1952

# The Calvin Forum

Calvin College and Seminary


# the CALVIN Forum

## The Church, Catholic and Protestant, in Politics

## Confusion, Collectivization, and Textbooks

## Christian Film Action

## Calvin on Amusements

## A Biblical versus a Modernistic Approach to Missions

## Book Reviews

VOL. XVII, NO. VI TWO DOLLARS A YEAR JANUARY, 1952

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

# The CALVIN FORUM

*Published by the Calvin Forum Board of Publication*

**VOLUME XVII, NO. VI. JANUARY, 1952**

## Contents

### Editorials

Ambassador to the Vatican and the Separation of Church and State.....*Cecil De Boer* 95

Does Vatican City Have a Spy System?....*Cecil De Boer* 96

At the Shrine of Method.....*Henry Schultze* 96

### Articles

Christian Film Action.....*Hendrik J. Spier* 99

Calvin's Attitude Towards Art and Amusements.....*Simon J. De Vries* 101

### Book Reviews

Old Wine in New Bottles.....*Henry R. Van Til* 108

The Comprehensive Approach; Biblical Or Modernistic?.....*Peter De Jong* 109

Sounding the Alarm.....*Henry R. Van Til* 115

I Believe in God, the Creator.....*Edwin Y. Monsma* 116

A Juvenile Book.....*T. Huizenga* 116

# EDITORIALS

## Ambassador to the Vatican and the Separation of Church and State

THE administration's proposal that the United States be represented in Vatican City by a full-fledged ambassador has met with considerable opposition on the part of both modernist and orthodox Protestants. Stripped of verbiage and hysteria their argument is that this proposal constitutes a betrayal of the principle of the separation of church and state. The administration's answer is that it is not proposing to send a diplomatic representative to the Catholic Church but to the Papal State, a state the nature of which, to be sure, we do not approve but which, on the other hand, we do recognize as a true state. There is ample precedent for this; we have been doing this kind of thing since the days of the founding fathers. Think of the Ottoman Empire, Czarist Russia, Japan, China, Persia, and so on—states representing a way of life as foreign to our own as that of the Papal State. In our own day we have been diplomatically represented at the capitals of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, and no one has complained that it was in violation of the principle of democracy and the principle of free enterprise. To this the Protestant answer is that the Vatican State occupies a piece of ground in the city of Rome so small that one can walk around it in about thirty minutes and that, therefore, it is rather simple-minded to suppose that our being represented by an ambassador there will make the slightest difference in improving our foreign relations. No, so these Protestants argue, by sending an ambassador to Vatican City we are in reality according the Church of Rome a preferred status, for the Vatican is nothing apart from the Catholic Church.

Just what brilliant political stroke Mr. Truman thought he was executing when he presented this proposal during the closing hours of a dying session is unimportant. The significant thing is that Mr. Truman evidently thought it safer to risk the wrath of American Protestants than the disappointment of American Catholics. He may or may not have considered the fact that on election day Protestants in the South think in terms of the Civil War rather than in terms of the Reformation, and that Protestants in the North, being mostly Republicans anyway, think in terms of bread and butter—assuming that they do not vote in accordance with the dictates of a political machine or a labor boss.

Let us take a brief look at this proposed ambassadorship and its implications, meanwhile hoping that the next time Mr. Truman feels impelled to make this or that bold political move he will make it in the direction of the problems involved in the questionable character of some of his appointees and party leaders, the problems involved in the clarification of our foreign policy, and the problems involved in the ever present spectre of inflation. First, then, it is simply a fact that many predominantly Protestant countries, including Great Britain and the Netherlands, have long been represented diplomatically at the Vatican for reasons of ordinary common sense. The Pope, whether we like it or not, is an important figure in world affairs; hence there is no good reason why governments should not acknowledge it and take advantage of it. In so doing they are in nowise committed to a recognition of the Pope as the vicar of Christ, nor are they submitting to the Papal claim of universal temporal power.

Furthermore, an unbiased study of the Lateran Treaty of February 11, 1929, ought to reassure any Protestant without an axe to grind as to the intentions of the Papacy. According to the terms of this treaty the Vatican State was granted full sovereignty. On the other hand, it was prohibited from interfering with the Italian government and, by implication, with any other government. Furthermore, at the insistence of the Vatican itself its future policy would be that of neutrality in regard to wars between competing states, and it would take no part in congresses called for the purpose of avoiding or settling disputes and wars, unless the parties to such conflicts actually appealed to the Pope for his good offices in promoting concord. Finally, the Vatican reserved to itself the right to exercise *spiritual* authority over Catholic dioceses the world over. To say, therefore, that by our official recognition of Vatican City as a true state we virtually commit the loyalty of American Catholics to a foreign power seems altogether silly. The conscience of an American Catholic is committed only to the Pope as the Vicar of Christ and not to the ruler of a miniature state, a state which above all desires to remain neutral in regard to international conflicts. Vatican City merely symbolizes the Catholic dogma that as Christ is the ruler of nations, so His vicar ideally ought to be. By no stretch of the imagination can it be inferred that Vatican City might conceivably declare war against say, Russia, thereupon presuming to call upon the armed might

of American and other Catholics for its successful prosecution.

Incidentally, if Protestants are as touchy about the principle of the separation of church and state as they occasionally appear to be, what about the political activities of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America (formerly the Federal Council)? The National Council claims to work with the government in "effective co-operation." By means of pressures, lobbies, and so-called government advisers (paid by the affiliated churches) it does in fact try to get its own officials into key government positions to the end of promoting the "social gospel." And its influence in the direction of socialism has already been felt in at least some actions of the government. Alger Hiss when serving in the State Department was chairman of one of the committees of the National Council engaged in pushing the idea of the welfare state. Rome is at least in the open and frankly uses its diplomatic power in an endeavor merely to secure the religious rights of Catholics, which seems more honorable than the National Council's under-cover activities.

By recognizing Vatican City as a state we in no-wise affirm that the Pope is in any temporal sense above the Federal Government or that American Catholics may consider themselves citizens of the Papal State and only by derivation citizens of the United States. Of course, whenever a Catholic says that he must obey God rather than men, he may mean that in the case of conflicting claims his first loyalty is to the Pope as the vicar of Christ. But one could hardly maintain that this would amount to a betrayal of the United States. Any Protestant worthy of the name would take the same position—without, of course, the Pope as intermediary.

C. D. B.

# Does Vatican City Have a Spy System?

It seems that the administration has with characteristic ineptitude permitted the circulation of a statement to the effect that inasmuch as there are many Catholic priests behind the Iron Curtain apparently in a position to obtain valuable information by way of the secret confessional, and inasmuch as this information is presumably relayed to the Vatican, we can more easily obtain such information by means of the proposed ambassadorship. In this way we would be in a better position to checkmate Communist moves. Obviously this piece of reasoning does a distinct disservice to the Catholic Church, since Protestants of a certain stripe will be quick to point out that it now appears that priests behind the Iron Curtain are organized into a kind of spy ring, something which could evidently work both ways. For just how sure could we be that information obtained by way of the confessional in the West and passed on to the Vatican would not be used behind the Iron Curtain for the purpose of gaining a privileged position for the Catholic Church to the detriment of Protestantism?

It seems incredible that there should be educated Protestants who apparently believe all this. In the first place, if the confessional is to be worth anything at all, it must retain the full confidence of Catholics, i.e., the certain knowledge that it is indeed secret. Furthermore, it is not clear just what information a layman could give to a priest which the latter did not already have as the result of his own observations. Again, if life behind the Iron Curtain is as evil as we are made to believe, just how sure could a penitent be that he was not divulging his information to a disguised communist? Finally, could the Catholic Church afford to run the risk of corrupting the confessional in the interest of international intrigue when it is already paying blood in order to find a *modus vivendi* which will enable it to propagate the faith behind the Iron Curtain? One wonders how the English and the Dutch view our queer Protestant antics here in America.

C. D. B.

# At the Shrine of Method

THERE is no area of American endeavor that is receiving more attention than that of education. This is as it should be because no other interest is of greater value, calls for more personnel, and demands more money (except in war time) than that of teaching. And even preparation for defensive or offensive warfare is largely a matter of education. Every leader, whether he be a politician or a professor, a business man or a preacher, utilizes with increasing consciousness new educational techniques. In this vast field of training there is what is called "formal education" such as given in educational institutions.

## Confusion in Education

In this area where men should know what and how to teach there is the highest degree of uncertainty. It is significant that in American education we are constantly experiencing revolutions. We have had several of them in the last fifty years. By

far the more important and perhaps most important is that inaugurated by Dewey with his plea that education should be regarded as but a process. Hutchinson introduced another revolution, perhaps of less value because it was less popular, not having reflected the genius of the American people. Then there was also the revolution introduced by military educators by which it appeared that much was taught in a very little time by a concentrated effort. Many leaders were convinced that it would bring about a change in educational methods. But it didn't and perhaps it is just as well that it did not, because it was no better, and perhaps far worse than that which it was expected to replace. Then among many other little revolutions there is the revival or perhaps a new emphasis on Christian education, which may be to some extent a protest against the results of so-called modern education. It is this last revolutionary type of education in which I am interested in this article.

## Christian Education in Danger

Its position as a distinct movement is far more precarious than many defenders of Christian education are liable to think. Its primary problem is not that of dollars and cents but that of justifying its existence as an independent educational attempt. There is some indication that the adherents of this movement are aware of its precariousness. Many church-related colleges are offering apologies for their existence, trying to show they have a real place in American education. And well they might. They are pleading in vain for federal aid. They are increasingly modifying their programs to square their philosophy and curriculum with that of the super-professionals in the educational schools and teacher training schools, and it is just because of such conformations that they may lose their chief right to exist.

The Christian schools associated with the National Union of Christian Schools have sensed this all along. They realize the necessity of being distinctive. In how far they have succeeded has been regarded by some as problematical. However, Christian schools have not and probably should not escape the contacts of the educational movement as a whole.

## Strivings for a Christian Philosophy of Education

There has been an urgent insistence on the part of many of its leaders that those who may be qualified should produce a philosophy of Christian Education. There has been manifested here and there some impatience with those who should be able for not having produced a book on principles that can serve as a directive guide. Several attempts have been put forth, but none of them have been regarded as adequate. This has been disappointing. But it is a wholesome acknowledgment that they have not yet arrived. It is to be hoped that for some time yet they will not have arrived. And it is hoped that as they arrive in the process of time the declaration will be fluid enough to incorporate any advances that may have been made in the science of education and to adjust itself to the varying world in which the educands are being prepared to serve as citizens. The issue should be kept vigorously alive and at the same time they should not be too hopeful that a statement generally acceptable would solve all their problems.

Any statement of the philosophy of Christian education will be theologically conditioned. It makes little difference whether we prefer educational or philosophical terminology; the basic ideas will be theological. Unless this prevails, that education will forfeit its right to use the adjective Christian. It should be obvious that we can expect no generally acceptable formulation on the part of those committed to the cause of Christian education who are not theologically agreed. I mean agreed specifically on the Biblical concepts that have a bearing on education. At the present time there is obviously a difference of opinion as to the bearing of a conception of the covenant, and as to the purpose of training, to mention just a couple of examples. Of all the conceptions to which a man is committed none are more determinative than those of his deepest theological convictions. Except the leaders of Christian education are agreed at this point, any statement of philosophy will be compromisal in character. This can never be more than a sort of a working agreement which will prove unsatisfactory because it makes the distinctiveness a pastel shade, and raises the question of its worthwhileness after a while when general education cleans house, if it does.

## The Know-How of Doing

The basic influence that Christian school educators find difficult is the impact of current education round about them and being pressed upon them by divers means by those in authority within its own orbit. In education America as a whole has been shaped by the philosophy of Dewey. Whether he grasped this basic and, at the time, unarticulated philosophy, or whether he injected it into American thinking may be debated. It is the philosophy of method. "Method is pure creed" declared a representative of the prevailing philosophy. It is not at all incidental that we are proud of our "know-how." We feel that we have far surpassed every other nation in this respect. We feel that our greatest contributions to "inferior" nations is our "*know-how.*" Our philosophy is wrapped up in those two

words. Unfortunately we are not so sure that the know-how of thinking is important; it is the know-how of doing that receives our applause. This "know-how" has the floor. The "know-why" and "know-what" have been silenced.

## Bad Results Unimportant

This theory is working disastrously in the area of education. It makes its adherents indifferent to the results of education. There are others besides the experts interested in what is taking place. They have tested the students in fields of geography, civil government, arithmetic, history, ethics, and stand amazed at the ignorance and indifference displayed. One would expect that a test common to many of this school of thought would be namely, that if a plan, project, or thought works, it is right. But the present prevailing trend seems to be to yield that point to the one that is regarded as being of greater importance, to wit, that it is not the results but the method that counts. Hence one can never impress the educators by pointing to the amazing ignorance, the depravity, and the moral degeneration so apparent in the affairs of society, state and individuals. There is no room for value judgments which have usually a bit of validity and consequently of absoluteness. This aspect of the process-emphasis has had a controlling effect upon the educational super-professionalists, who in turn control education not only by the propaganda available to them, but by their control over the policy-making authorities. It is tremendously demoralizing for a Christian educator to find that he must fall in line or else. But what is more unfortunate still is that individuals in positions of leadership in the Christian educational world persistently clamor for this emphasis. They feel that it is the know-how in teacher-training that is important and other matters must yield to it.

## Pedagogical Robots

It tends to develop in our educational efforts a generation of pedagogical robots. They may know how but they do not know what and why. This is a serious situation that can spell the end of the Christian school movement and perhaps should. The pressure for the multiplication of *method* courses comes both from the school boards and the educational authorities, which means a gradual squeezing out of the more distinctive *content* courses. Men often fail to realize that such an emphasis is playing right into the hands of the educators against whose educational principles they are to be a sort of a standing protest.

## Text Books Yield to Method

Among men of conviction in the matter of Christian education there has also been a very commendable promotion of the Christian textbook program. There is here, too, I fear, the danger of yielding to the method aspect at the expense of the content. There are evidences from those who are experienced teachers that they want the method aspect of the new books perfected so that the teacher will follow precisely the suggestion prescribed in the text book. We hope that those whose business it may be to work on textbooks will not fall down and worship before the great god *Method.* Robotism will be the result, and the inspiration of teaching will be forfeited. The profession will become a job such as the work of the men in the assembly line in our factories.

## Permeation through Available Helps

Those who worship at the shrine of method have made many valuable contributions to the cause of education. It would be folly to ignore these. Grateful use is being made and should be made of these. But let the users realize that they are not likely to escape the educational philosophy to which these helps are indebted. There are films that do not only illustrate how to teach, but will do the teaching for the teacher. The prime requirement of the pedagogue is his ability to run a picture-machine. Skill in copying is an excellent qualification for a teacher who can take over the many lesson helps. These deal with the *method* aspect of teaching. The philosophy back of it and its permeation of method emphasis will work through more or less imperceptibly. A mechanical mind rather than a creative and liberalizing mind is at a premium. Use the helps, of course. But be alert, realizing that you can save your educational soul only at the cost of eternal and concentrated vigilance. Christian educators can ill afford to be allured into a system that acknowledges no god save *method.*

## Tendency Toward Collectivism

This over-emphasis on method tends toward the de-individualization of the teacher. Only a few of the strongest and best teachers can escape this, and they will probably not be promoted because they have refused to conform. Many leaders in education are vehemently opposed to traditional American liberalism as found in the institutions of yesteryear. They believe it is anti-social. It is, they claim, inimical to the democratic way of life. Have they gone beyond the idea that the highest American ideals can be realized best by voluntary cooperation? Yes, they are committed to coercive state planning. In 1947 the American Association of School Administrators declared that the unavoidable choice is between the primacy of the individual and of the society of which he is a part. The

choice was not difficult. The individual must go, as he did in Russia, Germany, and it is feared, as he is going in this country. Educational collectivism wrought by an educational hierarchy committed to Method can be as crushing to individual freedom as any Stalinesque authority. H. S.

# Christian Film Action

**Hendrik J. Spier**
Pastor of the Gereformeerde Kerk at Rijswick (The Hague) and Chairman of the C. F. A.

WITH great pleasure I comply with the request of the editor, Professor Dr. Bouma, to write something about Christian Film Action (C.F.A.) as it is developing in the Netherlands.

After World War II many Christian people of orthodox persuasion felt that something ought to be done in the realm of the cinema, especially for our youth. Young people are film-minded these days and films form such an inherent part of our culture that we cannot imagine being without them.

Different viewpoints can be taken regarding the pictures. One can simply say No! Then we reject and repudiate the cinema and the film presented there, because the affair is wholly worldly and threatens faith and morality. In that case all Christian people who want to adhere to the commandments of God have to know that it is forbidden to go to the pictures. Many good words might be said for that opinion. Indeed, the world of pictures (Hollywood) is a capitalistic one which aims at money-making and must therefore cater to the wants of the great mass of the people. This implies that this industry is unscrupulous, induces to sin, and profits by it. Who can tell how much harm has been done to young souls by the pictures?

Nevertheless, there is another stand taken by many Christians. Here we are concerned with common grace by which God has granted many gifts to the unfaithful. We are thinking of various kinds of artists: in literature we possess magnificent novels written by some of them; in music there are masters in the beautiful world of tones. Though we may miss in them the direct glorification of the Lord and the witness to the truth of Jesus Christ, we can deeply appreciate for instance, the music of Beethoven. Would things be different in the field of pictures?

There are many bad films in the daily programs of the cinema, but there are also pictures of high quality, some of which appeal to the higher level of human emotion. And the best thing which may be said in favor of the pictures is that there are films which portray elements of the Christian faith. According to this opinion, we should make a good choice, proving all things in the cinematic world, and holding fast that which is good. One can appreciate this view also. It has the advantage that it is not negative and does not curtail freedom of conscience in any respect.

How shall we find the solution to this problem? There is, I think, a common mistake in both of the opinions mentioned. In either case the world is left to its fate. We are not trying to change anything in the world of pictures. In our behavior there is something of the "laissez faire, laissez aller." In abtaining from visiting the cinema, we soon forget the great mass of people that cannot live any longer without the pictures. When we go to the movies as discriminating visitors, picking out the best of them, perhaps no harm will be done to our souls. For we are awake, and we may thank God for the good things we have seen. But what about the other people that have no religious convictions, no positive faith, and miss in fact any counterbalance?

Hardly ever do they see life on the screen as it can be, saved and renewed by the grace of our mighty Lord, Jesus Christ. Empty hearts which still remain empty! It is going from bad to worse. And we don't lift a finger to help them that they may see on the screen life that is really life, through the radiant power of Him who is the Life.

Someone will wonder and remark, "They can come to church, where they will be heartily welcomed." Yes, indeed! But what further about the cinemas? Should they disappear as soon as possible from the earth? Are we preaching and praying for that purpose? Or are we to recognize that the pictures form a part of our technical century, so that it is impossible to reject the film without rejecting the total development of our modern age? I think so.

Then it may be clear that the cinema is a great challenge to our Christian belief. That is the conviction of the C.F.A. in the Netherlands, in which organization many men of various orthodox churches have joined (no Barthians!). They are willing to listen to the call of God just as it is heard, not only in the field of science and art, of school and radio, but also in the field of pictures.

It is true that we cannot accord with the cinema as it is in the world today. Therefore the C.F.A. has organized its own performance in several towns and villages of our country. Money-making is not our aim. The reader will be curious to know what films are shown to the attendance. They are selected films from various sources. The C.F.A. itself has

approved some titles for performance. I mention: *Monsieur Vincent,* a French prize-film; *The Word,* a Swedish film taken from the book of the late Danish minister Kaj Munk; *La Maternelle* (Infant School) another French film; *L.O.-L.K.P.,* a Dutch film of resistance against the Nazis, in which the Rev. D. Rijnalda from Amsterdam played his role. One of the first films was *Hardsteel,* an English picture on the theme of Matthew 16 verse 26. A fortnight ago the American film *Gentlemen's Agreement* was shown in the Hague—a very good picture on anti-Semitism. One thing must be admitted, that there is a serious lack of good films in the world production. Sometimes films with good elements are shown; however, it is possible that objection may be raised against other parts of them. In the C.F.A. there is opportunity to speak freely about these objections. We are in our own house where we can make our own sphere.

Now the question arises: What can be done for the production of good, viz., Christian films, which may contribute to the glorification of the name of God in this world? It seems hopeless to give a satisfactory answer to that question. For how are we to get the money, the studios, and the actors for our own film productions? How are we to compete with the great and wealthy world of the film? It seems to be an immense task which cannot be accomplished by Christian people with our limited possibilities—the more so because in the first place we have to accomplish our task for the church, the missions, the schools, etc. We can only spend our money once! But all beginnings are difficult. Often in history faithful people were placed before a job which seemed too heavy a burden for their shoulders. I am thinking of the start of the Free University in Amsterdam in 1880 with only three professors. The beginning of the Christian Radio Association in the Netherlands was also on a very small scale. But who was the man who spoke of a matter of faith? It was Kuyper, the man who with all his heart and power confessed that there was no part in the wide field of human life where Christ, sovereign of us all, does not speak His "Mine"!

Believing that Jesus Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, also in the field of pictures, I am sure there will be Christian films. And indeed there are! And their number will increase. If we refuse to accomplish that task, others will. I am thinking of the Religious Film Society of Arthur Rank in England, and of the Cathedral Films in America. When we keep on doing nothing except criticizing, we will be too late. At the same time we lose the right to speak when things go wrong.

Now it may be remarked that it is not necessary at all to compete with the great film industry of the world. The film magnates may have the sources of financial power. But we have the sources of spiritual power. And to show life as it is and must be the latter is the most important. In the production of films it is more and more acknowledged that the great problems of life and world are essential. Provided the Lord blesses our work Christian Film Action will have its process of growth. It is not possible to deal in one article with all the questions that will arise.

What is a Christian film? It is not permitted, in my opinion, to film the stories of Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon, and of Jesus and his disciples, for the revelation of God and of Christ our Lord cannot be played. It is quite impossible to repeat the holy story without upsetting it. There are, I know, different opinions among us on this point, but I am sure this is the only safe way to maintain reverence for the Holy Scriptures. But Christian life, as it is going on in this world, should be filmed and presented with all its varieties and strains, with its sadness and gladness, with its struggle and pain, with its victory and everlasting joy. This must be the object of C.F.A. And in that indirect way the pictures can bear witness to the honor of Jesus Christ, and on the screen shall shine the glory of God, of His greatness of mercy and justice, to lighten a darkened world. To attain this end it is necessary for all Christians who have seen their task to join hands.

There must be co-operation of Christian people in the many countries of the world. We shall help each other to gain the object that cannot be gained by separate action. The task is immense indeed. But immense also can be the results for our Christian action, for youth, for missions, for evangelization, to strengthen our driving power for a great attack on the world with our own weapons, sanctified by the Word of God and by our prayer.

Thus far television was not mentioned. What can we do in this department without C.F.A.?

Finally the remark may be made that I shall be glad to hear reaction, discussion, and criticism that go to the point. And we hope that the challenge of the movie will be accepted by Christian people in America, Europe, Africa, and elsewhere, in the surety of faith which knows "that all things are possible to him that believeth."

(A reliable book on this subject has been written by Drs. J. Das, entitled *Wij en de Film,* edited by Bosch en Keuning, Baarn, 1950).

# Calvin's Attitude Towards Art and Amusements

**Simon J. De Vries**
Minister of the Gospel
Prairie City, Iowa

AFTER four hundred years of familiarity with John Calvin's work and writings, it might be expected that the scholarly world has most certainly arrived at a definite consensus on what the reformer thought about art and amusements. This expectation is not true to fact. On the contrary, we find two widely-separated representations of what Calvin's attitude was towards these elements of the lighter side of life. One school, obviously unfriendly towards him, sees in Calvin a Puritanical fanatic, or, even worse, nothing more than a typical medieval monastic. Another school of scholarship, more sympathetic with him, finds in him more of the aesthete and man of the world than of the monkish ascetic.

## Calvin An Ascetic

Albert Ritschl seems to have been the leader of the first-mentioned antipathetic group. In his *Geschichte des Pietismus,* written in 1880, he stated: "So far as the ideal of Calvinism is anti-Catholic, this is due to the instigation of Luther; so far as it departs from Luther, it goes back to the ideal of the Franciscans—of the Fanciscans and Anabaptists".[1] "Calvin . . . combatted everything that pertained to the gay and free joyousness of life and luxury."[2] In Ritschl's eyes Calvin resembled a Catholic monk who personally had no need of recreation and set himself against art and amusement for others. A whole school of writers followed this idea, including such figures as Loofs and Martin Schulze. One who expressed himself with special sharpness was Bernhard Bess who wrote that "(Calvin's) personal character . . . despised, . . . it may be said, held in horror all that could refresh and adorn life."[3] Emile Doumergue, the great Calvin scholar and biographer, criticized this group of writers very severely in an energetic paper written to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Calvin's birth. In this paper entitled "Calvin, Epigone or Creator?"[4] Doumergue rightly accuses Ritschl and his school of pan-German chauvinism and blind pro-Lutheranism of ignoring or suppressing the large quantity of evidence contrary to their thesis. Doumergue feels in this connection that this representation of Calvin's character has been brought to its *reductio ad absurdam* in a commemorative lecture delivered at Union Theological Seminary on Calvin's four-hundredth anniversary by the then professor of Christian Ethics at Union, Thomas C. Hall. Prof. Hall's topic was this: "Was John Calvin a reformer or a reactionary?"[5] and he concluded that Calvin was the latter. Among other things Hall said that "Calvin was one of the last, though not one of the greatest of the schoolmen."[6] In short, this entire group of scholars thought of Calvin as belonging far more to the Middle Ages than to the modern era of history with its spirit of emancipation. He was still dominated, they said, by monachism and scholasticism.

One more name should be added to this list, and that is the name of Ernst Troeltsch. Doumergue, in the article referred to above, specifically exonerates Troeltsch of the charge of partisanship which he brought against the other writers of this tendency.[7] Certainly Troeltsch cannot be accused of pro-Lutheranism, for he applies to Luther as well as to Calvin all of the charges made against Calvin alone by Ritschl and his disciples. In an address delivered before the Ninth Congress of German Historians, convened at Stuttgart on April 21, 1906, Troeltsch called both Luther and Calvin monastic ascetics who belonged essentially to the Middle Ages because they had not broken, as modern Protestantism has, from "authority and asceticism."[8]

## Calvin a Lover of the Beautiful

Doubtless the list of names belonging to this school of thought could be extended. But let us observe now the opposite opinion that was expressed by many scholars who immediately reacted against what they felt to be a grossly unjust misrepresentation of the character and work of the great reformer. First and foremost we should men-

[1] Vol. I, p. 76, as quoted by Emile Doumergue in "Calvin: Epigone or Creator?" *Calvin and the Reformation,* New York, 1909, pp. 1 ff.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 50.
[3] *Unsere religioesen Erzieher,* II, 82 (1908). Quoted by Doumergue, *op. cit.,* p. 50.
[4] *Op. cit.;* see f.n. 1.
[5] As Doumergue puts it. Hall's work was "The Inner Spirit of the Calvinistic Puritan State," in a book of three commemorative addresses. Union Theol. Seminary, New York, 1909.
[6] Doumergue, *op. cit.,* p. 8, quoting Hall.
[7] *Ibid.,* pp. 9 ff.
[8] Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus fuer die Entstehung der Modernen Welt,* quoted by Doumergue, *op. cit.,* pp. 9 ff.

tion the name of that very energetic defender of Calvin, none other than Emile Doumergue who has already been mentioned above. Doumergue, though perhaps somewhat blind at times in his devotion to Calvin, was undoubtedly the best informed authority on the reformer's life ever to write in modern times. Hence, his position is of the utmost significance for our study. By quoting directly from Calvin Doumergue explained the "asceticism" of Calvin, showing that it was not the kind that leads a man to despise art and amusements in themselves, but rather the kind that gives a lively impulse to them. What Doumergue wrote was strongly seconded by John S. Stahr, a German Reformer minister writing on "The Ethics of Calvinism" in the *Reformed Church Review* of April, 1909. In rigid opposition to Ritschl and Troeltsch, Stahr summarized Calvin's moral attitude in the following sentence: "A strict morality that is yet free from the gloom of asceticism, and the consciousness of a service well-pleasing to God in the discharge of the duties which arise in one's earthly vocation."[9]

Other writers have also taken up the cudgels against Ritschl *cum suis*. Among these writers is A. Mitchell Hunter who reviews the charges that Calvin was a sterile and arid ascetic and a rigorous Puritan. He condemned them as calumnies, and showed that Calvin, with all his limitations, was indeed interested in the lighter things of life.[10] Another British writer, A. Dakin, author of the book on Calvinism, joins forces with those who defend the reformer, showing that the rigorous moral restrictions enforced at Geneva came not from Calvin's alleged asceticism but from his desire to see the glory of God vindicated in a city rife with immorality of every kind.[11]

Perhaps for many students of Calvin what will be of even more weight is the opinion of Max Weber advanced in his important work, *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus,* written in 1905,[12] after Ritschl but before Troeltsch. Though a colleague of Troeltsch at Heidelberg, Weber finds just the opposite in Calvin, insomuch indeed that he makes Protestantism, and especially Calvinism, responsible for the growth of the acquisitive spirit of capitalism.[13] He finds in Calvin not a spirit of withdrawal from this world, but quite the opposite, viz., a tendency to *love* this world and to make the most of it.

Other researchers whose writings were less colored than was Weber's but who were at least as sympathetic to Calvin, were scholars like Abraham Kuyper, Sr., Mary Ramsay, and others. Kuyper delivered his six *Stone Lectures on Calvinism* at Princeton Seminary in 1898.[14] In his fifth lecture, entitled "Calvinism and Art," he shows that Calvin, far from being an ascetic, actually encouraged and stimulated the development of art and music. Mary Ramsay argues, similarly, that Scotland's relative sterility in the fine arts is due to the Scottish temperament and political situation and not to her Calvinism.[15] Mention should also be made to a French dissertation, that by Léon Wencelius on *L'esthétique de Calvin,* which defends substantially the same thesis in regard to Calvin's aesthetic appreciation.[16] Finally, we find that even relatively unbiased biographers of the reformer, such as Henry[17] and Schaff,[18] take the trouble to defend him against the charge hurled at him by Ritschl, Troeltsch, Hall, and their kind. Even Georgia Harkness, who can be very bitter towards our reformer, exonerates him of being ascetic and Anabaptistic in principle.[19]

## Calvin's Appreciation for the Lighter Things of Life

In substantiation of what this latter group of writers have said let it be stated that Calvin was always very outspoken throughout his life both against Anabaptism, with its extreme other-worldliness, and against monastic asceticism, which represents essentially the same spirit as Anapabtism. In this respect Calvin stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Martin Luther. Both of the great reformers believed that the Christian must be busy in this world, using its good to the glory of God, and not fleeing from it as did the Anabaptists and the monastics in their vain imagination that it was not the proper environment for living a holy life. Whatever justice there may be to the claim that Calvin was an ascetic in actual practice (to say nothing of Luther), he was certainly not an ascetic in intention.

In temperament Calvin was sober, moderate, and frugal. But he wanted neither extreme austerity nor its opposite, indulgence in sensual things. Indeed, we know that he was no "teetotaler" but gratefully accepted the barrel of wine given him by the Genevan Council.[20] Though a shy and retiring man, he maintained warm friendships with his close companions and often joined in their festivities. Though frugal and disciplined in his per-

[9] Essay V in the commemorative volume, *Essays on the Life and Work of John Calvin,* Philadelphia, 1909.

[10] *The Teaching of Calvin, a Modern Interpretation,* Glasgow, 1920, pp. 267 ff.

[11] London, 1940, pp. 146 ff, 211.

[12] *Archiv fuer sozial Wissenschaft und sozial Politik,* Vol. XX, 1904, and Vol. XXI, 1905. Quoted by Doumergue, *op. cit.,* pp. 33 ff.

[13] Weber's main thesis is strongly rebutted by L. Verduin in a series of articles on "Christianity and the Acquisitive Urge in Man," *Calvin Forum,* XV, 15-17, 48-50 (Aug.-Sept., Oct., 1949.)

[14] Reprinted by Eerdmans (Grand Rapids) in 1943. There is also a Dutch version printed in Amsterdam, 1898.

[15] Mary P. Ramsay, *Calvin and Art, Considered in Relation to Scotland,* Edinburgh, 1938.

[16] Paris: Société d'Edition "Les Belles Lettres," 1936.

[17] Paul Henry, *The Life and Times of John Calvin, the Great Reformer,* 2 vols., New York, 1851, Vol. I, p. 473.

[18] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* 4th Rev. Ed., New York, 1903, Vol. VII, pp. 491 ff.

[19] *John Calvin, The Man and His Ethics,* N. Y., 1931, pp. 162 ff.

[20] *Ibid.,* pp. 27 ff, 162.

sonal habits, Calvin believed that art and wholesome secular activities should be cultivated as gifts of God, even though they had been partially vitiated by sin.[21] We might even call Calvin an artist of a sort if we consider his contribution to the development of literary French. As a literary artist Calvin was a genius. Mary Ramsay, referred to above, makes this tribute to him: "He was able to transpose into the derivative French vernacular something of the elegance, the exactitude, and the strength of the parent Latin tongue" while preserving the natural fluency and suppleness of the French.[22] And, as Hunter points out in his chapter on Calvin's "Attitude to Art, Music, and Science,"[23] though Calvin was no poet himself, he did possess strong poetic tastes. "There was a song in his heart, but his tongue could not utter it." He simply did not possess the musical and artistic talent of his fellow-reformer Luther.

When we look at what Calvin wrote on the subject of legitimate amusements and aesthetic pursuits, we cannot escape the conviction that Doumergue was right when he accused Ritschl and his school of pan-Germanic chauvinism of describing Calvin as the equivalent of a Franciscan and Anabaptist.[24] Read what Calvin wrote in his *Institutes.*[25]

> Now, if it has pleased the Lord that we should be assisted in physics, logic, mathematics, and other arts and sciences, by the labour and ministry of the impious, let us make use of them; lest, if we neglect the use of the blessings therein freely offered to us by God, we suffer the just punishment of our negligences. (*Institutes* II, ii, 14-16)

Calvin considered art a blessing of God, to be appreciated and used even when coming from the hands of unbelievers! Again: We need not abstain from that "Which seems more conducive to pleasure than to our necessities." We are to use such things "As well for our needs as for our delectation." (*Institutes* III, x, 1.) In another place Calvin writes:

> Since this life, then, is subservient to a knowledge of the Divine goodness, shall we fastidiously scorn it, as though it contained no particle of goodness in it? We must therefore have this sense and affection, to class it among the bounties of the Divine benignity which are not to be rejected. For if Scripture testimonies were wanting, which are very numerous and clear, even nature itself exhorts us to give thanks to the Lord for having introduced us to the light of life, for granting us the use of it, and giving us all the helps necessary to its preservation. (*Institutes,* III, ix, 3.)

Even more clearly Calvin expresses himself in another place:

> Now, if we consider for what end he has created the various kinds of aliment, we shall find that he intended to provide not only for our necessity, but likewise for our pleasure and delight. So in clothing, he has had in view not mere necessity, but propriety and decency. In herbs, trees, and fruits, besides their various uses, his design has been to gratify us by graceful forms and pleasant odours. For if this were not true, the Psalmist would not recount among the Divine blessings, "wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine;" nor would the Scriptures universally declare, in commendation of his goodness, that he has given all these things to men. And even the natural properties of things sufficiently indicate for what end, and to what extent, it is lawful to use them. But shall the Lord have endued flowers with such beauty, to present itself to our eyes, with such sweetness of smell, to impress our sense of smelling; and shall it be unlawful for our eyes to be affected with the beautiful sight, or our olfactory nerves with the agreeable odour? What! has he not made such a distinction of colours as to render some more agreeable than others? Has he not given to gold and silver, to ivory and marble, a beauty which makes them more precious than other metals or stones? In a word, has he not made many things worthy of our estimation, independently of any necessary use? Let us discard, therefore, that inhuman philosophy which, allowing no use of the creatures but what is absolutely necessary, not only malignantly deprives us of the lawful enjoyment of the Divine beneficence, but which cannot be embraced till it has despoiled man of all his senses, and reduced him to a senseless block. But, on the other hand, we must, with equal diligence, oppose the licentiousness of the flesh; which, unless it be rigidly restrained, transgresses every bound. (*Institutes* III, x, 2, 3.)

Does this look like Anabaptism? Did Calvin indeed combat everything that pertained to the gay and free joyousness of life and luxury? Did Calvin actually hold in horror all that could refresh and adorn life?[26]

Let us look further. We find statements like these in the *Institutes*:

> Many in the present age think it a folly to raise any dispute concerning the free use of meats, of days, and of habits, and similar subjects, considering these things as frivolous and nugatory; but they are of greater importance than is generally believed. (*Institutes* III, xix, 7.)

> Ivory and gold, and riches of all kinds, are certainly blessings of Divine Providence, not only permitted, but expressly designed for the use of men; nor are we any where prohibited to laugh, or to be satiated with food, or to annex new possessions to those already enjoyed by ourselves and by our ancestors, or to be delighted with musical harmony, or to drink wine. (*Institutes* III, xix, 9.)

In an anti-ascetic sermon on Deuteronomy, Calvin says:

> It is said in Ps. civ, that God has not only given man bread and water for the necessity of life, but that He added as well wine to comfort and rejoice the heart . . . . He might easily have made the corn grow for our nourishment without any preceding bloom. He might easily have made fruits and trees without leaves and blossoms. We see that our Lord wills that we should rejoice through all our senses.[27]

Poor as Calvin's scientific knowledge may have been, judged by modern standards, he obviously cannot be accused of lacking aesthetic feeling. In other sermons we read that Nabal's feast was not blameworthy on account of the festivities themselves, but solely on account of its excess,[28] and

[21] Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[23] *Op. cit.*, p. 271.
[24] Above, p. 1.
[25] Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the *Institutes* are from John Allen's translation of 1813 (from Calvin's final edition of 1559, printed in the Sixth American Edition in two vols., Philadelphia, 1813.)
[26] As has been alleged by the school described above, pp. 1, 2.
[27] *Opera (Corpus Reformatorum. Joannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia,* Brunswig, 1863.), XXVIII, 36, quoted by Doumergue, *op. cit.*, p. 30. See also *Opera,* XXVI, 163f.
[28] Homilies on I Sam., *Opera,* XXX, 565.

that the merriment of Job's sons was in itself something to be approved.[29] No doubt instances could be vastly multiplied if one were to go through all of Calvin's writings. Wencelius, who has done just that in preparation of his doctrinal dissertation,[30] as also A. Kuyper,[31] among others perhaps, give many of such instances as conclusive evidence that John Calvin, far from being a dour ascetic, appreciated deeply the good things that God has provided for man to enjoy in this life.

## Calvin's Suppression of Certain Forms of Art and Amusements

In the face of the existence of such passages as we have just noticed in the writings of Calvin himself, one finds it extremely difficult to understand how a whole school of writers could with good conscience and genuine sincerity have ascribed to him a monastic and Anabaptistic spirit. And yet it should be frankly recognized that these scholars did find some justification for maintaining their position, despite the massive evidence against them. These writers appealed to what they called Calvin's "Puritan state" in Geneva, in which a drab system of worship was substituted for something outwardly more beautiful by far, in which strict morality was rigidly enforced, and in which many pastimes, generally received in our modern day as acceptable, were condemned and forbidden. These writers seemed to believe that to have taken so repressive a course as Calvin did in Geneva clearly marked him as an ascetic.

Let us see for ourselves what Calvin did. Philip Schaff is one who tells us about some of the measures taken by the Genevan city council along this line.[32] He writes:

> Dancing, gambling, drunkenness, the frequentation of taverns, profanity, luxury, excesses at public entertainments, extravagance and immodesty in dress, licentious or irreligious songs were forbidden, and punished by censure or fine or imprisonment. Even the number of dishes at meals was regulated. Drunkards were fined three *sols* for each offense. Habitual gamblers were exposed in the pillory with cords around their neck. Reading of bad books and immoral novels was also prohibited, and the popular "Amadis de Gaul" was ordered to be destroyed (1559). A morality play on "the Acts of the Apostles," after it had been performed several times, and been attended even by the Council, was forbidden. . . . Several women, among them the wife of Ami Perrin, the captain-general, were imprisoned for dancing (which was usually connected with excesses). Bonivard, the hero of political liberty, and a friend of Calvin, was cited before the Consistory because he had played at dice with Clement Marot, the poet, for a quart of wine . . . .

Georgia Harkness reminds us particularly of Calvin's disapproval of dancing, card-playing, theatre, and ribald songs.[33] She tells us that the Geneva reforms of 1536-37 included the punishment of frivolous songs and the pillorying of gamblers.[34] In 1546, she points out, the council closed the taverns and *regulated* card-playing,[35] permitting it only with rigid reservations.[36] In regard to dancing Harkness shows that in March, 1546, Perrin and Amblard Corre, president of the Consistory, "committed the indiscretion of dancing at a betrothal party."[37] (This is probably the same incident referred to by Schaff in the quotation above.) For this offense they were imprisoned by the Council and severely admonished by the consistory. We are informed, further, that the students at the University of Geneva were "forbidden to dance, to dice, to play cards, to attend banquets or to go to taverns, to promenade the streets, to take part in masquerades or 'mummeries,' to sing indecent songs."[38] Harkness goes on to make the blank statement that theatres were anathema for Calvin,[39] a statement that may well be challenged, however, in light of what other writers such as Paul Henry and Léon Wencelius have stated. Henry informs us that Calvin's attitude toward theatricals depended very much on circumstances, so that, although he discouraged (and "discouraged" seems to be as far as he himself went with the matter) the council from permitting a company of professional players to perform in Geneva on one occasion, at a later time (Jan. 6, 1558) he seemed to have had no objections to a play put on by children of the city commemorating the martyrdom of five young students at Lyons.[40] We shall hear from Wencelius on the subject of Calvin's attitude to the theatre farther on.[41]

At any rate, those who put Calvin in a dim light tend to look upon these official measures of the Genevan city council and consistory as typical elements of a Puritanical state, and then these writers draw the swift conclusion, not without some justification, of course, that the iconoclastic Puritanism of Cromwell and the witch-burning Puritanism of the New Englanders were lineal descendants from Calvin's own system. It is little wonder that the typical modern mind, which prefers to see only the repressiveness of later Puritanism and hates it bitterly because of it, despises with equal hatred the alleged Puritanism of the reformer. That Calvin's character is not to be painted exclusively in sombre hues, however, we have already seen. Let us go on now to examine more minutely what lay behind both of these seemingly contradictory elements in Calvin's makeup: the almost exuberant appreciativeness of the good things of life, and the unquavering disapproval of certain activities and amusements typical of this life as it is in this sinful world.

29 Sermons on Job, *Opera*, XXXIII, 39, 41.
30 *Op. cit.*
31 *Op. cit.*, pp. 146 ff in the Dutch version.
32 *Op. Cit.*, pp. 489 ff.
33 *Op. cit.*, pp. 162 ff., 165 ff.
34 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
35 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
36 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
37 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
38 *Ibid.*, p. 53, quoted from Hugh Y. Reyburn, *John Calvin, His Life, Letters and Work*, London, 1914.
39 *Op. cit.*, p. 163.
40 *Op. cit.*, I, 473.
41 See below.

## Calvin's Moral Ideals

The proper method of resolving these two seemingly incompatible elements in Calvin seems to be to recognize in him something similar to what Max Weber has styled an "intra-mundane asceticism."[42] The reformer's view of Christian morality, in faithfulness to Scripture, included not only the proper use of the gifts of God, but also a certain kind of self-denial. This self-denial is not, however, what is ordinarily meant by asceticism. There is no detachment from this world to be found in it, as with the Catholic monks and with the Anabaptists. On the contrary, it is positive, involving the denial of one's own selfish aims in order to seek the glory of God and the welfare of fellow-men. In the *Institutes* (III, vii, 4), Calvin describes the self-denial that is required of a Christian: "This self-denial, which Christ requires so carefully of all His disciples, has respect partly to men and partly to God." A Christian must bear the Cross of Christ, but this cross-bearing involves nothing more than to take one's burdens patiently, enduring them for Christ's sake. It does not mean that one should seek after suffering, monk-like.[43]

Another moral ideal ardently cherished by the reformer was moderation. Calvin appreciated good wine, as we have already seen. He no doubt enjoyed fine food, too. But he condemned gluttony and drunkenness with unmitigated ire, for God's good gifts are in no wise to be abused. "To drink might be legitimate; to drink to excess was an offense against God, and a bestial practice."[44] This is the reason why Nabal's feast was so sinful: not because of its festivities, but because of its excesses.[45] Calvin was pitiless towards drunkards: "If a man knows that he has a weak head, and that he cannot carry three glasses of wine without being overcome, and then drinks indiscreetly, is he not a hog?"[46] "Let us use wine and other created things soberly, with temperance, in order that, satisfied by them, we may receive new strength for the fulfilment of our vocation."[47] If Calvin were to be resurrected in our twentieth-century America, we would hardly expect to find him sympathetic to a narrow prohibitionism, but on the other hand, we could not expect him to have any good to say for those in our day who so scandalously abuse liquor. For intemperance he had only the scorn of an outraged Christian conscience.

In faithfulness to the Bible John Calvin was also fervently devoted to moral cleanliness, conscious, as he was, that we are "temples of the Holy Spirit." A Christian is called to a saintly life. Having been washed by Christ, he is expected to keep himself clean from the abuses and defilements of the world, if only out of loyalty and gratitude to Christ. "Our bodies," he writes, "although they are wretched corpses, do not cease to be temples of the Holy Spirit, and God would be adored in them . . . .We are the altars, at which He is worshipped, in our bodies and in our souls."[48] How could one with so keen a conscience, one so loyal to Scripture, one so bold in combatting sin in every form, as was Calvin, do otherwise, then, than to oppose worldliness in every way possible?

One more thing to remember in connection with Calvin's moral ideals is that he always regarded the service and the honor of God as primary, and in this he set a good example for all Christians, also in our modern day, even though they may differ with him on the particular application of this principle in specific instances. Hence, Calvin opposes images, not because he was lacking in aesthetic appreciation, but because their misuse by the Catholics detracted seriously from the honor of God, which a true Christian is duty-bound to seek, as would seem to be self-evident.[49] For the same reason Calvin seeks to suppress licentiousness and blasphemy in whatever form they may appear, inasmuch as they, too, are defilements of the honor and glory of God.

## Calvin's Opposition to Worldliness

It is, accordingly, in the light of Calvin's genuinely Biblical morality that we must view his opposition to the worldly forms of self-indulgence prevalent among the Genevans. It was not art as such nor amusements as such that he opposed. Some of the Puritans, out of a spirit of infiltrated Anabaptism, may have done that; but Calvin did not. What Calvin fought against was the excesses, the abuses, and the perversions of these things. It must be confessed that he often did this with unnecessary severity and with an unfortunate lack of discretion. It must also be confessed that the peculiar "tie-up" of council and consistory in Geneva is not beyond criticism (Calvin himself did not consider it ideal.)

Nevertheless, let it be remembered that certain of the suppressive measures mentioned above by Schaff and Harkness did not have the full approval of Calvin, and were in some cases definitely opposed by Calvin. Moreover, one would expect that academic discipline would be strict, allowing the students in the schools very little frivolity, to say nothing of allowing them to indulge in immoral vices. And again, notice that most of the things suppressed by the council and censured by the con-

[42] Weber's use of this term in reference to Calvin cannot be uncritically endorsed. It is suggestive, however, and, when properly understood, this term can help us. Doumergue takes it over from Weber and applies it to Calvin.

[43] Cf. *Institutes*, III, viii, 9. This item, with the quotation immediately above, is quoted by Doumergue, *op. cit.*, pp. 35 ff. Doumergue makes his own translation.

[44] Harkness, *op. cit.*, p. 27, quoting Calvin, *Opera* XXVI, 510.

[45] Above, note 28.

[46] Sermons on Deut., *Opera* XXVI, 510.

[47] *Opera* XXX, 565.

[48] Sermon on Deut., *Opera* XXVII, 19, 20, quoted by Doumergue, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[49] Cf. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 ff.

sistory were things that should scandalize even the often indifferent consciences of modern-day Christians. The morals of medieval Geneva were notoriously loose, and, as Hunter points out,[50] these southern peoples with whom Calvin had to deal tended naturally to be frivolous and irreligious. They needed discipline, but of course did not like it—hence the bitter opposition of the Libertines. It is Dakin's opinion, nonetheless, that most of the Genevans were with Calvin in his moral reform and supported it as well as they could.[51] Certainly the city council cannot be accused of lacking the necessary zeal to cooperate with him.

Every type of worldliness which Calvin opposed was marked by an excess or abuse of some kind or other. For one thing, Calvin condemns pride, pomp, and extravagance as misuse of God's blessings. Notice what he says:

> The Scripture . . . states, that while all these things are given to us by the Divine goodness, and appointed for our benefit, they are, as it were, deposits intrusted to our care, of which we must one day give an account. We ought, therefore, to manage them in such a manner that this alarm may be incessantly sounding in our ears, "Give an account of thy stewardship (Luke 16:2)." Let it also be remembered by whom this account is demanded; that it is by him who has so highly recommended abstinence, sobriety, frugality, and modesty; who abhors profusion, pride, ostentation, and vanity; who approves of no other management of his blessings, than such as is connected with charity; who has with his own mouth already condemned all those pleasures which seduce the heart from chastity and purity, or tend to impair the understanding. (*Institutes* III, x, 5. Cf. also 3, 4.)

Calvin also disapproved of dancing, gambling, and theatres in general because, as Harkness points out,[52] "Dancing and theatre breed adultery and lawlessness. Card-playing wastes time and fosters gambling. Adornment of person and sumptuous living encourage pride and arrogance." Hence Calvin's chief objection to the theatre and dancing, as they then existed, was that they were both conducive to irreverence (in the case of the theatre) and to immodesty (in the case of both). Adultery is not only the overt act in Calvin's eyes; it is also to be guilty of immodesty in speech or dress or gesture.[53] With a conscience extremely sensitive to the demands of God's honor, as well as to the dignity of man created in the image of that God, Calvin frowned upon activities which other men, ancient as well as modern, broadly and indiscriminately condone. Yet remember that the reformer was no mere ascetic. He was not dominated by a blind legalism. He did not tolerate, yea, even approve, the theatre when it was free of morally objectionable features, as Henry emphasizes.[54] As Wencelius shows us, Calvin was keenly aware that the theatre afforded sensual mankind a grand opportunity for vulgarity and profanity, and hence it must be carefully censored and supervised (not suppressed out of principle) by a state professing to be Christian. This does not mean that Calvin was opposed to drama as such, or that he was lacking in appreciation for beauty and for the good things of this world,[55]

[50] *Op. cit.*, pp. 267-69.
[51] *Op. cit.*, pp. 146 f.
[52] *Op. cit.*, pp. 162 ff, 165 ff.
[53] *Opera* XXVIII, 20, 59, referred to by Harkness, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
[54] *Op. cit.*, I, 473.

## Calvin's Doctrine of Christian Liberty

As has now been said repeatedly, Calvin believed in making the very best of this world and enjoying its good things; but he never ceased to oppose the perversion and abuse of it. Especially is this clear in his chapter on Christian Liberty, which is Book III, Chap. xix of the *Institutes*. Christian liberty he writes, is not license. It is freedom from legalistic ordinances of man. It is the proper, God-glorifying use of Divine gifts. In one remarkable passage he writes this:

> For when the conscience has once fallen into the snare it enters a long and inextricable labyrinth, from which it is afterwards difficult to escape; if a man begin to doubt the lawfulness of using flax in sheets, shirts, handkerchiefs, napkins, and table cloths, neither will he be certain respecting hemp, and at last he will doubt the lawfulness of using tow. (*Institutes* III, xix, 7.)

He goes on to apply the same illustration to the enjoyment of delicate food and wine. Let the ascetic and the legalist beware! The road is slippery! But once more let us quote Calvin to see what he meant by Christian liberty:

> They are guilty of perverting its meaning, who either make it a pretext of their irregular appetites, that they abuse the Divine blessings to the purposes of sensuality; or who suppose that there is no liberty but what is used before men, and therefore in the exercise of it totally disregard their weak brethren. . . . They allege that they (blessings) are things indifferent; this I admit, provided they be indifferently used. But where they are too ardently coveted, proudly boasted, or luxuriously lavished, these things, in themselves indifferent, are completely polluted by such vices. This passage of Paul makes an excellent distinction respecting things which are indifferent: "Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled (Titus 1:15)." . . . Amidst an abundance of all things, to be immersed in sensual delights, to inebriate the heart and mind with present pleasures, and perpetually to grasp at new ones, — these things are very remote from a legitimate use of the Divine blessings. Let them banish, therefore, immoderate cupidity, excessive profusion, vanity, and arrogance; that with a pure conscience they may make a proper use of the gifts of God. (*Institutes* III, xix, 9.)

This gives us the other side of Christian liberty. Christians are free to use and enjoy the Divine blessings only if they do not abuse them. How could a Christian, one who by definition stands consistently in the Biblical way of life, do otherwise than agree with Calvin here?

Calvin's attitude may be briefly summarized in this short statement from his writings: "In everything and everywhere, even in drinking and eating

[55] *Op. cit.*, pp. 147-52, referring to *Opera* XL, 620 (Lecture on Daniel iii:2-7). In another place Wencelius shows that David's dancing is approved by Calvin because it did not partake of the lascivious elements of the "modern" dance. David's dancing was meant as an act of worship and praise (*Opera* XXX, 260, Homily on I Sam. 18). "La condemnation de Calvin reste donc parfaitement temporelle, donc temporaire," says Wencelius, p. 146, referring, of course, to Calvin's opinion of the contemporary dance.

God wills that our life should be regulated, to the end that by using His creatures, we may serve Him, and that we should be fit for doing good."[56]

## Calvin's Stimulus to Morality and Art

"By their fruits shall ye know them." Indeed, if Calvin believed that God's blessings, including art and amusements, were freely to be enjoyed, though always with moderation and avoidance of abuses, do we find that his followers have been benefitted by this attitude? We see that both in the moral and in the aesthetic sphere Calvin's sobriety and desire for Christian sanctity seem to be predominant. In morals, the true Calvinist has always been serious. He has taken neither sin nor the glory of God lightly. In fact, we find that Calvinism has been responsible to a great degree for the moral development of modern Europeans and Americans. It has stimulated its adherents to work hard in God's world, making the most of the Divine blessings, bringing the earth under man's domination, all with the intention of magnifying God's honor here in this life as well as in the next. But true Calvinism, serious though it is, is not sombrely ascetic. If some types of later Calvinism became stringently legalistic and repressive, this is due to the infiltration of Anabaptistic attitudes, insomuch, indeed, that a good deal of "Puritanism" (whether Dutch or English or American) was more Anabaptistic than Calvinistic. In the measure that this has become the typical feature of Puritanism, Puritanism has departed from the true sentiments of the great reformer whom it professes to follow.[57]

In the field of art, Calvin's positive attitude is seen to have stimulated considerable activity. Calvin, it is true, carried on a vigorous polemic against the use of images in the Roman Catholic Church and against the bondage of art to the Church in general.[58] He wanted an art that was secularized, but—it goes without saying—not pagan. Though art was not to be religious in the narrow sense, it was not to be irreligious, but like all human things dedicated to the honor of the sovereign God.[59] Calvin laid down three principles to which plastic art must conform. As stated by Mary Ramsay,[60] they are the requirements that art be (1) *Protestant,* i.e., not tainted with Roman idolatry nor tied to the church;[61] (2) *moral,* i.e., not devoted to the sinful lusts of man, but instead to the glory of God;[62] and (3) *realistic,* i.e., it is to refrain from attempts to depict heavenly things.[63] Though didactic painting and sculpture are more advantageous to the edification of man, art solely for the aesthetic enjoyment of those who view it is also to be cultivated.[64]

In Ramsay's opinion, John Calvin is also to be given credit for stimulating landscape-painting and un-ecclesiastical portraiture, two phases of painting almost unknown before his time. Protestant artists and those influenced by them, filled with Calvin's profound awareness of the beauty and glory of God both in nature and in the frame of man, were motivated to depict this beauty through the medium of art.[65]

Calvin must also be credited with having greatly stimulated the development of congregational singing. He encouraged the versification of the Psalms and the development of the choral for liturgical purposes. He seemed to take particular delight in music, though always he insisted that its use in public worship remain strictly ancillary to the purpose of glorifying God. This explains his special preference for the plain choral in which all musical embellishments are discarded while the melody of praise rises triumphantly to the worship of God.

Though it is true that Calvinists in France were not artistically productive to any great degree, doubtless because of the persecution against them, we find that art, and particularly plastic art, has flourished, not in Lutheran lands, but notably in the Reformed Netherlands.[66] Undoubtedly it is true that national temperament is the deciding factor in determining whether a particular nation is artistically productive or not, and this gift differs in individuals. At any rate, the evidence seems to be conclusive that Calvinism has not acted as a damper upon aesthetic expression, but has instead acted in many ways as a stimulus to it.

## Conclusion

What shall we say then? Are they right who make ascetics of Calvin and Calvinists? It would appear that the opposite has been established, if not by this paper, at any rate by the works upon which this article depends and to which it refers. If we define Calvinism as the true essence of Calvin's own spirit, and not as the distorted version that appeared in various forms of later Puritanism, then we must endorse and stoutly reaffirm the ringing words with which Doumergue concludes his treatment of this topic:[67]

> Calvinism, lost in the mists of eschatology, living in the pessimistic expectation of death, paralyzed by the bonds of asceticism! Where has a Calvinist of this sort ever been seen? If Calvinism is what Ritschl and Schulze think, there is only one conclusion: there have never been men less Calvinistic than the Calvinists! Far from being a man who seeks retirement or turns from the world and from the present life, the Calvinist is one who takes possession of the world; who, more than any other, dominates the world; who makes use of it for all his needs; he is the man of commerce, of industry, of all inventions and all progress, even material.

May we add: "Even aesthetic?"

[56] Sermon on I Tim., *Opera* LIII, 537, quoted by Doumergue, *op. cit.*, pp. 45 f.
[57] Cf. Doumergue, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 ff.
[58] Cf. *Institutes* I, xi, 5-7; also 2, 8, 9.
[59] Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Kuyper, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-70 *passim.*
[60] *Op. cit.*, p. 19.
[61] *Inst.*, I, xi, 1, 2; IV, v, 18.
[62] *Inst.*, III, xx, 21, 22.
[63] *Inst.*, I, xi, 12.
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 33, referring to *Inst.*, I, v, vi, xv.
[66] Cf. Kuyper, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 ff.
[67] *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

# Book Reviews

## OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

THE MAIN TRAITS OF CALVIN'S THEOLOGY, *by Bela Vasady. Revised and translated from the original Magyar text, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 43 pages, $1.00.*

THE AUTHOR of the book under discussion was brought up in the Reformed Church of Hungary which for generations comprised one of the great segments of Protestantism and constituted its easternmost outpost in Europe. On the occasion of the four hundredth anniversary of the first edition of the *Institutes,* 1936, Vasady's church republished the text of the first edition for the general public. The essay under review appeared as introductory material in that publication.

Dr. Vasady begins by condemning the *cultural-protestantism* of those who identify theology with the science of religion, and who also show more interest in the Reformers as religious personalities than in the message which they were bound to bring in the name of God. The kind of scholarship that "light-heartedly brands Calvin as a 'Luther epigon' " or that attributes Calvin's originality to French racial traits and French Humanism is disdained. Vasady respects the efforts of those who have tried to isolate the material principle of Calvin's theology, and he commends the observation of Doumergue that "the service of God's Word became the dominant element of Calvin's life" (p 13). Furthermore, high praise is accorded Peter Brunner's, *Vom Glauben* bei *Calvin,* (1925), a Barth inspired research. This recent research proceeds upon the assumption that the understanding and evaluation of Calvin's theology must be predicated upon the recognition that this theology deals with the living God whose glory is not a mere principle in a theoretic system but must become the motivating and transcendent purpose of the believer's life.

It is the conviction of the author that Calvin brought the formal structure of his theology into conformity with his subject matter: "Jesus Christ reigns supreme not only over the subject matter but also over the formal aspects of Calvin's theological thinking." (pp. 14, 15). Divine authority was supreme for both Calvin's metaphysics and his methodology. The latter was not the contribution of French Humanism or the French spirit of analytical construction (Bauke). On this basic consideration, which is the *sine qua non* for understanding Calvin's theology, the author proceeds to set forth five major traits of Calvin's theology in a fresh, new garb.

* * * * *

Calvin's theology, as set forth in the *Institutes,* is characterized by a *belief-full pragmatism.* Not as though utility decides the truth of a matter, but Calvin, with his revelation-fed faith, sets forth the immanent teleology of world-history in which both God's glory and the salvation of man are integrated. From this follows the "structural, or external-methodical teleology of his theological thinking" (p 15), i.e., the form, the revisions and the restrain in argument, the lack of speculation in treating his subject—these all are included in Calvin's pragmatism. In discussing the separate doctrines, the same tendency crops up continually. Calvin wants to know what God is, not in Himself, but for us. We are urged to study and inquire because it is *expedient, profitable, useful, beneficial, advantageous,* etc.

This pragmatism, springing from faith, is supplemented by a *belief-ful realism.* The God of Calvin is not identical with Idealism's "Absolute Ideal" but is a Person who has revealed himself in his Word to the sinner and has sat in judgment on him and has shown him mercy. This realism of faith "is nothing else but an existential response to a self-disclosing God, to his Word, and to the actual work of the Holy Spirit, and afterward the applying of the conclusions drawn from this response to the whole field of human life." (p. 20) It is Calvin's realism which wages war against "any vain appearance of righteousness" and seeks to establish the final victory of the Truth. The false-god-ideas must be unmasked. All spurious god-ideas must be exposed, as, e.g., those which worship an unknown God. Blind Fortune and Fate as god-substitutes, are opposed as well as Pantheism and Deism. When we wish to investigate God, therefore, we must do so from His Word. Our ideas must be formed agreeable to that Word.

In anthropology Calvin sees man as dead in trespasses and sins. We find here no speculation between a formal and material image of God, as is the case with Brunner, but whatever vestige of the image of God is left is but " 'a ruin which is confused, mutilated and defiled.' " (p. 22. cf. *Institutes,* Bk. I, 15, 4) However, the same attitude of faith and total commitment is indicated in the development of every doctrine upon the infallible Word. Without the Word man cannot have the proper understanding of the world, of man or of God. Hence the term, *belief-ful realism,* to explain this utter rejection to the Biblical interpretation as the absolute Truth of God.

* * * * *

A particularly characteristic trait of Calvin's theology is his *belief-ful totalitarianism.* By this Dr. Vasady means that Calvin saw the whole man and the whole world dependent upon God. Therefore, the whole universe with man must serve this God. The law of being here becomes the rule of living as well, and thus dogmatics and ethics are united; faith and obedience are twins. Calvin, after Paul, was the greatest preacher of the "God-determinedness of man." This is where the dynamic vitality of the Reformer assumes its life-pattern—his contending for the glory of God, which is the most thoroughly existential act of man. (25). Doctrinally this totalitarianism of faith finds expression in the absence of any natural theology in Calvin, in his insistence on the full and eternal equality of Word and Spirit in the Godhead, but especially in Calvin's doctrine of providence and predestination. It will not do to separate God's justice from his omnipotence, for the power of God is not used arbitrarily. God, who is a law unto Himself, may not be represented by us as lawless, but He is above all law. "The object of our election is the glorification of the divine grace, while in reprobation that of divine justice. The cause of both is to be found in the divine will." (p. 28).

Double predestination must be taught if we would take God at his Word; the rejection of reprobation would involve us in a reckless quarrel with God. (p. 28).

In the doctrine of the state Calvin's first principle is: "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29; inaccurately quoted and cited in the text). This is the only healthy foundation for the state. There is no room for the idea of the totalitarian state in the totalitarianism of faith.

* * * * *

The fourth and fifth major traits are treated together as *belief-ful agnosticism* and *belief-ful antinomism.* Dr. Vasady hastens to assure us that *agnosticism* is not used in the philosophic sense. There is no common ground between the "unknowable" of Herbert Spencer and the "hidden God" of the Reformer. God for Calvin is not unrecognizable and unknowable, but he is incomprehensible and his ways are past finding out for the human mind. The secret things belong to the Lord our God. He dwells in a light that no man can approach unto. But at the same time those things that are revealed belong unto us and our children forever. The finite cannot grasp the infinite; this is humbly affirmed by Calvin. This *belief-ful agnosticism* is carried through with an unswerving consistency. Faithful ignorance is better than presumptuous knowledge. Vasady rejects any and all charges of formal or material rationalism in Calvin. (Cf. Bauke).

The inevitable concomitant of the agnosticism of faith is the *belief-ful antinomism.* Again the author warns that his term has nothing to do with the antinomistic dispute of history. Here the term is used "in the epistemological or logical meaning of 'antinomy.' " Two laws or lines of thought meet one another with equally valid claims or truths. Thus, according to Kant, a self-contradictory impasse is reached by the human mind. Calvin's theological thinking, says he, was full of such antinomies or paradoxes. Yet they were "not formulated by the natural mind in a formal-dialectical way, as in the case of Kant." (p. 31). Nor do they disturb the dynamical unity of Calvin's thought. Calvin admits that God has purposely concealed certain things from us; they are inpenetrable to the human mind; they are too high for man. It would therefore be very improper to measure the glory of God by our ability; we ought rather to "restrain our investigations within the limits of sobriety." (*Institutes,* I, 15, 8).

These *traits* are again traced through every one of the main doctrines, but they come to their highest expression also in the doctrine of predestination. When Calvin is confronted by the mysterious judgments of God, he finds it safer to suspend judgment than to incur the imputation of temerity. He is not ashamed to admit the limited comprehension of his faith and is willing to submit his understanding to the infinite wisdom of God. There are some things "which it is neither possible nor lawful to know" and "eagerness to know them, is a species of madness." (*Institutes,* III, 23, 8).

Some striking statements of antinomies which are resolved only by faith are reproduced by the author, e.g.: " 'Man falls according to the appointment of Divine Providence, but he falls by his own fault.' 'The destined destruction of the reprobate is procured by themselves.' " This is foolishness to the unbelieving mind and a rock of offence to the rationalist, but for the believer God is greater than our heart and these paradoxes are for us "but barriers of human curiosity which while, on the one hand, prove the total bankruptcy and impotence of our minds, point, on the other side, to that mysterious divine wisdom which does not allow us to measure him on the scale of our human understanding." (p. 37).

* * * * *

In conclusion, the author points out the fact that these five main traits of Calvin's theology are "organically and reciprocally inter-related" and that *belief-ful totalitarianism* furnishes the dominant note. All of these traits are fittingly bound together in Calvin's exposition of prayer. Here especially his totalitarian conception of religion, as that which encompasses all of our lives and demands our whole existence in the service of our great and sovereign God, becomes evident. "Nostri non sumus"; Dei sumus:" ("We are not our own; we are God's"). (Quoted on p. 41).

* * * * *

Dr. Vasady has presented us with a thought-provoking essay. Apart from the outlandish terminology, which at first has a tendency to confuse the mind that is philosophically oriented, and therefore does not add to the clarity of the book, one is stimulated and gratified. The approach is fresh and the style is vigorous. The interpretation is in the Reformed tradition but not stereotyped. The book is scholarly without letting the scholarship interfere with reading pleasure. The binding of the book is excellent. Its pages are few but the value of the book is not its bulk.

One critical observation ought to be made beyond the misquoted mis-cited Scripture passage mentioned above. There is a denial of the adequacy of general revelation for the knowledge of God in the state of rectitude. This Barthian error presents itself under the knowledge of God which according to Calvin is two-fold. "The first of these is the knowledge of the Creator God, the comprehension of 'general revelation.' This, however, find its voice with Calvin only as (in the words of Karl Barth) a 'theoretical possibility.' It could have reached the stage of reality only if 'Adam had remained innocent' (I, 2, 1)."

Over against this Barthian view, Reformed scholars have always interpreted the revelation of God in nature to have been adequate for Adam in the state of rectitude. As endowed with the image of God and as appointed with an office to represent God in the cosmos, Adam was prophet, priest, and king. As prophet he knew God truly and himself as God's creature and friend; but he also read nature aright. To deny this is to inpugn the creation of God in its pristine glory and to put man in the creaturely predicament.

However, I would not detract from the main thrust of this fine essay and heartily commend it to readers of *The Calvin Forum.*

HENRY R. VAN TIL.

## THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: BIBLICAL OR MODERNISTIC?

SOME time ago the undersigned was given and asked to read a little paper-bound volume by Anton G. Honig, with the remarkable title *"Bijdrage tot het Onderzoek naar de Fundeering van de Zendingsmethode der Comprehensive Approach in het Niewe Testament,"* published in 1951 by J. H. Kok at Kampen. A doctor's thesis by a missionary of the Gereformeerde Kerk, the little book has already aroused and will probably continue to arouse unusual interest, for it deals with one of the fundamental questions of mission policy that has recently come under discussion in

our circles. The 100 page text in Dutch is followed by a six page English summary which will help English speaking readers.

The author's interesting line of thought may be briefly traced. He begins his work with the observation that since the world mission conference at Jerusalem (1928) the practice of the comprehensive approach has received great attention, whereas the theological reflection of the question how far the activities involved in this method are the legitimate task of the church was neglected. "Particularly in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands the right method of missions has never been thought out." By the "comprehensive approach" as advanced in the Jerusalem and other such mission conferences is meant a way of doing mission work that, in addition to preaching of the gospel, not only takes in the operation of hospitals and schools, but also includes social and economic work, rural reconstruction, dealing with industrial problems, etc. As the Jerusalem council expressed it, "We are therefore desirous that the programme of missionary work among all peoples may be sufficiently comprehensive to serve the whole man in every aspect of his life and relationships." Now the author observes that in Reformed circles mission work has also come to include more and more of these varied activities, without any real thought being given to whether they really belonged in the missionary task of the church or not. He endeavors in this little book to make a "contribution to the search for the foundation for the 'comprehensive approach' in the New Testament."

He says that he is interested not so much in the question of whether the gospel is comprehensive (dealing with the whole of life), "which goes without speaking," but in the questions: (1) "Can the auxiliary services of missions be considered a legitimate part of the missionary task of the church as institute?" (2) "Ought these auxiliary services to be dropped as illegitimate?" and (3) "Is it wrong to see missions as a task of the Church as institute only?"

Most of the book is then given over to a survey of the New Testament, or rather those parts of it that may be construed to give the foundation for the comprehensive approach that the writer desires to find. First he points out from the synoptic gospels that Jesus not only preached, but also performed miracles, which showed that He was King and came to save the whole of man's life. Honig criticizes the interpretation that men like Ridderbos have given of these miracles that they were primarily eschatological signs which pointed ahead. He himself prefers to emphassize that they also brought a many-sided deliverance at once. From them especially he gathers that Christ's approach was "comprehensive" and that he taught his disciples to work in the same way. In the Gospel of John which he treats separately, the writer finds not only God's Saving Word but His Saving Deed. It therefore is also "comprehensive." Then he points out that as Jesus was sent, so he also sent out his apostles. In the Acts, where the work of the apostles is shown as a continuation of Christ's work, we must therefore expect to find their work also comprehensive. And we do, for they also "served tables" (Acts 6:1-6) and preached by word and deed, as did also their converts. Their miracles too reveal a comprehensive approach. The same approach is found in the epistles of Paul where there is an emphasis on Christian life as well as teaching, both in what Paul revealed about his own life and behavior and in what he taught the churches. In the pastoral epistles, too, the church is revealed to be "approaching the world with the gospel by word and action." The writer, furthermore, observes that although in these epistles we seem to approach a situation in which the church was becoming established in its permanent form, similar to that which it still reveals on mission fields, there was as yet no clear differentiation between the church as organism and as institute. In the other epistles the writer finds only some additional evidence that the gospel must also be revealed in deeds and in comprehensive. In Revelation, chapters 2 and 3 are seen to reveal the churches as candlesticks shedding light through their lives as well as their teaching. Chapter 20 shows them facing Satan's power as small indifferentiated units. Later, when Satan was bound, they might develop a wider approach.

In the second and shorter part of this book, the writer, having found a "comprehensive approach" in the New Testament, proceeds to make his systematic deductions regarding mission policy.

First he cautions us regarding some reasons why he cannot take our present mission methods directly from the New Testament. He mentions the historical situation of the world in the New Testament day, including such facts as the rule of the Roman empire, the high degree of culture that prevailed and made unnecessary many auxiliary services of later missions, and the widespread Jewish dispersion which gave a starting point for missionaries to begin work, and he points to the fact that we live in a later day in history as facts that must be considered in drawing conclusions from apostolic methods for ours.

Now Honig at last defines more carefully what he means by "comprehensive approach," pointing out that there is no question whether or not Christ came to have the whole man, but that the question at issue is really whether the missionary task involves "the actual unsealing of the life bound in sin," or whether as K. Dijk maintained, the church must only preach and when the preaching bears fruit and there are Christians, *they* must deal with the whole of life. Honig defends the former position and opposes the latter.

The missionary, when he goes to the mission field, preaches as a whole man in words and deeds; " 'preaching only' is an abstraction." While the writer sees certain dangers in the comprehensive approach, he brushes them aside with the remark that "any method has similar dangers. The comprehensive one is Spiritural and so essential."

Honig maintains that the missionary task of the church is the work of the church as both institute and organism, for in the mission field it is not possible, as at home, to differentiate between the two. "All organized activities of the church as organism should be drawn into the execution of the missionary task." "The essence of the missionary task of the entire church is: preaching Christ by word and action." Hence the writer takes as his position, over against those previously held by others, that "the task of the 'auxiliary services' ('nevendiensten' — Bavinck) is not preparatory, cultural, raising, conducive to higher prosperity, etc., but preaching the gospel and so they are missions too." In other words, bringing the gospel is not only preaching, but healing, educating, socially reconstructing, and carrying on any other kind of activity to help or save men in all of their interests, in the name of Christ. All of these extra activities and their benefits should, in his opinion, not be properly viewed as extra, or additional to the bringing of the gospel, but as part of the gospel itself. Social and economic activities at home are not performed by the church as institute if there are other organizations to perform them, (such as a Christian Labor Association, for example). Now

in Honig's view such social activity is also part of the churches' missionary task, and on mission fields if such other organizations do not send out special missionaries to promote such activities of the church as organism, it becomes the business of the church as institute to do so. "The church as institute temporarily takes over the task of the church as organism."

Against practical criticisms of his method Honig points out that it must be carried out so that the natives can some day take over these various activities of the missions. The extensive report of a committee at the 1950 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in favor of an indigenous mission policy is singled out by the writer for special attack as having failed to take into account all of the facts he has mentioned and especially the change in times from the New Testament age. In conclusion, he sums up his argument and pleads for a "comprehensive approach."

What sort of evaluation must one place upon this unusual piece of work? One can appreciate the amount of study and effort that has gone into it. It is by far the most extensive attempt that I have seen to defend many practices commonly found in mission fields today and to do so on a Biblical basis. In calling attention to the need for the facing of these problems of mission principle and policy in the light of God's Word, and in pointing out how this has been neglected, the writer performs a real service. Many of the observations that he makes in the detail of his presentation, too, invite hearty agreement. Yet, in spite of all of the author's painstaking efforts, it seems to this writer that there are certain fundamental faults in the treatment of the Scriptures and in the deductions made, that ought, in the interests of seeking a soundly Biblical mission policy, to be pointed out.

1. The writer frankly admits that many of the practices Honig is attempting to defend, while common in the churches' mission fields, have never been given a really fundamental Biblical basis in the thinking of the church. Now he is attempting to find such a foundation for them. It is not surprising that like almost all who approach the Scriptures to seek justification for ideas that plainly and admittedly come from other sources he finds some such justification. The danger of this approach is that one reads into the Bible ideas that do not really come out of it. There is an old saying that one can prove anything from the Bible if he only selects the right texts and ignores the rest of it. In spite of this author's painstaking and extensive use of New Testament material, it seems to this reviewer that his zeal for the purpose he has in view has led him into this common error. By a careful selection of texts and by ignoring other relevant material he makes the Scriptures say things that they do not say, and support an emphasis in missionary work that is really quite foreign to them. No one will quarrel with the statement the Christ came to save the whole man, but when much is made of the fact that the miracles dealt with the healing of the sick, restoring to social status, providing food, etc., and when it is concluded that Christ was concerned about men's bodies and immediate temporal welfare as well as their souls and eternal welfare, and that therefore these matters should be emphasized along with preaching as a central part of the churches' missionary work, the writer quite ignores the fact that the Lord nowhere places his miracles and their present benefits on the same level as his preaching. In fact in such a passage as John 6, for example, the Lord laid all possible emphasis on the fact that what was fundamentally important was not the material food that Jesus multiplied and the multitude wanted, but the spiritual food of which it was a sign. He had to warn men: "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life." (vs. 27) Christ did not come, as the Jews would have it, to deliver them from their earthly bondage to Rome, to reconstruct their political life and restore their lost prosperity, but he repudiated explicitly and repeatedly any such misrepresentation of his purpose. The effort to make of his work such a this-worldly, present, material, external deliverance, as the Pharisees of old and the Modernists of today would represent it, the Lord's whole teaching and ministry did not sanction, whatever deductions one might in the abstract draw from his miracles. The transformation and salvation of men was not to be brought about by many and varied activities brought to bear upon their whole environment and social life, but it was to be brought about by the bringing of God's Word and the spiritual regeneration and transformation from within. Men must be born again before they should even see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3) In this connection one must reckon with another peculiarity of those miracles on which Honig builds so much of his case, a peculiarity he quite ignores. The miracles were only temporary and occasional. Far from being an end in the ministry of Jesus and His apostles, they pointed to the Word as signs and wonders. In time they ceased all together while the ministry of the Word continued and increased. The Scriptures simply do not support the emphasis Honig labors by his careful selection of texts to draw from them, but they teach a contrary emphasis.

Another example of the author's rather evident misuse of texts is his extensive treatment of Acts 6:1-6, a passage from which he tries to prove that such activities as "serving tables" were properly a part of the apostolic task. It should be plain to the reader that the passage teaches the very opposite, for the Apostle Peter says in so many words, "It is not fit that we should forsake the Word of God and serve tables." As Lenski, the commentator, aptly remarks on this passage: "The theory that all offices in the church flow from one central office and really constitute parts of it, finds no support here—the apostles were not delegating a part of their divine office to others—they could not. They were relinquishing tasks that were not a part of this office but which were interfering with that office. To be sure, these tasks too need to be performed, but this necessity does not make them a part of the divinely instituted office of apostles and pastors." Whether one agrees with Lenski's interpretation or not, it should be plain to all that the lesson Honig tries to draw from this passage is exactly the opposite from what it teaches. The apostles plainly were trying as much as possible to concentrate their efforts on bringing the Word of God and on avoiding becoming entangled with other, even good, activities that might displace it. Honig tries to explain this very passage to defend putting more emphasis on doing such other things as "serving tables."

Many other examples might be cited, such as Honig's labored effort to escape the obvious thrust of such a text as I Corinthians 1:17 ff., but these selections should be adequate to illustrate the way in which he labors to read into the Scriptures an emphasis on other things than preaching the Word which they themselves do not contain.

2. Basic to the writer's whole attempt to find a foundation for the "comprehensive approach" in the Scriptures there is also an *ambiguous use of the term "comprehensive approach,"* so that it is taken to mean one thing in his study of the

Biblical material and quite another thing in his formulation of conclusions. It is striking that throughout the author's New Testament investigation (in spite of some preliminary remarks to the contrary) he uses the term in as loose and broad a way as possible so that every reference in the Scriptures to the need for Christian living and practice, which every Christian must recognize and accept, becomes a justification for it. Only after he has completed this Biblical survey and found this kind of "comprehensive approach" everywhere, does he begin to distinguish clearly between what all will accept as the ultimate goal of the gospel of bringing practical and complete salvation, and the more precise use of "comprehensive approach" as describing a peculiar kind of missionary method which would use all kinds of other activities beside preaching the word in the name of missions. Having found the former broad "comprehensive approach" in the Bible, he assumes that he has thereby justified this latter disputed mission method as quite Biblical. That the gospel bears on all of life is a truth so obvious that no one can deny it. That the Bible teaches us to provide in the name of missions everything heathen people may need or desire is so patently untrue that it hardly needs refutation. Yet Honig's book uses the term "comprehensive approach" to cover both notions, and having with great pains proved the first from the Scriptures, he in effect presents us with the second as his now Biblically established conclusion!

3. In spite of the author's efforts to find a foundation in the Bible for many of the activities carried on by modern missions in their "comprehensive approach," it is only too evident that most of these extra activities were never, as a matter of fact, either commanded in the Scriptures or carried on by the early missionaries and churches whose examples are recorded in the bible. These inspired missionaries, the record of whose teaching and practice every orthodox Christian presumably believes was "written for our learning" (Romans 15:4; I Cor. 10:11), simply did not work in that way or have this "modern" emphasis. Recognizing those facts, however, would seem to destroy Honig's whole thesis. He therefore attempts, as many others have attempted, to evade them by pointing out that times have changed and that conditions in the New Testament times were in some respects unusual. A little consideration of each of his arguments, however, makes it evident that they are hardly adequate to make the teaching and example God gave in the Scriptures impractical and useless for us today. The rule of the Roman empire, while an important feature of the life of that age, certainly is not such a decisive factor. There is no apparent reason why Paul, a Roman citizen, preaching to various other races would have to use methods radically different from an American or Dutch missionary preaching to men of other races, for the Bible plainly teaches that there is no respect of persons or priority of one race over another with God, and He orders the same gospel brought to all. Similarly, the claim that Paul was dealing with people of a relatively high degree of culture and therefore not needing auxiliary services, is in the first place, not true, and in the second, begs the question at issue. He preached in primitive and backward Lycaonia as well as in Athens and Corinth, but there is no evident difference in his approach in any of these places. Neither in the work of Paul, nor anywhere else in Scripture, do we see a difference in the level of culture recognized as so significant that it requires such a drastic variation in the approach of the gospel. The third consideration that the author advances, namely that there were colonies of Jews with which the early missionaries made contact, certainly is true, but review of the record makes it plain that far from helping in the spread of the gospel, these Jews in many cases became the source of the most violent opposition to it, and the heathen often showed themselves much more receptive than they. Finally, the consideration that we are at a different place in the course of history, although perfectly true, does not in any way justify trying to alter the whole approach of the gospel. Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." The question of the proper missionary approach is not one of historical setting, but of fundamental principle. The passage of a few centuries of history certainly cannot justify an orthodox Christian in taking the sentiments of modernistically-led missionary councils like that at Jerusalem in 1928 as better guides to present-day mission technique than the Word of God and the inspired examples of Peter and Paul. Throughout Honig's ready arguments, it becomes increasingly apparent that he is trying to make the Bible justify missionary methods that it obviously does not teach and to evade those that it does teach.

4. The Bible plainly teaches us that the gospel ("good news") must be announced to the whole world. As a result of this preaching of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit a spiritual transformation takes place which ultimately affects every sphere of man's life and activity. The church has in recent years come to place many other activities, which are directed largely at improving the environment, along side of this preaching of God's Word in its mission program. It did so with apology and sometimes embarrassment, often from considerations of expediency. Now Honig says this apologetic attitude is all wrong. These various other activities, as well as the gospel ministry in the narrow sense, are also "preaching the Word." The agricultural specialist teaching farming, and the political scientist trying to suggest ways of improving political and social institutions, are all "preaching the gospel" as long as they work in the name of Christ. Instead of concentrating as much as possible on preaching the gospel in the narrow sense, missions should include more of these other activities. We have seen that Honig's effort to base this "comprehensive approach" on the Bible, extensive though it is, is not convincing; it labors on one hand to make the Bible say things it does not say and, on the other to evade the things it plainly does teach about mission work. As a matter of fact, Honig admits at the beginning, that these various activities, added to the preaching (which he tries to give a Biblical foundation) did not actually find their place in the churches' mission program as a result of the churches' conviction that the Bible taught us to engage in them. From where then has this popular "comprehensive approach" derived its impetus and inspiration?

The book begins by pointing us to the great world missionary conferences which in recent years have led the way in adopting the comprehensive approach. What the writer, strikingly, omits to say is that these same missionary conferences have also shown a steady development away from the Bible in the direction of Modernism. They have promoted the "social gospel" on the world mission fields. Especially the conference at Jerusalem (1928), which Honig especially credits with having promoted the comprehensive approach, "was dominated by the new liberals," according to one recent writer. That conference, the same writer informs

us, "dealt with the social, economic, and political questions of the day so comprehensively, that Wark (a liberal writer) said, 'One is compelled to wonder whether the Jerusalem Conference should be called a missionary conference. In reading the report one would hardly know whether it was a group of people interested primarily in missions or a group of social reformers.' " (*The Case Against Modernism in Foreign Missions* by C. Tulga, pp. 6, 9). The emphasis that Honig seeks to support from Scripture on the this-worldly, social results and aspects of the gospel have been characteristic of the Modernistic movement. Repeatedly Honig shies away from the eschatological aspects and emphasis of certain parts of the Scriptures, as the Modernists also do. Perhaps, even more striking is the way in which he endorses the great present ecumenical movement. He speaks of "the terribleness of church division" and of "the necessity of searching for a way out of it." One notices also that, while the writer carefully and repeatedly distinguishes his position from that of the Roman Catholics, he gives little or no attention, other than a passing reference (p. 90) to distinguishing it from that of the Modernists! Do I mean to imply by all this that he is a Modernist? Not at all! But it is apparent to the careful reader that the methods he advocates for our mission fields are those that the modernistic deniers of the gospel have been promoting. They are methods that derive much more support from those sources than from the Scriptures. And I might add that they are methods more natural to the thinging of those who have denied the gospel—and are therefore interested in finding other techniques to achieve humanitarian and social ends on the mission fields—than appropriate to the activitiy of those who still believe in the fundamental importance of the ministry of Word and Spirit. Though Honig emphatically says that they must be used to preach Christ, these methods which he advocates are those which were designed and promoted under modernistic influence rather to civilize than to convert the heathen.

As was pointed out at the beginning of the book, the churches have adopted these mission practices with embarrassingly little effort to base them upon God's Word. In the introduction of these methods the modernist deniers of the gospel have led the way. Would it not be an amazing thing if we should now discover that in these methods adopted without much attention to God's Word we had discovered ways of working that were really more in harmony with that Word than those used by the conscientious orthodox missionaries of the past? Would it not be remarkable if the modernists of today proved to be better teachers of mission techniques than the Word of God and the inspired examples of Peter and Paul? That, I for one, cannot bring myself to believe. I will rather conclude that the church and some of its missionaries have, quite unintentionally perhaps, been unduly influenced by the modernistic leaders of our day, and that the way to a sound mission policy which we may hope God will bless is the way that turns its back on the modernistic experts and their world councils and turns humbly back to God's Word to learn both from its precepts and its examples how He would have His work done. If it is found that mistakes have been made, it is much better to correct them than to try to improvise a foundation of Bible texts to shove under these mistakes in order to help perpetuate them.

5. What must one say about the argument of which Honig makes much in the latter part of his book, that on the mission field it is not possible, as at home, to distinguish sharply between the church as institution and as organism, since both are combined in the person of the missionary. There would appear to be an element of truth in it, although at home, too, the church as organism and as institution come to expression in the life of each Christian, so that even here the distinction is not absolute. But that observation can certainly never be permitted to obscure the plain teaching of the Scriptures, regarding the duty of the church as institute, to place all emphasis on preaching the gospel. Certainly, a missionary, just as every other Christian, must show himself interested in helping his neighbors and living in harmony with the gospel he preaches. And that gospel he preaches must not be merely certain abstract doctrines, but it must point out that the Lordship of Christ over all of life; but all this does not justify him in turning from concentrating on bringing the "good news," as it was done in Scripture and has been done through the centuries by those who believed the Word, and becoming more and more preoccupied with what Peter called "serving tables." It does not justify diverting the missionaries' time (or the time of other "missionaries") to the teaching of such things as scientific farming methods or labor organization instead of the "gospel." That is precisely what modern missions with their "comprehensive approach" have been doing, and that tendency is what Honig's book now champions. Certainly the Christian farmer must be a conscientious worker, and he must witness by his deeds as well as by his words to the power of the gospel, but when the missionary begins to devote his time to such things as importing tractors and teaching the heathen how to farm, to organize labor unions, and to reconstruct their government, I cannot believe that he is at long last discovering what the Lord meant when he said, "Go ye out into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." It is more evident, that he is losing sight of what the gospel is and what the missionary is for. That those who reject the gospel do this is not strange, but that orthodox Christians, with a show of Biblical argument, should earnestly admonish us to imitate their method does not make sense.

6. The practical difficulties that result from the comprehensive approach are dismissed by Honig with the remark that all methods have such objections and that missionaries must just be careful in using them. "The comprehensive one is scriptural and so essential." We have already observed how flimsy and artificial the "Biblical" ground of this method proves to be. Now, when one turns to these practical objections he observes that they are not just incidental to any method but that they are the natural and almost inevitable results of the "comprehensive approach" in distinction from others. If one conceives of the missionary task in truly Biblical terms as bringing the gospel, and leaves the results of its work upon native life and society to be worked out primarily by native converts as their responsibility, the danger of creating the impression that the missionary is trying to promote a foreign culture and destroy native traits is not great. But in the measure that the missionary assumes, in addition to bringing the gospel, the task of trying to reorganize the whole of the natives' life and society for them, he stamps his own prejudices and background the more strongly on those among whom he works. He is really taking up a job that is not rightfully his, and it is no wonder that he often makes a mess of it. The objectionable results are not just incidental to any method but are the logical outcome of this comprehensive approach.

7. The second *practical* objection that arises is that when these various activities are carried out by missions, difficulties are raised in the way of natives taking them over as their own. This difficulty Honig would avoid by keeping the scope and size of these various activities such that natives can take them over. However, in this matter, too, the difficulties are the result of the method. The mission, when it begins to set up these various services, educational, medical, agricultural, social, industrial, etc., first accustoms the natives to take what the missionary provides, and it then hopes eventually to reverse the procedure and have the native take over responsibility for them. In practice it seems that that aim is usually not realized. When we with our—in native eyes—fabulous wealth begin doing things for natives they cannot see why they should later begin to pay for or carry on those activities themselves, and they usually show considerable resistance to doing so. Instead of concentrating on the preaching of the Word as much as possible, the missions begin to do these other things in the hope that the spread of the gospel may be promoted more quickly through them. But in beginning to do things for the natives—things that are really the responsibilities of Christians to do for themselves—they prevent native converts from taking up those responsibilities and so retard the cause they aimed to promote. The whole problem is the natural result of an un-Biblical comprehensive approach. A method that God's Word does not sanction leads to practical difficulties too.

This is a significant book. It places us before one of the great basic questions of mission strategy. The question is this: In the missionary task, which certainly envisages the salvation of man in all of his life and relationships, is that end to be gained by the use of many simultaneous remedies of educational, medical, agricultural, social, and economic remedies along with the gospel in its narrow sense—all of course in the name of Christ—or is it to be reached by concentrating as much as possible on the direct preaching of the Word and relying on the work of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts as the all-important means of missionary work? The modernist of today with his comprehensive approach gives the former answer; God's Word, in the preaching and example of Christ and His apostles, and the Christian church through most of its history, have taught the latter. Professor Honig has done well to raise the question, and he has made an able effort to defend what this reviewer is convinced is the wrong answer. May the Lord guide His church, as it faces such urgent questions on its mission fields, to answer them plainly and correctly in the light of His Word.

PETER DE JONG,
Route 6, Holland, Michigan

## THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT, *by Merril F. Unger, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 2, Michigan, 1951, 420 pp., $4.95.*

THIS book which was awarded first prize in the Zondervan Christian Textbook Contest arose from a felt need for conservative and evangelical textbooks especially in the field of Old Testament Introduction. Many of the books now available were adjudged to be too technical, detailed, negative and destructive. Dr. Unger has therefore limited his treatment to what appears to him to be the essentials. He makes no apology for introducing a special chapter on the inspiration of the Old Testament nor for a firm stand on what he designates the plenary verbal view of the Bible.

As was to be expected, considerable space is devoted to the Pentateuch, and Dr. Unger's views can be summarized as follows:

> A survey of the literary problems of the Pentateuch and the manner in which the modern critical hypothesis deals with them has demonstrated that the solution offered by the critics is not only inadequate, but increases rather than removes the difficulties, besides casting doubt and aspersion upon the historical reliability and authenticity of the Pentateuch itself. On the other hand, Mosaic integrity of the Pentateuch is not at all endangered by the critics' claim that variations in the use of the divine names, the occurence of parallel accounts or doublets and diversity in vocabulary and style preclude it. The Mosaic integrity remains not only the best explanation of the problems of the Pentateuch, but the only position that does proper honor to these ancient writings and accords with the witness of the New Testament and the well-nigh universal tradition of both Jews and Christians. p. 262.

Of special interest among our own group is Dr. Unger's statement:

> The appearance of man upon the earth is set forth in the Genesis account as the result of the direct creative act of God, which took place at least over 4,000 years B.C. and perhaps as early as "seven or ten thousand years B.C., which" writes Laird Harris, "would be more in the spirit of the Biblical record than either Ussher's compressed chronology or the evolutionist's greatly expanded ages." Byron Nelson, a conservative, argues for even greater antiquity of man, but this, we believe, is unwarranted by the facts and out of focus with the perspective of the Genesis account. p. 192.

A fine feature of the book is the extensive bibliographies appended to each chapter. Generally, the book is well executed especially in the special introduction dealing with the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the writings of the Old Testament. A larger recognition, however, of recent trends in Old Testament studies (cf. George Ernest Wright who has shown that there is decided swing in the direction of increasing conservatism in Old Testament studies) would have made Dr. Unger's case more appealing and considerably more effective.

The General Introduction leaves things to be desired. I find it difficult to accept Dr. Unger's statement that the New Testament is erected on the failure and ruin of the Old Covenant (p. 16) and that especially in view of his subsequent assertion on p. 19 that this Old Covenant will in the millennial age be the "charter manual of a reinstated Judaism, grounded in the finished work of Christ, spiritually vitalized, and fulfilling all the covenants and promises made to Israel in the blessings of the Davidic Kingdom."

I believe that Dr. Unger is wholly justified in incorporating in his book a special treatment of *The Inspiration of the Old Testament.* Two things may be suggested: First, the organization of the material could be improved. Under the general heading of *The Scriptural Definition of Inspiration,* the author discusses coordinately the following: 1—The definition of revelation; 2—The definition of inspiration; and 3—The definition of illumination. This is formally incorrect since point 2 is a repetition of the general heading while points 1 and 3 are at this point irrelevant, though highly significant in their own right. A definition should be characterized by precision.

A second stricture is on the material treated and the manner in which it is carried out. Dr. Unger correctly perceived that one cannot adequately discuss inspiration without delving into the larger field of revelation, but his treatment of revelation is too limited in scope even within the confines he was compelled to impose. If we are seriously concerned about establishing what Dr. Unger calls the plenary

verbal view of the Old Testament—to which we give cordial assent—we shall simply have to come to grips with the larger perspectives of the thoroughly Biblical doctrine of revelation. We hope that a subsequent edition will take care of these matters. Such a needed revision will make this good book a better book.

JOHN WEIDENAAR.

## SOUNDING THE ALARM

MOSCOW OVER METHODISM *(Revised Edition), by Rembert Gilman Smith, The University Press, Houston, Texas, 1590, 182 pages, paper cover, price not indicated.*

ON THE title page of this revised edition of a book that originally appeared in 1936 we find the following quotation from J. Edgar Hoover, the nationally known director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation: "I confess to a real apprehension so long as Communists are able to secure ministers of the Gospel to promote their work." This apprehension is shared by the author who charges that there are many Methodists bishops as well as some ministers and lay-members who are willing tools of Stalin. These charges are abundantly substantiated throughout this book which is a conglomeration of quotations from the American Constitution, the Communist Manifesto, Lenin, Stalin, Wesley, the American bishops, and addresses of the author on various occasions, etc. In spite of the lack of unity in the presentation of the materials, the author clearly indicates the confused leadership of Methodism prior to the last war, and its devotion to a now outmoded pacifism. Not only was Kirby Page one of the favorite speakers, but the youth of Methodism was advized to "sabotage war preparations and war. Be agitators for sabotage." (p. 23).

In the chapter entitled: "Three Leaders Lost from Methodism," Mr. Smith shows how Bishop McConnell has substituted Society for God, that Dr. Webber considers God to be the great revolutionary, and that Dr. Harry F. Ward favors anarchism in the United States and is suggesting practical steps to bring it about. (pp. 44 ff.). Consistently these and other leaders have been teaching the Young Peoples' Conferences that private property is wrong (theft) and that making a profit is wrong. Putting such teaching together with the standard definitions of socialism and communism, the author charges that Methodism has been invaded by Socialism and Communism. The reviewer is of the opinion that the charges must be considered on the basis of the evidence.

The Methodist Federation for Social Service comes in for a fair share of the criticism. It is accused of having taught for forty years that "it is unchristian to make profits." The author wrote this body a personal letter suggesting that "you refuse to take more money than you need for living expenses, or give what you make above your expenses to the church . . . . Should you do this, we would believe you to be sacrificially sincere." (p. 72). This organization is attacked by the author for its misuse of the name *Methodist* as well as for its unenviable record in favoring socialistic legislation and in favoring the enemies of the United States. As late as July 1950 the request to remove the Executive Secretary, the Rev. Jack McMichael, because of his connection with many subversive organizations, for which documentary proof was available, was turned down by a vote of fifty-eight to two. Furthermore, the Federation at this meeting refused to drop the name *Methodist* as had been requested; also it condemned the South Koreans and the U. N. for resisting the North Korean Communists; also "it *demanded* that President Truman pardon the eleven communists condemned to prison in the New York Court of Judge Medina." One of the leaders of this Socialistic Federation, Bishop Edgar Blake, wrote, "The principles of the Christian religion are better applied in Russia than in the United States." (p. 89). Another one of the rabidly red leaders, Dr. Harry F. Ward, is charged with immorality and imprudent and unministerial conduct. This charge was brought by the author of this book before the Rock River Annual Conference and was substantiated by fourteen specifications with evidence, but no trial was held since the presiding bishop virtually ruled the complainant out of order. All this ought to warn us that one cannot do business with the modernists — for that is what most of these leaders are with such notable deniers of the faith as Bishop McConnell and Bishop Bromley Oxnam in the forefront of the battle versus American democracy.

After the publication of Standley High's article, "The Pink Fringe in Methodism," and the appearance of John T. Flynn's book, *The Road Ahead,* many Methodists throughout the land became concerned and addressed a communication to the bishops for clarification. To this the bishops of Methodism responded with a statement adopted in Council at Cleveland, Ohio, April 20, 1950. This answer takes pride in the *Social Creed of Methodism,* which, the author makes plain, was never adopted by Methodism in any official sense; it writes off Flynn's accusations by branding his chief source "an intemperate and unreliable book written by a man who was deposed from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The literary company that he thus keeps is doubtless responsible for the low ethical quality of his manners in dealing with the Christian personalities whom he attacks." (p. 138). Our readers ought to be informed that the minister to whom the Methodist Bishops here refer is the Rev. Carl Mc Intyre of Collingswood, New Jersey, publisher of the *Christian Beacon,* who was deposed along with Dr. J. G. Machen, because he refused to obey the commandments of men and remained true to the historic creeds of the church and the Word of God. One must know what he is doing if he would accept the testimony of these blind leaders of the blind, who not only have denied the historic Christian faith, but have been following the Moscow line quite consistently and now by innuendo and smear technique try to throw the pursuers off the scent. I for one would rather be found among those who accept the testimony of McIntyre than with Bishop Bromley Oxnam and his crowd. Both religiously and politically the Methodist Bishops have shown themselves to be enemies of the Gospel.

Furthermore, the Bishops reaffirm their absolute faith in the Federal Council and its program (now the National Council). And as to a defense of Bishop Bromley Oxnam and Dr. E. Stanley Jones, that is simply laughed out of court. Their confidence in these men has not been dented; they remain the undaunted, recognized leaders. All this simply is an indication to any fairminded orthodox Christian that American Methodism, as far as one can judge from its leadership, is confirmed in its resolution to deny historic Christianity.

The Methodist Bishops, moreover, instead of opposing the un-American and un-Christian propaganda of the Methodist Federation for Social Service, have denounced the Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities. And in spite of the aspersions that were cast upon the author of *The Road Ahead,* "At no point in their statement did

the Bishops cite any specific inaccuracy, nor did they deny the authenticity of the statements quoted." (Quoted by author from the *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* April 22, 1950, p. 145.)

In chapter ten the author has quoted Walter S. Steele, Editor of *National Republic* on the "The Ten Commandments and Communism," in which it is affirmed that love is the theme of the former and hatred the predominant idea of the latter. Some very telling words of Lenin, Stalin, Marx, etc., are quoted to prove that they sought the abolition of religion, the family, and morality.

In many ways chapter thirteen is the best in the book because it is the most systematic presentation and argumentation against the evil of Communism itself. The author shows how Communism seeks to destroy not only the right to property, but the family, and Western culture in general, as well as all religion. Neither is there any morality in the commonly accepted sense of the term. "Lenin wrote, 'Lies, deceits, and treacheries, to the bourgeoise, to capitalists, and their governments, all are justified in the sacred cause of social revolution.' W. Z. Foster, leading communist of the United States of America, says, 'We communists are unscrupelous in our choice of weapons. We allow no considerations of legality, religion, patriotism, honor, duty, etc., to stand in our way to the adoption of effective weapons. We propose to develop, and we are developing, regardless of capitalist conceptions of legality, fairness, right, etc., a greater power, with which to wrest their industries from them.' " (pp. 171, 172).

Such is the ruthlessness of communism in our world today. Hence the book ends with an appeal to all Methodists to rise up against this beast from the abyss. We do well if we learn from the warnings issued in this book. The first thing that impresses one is the need for a doctrinal Christianity, i.e., for a renewed emphasis on the systematic indoctrination of our youth. Modern Methodism has been woefully delinquent on this score. It has been emphasizing Christianity chiefly as a program and organization for life. In no church has the *descent to Avernes*—deviation from sound doctrine—been more phenomenal. The best antidote against heresy in doctrine is knowledge of the truth, but just as in the days of the prophets we may well say that the people perish for lack of knowledge, i.e., the knowledge about God and his revealed will.

From Modernism with its denials of historic Christianity and its social gospel it is an easy step to socialism and the gospel of communism. This is, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the fatal step that many Methodist leaders and members of the National Council of Churches have taken. Instead of salvation through the blood of the Lamb they have been advocating salvation through the abolition of private profit and the profit motive. Because the remedy for sin as a supernatural work of God is denied, men have set their hopes upon changing the economic system. Hereby they have in principle granted the basic tenet of Marx as to the economic determination of history and have denied the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These perverters of the Gospel have furthermore taken away the hope of heaven and have translated the Kingdom of God into a temporal, material reality to be achieved by cooperative efforts of a brotherhood of man. And all the while these wolves in sheep's clothing have been denying their ordination vows and taking their salaries as ministers of Christ, mouthing mealy words about the ethical life. I must confess that it gets me a little sick at heart when professedly orthodox Christians are taken in by these false prophets and in some instances rise to their defense on the basis of objectivity in presenting the facts. I deny such objectivity to exist anywhere in this world. The question to my mind is simply this: Are we willing to take our stand unequivocally upon the Word of God and try the spirits according to this rule?

H. R. Van Til.

## I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE CREATOR

Wonderfully Made: Some Modern Discoveries about the Structure and Functions of the Human Body, *by A. Rendle Short, M.D., F.R.C.S., London: The Paternoster Press, 1951. 159 pages, 6/—net.*

In the fourteen chapters of this little book Professor Short, a British surgeon with much experience as a practical surgeon, teacher of anatomy and physiology, and professor of surgery, gives us the benefit of his reflection on the wisdom of design and adaptation as seen in a human body. This is not a textbook of anatomy and physiology but it contains a wealth of recent information on these subjects. It is so interestingly written that many who have never studied science will enjoy it and add to their store of

But the book has not been written merely to impart information. It is pervaded with a tone of respect and admiration for the Creator of such a wonderful organism, and in this lies its main purpose. As such this book is an exception to most books on science written in our day.

The last chapter deals with the problem of man's origin. Here the author first of all shows the inconsistencies of evolutionary theories, particularly Darwinism. He then suggests certain perplexing questions which find no solution apart from Divine revelation in the Scriptures.

This book deserves wide reading both for the information it contains and for the spiritual benefits which can be derived from its pages.

Edwin Y. Monsma.

## JUVENILE

Sam in the City: A Story for Boys and Girls, *by Henrietta Van Laar. Moody Press, Chicago, 1951, 59 pages, $.75.*

Sam and Bob both had potentialities for leadership. Sam had a special talent for whistling and owned a pony, a novelty among his city friends. Bob was "bright" and capable and owned a special breed of fur-bearing rabbits. His schoolmates gathered daily to watch him feed and care for them. Bob, however, had the "green-eyed monster" of jealousy within him, which prevented him from being Sam's friend.

Complications arising out of this situation form the plot for a story that should intrigue any youngster of the intermediate grades. Not exactly "preachy," it does contain character-building lessons that cannot help but be absorbed by its readers. The conversation in the story seems true-to-life, typical of boys' and girls' talk. Only when the author launches into descriptions of scenes or events does the story at times lose its smoothness. The young reader may be discouraged by such portions of the story, which, fortunately, occur only rarely.

The book is of convenient size, has an attractive cover. It certainly can be recommended for any child's library.

T. Huizenga.