trend in thought and practice. And then, out of a clear sky, our atomic age dawned. The heavens were ablaze with its light, the earth trembled and then lay molten beneath. And when the smoke of destruction cleared away, mankind was stunned at what it saw. Of course, I refer to the devastating results of atomic disintegration, to the atomic bombs which epitomized so well our scientific accomplishments. The tower of Babel had been rebuilt, this time higher, far higher, than before. But now, quite unexpectedly, its foundation had crumbled and confusion reigned. Was it true that our scientific acumen had evolved a monster which now threatened to consume us? Now that the secret was known, who could be trusted to use it for good rather than ill? Was there any certainty left, any anchor for the soul?

Fear is the prevailing thought in many minds today. How can we regain our equilibrium? Is our Calvinistic heritage suited to cope with this present contingency? More than that, is our message peculiarly adaptable to this situation?

Some have lamented the discovery itself. Others have purported to find in the Scriptures a more or less detailed prophecy of the atomic bomb as the agent for the consummation of all things. I think we agree that our times should awaken us to some serious reflection. But we should also agree to consider the current situation from the proper perspective, namely, an overall interpretation of history based on Scriptural principles. Specifically, we desire now to reflect upon the bearing of our faith on the fragment of history we call science.

* * *

That our fundamental problem today is a religious and moral one would appear beyond question. Recent events have given new meaning to the words, “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. 17:9) General Omar N. Bradley recently said, “With the monstrous weapons man already has, humanity is in danger of being trapped in this world by its moral adolescents. Our knowledge of science has clearly outstripped our capacity to control it. We have too many men of science, too few men of God. We have grasped the mystery of the atom, and rejected the sermon on the mount. Man is stumbling blindly through a spiritual darkness while toying with the precarious secrets of life and death. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living. This is our twentieth century’s claim to distinction and to progress.” In commenting on these words, J. Murphy remarked, “The apparent lapse of morality among scientists today is more the result of an initial lack of spiritual development among those who become scientists than the effect of science upon spiritual men. It is quite natural that the impact of science upon an insecure faith will cause that faith to waver, to cast doubt upon its validity, and to suggest the renunciation of all spiritual values. But this should not be held against science; rather, it is a reflection upon the extent of our departure from God, a descent induced partly by our preoccupation with material values, and unconsciously perhaps by the contiguous development during the past 100 years of a strong ideology based on complete renunciation of the spirit.”

I believe these reflections strike a sympathetic chord within us. Perhaps some are even inclined to say we could have told you so long ago. But then the rather embarrassing question may be asked of us, “Have you told us so?” I think most of us must admit that, although we have been convinced for a long time that a Calvinistic approach to the problems of living is necessary and adequate, we have really only scratched the surface in formulating its implications. The problems are many, and our solution is fundamentally sound but needs much elaboration. In this article we propose to discuss only what we believe to be the basic difficulty and error in current thought, and to show that the Christian position alone can meet it. Our thesis then is that a true and satisfying wisdom must be a synthesis of knowledge within the framework of the Christian faith.

* * *

Most serious attempts to evaluate the world of scientific phenomena lead to some form of subjectivism, with its emphasis on the knowing self as the guarantor of reality. In his criticism of Eddington, Joad says, “The familiar world is subjective through and through, in the sense that it owes the features which are discerned in it to the activity of the same mind as that which discerns them.” Obsessed with the mathematical beauty of the universe, Sir James Jeans goes so far as to speculate that there may be a creator, or mathematical mind, and the world may be the thought in this mind. The point I am making here is that these instances illustrate an exaggerated trust in the authority of the human mind. Copernicus has been hailed for his defiance of the authority of the church in his time when he relegated our world and its inhabitants to a relatively minor place in the universe. But current philosophies are as wrong as the church of that time when they insist on the right and necessity of the human mind, residing on an insignificant planet, to legislate for the universe, and


Murphy, Ibid., p. 3473.

design a creator as he may require one. Such is the folly of the wisdom of this world.

I think it must be apparent that the philosophical framework of the sciences depends upon the authority to which one appeals. There must be authority if there is to be certainty, but that authority must be of a sort that is antecedent to, and independent of, the human mind. Over against the authority of the human intellect, Christianity posits the authority of the revealed God, revealed in Scripture but also in nature. Therefore one cannot properly interpret His natural revelation without a prior acceptance of this more personal and redeeming revelation in the Scriptures, for the latter determines the presuppositions and attitudes of the human mind which investigates and evaluates the natural. "There is no realm of life which is exempt from the applicability of Scripture. As God is sovereign of the whole universe, so his Word has meaning throughout that universe. The details and particularities of application will vary tremendously, but the principles are the same wherever God is God and humanity human.”

This is not to say that nature as such is not a revelation without the Scriptural commentary on it. Romans 1:20 tells us, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." Without any consideration of the God of the Scriptures, many scientists have been impressed not only with the tremendous forces resident in nature but also with the beauty of it, or perhaps the mathematical coherence of it as expressed in natural laws. These laws speak to us of rationality, of a mind as their source. But the god derived from a knowledge of creation alone can never transcend the physical world and can be no more than a creation in one's own image. (Romans 1:23) Such a god can never be the object of one's love but only of fear.

Sir Arthur Keith, in a recent book entitled Evolution and Ethics, clearly points up the antithesis between a naturalistic and the Christian position. Obsessed with the evolutionary hypothesis, he elevates it to the position of a metaphysical law. Then he observes, "The law of Christ is incompatible with the law of evolution.... Nay, the two laws are at war with each other, the law of Christ can never prevail until the law of evolution is destroyed.” Why should this be so? Keith says, "Human mentality is so aptly fitted to carry out the law of evolution, and so ill-framed to carry out the law of Christ.” Once again he remarks, “Human nature will have to be remade from top to bottom, and a man-made scheme of evolution devised, before we can hope to yoke Christian ethics to the purposes of human development.” He concludes that Christianity has failed, and must fail always, because its demands and methods are discordant with human nature and, therefore, anti-evolutionary. Keith reasons very clearly in this matter. His analysis is good but his conclusions are wrong, because he does not reckon with God's authority over the natural and human. He recognizes the demands of the gospel but fails to fathom its power, simply because this power resides in God who is above natural law and will not be identified with it.

These few reflections have sought to show that the recent developments in science and scientific thought have led us to see more clearly than before the gulf that lies between a Christian and a non-Christian interpretation of our world. Either one excludes God as He has revealed Himself in His Word, or he includes Him in his thinking. Either one assumes the measure of all things, or he accepts on faith the authority of God, also in nature. This authority can never be derived from nature but transcends space and time. It is absolute, and known only, for what it really is, by a recognition of His revelation in the Scriptures. Without it, the accomplishments in science are surely possible, but cannot be eternally satisfying. Without it, the exploitation of nature will continue, but will also continue, in increasing measure, to lose its meaning and to increase our fear of it.

In the scope of this article we cannot address ourselves to the many problems which require attention. Granted the relevance and authority of Scriptural principles for an adequate Philosophy of Science, it is necessary to consider the various aspects and implications of that authority. For example, we might examine its claim upon us for activity in the sciences, the limitations it may impose upon the area and the method of science, the meaning and purpose it gives to a vocation in one of the fields of science, and so forth. Perhaps we shall have occasion to discuss some of these questions in future issues.

18 Nash, Ibid., p. 272.
20 Keith, Ibid., p. 16.
21 Keith, Ibid., p. 70.
The Weapons We Are Forced to Borrow

The Macy Company of New York City recently received a bit of wide publicity. It arose from the plea of this store to the public to restrain itself in its buying of goods. Certainly this was a sincere appeal, and the company is to be commended for it. Very few retailing organizations can be expected to argue publicly for a drop in their sales and turnover.

Too, such a request as this indicates a sense of responsibility over against inflation. But tragically such an individual statement to the huge New York public "falls flat". What is worse, it may induce exactly what it is seeking to curb. It may put into the minds of many a decision to purchase even more goods, because "things must be scarce, if even the stores don't want to sell!" Buyers may come in greater numbers to the patriotic store itself, or they may throng the establishments of competitors where their efforts to "stock up" are not regarded with disfavor. Thus an isolated attempt to stabilize the economy comes to nothing.

Another Method

There would be fine results if all commercial establishments and manufacturers would cooperate in resisting sales demand and price raises. Of course, labor unions would have to join the movement wholeheartedly. Industry-wide rationing schemes could be established, and consumers could be disgraced from buying more than their actual needs. No one, person or corporation, could hoard or stockpile goods. Such a privately administered scheme to stabilize the price level and batten down artificial demand would obviate the intrusion of the much disliked bureaucrat and the flunky-behaved government clerk. But, on the other hand, such a privately operated machinery of controls would cost enterprise real effort and real money and real grief. Imagine the organization that would be required to manage the steel industry alone. Or rubber. Or food. And to be effective any such control organization would have to be allowed to discipline its own culprits or chiseling buyers. But how would U. S. Steel discipline a stove company for grabbing more than its share? What would the courts do with the defendant's plea that the law did not forbid him to buy as much steel as he could pay for? To "job out" the power to punish a man who did not do an illegal thing would be a delicate business. The Middle Ages saw something of this sort of thing in the Hansa and in Holy Vehme, but the commercial and industrial aspects of society were very simple structures in those times.

Alternatives

There is not an intelligent citizen who would not prefer efficiently operated private controls on all levels of a war time economy such as ours. But there are few who think that private control initiative could be effective. And the price of failure is so high that the experiment cannot be risked at this stage of the war. These past eight months of the Korean conflict have convinced the nation of the need for a large measure of government regulation.

There is still this, however. The storekeeper and the farmer might argue: Let prices rise, and wages —so what? The answer is that within two years we would have wiped out the value of all liquid assets and savings. Our currency would be decimated in its purchasing value, and we would have to establish a new money unit. Hoarding would have produced either complete stagnation of trade, or speculation in goods would be a fever. We would move in the direction of a barter way of life. The very stability that the industrialist and the storekeeper and the farmer want would disappear. In time our economy would blow up or collapse, much to the pleasure of the Soviet Union. In fact, it wants to engineer our ultimate defeat in just that way. The Soviets believe that capitalism is suicidal, and they want to prove it to the world by keeping the United States in a series of wars on the fringes of Asia—all the way from Korea to Finland.

The Rascal

The uncooperative figure in a scheme of privately-administered price controls is the average American citizen. He can be anything from a banker to an ordinary hireling. All of us are average in our preoccupation with ourselves and our future needs for sugar, rubber, appliances, and linens. If everyone would behave as a true patriot no one would have to even discuss regulation and government controls. But the public at large cannot be educated completely to keep faith. The individual rascal will always sneak through the broken picket. In a world of selfishness there has to be punishment for the

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evildoer, the person who endangers the welfare of the group by exercising an inflated type of freedom that pushes aside the freedom and rights of others. Thus it is that during a war a capitalistic economy like ours resorts to weapons that it would scorn during peacetime.

What Weapons?

They are such devices as over-all price fixing, goods allocation, confiscation of privately-owned stocks of critically needed materials, conscription of boys and young men, credit restraints, rationing of anything and everything, invasions into banking and loan operations, outright subsidies to weak industries, practical obliteration of other industries which dissipate national energy, and allocation of manpower. All are negations of nineteenth century capitalism. Seventy-five years ago every one of these devices would have been regarded with complete horror by all except rabid communists. Today capitalistic countries pick them up and lay them down as matters of course, as weapons which we ourselves have fashioned. It has come even to the point that industries which themselves are badly injured by these controls loan their executives willingly to a wartime government which is run by a political party in which industrialists have no confidence. This is all to the good; in fact it is a splendid tribute to and commentary on the solidarity that is America.

Implications

Does our borrowing of the economic weapons of a collectivistic state mean that we are conceding that capitalism cannot help itself with its own tools? Of course not. That is the charge of the socialist who has been harping for a century that capitalism equates itself to and predicates itself upon economic anarchy. To this two observations. One is that to use a truth or a device owned or originated by an opponent does not by itself constitute a commitment to his position. Loosely speaking, for example, Luther is credited with restating and teaching the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Just because Calvinism also found and adheres to this truth, it is not thereby guilty of mixing its theological tenets or sacrificing its own character. Similarly, just because we sing a hymn tune attributed to Jean Jacques Rousseau, we are not thereby polluting our hymnody with his philosophy or with his taste in art.

The second observation is that an institution such as capitalism does not have to be frozen in its original form in order to retain its name. Nineteenth century capitalism, completely unchanged, would leave us in a state of economic anarchy today. Vice versa, the modified capitalism of today would have constituted advanced socialism, if it were superimposed on a 19th century economic way of life. The backwash of the Industrial Revolution has produced such fearful complexity and stresses and strains within our economic framework that we are simply compelled to adapt capitalism. And fortunate it is that it is adaptable.Fortunately it is, too, that we are not forced to take on our national enemies with the tools that make up a peacetime way of life. We would be lost before we began.

Conclusion

We trust in the Providence of God that America can maintain its proper place in the earth and defeat all her enemies. You and I believe that a freedom-loving and a free people fight more ably and more effectively than an enslaved people. On the other hand, a people who insist on various types and degrees of 19th century economic license cannot defeat even an enslaved people. We cannot fight a twentieth century war with an industrial economy that is "wide-open".

The time has come for all Americans to be a bit more well-disposed toward one another's views and outlooks. Those of us who have a "business" must cease calling the government every name in the book whenever a new restriction is published. After all, one of America's greatest industrialists, Charles "Electric" Wilson, is at the helm. And those of us who are just ordinary consumers must not regard everything said by a business executive as tainted with greed. God willing, we must and can maintain a degree of optimism and good faith. If we give them up, we are militarily lost. A nation goes totalitarian because it has lost its courage and faith in God and in its own task and future.
Dear Dr. Bouma:

RECENTLY I gave the main thoughts of my article, formerly published in the CALVIN FORUM, Did Jesus Die of a Broken Heart?, as the devotional address at a district meeting of the Christian Medical Association of India. May I have permission to send the article, slightly abridged, to this Journal for publication. I would also like to rewrite my article on Human Suffering for later publication in the devotional part of the same Journal. May I have permission for this also?

Our hearts fill with pride as we follow the expansion of Calvin College, see pictures of the magnificent science building, and the library now being erected. Visitors who pick up the erudite CALVIN FORUM from our table and begin reading its articles comment on its general high scholarship. The latest number to reach us, the November issue, for example, had the informative articles on Bach and on Abraham Kuyper, the article on Scripture and Theology (requiring longer time for digestion), and the Pastoral Psychology Review. I would agree with the quotation from Goulooze that the opening system of doctrine.

Did Jesus Die of a Broken Heart?

* * *

The Women's Christian Medical College at Ludhiana, on whose surgical teaching and operating staff I am a member and of which I am the superintendent of the hospital, has hopes of erecting additional hospital buildings soon to increase its bed capacity from the present three hundred to five hundred and aims at giving the higher medical diploma of M.B., B.S.

With sincerest personal greetings,

STUART BERGMA.

Mount Olive, Mississippi, January 15, 1951.

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed is my belated subscription price.

The press of duties and the absence of a considerable amount of time makes reading almost an unwelcome chore. I note that of the last four issues of the FORUM, I have read only one

and the other periodicals that I receive fare about as well. What I need is another vacation so that I can catch up with my reading of current material.

Needless to say, I am allowing subscriptions to expire without renewal but in order to glean a few worthwhile articles from your press, I enclose the two keys to knowledge a la Bouma, etc.

Yours for a good year of witness bearing and the reviving of Calvin's doctrine of the Sovereignty of God and its accompanying system of doctrine.

Yours truly,

GEORGE H. KIRKER, JR.

First Baptist Church
Butler, Pennsylvania
February 3, 1951

Dear Dr. Bouma:

Please send me a copy of the January issue of THE CALVIN FORUM containing the article on Capitalism and Socialism. Thank you!

Yours in Christ,

CLAYTON HOWARD GRAY
Col. 1:18

P.S. It may interest you to know that God has graciously brought me out of Arminianism into the light of His marvelous grace. The Bible is a new book when viewed through the eyes of His grace.

Yours by His Wonderful Grace,

C. H. G.

Holland, Michigan
January 19, 1951

Dear Dr. Bouma:

Thank you mightily for your clear-cut article in THE CALVIN FORUM. The whole January issue was excellent. It warms the heart and the mind.

Sincerely,

BASTIAN KRUITHOF.

Clay Center, Kansas
January 20, 1951

Dear Dr. Bouma:

May I express my appreciation of the excellent review of Mr. Boyle's book, The Church in Red China "Leans to One Side," by Dr. Harry R. Boer, which appears in the January issue of THE CALVIN FORUM.

If not too much trouble, would you kindly publish a note in the next issue stating that the book is obtainable from J. G. Vos, Route 1, Clay Center, Kansas, at $1.00 per copy (paper covered, 152 pages) as long as the limited supply lasts. I feel sure that some of your readers will want to purchase this book.

The January issue of the FORUM, with its timely articles on the question of Socialism, is a magnificent piece of work.

Very sincerely yours,

JOHANNES G. VOS.

Women's Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, Punjab, India, January 10, 1951.

Dr. Clarence Bouma
Editor, THE CALVIN FORUM
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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THE CALVIN FORUM * * * MARCH, 1951
From Our Correspondents

EUROPEAN WANDERINGS

Princeton, N. J.
January 17, 1951.

Dear Mr. Editor:

First of all I must express my apologies to you for not having sent you a news-letter before this time. Usually this is done during the summer vacation but during this past summer I was not present on the campus and so was unable to write.

On June 6 I left for Europe on the Mauretania and did not return until September 27. It might interest the readers of Calvin Forum to hear about some of these European experiences. I trust you will pardon me if for this time, instead of writing about Princeton, I give you some account of these summer experiences.

Oberammergau

After a few days in Paris I went on to Basel, Switzerland, where I spent a couple of weeks at the University. The main part of the summer, however, was spent in Germany and the Netherlands. My first stop in Germany was at Oberammergau in Bavaria, where I saw the Passion Play. This play, in which a large share of the population of the town takes part, has been given at least one season in every ten years for centuries. Its production was the result of a vow on the part of the city fathers during the days of the Black Plague, to give such a Passion Play at least once in ten years if God would spare the lives of the remaining populace. The plague did lift; at least we are told that no more deaths occurred and the people of Oberammergau have faithfully carried out the terms of this vow. The production takes an entire day and it is given twice a week from Easter until late in the Fall.

Oberammergau lies at the foot of the Tyrolean Alps which constitutes a magnificent natural setting for the production. One could only be impressed by the magnificence and the dramatic character of the Passion Play. Unfortunately, however, it is to be doubted whether the commercialization attendant upon its performance actually meets the spirit of the original vow. It certainly constitutes a discordant note in what might otherwise be a religious experience.

Furthermore, to a Protestant thinker the Roman elements in the play were rather distasteful. The scene of the parting of our Lord from His mother at Bethany was not only highly over-romanticized but was also quite in spirit with the tendency in the Roman church exemplified by the recent dogma proclaimed by the Vatican.

Heidelberg and Berlin

After spending a delightful week at Heidelberg, which in a sense seemed like an unreal city since it is one of the few cities in Germany of any importance untouched by bombing during the last war, I had to go to Bethel Seminary to deliver a lecture there and to bring the greetings of our own Seminary. A few years ago the student body at Princeton supported the Bethel student body with many gifts of food and clothing, for which Bethel was profoundly grateful. In the light of this, I was a symbol to them of an institution which had extended to them the hand of Christian charity in a time of need.

Probably the most interesting experience of the entire summer was the three weeks which I spent in Berlin and environs. I had been invited by the Freie Universität of Berlin to give a course of lectures for a few weeks on "The Prophets and Civilization" as guest professor of the religions-geschichtliche Fakultät. The acceptance of this invitation provided me with a wonderful opportunity to see at first hand this pivotal point of East-West conflict. For the duration of my stay I was the guest in the home of Dr. Ibsher, papyrologist, at the old Kaiser Wilhelm Stadtlische Museum in Berlin, who resides outside the city in the Eastern Zone. The technical difficulties in connection with obtaining a pass from the Eastern government were amply compensated for by this opportunity to see at first hand living conditions in the Eastern Zone. Your correspondent saw very little evidence of real communist thinking among the ordinary people living within the zone. On the other hand, there also seemed to be very little evidence of resistance to the regime. Most of the conversations which the people had with me as an American involved Russian atrocity tales. Almost everyone had some tale of horror to recount and if I may for the moment indulge in general impressions, there seemed to be very little realization of national guilt on the part of anyone whether in the Eastern zone, the city of Berlin, or in Western Germany. I hardly met anyone who had not been an active opponent to the Nazi-Regime, let alone anyone who had been a member of the Party. And now there seems to be the feeling among many that the United States ought to be engaged internationally with pulling German chestnuts out of the fire. One of course does not expect a guilt worn upon the sleeves but to have found hardly any evidence of a realization of guilt is somewhat disconcerting.

Eastern and Western Germany

One was also struck by the fact that the residents of Berlin were not as plagued by "war nerves" as the people of Western Germany. A danger seen is never quite as appalling as a danger not seen. The international situation, particularly the Korean conflict, was of course on everyone's lips and I as an American citizen was constantly plagued by questions concerning American military strategy and public opinion at home, in spite of the fact that I was already in Europe when the Korean conflict broke out and knew nothing about military strategy.

One of the chief impressions which one obtains from visiting Western Germany, particularly such a center as Hamburg, is of the constant urgency of the refugee and displaced persons problem. A city such as Lebenstedt near Braunschweig and displaced persons is not just a German problem but must be taken into account for the solution and if we take our Christian tradition seriously at all much more liberal measures will have to be taken.

In Holland and England

After leaving Germany I spent a delightful month in the Netherlands visiting relatives in Gelderland whom I had never seen. The international situation, particularly the Korean conflict, was of course on everyone's lips and I as an American citizen was constantly plagued by questions concerning American military strategy and public opinion at home, in spite of the fact that I was already in Europe when the Korean conflict broke out and knew nothing about military strategy.

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In Holland and England

After leaving Germany I spent a delightful month in the Netherlands visiting relatives in Gelderland whom I had never met. I had been invited to read a paper at the International Meeting of Old Testament Scholars which met at Leiden the
first days of September and also to attend the 7th International Congress for the History of Religions at Amsterdam the following week. Such international gatherings are quite naturally a delight to the scholar's soul since here he meets people with the same specialized interests that he has.

The last week of my stay in Europe was spent in England, mainly at the British Museum in London and the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Then a fast trip home on the Queen Elizabeth and I was back in time for the opening classes at Princeton.

This letter has not been a Princeton newsletter to be sure, but I felt it might be of interest to your readers to hear about those wanderings of mine.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN W. WEVERS.

SECOND ANNUAL CANADIAN CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE
Glencoe, Ontario
February 8, 1951.

Dr. Clarence Bouma
Calvin Seminary
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Dear Dr. Bouma:

Our Second Annual Conference will be held in the Christian Reformed Church, corner of Charlton and Hess, Hamilton, Ontario, on March 27th and March 28th. This Conference is open to anyone who is interested in the Reformed Faith. An excellent program has been arranged around the general theme "THE REFORMED FAITH IN THE MODERN WORLD."

TUESDAY — 2:00 p.m.
Dr. Stanford Reid, minister of the Presbyterian Church in the Town of Mt. Royal, Quebec, and full time Instructor in the Department of History at McGill University, will speak on the subject "THE REFORMED FAITH AND THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH"

TUESDAY — 5:00 p.m. — BANQUET — Chr. Ref. Church — Hamilton. Followed by after dinner speaker and business meeting.

TUESDAY — 8:00 p.m. PUBLIC MEETING.
Rev. Edward Heerema, Secretary of the National Union of Christian Schools, will speak on the subject "THE REFORMED FAITH AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION"

WEDNESDAY — 10:00 a.m.
Dr. B. H. McNeel, the Neuro-Psychiatrist at Victoria Hospital, London, Ontario, and also a member of the Western University Medical School Faculty, will speak on the subject "THE REFORMED FAITH AND MENTAL HEALTH"

WEDNESDAY — 2:00 p.m.
Mr. Joseph Gritter, Secretary for the Christian Labor Union will speak on the subject "THE REFORMED FAITH AND LABOR RELATIONS"

Any person desiring more information regarding this conference is asked to write to either Rev. David Kerr, Rodney, Ontario; or Rev. John Botting, Glencoe, Ontario.

Will appreciate any publicity you may care to give this Conference.

Thanking you, we remain

Respectfully yours,

JOHN A. BOTTING.

CHICAGO CALVINISTIC STUDENT FORUM

Christian Reformed people are meeting more and more in groups for various purposes. Some groups meet to read and discuss good Christian literature. Other groups meet to study Calvinism as it applies to the present world situation. Some groups are action groups to promote the application of Christian principles to politics, for example. Still other groups are devotional and meet to meditate and pray.

The Calvinistic Student Forum is a group of college and university students of Reformed persuasion in Chicago who have recently organized themselves for two purposes: 1) to discuss the broad question of Calvinism and its implications for our life in this world, and 2) to give Christian support to each other while attending schools which are by and large secular.

At one of its last meetings the student forum had a visitor from one of the Alethian organizations in Paterson, New Jersey. It was encouraging to discover that these two groups had such similar goals and methods. Immediately the question was raised about the existence of other such groups among our people whose ideas could be exchanged. We would like to correspond with such groups who are working on the same kind of problems.

Perhaps other groups would be interested in establishing a round robin letter or a journal of some kind to give all of us more stimulation, support, and a way to test out our ideas against those of others.

The Calvinistic Student Forum
Roberta De Haan, Acting Secretary
C/o Englewood Christian School
7146 S. Sangamon Street
Chicago, Illinois.

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

1. Its present organization: The present Executive Committee (with a few exceptions) was appointed by a group of Christian Educators about three years ago. These educators met in Los Angeles under the auspices of the Educational Department of the N.A.E. It must be understood that this Association is not affiliated and will not affiliate with the Educational Division of the N.A.E. or of the American Council of Churches. Reason: Many of the California Christian schools are denominationally unaffiliated with any of these two major church groups.

2. Its basis:
   a. That we believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
   b. That we believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
   c. That we believe in the Deity of Christ, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.
   d. That because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, we believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation.
   e. That we believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
   f. That we believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.

3. Its purposes and objectives:
   a. To assist in establishing Christian schools.
   b. To promote the cause of Christian education in general.
   c. To formulate Christian school objectives.
   d. To propagate a Christian educational philosophy.
   e. To prepare a Christian school curriculum for California schools.
   f. To stipulate Christian educational standards for California schools.

4. Its attainment of objectives:
   a. Through the organization of an Association of Christian schools in California.
   b. Through the organization of an Association of Administrators (superintendents and principals) of Christian schools in California.
c. Through the organization of an Association of Christian School Teachers.

d. Through regular Christian Teachers' Institutes.

e. Through the development of a local parent-teacher group in each school.

f. Through the filling of speaking engagements affording opportunities to present the challenge of Christian Education.

g. Through discussion groups on part of teachers and administrators.

h. Through the publication of Christian educational literature.

5. Its accomplishments:

a. Conducted and sponsored two California Christian School Teachers' Institutes. At the last Institute 175 teachers and administrators were registered.

b. Sponsored two summer Christian School Teachers' Workshops.

c. Assisted Christian School Teachers to find positions in the Christian schools.

d. Assisted School Boards to secure teachers.

e. Assisted in organizing Christian schools, School Boards, etc.

(1) Supplying proposed Constitutions.

(2) Supplying facsimiles for incorporation procedures.

(3) Supplying lists of textbooks to be used in schools.

(4) Supplying addresses of firms to purchase school supplies and equipment.

(5) Supplying advice in courses of study and curriculum.

f. Filling speaking engagements in connection with the organization of schools and propaganda.

g. Obtained legal advice in regard to the encroachment of State organizations in behalf of some of our schools. All those activities were carried out and were accomplished by your tentative Executive Committee free of charge. The costs were paid partially by the various members of the Committee. Time and money (personal funds) were not spared to effect this labor.

6. Its immediate plans:

a. To conduct another Teachers' Institute, Lord willing, February 23, in Los Angeles with:

(1) Dr. C. Jaarsma, Director of Supervised Teaching, Calvin College.  
(2) Dr. R. Voskuyl, eminent scientist, President of Westmont College.

(3) Dr. McGoo, Pastor, Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles.

(4) The banquet arrangements are in charge of the Faculty from Immanuel Academy in Reedley, California.

b. To arrange a Christian Musical Festival to be held, Lord willing, April 13, 1951, in Los Angeles. Every Christian High School will be asked to cooperate.

Miss Culter, President of Culter Academy, will work on preparations. She will be assisted by other music teachers from Christian schools.

c. To publish a monthly educational bulletin containing pertinent academic and practical suggestions for the Christian school teacher. This will also contain news items and flashes from our California Christian schools.

d. To make available for our School Boards a list of prospective teachers.

e. To publish a pamphlet containing such information as:

(1) Name and address of schools.

(2) Denominational background.

(3) Stating whether a school is a Parent, Parochial, or Board Member school.

(4) Statement of number of grades taught. Elementary or Secondary level.

(5) Number of students and teachers in each school.

(6) Date of organization.

(7) Names and addresses of executive members of each School Board, Principal, or Superintendent.

f. To devise ways and means to have each School Board contribute for the time being a $5.00 donation to defray expenses involved. This donation to be an annual donation. Some school boards have just begun to contribute.

7. Its future plans:

a. To appoint committees of competent teachers who are specialists in their respective fields of teaching to recommend textbooks to be used in our schools.

b. To prepare a revised Constitution of this Association which may be accepted by all the schools to give further permanency to this association.

c. To sponsor an Association of Christian School Administrators.

d. To secure unity in the curricular studies in our Elementary and Secondary Christian schools in California.

e. To formulate certain academic standards which make our schools distinctively Christian and yet to maintain our educational standards on a basis superior to that of the Public Schools.

Executive Committee,

Mr. John Z. Martin, Secretary,
Upland College,
792 W. Arrow Highway,
Upland, California.

Miss Dixie E. Oehler, Treasurer,
PASadena Christian Schools,
2069 Lincoln Ave.,
Pasadena 3, California.

* Dr. Jaarsma just notified us of not being able to be with us this year. We will try to get another representative from Calvin to take his place.
Book Reviews

CHRISTIANITY AND CLASSICAL CIVILIZATION, Ralph Stob, Ph.D., Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1950, 188 pp. $3.00.

Publishers should save their prize money for a book like this. Not that it is a monumental work, or manifests scholarship of great virtuosity. But it is a clear, orderly, and vigorous study of the relation of the Christian gospel to classical thought and ideals. Its very publication is evidence of the vitality of the Calvinistic world-view which the author propounds. It is as characteristic of the genius of Calvinism as it is uncharacteristic of modern specialization that a professor of classical languages should go beyond ancient verb-forms to concern himself with the view of life they express. The cause of the Reformed Faith in America will be mightily advanced through books like this relating the gospel in a scholarly way to the problems of thought and culture.

The book is more restricted in scope than the title might indicate. It is chiefly a comparison of the thinking of the Hellenistic age with the teaching of the New Testament on the subjects of God, the world, man, eschatology, and ethics. The institutions that made up classical civilization are not dealt with, and classical ideas and ideals are compared only with New Testament Christianity. The problems of the mingling of Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian elements in the thought and action of the post-apostolic Church are not within the limits of the investigation. The scope of the book is therefore much more limited than Charles Norris Cochrane's brilliant Christianity and Classical Culture, with which the title might lead one to compare it. Brevity is characteristic of the treatment; some chapters are two or three pages long. Perhaps the most distressing instance of brevity is in connection with the exposition of John's Logos doctrine, where Dr. Stob gives a most lucid exposition of the force of the Greek word, shows that the source of John's doctrine was not in the Greek philosophers, and, exactly eleven lines from the end of the chapter, asks the question, "Whence then did it come?" The answer given (the Jewish wisdom literature, and, with respect to some of the terminology, perhaps Philo) may be perfectly accurate, but it leaves the reader with the feeling that a door has shut in his face. These sources apparently are not discussed because they are not "classical," but it is in just such areas of interaction that the investigation has the most critical interest.

In presenting his treatment, Dr. Stob catalogs in a crisp way four ancient and three modern theories regarding the relation of classical thought and Christian truth. His own view strikes a balance between more extreme positions by giving full recognition to the Reformed doctrine of common grace. Classical thought is not the soil from which Christianity grows, nor is it utterly valueless and without any vestiges of truth. Developments in classical thought prepared the way from the coming of the gospel, both negatively and positively. There was a deeper preparation for the spread of the truth than merely the Greek language and the Roman roads. The balanced sanity of the Reformed evaluation of culture apart from the gospel as expressed by Dr. Stob, should recommend itself to many evangelicals. It is to be hoped that his remarks will encourage many to a further study of the operations of God's common grace in history. (It might be remarked in passing that the argument in this connection from the two natures of Christ [p. 38] is hardly to the point.)

Dr. Stob's approach, therefore, provides for full candor in evaluating classical thought. The positive as well as the negative can be acknowledged, and its presence understood as due to the common grace of God. However, while the positive is allowed for in the approach, very little that is positive emerges in the investigation. When Christianity and pagan thought are put side by side it is significant that it is the folly and error of paganism that is manifested.

The summations of classical thought on the various topics treated are most valuable. Not only are there many excellent abstracts in which currents of thought are set down, there is also copious quotation in full of characteristic passages. The whole is a most illuminating survey of Hellenistic thought in contrast with Christian truth. The book can be of great use to pastors and teachers in sharpening their grasp of Christian concepts by means of this contrast. Dr. Stob also relates ancient humanism to its modern heir and counterpart, and shows the essentially pagan character of religious Modernism in its approach to worship, its pantheistic teaching of the "divine spark" in man, and its confidence, ethically, in man's essential goodness.

In discussing the nature of man, an effective contrast between the one-sidedness of the Greek emphasis on intellect, especially in ethics, and the balance of the Christian view of man is presented. The vivid juxtaposition of the Christian ideal of the perfect human life in the suffering Saviour, and the pagan ideal of the aforesaid, impassive philosopher (p. 162) shows in a telling way that the Christian ethic demands the sanctification, not the mortification, of the emotions. It is perhaps understandable that in showing the importance given to the emotions and will in the Christian scheme, as over against the pagan view, Dr. Stob should neglect to develop in a positive way the Christian emphasis on the intellectual functions of the soul. But this lack blurs the clearness of the comparison of the Christian and classical views on this point. It is true that Paul's outlook is not limited to the mind, but centers in the heart. But the heart in such a statement cannot be equated with the emotions and will alone (p. 159). Effectual calling involves an enlightening of the mind as well as a renewing of the will, and the Word of Truth is the instrument of the Holy Spirit in sanctification.

In developing the Christian view of the constitution of man as over against the Greek, Dr. Stob does not work out the relations of the functions of the soul, but subordinates them all to pneuma, spirit. He takes the position that "Every man is psyche or soul, but only the Christian has pneuma." (p. 111.) Pneuma is made out to be the highest in man, his religious nature, the point of contact between God and man, and above mind, feeling, and will. The latter are in the psyche, which stands midway between spirit and body, mediates between the two, gives individuality, and is the seat of personal impressions (Ibid.). In my opinion, this trichotomous construction is mistaken, and arises from what might be called a failure to capitalize the initial letter of Pneuma in Paul's usage. The Spiritual man is not a man with a new element of human nature, but a "Spiritized" man, a man whose whole soul or spirit has been regenerated, and is being indwelt and directed by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:5-16). Certainly Paul ascribes pneuma to man as a result of regeneration (Cf. Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 2:11; 5:8, 4, 5; 6:20; 7:34), and uses so strong a term as molusmos in describing the pollution of the spirit, as well as the flesh, from which Christians must cleanse themselves (II Cor. 7:1).

As might be expected in a book which deals in summaries of both Christian and classical thought, there are many other points at which Dr. Stob's analyses will provoke criticism or
stimulate discussion. His statement that the resurrection body is not flesh (p. 133) surely needs correction. Not only does Luke 24:39 contradict it, but Paul's argument in I Corinthians 15, which Dr. Stob seeks to interpret, specifically establishes a distinction as to flesh of different kinds (v. 39), while the sense in which "flesh and blood" is used in verse 50 is clearly defined by the parallel term "corruption."

But Dr. Stob has worked in large and significant matters. It is among the greatest imporants for Christians to be aware of the contrast between Christian and pagan thought. That contrast in the present can best be understood by tracing it to its roots in the past. Dr. Stob does this with a vigor and clarity in which the awkwardness of his literary style is soon forgotten, and with a broad learning that is illumined by discernment in the supernatural character of the Christian gospel. The result is both a scholarly Christian treatise and a tract for our times.

E. P. Clowney, Jr.

GREEK AND JEW IN HELLENISTIC TIMES

This work deals with the "problem of Greek and Jew in relation to the history of N. T. times," as the author has expressed it at the end of the book. He is aware that it is a real problem to see those interrelations properly, and that he has not dealt with all the angles or done so adequately. The style is clear and forceful, but the book is not easy reading because it contains a great deal of argumentation on rather limited and sometimes very specific points. There are nine chapters, all dealing with an interpretation of history, and is very zealous in his attempt to evaluate phases of N. T. history, and is very zealous in his attempt to evaluate phases of the problem. The author is an ardent protagonist of the value of each, and that in relation to the other is the essence of the problem. The author reveals himself as having a mind which craves definiteness. That is highly desirable. The style is clear and forceful, but the book is not equally at home in both Greek and Hebrew literature.

The author is concerned about a correct understanding of history, and is very zealous in his attempt to evaluate phases of the problem. The peoples of that period of history have in them what comes from and is made up of general and special revelation. To see the exact value of each, and that in relation to the other is the essence of the problem. The author is an ardent protagonist of the antithesis. He goes forth with sword and buckler to annihilate the opponents of the antithesis doctrine. That is highly laudable, but brings with it certain dangers. In the ardent zeal to lay the enemy low the danger lurks of making too much of a minor point, or of bringing in extraneous material. It is extremely difficult to keep the proper balance between the ardent zealot for a cause, and the reserved objectivity of the scholar. But Christian scholarship is committed to both. In the case of Popma there is no question of his zeal, but it strikes this reviewer that he has not always revealed the other in equal degree. Very probably this is due to factors with which we at this distance are not sufficiently acquainted. For it appears that there are in the Netherlands those who have made so much of common grace and general revelation that the special is either ignored or denied. Cf. p. 75, 84. That he is out to say that view is very praiseworthy, and it is effectively accomplished. However, there is room for questioning his view on some points. Though there is no doubt about the Hellenic influence in Palestine, the author appears too confident about its extent. Thus he would defend the statement that "Jesus Christ was a Hellenistic figure." (p. 33.) That could mean simply that he lived in the Hellenistic world, but the exact meaning is to be gathered from his view in general about the extent of Hellenism. He seems to think that practically everyone in Palestine was a bilingual (p. 90) equally at home in both Greek and Aramaic. And then on the basis of that he makes inferences and draws conclusions. In reading the book one should be on his guard not to accept the conclusions based upon this view of a thorough, complete Hellenization.

The author reveals himself as having a mind which craves expression and delineation. So, too, words and movements are given definiteness. That is very fine. But it may bring about that a term is understood in too narrow a way, and then inferences are made on the basis of it. I should like to call attention to a few, as "hemelbewoners" (p. 46), times of ignorance (pp. 85, 99), Sadducees (p. 130), Epicureans (p. 141), Pharisees (p. 203), fulness of time (pp. 110, 117). Certainly the last term means the time determined by God. But is that all? Is there no nexus of events? Is it wrong to see how God's plan actually worked in history? So, too, he strays the meaning of "Augustus" (p. 46), the Greek verb "feel after" (p. 168), and "give to Caesar" (p. 201). This last work he apparently has missed the force of the preposition.

In conclusion I should like to point out a few statements in which the author expresses himself too confidently, as on the origin of Philo's writings (p. 91), the relations of Paul and Stephen (p. 92), the effect among other churches of Paul's speech on the Areopagus (pp. 95, 98), Seneca on the hereafter (p. 148), marriages between Christian Jews and Gentiles (p. 189), the Pharisees' attitude toward John (p. 206). But these are all minor points. The book is a good discussion of the problem.

RALPH STOB.
Calvin College

TALKS WITH GABRIEL

JACOBUS VANDER STUPE doesn't like his name. He de­tests the worn hallway runner in his home or the string that substitutes for a garter. He doesn't relish the daily grind of his job either.

Jacobus harbors a special dislike for middle-class respectability and for everything else that could be called bourgeoise. And Jacobus isn't very adept at the give-and-take of social intercourse. He is almost boorish in his lack of finesse in pulling a thrust or delivering a strike. He gets himself laughed at—and storms out of the house. Vander Stupe dislikes people who dismiss frustration with "Lord, thy will be done." He looks upon this attitude as one of cowardice and deceitfulness. Obviously Jacobus is a character, very much of an individual. He gets "mad" very quickly. He goes "madding about" and flies into a rage. When he and his providentially stable and long-suffering wife are sitting cozily before the fire, the peacefulness suddenly fails on him and he rips the newspaper out of his startled wife's hands. How can she possibly enjoy reading of all the tragedy, mayhem and other sinful stuff that fills a newspaper these days?

He even tries suicide—and he gets the reader's deepest sympathy as he makes this attempt on what he calls "the blackest day of my whole life." Some one once suggested that he go to a psychiatrist. If he had, the psychiatrist might very well have said that he was narcissistic. "God" says to Jacobus, "You want everything or nothing." To be sure, this refers to Jacobus's passion to gain the blessings of Paradise for this distressed world here and now. This does not alter the fact that the very quality of narcissism is the inability to reckon with the hard facts that circumscribe human yearning, whatever be the boon sought.

But here lies the essential beauty of the book. God has children like Jacobus, children that may bear this or that psychological label. And God loves them. Jacobus is a character, in many ways a weird one. In spite of that he elicits a warm sympathy. His faults, yearnings, frustrations and fumblings...
are honestly portrayed. The God of boundless grace deals with this tempestuous soul, sometimes gently and sometimes abruptly, through the faithful ministrations of a guardian angel called Gabriel. As this inward biography unfolds in the several talks with Gabriel, a sharp rebuke is administered to easy-going and too comfortable religion, to hollow prayers and to the recital of scripture passages that borders on superstition. Jacobus wrestles with the angel of the Lord as he strains his whole being to win the blessings of Paradise for this anguished world and for his own sinful soul.

This is the valid central thrust in this unusual book—the God of wondrous and personifying grace working in his own way with the soul of one of His own. To that thrust we must naturally say "yes." It is not an unqualified assent, however. This is a "yes, but" book. Yes, heaven is tenderly concerned with every soul that strains at the point of tension between sinful self and the call of Paradise. But, isn't it somewhat hazardous to lay down the rule that the guardian angel comes "always in a form that suits the train of thought going on in the mind of the person" involved (p. 18)? Do Gabriel's visits recorded in the Bible suggest this?—the visit to Mary, for example? Doesn't this rather show a talent too close to the position that divine things are only projections of man's subjective states? Our concern for the divine reality and integrity of the things of God is not idle at this point. On the occasion of Jacobus's abortive attempt at suicide God himself comes to deal with the wretched sinner in the place of Gabriel. The curious reason given for this is that God couldn't trust Gabriel with it" (p. 205). Do such human foibles affect the relations between God and His holy angels?

Dogmatics is dealt with rather roughly in places. Yes, indeed, dogmatism does sometimes seem to be without the breath of life, and dogmaticians sometimes try to play their trade away from the main arteries of human life and emotion. But, is the author warranted in breaking into Jacobus's reflections on the "Una Sancta" (the "one, holy, catholic, Christian Church") with Gabriel's remark, "No dogmatics now, Jacobus. It would be too profane holy things" (p. 173)? If this is in the Reformed tradition, I shall have to engage in a few talks with Gabriel too (Miedema's Gabriel).

The high point in this inner biography is the ride on the white horse, the white horse of Revelation 6 that "went forth conquering and to conquer the Kingdom of God and for Paradise. Before this tremendous episode the devil and "Michael, the marshal of heaven" contend for Jacobus' soul. Michael wins and Jacobus is ready for the great adventure. And what does the Paradise-bent Jacobus accomplish on this conquering mission? The white horse can make no headway. It dashes forward only to be blocked by some dark obstacle in its path. From the dark obstacle comes the sound of sharply bickering voices, with a soft lament yearning for peace almost drowned out in the din. Jacobus' soul goes out to the oppressed voice. The silver baton he carries swells into a huge maul and with one fell blow he demolishes the obstruction. And still more such obstacles rise up before them, only to be destroyed by Jacobus on the white horse.

Gabriel asked, "Know what you did tonight, Jacobus?" "No," replied Jacobus, "except that I cleared something out of the way that stood in the road of Paradise."

"Exactly,—tonight you wrecked all the churches," said Gabriel.

One cannot help feeling that "Gabriel's" explanation of this episode furnishes the key to the book. Here it is. "I knew what you were doing, Jacobus, and it was a good thing, very necessary even. Didn't you hear those bickering voices overwhelmed by that one soft litany? An over-dogmatized faith held the Una Sancta captive in its walls—and you liberated it. Did you mark how they sought and found each other, and how their song of lamentation grew into a common hymn of praise? And how, once the true faith had left the church, the dogmatic quibbling was choked in the debris. Of course, there's faith underneath dogmatics too, but the odium of that science is that you always have to be militant about it, and the Una Sancta can't live on battle-hymns. But now the time for the Una Sancta has come." (p. 242).

Yes, it takes no exceptionally astute reader to suspect that here is a soul probably troubled by the doctrinal controversies that erupted in the Reformed churches in the Netherlands in the very recent past—controversies that sometimes have seemed almost to run beyond the bounds of relevance. Yes, one sympathizes with such a soul and with all those who are troubled when the peace of Zion is disturbed, and harassed men turn from a war-torn world to seek this peace in vain. But, shall sympathy for these human yearnings and disappointments blind our eyes to the historical task of the visible church? Shall such sympathy dull our high regard for the church as "the pillar and ground of the truth"?

This constrains the reviewer to point out what he believes to be the most assailable point in the argument of the book. Valid as the central thrust of the book may be, there is too much that falls in the typically modern groove where there is large sympathy for human frailty and need and decreasing respect for the changeless realities of the Christian faith. We have found human foible in the relation between God and His holy angel Gabriel. We have found the typically modern disparagement of doctrine. And here we have found the typically modern weakening of respect for the church as contender for the faith.

In short, the book generates a high degree of sympathy for the wrestlings of a stumbling, sinning soul. On the other hand there is a definite tendency in the book to weaken those solid foundations which furnish the only security for a haunted and burdened soul. Miedema has been compared to C. S. Lewis. I'll take C. S. Lewis.

There are passages of compelling beauty and power in the book. At times one gets the feeling that the staging for a talk with Gabriel is a bit too obvious and synthetic. Also, there is so much of the superlative in the book, so much of nature in high excitement, that the reference of Jacobus to the day of the suicide attempt as "the blackest day of my whole life" doesn't leave the impression that it ought to leave. But these are only observations of minor importance on a book whose style is always compelling and always finely sensitive to the delicate nuances of great music and of nature in her varying moods.

The English translation is highly readable and is a credit to Professor Zylstra. The credit is the greater because this book is no academic treatise, but is rather a thoroughly human document frankly expressing man's feelings in the idiom of the day. One does want to ask the translator whether he meant to say what is said in the following: "practically every day one of the girls breaks her neck." It seems that this is a Dutch colloquialism. In its English rendering it's a bit hard on Jacobus' family. Zylstra, no mean student of the English language, seems to feel that "different than" is legitimate usage (pp. 66 and 151).

EDWARD HEEREMA,

LITERARY TID-BITS

CALVIN LITERARY REVIEW, Published by Calvin College Students, Fall, 1950. Price, 25¢.

I HAD a very good time reading the Fall 1960 Calvin Literary Review. There are lines in it I shall remember—not to prove anything, understand—but only for the joy of the music:

When like a wind he walks within
My world of inner silence,
Walk tall because the hills are high
And though there is singing sound to laughter
Has ever two been blessed as we,
Beloved?

And speaking of music, that is what Ardith Plouegra has in her Five Poems. They have a delicate sensitivity, a soft harmony.
Yes, these poems are simple—so were Alice Meynell’s. But underneath simplicity can be an almost unconscious profundity: Allan Paton’s Cry, the Beloved Country is a perfect example of that.

In the rightness of his workmanship, Connie Ter Maat’s Prayer reminds me of Robert Bridges. It does not pretend to be sensationally original; it is simply right. And if you consider that conservative praise, remember that for a poem to be “right” is no small thing. I like his dancing lines about the “little fire impudent.” The poem itself is delightfully impudent and has a snap ending. Connie is good at endings—like this one for instance:

Yet must I sing of this dump world
That somehow still a bit of Eden dearly clings
Like lace upon a beggar’s coat.

And he is good at painting pictures like Steamer in the Dawn. There it is on canvas—no philosophical implications, but feast your eyes upon it.

Stan Wiersma has been reading Carl Sandburg but his interesting blocks of poetry retain their individual flavor. Stan has a quality of insight that makes him lift the dramatic core out of an everyday situation.

Kent Prell’s Poems have classical construction and they go deeper than any others in the Review. You have to work your way tortuously through some of them but afterwards you have a good feeling of accomplishment. That’s the experience I had with the first verse of the third poem—The Cypress, which widen round the pool of hungry, praying intellect . . . . I liked the second verse up to the line—Of Hell-born madness, its gross, godless twin. Then I felt a lack of restraint and a tinge of melodrama. Then for me the whole thing didn’t seem convincing.

But the one about the “ancient, crumbling tenement” is convincing no end. This is poetry of a superior order, original, finely molded. The fifth one (“I’ve vexed my soul in valiant quest for words sublime to liken you”) is lighter but well-done and the last—Has ever two been blessed as we, Beloved—runs like a song. And what a superb grammatical error!

In considering the prose articles I have a criticism to offer which is in no way a reflection on Dewey Hoitenga’s excellent thinking capacities. But I simply cannot see a thing like a debate—question and answer, question and answer—in a literary review. Calvin Seerveld’s I Choose the Law makes a good term paper. He certainly wasn’t loafing when he took the course in Shakespeare. If I were his professor I would give him a good mark, but the piece is not distinctive as literature. Rod Jollom’s Carlyle in our Times is also, I imagine, a term paper, but a different sort. It is unusually smooth writing and contributes ideas that are something to think about.

Neil Lamper’s Leave the Dark is a good story. It excels in atmosphere—“Outside the gray lowered itself to a drizzle . . . . Soon everything shone with the temporary gloss of rain.” It excels, too, in dialogue—smoothly-running Hemingway-like dialogue. And I consider that an accomplishment.

Then there is the sketch at the very end by Helen Louise Hartel Can You Tell Me Please, which shows that Helen has “story sense” and knows how to handle a surprise element. There are several modifiers, however, that should have been left out and others that are not quite the right word. For instance, somewhat, quiet, usual, precise should have been omitted in the following paragraph:

The older woman, somewhat taken by surprise at the quiet, shy approach and interrogation, gained her usual power to answer, “Why, yes, dear. It’s right over there.” She indicated the direction with an accurate, precise gesture.

What interested me most I have left for the end—Marinus Swets’ Art and the Critics. What could he have done to make it a better piece? Nothing. It is close-knit, concentrated. Every word in it contributes to the final effect. “Three old men sitting on a youth’s knees!” Who would ever think of that besides Marinus Swets?

Even without the incomparable satire at the end the “silly” story of Threepie and his Daughter as it stands alone is a remarkable thing. Watch how he builds up the witch character but bit by bit—first she passes by on a broom, then she is an old hag, finally Threepie finds her on the “peeked” roof of a barn with a voice like “the cracking of an eggshell.” And that designation of time—in the primitive—isn’t it clever? “Threepie walked for the length of time it takes to get hungry enough to eat half a loaf of bread and half a cheese.” And that masterpiece of an understatement—She is mistress of the universe and works nights!

As for the satire on people who must analyze what can only be felt. Well, it’s a long time since I’ve been so thoroughly amused.

ALICE PENNENGA

VENEBR:OUS THOUGHTS IN MODERN WORDS


I N THE kind of smooth, readable translation which one may expect from Dr. Goodspeed, he has presented, Barnabas, I and II Clement, the Shepherd of Hermes, The Letters of Ignatius, and several shorter works. Advances in textual materials as well as changes in the English language made this “franker, more modern, and unfinching translation” desirable. The introductions to the various books co-ordinate these writings with the canonical books in an interesting manner. Places and dates are discussed; Hermes is dated 60-70 years earlier than in the Edinburgh edition of the Fathers. Differences between the Didache and the Doctrina are discussed at some length. Incidental, but enlightening glimpses of the attitude of modern scholarship to the canonical books are given.

Entirely apart from the critical value of this book, it is profitable to read again the writings of the early Fathers. The ancient authors communicate with the modern mind, and the mind responds in various ways. The tremendous conflict of Hermes does not prevent him from presenting some very valuable observations on life and temptation. Barnabas presents most solemnly some extreme examples of allegorization which are matched only by some of the modern radio preachers which it has been my privilege to hear during a recent confinement to my home. It is not difficult to sense the superiority of the canonical books to these. But at the same time, there is a genuine thrill in reading the words of such martyrs as Ignatius and Polycarp. We can always use such humility as Ignatius expressed to the Trallians: “For I am glad to suffer, but I do not know whether I am worthy. For the jealousy is not apparent to many, but it makes war on me all the more. So I need humility, by which the ruler of this world can be destroyed.”

J. H. KROMMINGA

HOW OLD IS THE EARTH?


Those who are inclined to accept the idea that God created the world some six thousand years ago in the space of six days of twenty-four hours each will welcome this latest work of Professor Marsh. Whatever one may think of the validity of Marsh’s conclusions, orthodox Christians should appreciate the fact that this author attempts to solve his problems in the light of the Scriptures. Whether or not he solves them accurately is a debatable question.

There is, of course, in a book of this size material other than that related to the above question. With much of this we can agree. The author begins by answering the self-imposed question relative to man, “Bestial or Divine?” He
points out that although animals and man are identical in anatomy and life processes, only man can engage in abstract thought and reasoning. He then discusses various creationist and evolutionistic theories and points out that scientists as a rule tend to ignore the possibility of a supernatural influence in nature. Throughout, however, he insists that the creation took place some six thousand years ago. The above chapters introduce the subject by saying that no one questioned the Genesis account is concerned first and last with our solar system. This means that the stellar universe was created at a previous time. On p. 212 he states, “That the stars were in existence at that time is certain, because we now know that falling on our earth is starlight which left the stars millions of light years ago... and our earth, according to Bible chronology, cannot be more than seven thousand years old.” On p. 222 he elaborates a bit on this same thought when he states, “The fact that many stars are millions of light years away from our earth and yet are shedding their light upon us, apparently demonstrates that they have been in existence many, many times six thousand years. This shows that they must have been formed before creation week, unless God caused their light to reach out across space in an instant instead of eventually reaching our location in a natural way. Such a premise does not fit in with all we know how God chooses to operate the objects of his creation.” He concludes by quoting an authority who insists that we should not accept any idea which would destroy all belief in a regularity of God's laws. Marsh asserts this repeatedly, e.g. on p. 218, “All the natural forces were apparently at work since matter had been spoken into existence the day before.” And yet he and men like him refuse to follow their own advice repeatedly and accuse those who do of accepting the theory of evolution.

There are several miscellaneous minor points which should also be noted. Marsh does not always go to the original source for his quotation, e.g. on p. 198 he quotes Robert Millikan as quoted by Harry Rimmer. The latter is hardly the primary authority in this matter. There are other similar instances. On p. 212 he again shows his lack of knowledge of basic physical principles when he states, “If air had not been present the ‘waters’ would have evaporated promptly into the vacuum above the earth.” Many people have this notion but it so happens that vapor pressure increases with an increase in external pressure and hence his argument bogs down completely here. On p. 196 he argues for a literal interpretation of Genesis I but on p. 213 he allows for the fact that the solar system was formed on the first day. There are several allusions to the fact that animals should not be used for food. Chapters 22 and 23 are especially devoted to this argument. On p. 267 he asserts that no rain fell until the time of the flood. Yet previous to this he spends much time discussing the evaporation of water into vapor, etc. What is to be gained by insisting that no rain fell until the time of the flood? On p. 236 Marsh states that “Adam was formed a few hours before his mate.” Does this mean that Adam named all the animals in this short period of time? Yes, we know that Adam was in a state of rectitude, but he was man nonetheless. Marsh tries to wiggle out of this dilemma by saying that only the animals in the garden passed before Adam and that “without doubt Adam continued his naming of the animals during succeeding weeks and years until he had named all the originally created kinds with their varieties.” (p. 278.) One cannot help wondering at this stage what his definition of literal interpretation is.

On p. 286 Marsh states that there was no death of animals in the original state. It is interesting to note how he attempts to rationalize his position. He admits that animals produced wastes, that deer shed their horns, that insects discarded their exo-skeletons during their life cycles (italics ours). He also points out that there was no second creation after sin entered the world to repattern the bodies of animals. We ask then why God created some animals with definite carnivorous appendages and others with herbivorous ones.

On p. 316 Marsh asserts that aquatic animals were excluded from annihilation at the time of the flood. Yet he is a firm believer in Flood Geology which teaches that all fossil remains came as the result of the flood. He claims (p. 327) that Mount Everest is a postglacial mountain since it is 29,000 feet high.
and we have no idea how high the waters actually rose above the earth.

There are several other remarks which can be made concerning this work but we feel that enough cases have been cited to indicate our attitude towards it. It all simmers down to the simple observation that those who are inclined toward Marshall's view will welcome this apologetic to bolster their position and that the majority of Christian scientists will feel that this contributes very little to a defense of the Christian position. The publishers have done an excellent job of printing and binding.

JOHN DEVRIES.

Calvin College

PREACHING, BUT NOT IN CALVIN'S STYLE


This collection of homiletical samples taken from the storehouse of a great preacher of another generation offers limited rewards to the Reformed reader of books of sermons. The outstanding feature of these homilies is rhetorical style. Prof. Homrighausen of Princeton states the obvious when he writes in a rather interesting biographical introduction that "one gets the impression that Jowett wrestled with the English language to make it subservient to the message he had to communicate and that he was so successful that the style is crisp and precise, clear and vivid. Of some value in understanding the possibility of achieving such excellence rhetorically is the explanation that the language is one of the winner, for the style is crisp and precise, clear and vivid.

Most preachers expect the sermon is consistently Biblical, usually consisting of three or four propositions set forth to expound the topic. That the first matter to settle is the selection of a theme. That the majority of Christian scientists will feel that this contributes very little to a defense of the Christian position. The publishers have done an excellent job of printing and binding.

JOHN H. PIERSMA.

ANNOUNCED TO PREACH, BY CLYVOS G. CHAPPELL. ABINGDON-COLES-BURY PRESS, NEW YORK; NASHVILLE, 1951. 124 PAGES. PRICE $1.50.

Most ministers of the Gospel, if not all of them, feel the need at times of having their sense of the glory and responsibility of their high office revitalized. This small book can usefully serve as such a tonic. It is a stream-lined book, suited to a stream-lined generation. It comprises only six chapters: The Preacher's Call; His Major Emphasis; The Sermon; Preparing the Sermon; Our Finest Hour; Keeping Fit. In these six chapters the author does not concern himself with every aspect of the minister's work, but specifically with his task of preaching, which he rightly regards as the minister's primary task.

His emphasis in the opening chapter, that the preacher must be able to preach from the sense of mission, is both wholesome and Biblical. The true preacher performs his work from the conviction that he is God-sent, that he has a message from God to deliver. That concept is certainly basic for the pulpit which is to possess spiritual power. Our generation is witness to the sad spectacle of widespread loss of that view of the preacher and the pulpit. Such loss can only result in serious damage to the church. The author also warns against the growing danger of making the sermon secondary in the worship service. He rightly contends that the priest may not displace the prophet.

While this book will serve as a refreshing to the busy preacher, to restore perspective to his many-sided task, and can be recommended because of its compact and interesting presentation, it is, in the opinion of the present reviewer, not an outstanding book, and does not rank with a volume as The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons by Dr. John A. Broadus.

Furthermore, it is not possible to agree with every viewpoint and contention of the author. Statements occur to which many Christians will not subscribe, and least of all the Reformed Christian. On page 49 the author states, "Thomas Goodwin reminds us that God called His only begotten Son unto the ministry. This He did because there was no higher task that even Jesus could perform than that of preaching." Indeed, Jesus came preaching. But the redemptive fact-revelation of Christ's vicarious suffering and death constitutes His central mission and work, and has become the theme of all subsequent preaching.

When the author on page 57 applies the words, "Resist not evil," by saying that constructive preaching does not engage in denouncing sin, and that Christ Himself is our great example in this, he certainly overlooked Matthew 23.

In the chapter, "Preparing the Sermon," the author contends that the first matter to settle is the selection of a theme. That affirmation clearly indicates that he advocates topical preaching, rather than expository preaching. But the business of the preacher is to expound the Word of God. And when in this same chapter, while urging that the preacher should not neglect the Old Testament, the author makes bold to say that "Jesus rejected some of the Old Testament," we are constrained to demur. No proof is offered, and the implication is at hand that the Word of God is in the Bible, but the whole Bible is not the Word of God.

On page 76 Dr. Chappell asserts, "Of course there are excellent ministers who make scant use of the Bible." How can he make that assertion in the light of his basic contention in the chapter is an enigma. What else shall we, who is anointed to preach, proclaim other than the Word of God?

JOHN C. VERBRUGGE.

LYNDEN, WASH.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * MARCH, 1951