Our Old Younger Generation

Protestant Ignorance

The Signs of a True Prophet

Theology and Reason

Calvin on Devotion and Culture

Correspondence

Book Review
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Contents

Editorials

Life No Longer An Adventure .................... Cecil De Boer 191

American Protestantism Meets a Life-and-Death Issue ..................... Cecil De Boer 192

Self - Examination ............................... Henry Schultze 193

The Old and the New ............................ Ralph Stob 194

How Free Is Man? .................................. Enno Wolthuis 195

Articles

Prophets, False and True, in the Old Testament Dispensation .......... John H. Bratt 197

Notes on the Relation of Theology and Philosophy ..................... Jesse De Boer 200

Calvin's Golden Booklet ................................ H. J. Van Andel 203

From Our Correspondents

A Letter ............................................. 206

News from South Africa .................................. 207

Information from Behind the Iron Curtain .............................. 208

Book Review .............................................. Fred H. Klooster 211
Life No Longer An Adventure

A RECENT survey appears to show that the contemporary younger generation is in many respects "the oldest younger generation within living memory"—young bodies with the mental weariness of those well past middle age. Without the ambition to make life something better than the previous generation left it, the members of this generation seek only to become adjusted, never suspecting that this may amount to an acceptance of the condition of lost souls in a kind of hell on earth.1 How does this adjustment a la John Dewey manifest itself? Well, among other things, the chief interest of the typical American young male of between eighteen and twenty-eight nowadays seems to be security. He tends to avoid the adventure and risk involved in striking out for himself, preferring rather to be connected with some large corporation, where he may climb the "prefabricated ladder." Given a good job with a large firm, plus insurance against sickness, accident, and old age, the contemporary youth is ready to regard himself as a success or, at least, as much of a success as it pays to be under present conditions of taxation. His final goal is retirement, a state of being in which he hopes to be free to do what he has always wanted to do, something which in the end turns out to be just about nothing at all—a little fishing and traveling and, generally, taking it easy. His point of view is that of the tired man of the world who has made up his mind that inasmuch as the future holds no novelty and no surprises (except unpleasant ones), his best chance for any kind of satisfaction in this life is to be found in the role of an onlooker. He appears to be quite reconciled to an apathetic existence void of significant responses, an existence without great loves and hates and enthusiasms. Although he does not particularly like the environment in which fate has placed him, he does not dislike it seriously enough to rebel against it. Incidentally, this may have something to do with the fact that, according to reports from many of our secularized denominational colleges, the trend on the part of students toward the ministry is increasing.

More or less preoccupied with the Korean affair and whatever may follow from it, he tends to expect the worst without, however, losing sleep over it. Since there is nothing he can do about it anyway, he takes on the protective armor of a fatalism of sorts. He has no heroes, for he seems to sense that heroes are but for a moment, that they become stale over night, and even a bit tiresome. Self-sacrifice seems to him quite senseless because, naturally, having no great love for anything, he is blind to the greatness of sustained devotion. He has seen too many die in battle, briefly mourned and promptly forgotten. Dying for one's country without knowing just what one is dying for has become commonplace, and since "no wonders are shown to the dead" and there is no glory in the land of forgetfulness, why take off your hat to the filth, the vomiting, and the bleeding? Of course, when your number comes up—well, it's the kind of world you are living in and there is no use in sobbing about it.

One idly supposes that in the face of such depressing monotony and meaninglessness, it would not be unreasonable to expect, if not a revival of religion, at least a general tendency to experiment with it. Now the fact is that a considerable amount of experimentation is actually taking place, but it is not done by members of the younger generation. Thanks to the sins of their fathers and grandfathers, God to most of them is not much more than some metaphysical postulate vaguely connected with some ethical code. Even the old and rather exciting antagonism between philosophizing scientists and dogmatizing theologians seems to them absurdly irrelevant. They have no religion, and science to them is merely an instrument for producing jobs and material comforts or for increasing the destructiveness of the engines of modern warfare. They are not against religion but only profoundly indifferent to it. The metaphysical teachings of the Church may be true, for all they know, but they can't see just what practical difference it could possibly make. Accordingly, to condemn religion and the churches or, on the other hand, to defend them just doesn't seem worth the effort. If a fellow wishes to believe this or that, why bother him? The chances are that he is just as right and just as wrong as anybody else. In a word, the younger generation is too well adjusted and, therefore, too apathetic to care.

It is, of course, a disappointed generation, but inasmuch as disappointment is something it has always expected, it does not feel the sting of it sufficiently even to bother about cultivating an attitude of cynicism. In its fundamental longings it has simply reverted to the life of the satisfied animal: Instead

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1 It is interesting to observe that the writer of the article "State of the Dead" in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics describes the final state of the lost in Hell almost exactly as Spencer describes that of the "perfectly evolved" and, therefore, perfectly adjusted society.
of trying to transform the environment it prefers to adjust itself to it. Incidentally, about the only virtue it seems to insist upon is that of "sincerity." Yet it exhibits little critical judgment as to the kind of behavior one is supposed to be sincere about. (After all, both Stalin and the devil are sincere). It is not strange, therefore, that it tends to be intolerant of discussion and argument. (It gets you nowhere, and most of it is just a matter of somebody wanting to sound off, anyway). It doesn't believe that general truths can be formulated, that controversy can in any way lead to such formulation, and that the latter can be productive of beneficial self-criticism. In a word, it is not looking for a critique of life, preferring merely to make the best of a bad situation accepted on its own terms.

In a way, therefore, the younger generation may be said to be the victim of a kind of damnation that seems naturally to follow in the wake of two or three generations of marked religious and moral decline. Lethargy and hopelessness are not so much the results of its own sins as of the sins of its parents and grandparents for never since the Reformation has a younger generation had less to fall back on. Add to our conspicuous religious and moral decline since the so-called Gay Nineties the undermining of the authority of the home and the surrender of significant spiritual authority on the part of the Protestant churches, one seems driven to the conclusion that the seeds have been sown for a type of mentality eminently suited to the climate of statism and bureaucracy. If the dangerously large minority now apparently afflicted with such a mentality develops into a majority, we can only conclude that totalitarianism is just around the corner in the United States.

One footnote: Just how are the members of our younger generation faring in this spiritual climate? Can it be said of them that they constitute an old younger generation? Well, they do seem at times to take themselves very, very seriously. One gathers that it has never occurred to most of them to laugh at themselves (the major prerequisite for a fruitful sense of humor), a fact which would seem to spell a rather dismal and long-faced future. But, then, considering the kind of world they are about to inherit, perhaps one should pray for them rather than complain.

C. D. B.

American Protestantism Meets a Life-and-Death Issue

NOT long ago there appeared in Presbyterian Life, a religious journal of dubious Presbyterianism, an article entitled, "The Church Must Combat Ignorance." Naturally, upon reading a title of that sort, one supposes that the ignorance referred to must have something to do with the conspicuous religious illiteracy to be found in the majority of Protestant churches in this land of ours. However, ignorance of Scripture and of, say, the Shorter Catechism and other Presbyterian standards was apparently the last thing the writer had in mind. Rather he was thinking about "the unbelievable ignorance about life-and-death matters," matters such as the A-bomb, domestic affairs, and the "awful effects of another world war." A recent survey seemed to have shown, according to the writer, that in this country only one in five were correctly informed on where Formosa was located, on the meaning of the 38th parallel, on the nature of the Atlantic Pact, and on just who Chiang Kai-Shek and Dean Acheson were. After diagnosing this sad state of affairs with somewhat of a show of omniscience, the writer came to the conclusion that the church should get busy and organize study courses.

One wonders what the results would be of a survey of the younger generation of Presbyterians regarding its knowledge of Scripture and of Presbyterian standards. A professor of political science in one of our state universities, a Presbyterian with evangelical leanings, reports the following: For about ten years he conducted a course in what amounted to American political history in one of the more generously endowed Presbyterian colleges in the Middle West. In his treatment of early colonial political history he tried to point out that the so-called New England theocracy was in effect the basis of perhaps the purest form of democracy ever practiced in the new world. In the course of developing his argument he always made a point ("just for the fun of it") of asking this question: Which are the three divine offices of Christ and, by derivation, the three offices of the believer? He relates that for ten solid years he received only blank and somewhat indignant stares ("What in the world was the fool talking about, anyway?") He subsequently had the good fortune to be called to a state university, where he taught the same course and where in the appropriate connection he asked the same question. After three years of this he finally got the correct answer from a student who by training and conviction happened to be an Anglo-Catholic. As the Dutch would say, "'t moet ook altyd gek treffen.'"

Anyway, there you have a sample of how a great and proud American church proposes to meet a burning issue.

C. D. B.

1 Roughly translated: "life seems to insist upon perverse coincidences."
Self-Examination

In a recent popular religious periodical there appeared an editorial in which the editor chastises the older folk for becoming complacent, having surrendered the enthusiasms of youth. This is due in part to the fact that youth is inductively geared. They are still in the age of experimentation and accumulation. Age brings with it its conclusions, general standards, and policies from which it operates deductively. This is a faint analogy of the situation as found among many Calvinistic leaders. They are men of principle. For them principles are standards of judgment and points of departure. They have arrived at the point where they attempt to evaluate a statement by asking, "Is it Reformed?" and not "Is it Biblical?" This can be safely allowed if it be agreed that to be Reformed is identical to being Biblical. Though this may be regarded to be true practically, no thoroughly Reformed man would go beyond the declaration that the Calvinistic faith is the best and most true human expression of the teachings of the Bible. But there are interpreters between Scriptures and the Reformed faith. Therein lies the possibility of error and this possibility renders the process of constant re-examination imperative. Even the conviction that we have been guided into the truth by the operation of the Holy Spirit cannot remove from us the obligation of re-examination.

Complacency Calls for Investigation

But no Calvinist will rest and be complacent if he is aware of any discrepancy between his convictions and the teachings of the Bible. Lamentable complacency, however, is often found among us when we recognize the discrepancy between our faith and our lives, between doctrine and practice. Even the declaration of the perfection of our doctrine cannot excuse us from being deeply disturbed by our failure to approximate it in a practical way. Much less is this complacency to be tolerated on the basis of the doctrine of total depravity.

They could probably appeal to many modern psychologists who have been asserting that we must accept ourselves as we are with all our virtues (if any) and all our defects. The advice that we must take ourselves as we are is undoubtedly associated with the modern attempt to remove from the lives of men all tensions, and to get them to live lives of calmness, control, and complacency. But many come to terms with themselves and the world too quickly. There should be a holy dissatisfaction, or better yet, revulsion at any inconsistency in the sub-total of our religious thinking and living. If we do not have some such revulsion, we are condemning ourselves to lower levels of living and thinking.

Is Consistency a Jewel?

Honest self-examination reveals the fact that many of us are complacent about the discrepancy between faith and conduct, but we are intolerant over against any inconsistency within the realm of thinking. We are convinced that consistency is a jewel, even though it often proves to be no more than a piece of stained glass. There is, of course, no other tolerable way of thinking than that of consistent thinking. But if the only basis upon which we accept our conclusion as true is that our thinking processes appear to be consistent, we shall flounder about in error. The confidence we have in consistency rests upon the assumption that our thinking process is errorless, that our point of departure in thinking is correct and correctly formulated. All of which is admittedly fallible.

It is this confidence in the processes of human thinking that has moved men to question the veracity of Scriptures. Calvinists accept the infallibility of the Word. That is for them basic and when these two avenues of knowledge (human thinking and Scriptures) do not seem to harmonize, human reason must yield. That is after all the fundamental difference between those labelled orthodox and others called liberal. But even the so-called orthodox fail to satisfy themselves or their urge toward what may be called the human conception of consistency. Men can discard the Scriptures and build little systems of their own. This is intolerable to the Calvinist because of his basic commitment. But he does not escape the difficulty.

Human and Divine Consistency

There have been various ways in which this problem has been met. One of them is to grant frankly that the human type of consistency, admittedly defective, does not apply to the Bible. Human thinking cannot harmonize, for instance, the hidden will and the revealed will of God, the teachings of man's responsibility and God's predestination, and others. But the basic commitment on the matter of the Bible's infallibility and God's Unity compels men to take recourse to what may be called a higher unity or consistency beyond our ken. This is virtually a surrender of the mind of men. This is only a part of the general common obligation of complete and total self-surrender that God requires of His children. However, such intellectual surrender does not mean that the problems have been solved. The Calvinist knows that the Bible calls upon them to search the Scriptures, to understand, to accept, to assent to the truth, to be instructed, and so on. This urge to build a system of thought based upon the Scriptures, humanly consistent, has led to wrench-
ing, misemphasizing of the Bible, and making it speak rather than allowing it to speak. This accounts for the myriad forms of theological thought found among those who claim that the Bible is their only source of theological thinking. And strange though it may seem, it is precisely the differences among them which each finds articulated on almost every page of their commonly recognized infallible source of faith. This means a biased approach, a preconceived conviction as to what the Bible ought to teach. This is as true of Calvinists as of any other group. The Calvinist, and I presume it is true that every other theological thinker as well, feels that he is justified in such an attempt of Biblical interpretation because his bias consists of the general teachings of the Bible. He indulges in what he believes is a sound Scriptural principle, to wit, the Bible is its own best interpreter. In order to satisfy the urge to secure a system satisfactory to the human conception of consistency, the Scripture must be worked on and at the expense of reshaping it if necessary. We want facts not only to fit theories but to support them. This may be the best and most satisfactory way of arriving at a consistent unit of thinking. But it is obvious that it is beset with difficulties. In the so-called scientific world such possibilities are recognized and somewhat, though not by any means perfectly, checked and re-checked for possible errors. If this is necessary in the world of science, how much more necessary should it be regarded in the area of one's faith where the acceptance of truth is a matter of life or death—eternal life or death. Obviously in any system of religious thinking checking and rechecking must be regarded imperative. This applies not only to the interpretation of the source of our information but also the processes by which we come to our conclusions. Many would discount the necessity of re-examination in religious thinking because of the guidance of the Spirit which they are convinced they have. It seldom if ever occurs to them that the Spirit normally guides them while utilizing their natural faculties. Even the pietist cannot escape the obligation of using his own mind to come to some comprehension of the truth.

The Primacy of the Intellect

The necessity of checking and rechecking by way of self-examination becomes all the more important among the Calvinists if it be true that they are inclined to the position that has been called the supremacy of the intellect. There are differences in this field. There are groups that stress the volitional aspect of human reaction. They do not regard this as indifferent to the learning process. They feel with a great deal of justice that the proper volitional attitude toward the truth is important in its comprehension. It is suggested in Scriptures in such a passage as John 7:17 that "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. . . ." Psychologists and theologians have come to a growing conviction of the importance of one's willingness to accept the truth as a condition of understanding. One can insist upon the primacy of the intellect in grasping the truth, but he must make room for some volitional reaction. With the particular Calvinistic emphasis it must be seriously questioned whether sufficient account is made for this human faculty—and whether the lack of consistency between faith and practice may not be due in part to insufficient recognition of the will.

Again a self-examination should also be directed to the emotional side of human reaction. Perhaps in this area one can find reason for the lack of warmth that is alleged to characterize the Calvinist. The charge may not be true, but we should realize the importance of hating error and loving the truth in order to arrive at some comprehension of the truth as revealed in Scripture. Understanding and appreciation call for commitment on the part of the entire man. If the Calvinist because of his insistence upon the supremacy of the intellect minimizes the importance of other forms of human reaction, he is sorely in need of a re-examination of his epistemology.

H. S.

The Old and the New

There can be no well-founded hope that the torch of Calvinism will be passed on to the next generation unless he who is seeking to pass it on has a real hold of it. The basic elements in that individual and personal hold I have indicated as a grasp of fundamentals and an enthusiasm for them. What is required of us today is that we find our way in and through the mass of details and lay hold on that which is really fundamental, and also that in our efforts to have others get hold of it, there be a full and wholehearted enthusiasm for it. These two, it seems to me, are basic and therefore indispensable.

But those two alone are not sufficient. We are faced with the question of methodology, of which the aforementioned are parts. They are not all. In the whole process there are always two, often rather opposite, the old and the new. That should be perfectly evident, if for no other reason than that there are two individuals, or probably one over against
How Free is Man?

If there is one theme which deserves special emphasis in our day, it is this: Man must reckon with the fact of God. Disinclined as he may be to do this, nevertheless the fact remains that he must take God into account, voluntarily in this life, but inescapably in the next. To fail to do so makes him a slave of self rather than the free personality he was created to be and longs to be.

It is difficult to convince the average modern that he is a creature of eternity as well as of time. It is still more difficult to get him to acknowledge that this present time is not his own but really "borrowed" time, a possession with a purpose. And, but for God's grace, it is impossible to convince him that the Creator has a claim upon his whole being, that he is responsible first of all to Him, that he is not free except the Son make him free.

The whole tenor of life today revolts against such a "servile" existence. Opposition to it is apparent on every hand, and takes a variety of forms. In our favored land it is probably best characterized by the word Materialism. It manifests itself in a lust, yes a greed, for money, possessions, pleasures and the like. At one time it may mean the purchase of a new car or a TV set instead of, or before, the financial support of the local church or school. At another, it may mean that the school teacher must add to the physical plant for proper recreational facilities. Again, it is apparent when one lavishes his time and money on being entertained rather than in the serious study of a good book or the Scriptures. All of these forms, and many more, are alike in the undue emphasis upon the self and its comfort and pleasure. Christian folk,

more than one. We have the teacher, whether formally so designated or not, and the taught. And that constitutes the old and the new, generally the older and the younger. It is exactly the task to bring these two together. When that is accomplished the torch is passed on.

Now the older has been brought up in a different kind of world. Sometimes it is slightly different; again it may be radically so. The older may have been very alive to his world of the past, but with the passing of years he may have lost something or even much of his hold on the world of the present. Views of individuals in that present, and up-to-date currents of thought may be beyond his interest and ken. But the new, the younger generation has only the present. It lives in, senses, observes, and hears about that. The present is very real to it, simply because it never knew the past. Now the gap between these two must be bridged. The individual who can do it best is he who is the older, he who knows the past. His experience and knowledge of his own past must be brought to bear upon the present. For, as said, only the present is really alive to the young. Indeed, to get true insight, true perspective, the new must be made to see and understand something of what the past was. Without that he will never correctly and sufficiently understand his own present. But the fact remains that he does know, no matter how inadequately his present. That he cannot escape.

Therefore the torch will be passed on only then when that which the older has seen and learned in the past is shown to be of meaning and significance for and in the present. Therefore there must be a candid and courageous facing of the present. What do men now think and say? By the older the present views may be regarded as of second rate importance. The fact is, however, that to the younger they are really significant because he meets with those views, and possibly those alone. What is proclaimed as Calvinism must be shown to be relevant now. It must be linked up with the present world. That facing of the present gives a sense of vitality in minds of the young. Then only does the truth have significance for him.

What a task and what a calling! This world is so confused, perplexed, upset, out-of-joint! What an opportunity it offers for an individual to have a vital message! No matter where one turns he runs head-on against violently unchristian views and attitudes. This is not an age in which there is a little that is wrong, and much that is quite acceptable. Nor need one look long and far before he finds something really antithetical to Christianity. The situation is just the opposite. What a shrinking of our duty then, if the voice of truth is not heard with perfect clarity! What a failure if we appear not to see the present enemy, or if he is seen, what abysmal cowardice if we dare not confront him! The world needs the light desperately. And lo! those who alone can give it, hide it under a bushel, either because they fail to see the darkness of error, or they are afraid to face it. The world suffers and will continue to suffer because the light is withheld from them. But not only the world. The tragic thing is that the torch itself will not be passed on. The next generation will not have the light, and the gloom becomes ever denser. Up then and at them! Calvinism is militant! It fears no present foes! It dares to enter the conflict now! And when the old reveals such confidence and courage, the new will become aflame for the truth and Calvinism will live on gloriously and victoriously.

RALPH STOB

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too, are not beyond reproach in this respect. Perhaps there is no single evil among us which deprives us of virility, power, and influence as this consuming desire for unfettered indulgence in self-pleasures.

But the evils of which we have been speaking are only symptoms or manifestations of a system of thought, a philosophy. Things usually have their roots in thought. "As a man thinketh so is he." The philosophy which begets these symptoms is fundamentally atheistic. It begins with the proposition that man is sufficient unto himself, and that he may, if his reason warrants it, entertain the notion of a god, but then only as an appendage, a sort of reserve power supply, to be used only when necessary. That such is the prevailing thought in our day is especially apparent when one examines current educational thinking. Permit me to quote from a speech by an educator in one of our large state universities and delivered at a joint session of the American Historical Association and the American Civilization Conference held recently in Chicago. He is reported to have said the following:

"A door opening outward upon freedom is what I conceive a liberal education to be. This is true to the etymology of the phrase: liberal education is the education worthy of a free man. More than that, it is the education by which a man achieves freedom. To make himself truly free, a man must break the intellectual chains that keep him a serf by binding him to his parish, by binding him to his narrow workaday tasks, by binding him to accept the authority of those placed over him in matters temporal and spiritual. A liberal education frees a man by enlarging and disciplining his powers. He is no longer bound to his parish, because education makes him spiritually a citizen of all places and all times. His workaday tasks no longer subdue his mind to their narrow demands, for he is large enough to cope with them and with the great intellectual tasks of a free man as well. He is no longer obliged to accept blindly the authority of those above him, for they are above him no longer. In the things of the mind he is their peer, and he can decide for himself, on as good grounds as they, the great human issues that confront him. Thereby he is entitled to be the citizen of a free state, participating in its highest decisions, and obeying no political mandates save those that derive their ultimate sanction from his own consent!"

There is no mistaking the meaning of this frank statement. Freedom as he interprets it is plainly the freedom to think as one wishes and to do as one pleases—of course, within the framework of what we ordinarily call human decency. Such a philosophy exalts man as mind, and is committed to the position that an educated mind alone is truly free. It represents the old fallacy that knowledge is synonymous with wisdom, or at least that sufficient knowledge adds up to wisdom.

It is difficult for us to understand how a thinking individual in this day can subscribe to such a faith, for a faith it is. With corruption in high places, with the inventive genius of man evolving deadly instruments of warfare beyond our comprehension, with the spectacle of educated crooks staring at us from the front pages of our newspapers, we marvel at the blindness of those who still insist upon putting their trust in themselves. Yet, but for the grace of God, we too would be among them. It becomes clearer each day that only Sovereign Grace can snatch us out of this accelerating whirl of self seeking self. And this is precisely the core of the message which we as Calvinists are committed to declare.

I shall never forget the great disillusionment of a friend when the outbreak of the second world war shattered his faith in the "educated" man. But neither shall I forget his amazement and satisfaction when he realized for the first time that the central message of Christianity, namely, an utter and absolute dependence upon God's grace, is, and must be, the only source of comfort, the only answer to man's deepest need.

We do well to remember that we shall never achieve true freedom through education. Even a "liberal" education cannot liberate man from the purpose for which he exists and from the bondage of his own desires. A liberal education can have a truly liberating influence only when it begins with a recognition of God's claim upon, and redemption of, sinful man, and then enlarges his vision of service to God in all of his activities. Freedom, then, consists in happiness, in the total living expression of gratitude to God.

Enno Wolthuis
Prophets, False and True, in the Old Testament Dispensation

A BIBLICAL STUDY

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As far as etymology is concerned, there are three Hebrew words that need investigation if the distinctive character and the specific functions of the Old Testament prophets are to be ascertained. Of signal importance and therefore deserving of first mention is nabhi, a word pregnant in meaning, embracing in its sweep not merely the receiving of a message from God but also its transmission to the appointed recipients. Hence it has both positive and negative or rather active and passive implications. Along with nabhi there are the twins roeh and chozeh which lean towards the passive, involving the ideas of “seer” and “visionary,” hence laying the stress on the reception of a message from God. (Renkema is of the opinion that nabhi refers to the prophetic office while roeh and chozeh refer to the prophetic gift, a plausible distinction it seems to me. König’s judgment that roeh refers to the true prophets while Chozeh refers to the false hardly holds water since they are apparently used interchangeably in Jeremiah 28:7 and 30:10.)

I

It should be pointed out at the outset that in the reception of his prophetic message the true prophet could distinguish clearly between the external voice that came to him and his own personal reflections. That message bore a distinctly objective character. It did not originate in his own subjective reflections. That is a significant point of difference between the true and false prophet. The false prophet had a subjectively produced message (Ezekiel 13:3) and his words came “uit zijn eigen hart” (Aalders). The message of the true prophet came from God and he recognized it as such. It was no counterpart to Canaanitish ecstacies, nor was it merely the expression of a man who had a little more piety, intelligence, and insight than others (Kuenen). The true prophet of Israel, whose contact with God was incidental, not continuous (think of Jeremiah who, in his bout with Hananiah, had to await a revelation from God), was conscious of being laid hold of by God and given a message to deliver, a message that originated not with him but originated with God and had objective reality and validity (Ezekiel 1:3).

What are the distinguishing characteristics of the true prophet? By what touchstone is he to be judged? Aalders suggests that “self-witness” or being under conviction that he was a true prophet sent from God is not of primary importance. Self-deception may not be ruled out of the picture. The fact is that there were false prophets (perhaps victims of hallucinations) who were apparently convinced that they were transmitting the truth of God. Neither are signs and wonders the credentials of a true prophet. The same was true of the prophets in pagandom who confided in auguries, sorceries, and divinations. They trafficked in the unusual, the eerie, and the sensational, but their main interest was an inordinate curiosity and a prying into the future. Orr avers that the only value of prophetic pagandom lies in the “testimony it bears to the inextinguishable craving of man’s heart for some kind of revelation of God and the future.” The fulfillment of prophecies uttering is not the outstanding mark of the true prophet even though that is a significant factor (Deuteronomy 18:21ff.) Neither is it the accompanying high moral life of the prophet that is determinative, although it must be added at once that integrity and lofty morals did substantiate his right to speak. The outstanding mark, according to Aalders, is harmony with previous revelation. There must be no divergence from former messages from God. All revelations must fit into the pattern of the hitherto received. If it fails to do so, it emanates from a false prophet; if it harmonizes and synchronizes, you can rest assured that its messenger is an accredited agent sent from God.

II

The sharp contrast between true and false prophets (denied by Kuenen and others who see little difference, for instance, between “Jehovah-seers and heathen fortune-tellers”) may be indicated along the following three lines:

a. The political. The prophets served in the capacity of advisers to the king. Their word held weight when it came to the framing of domestic and foreign policy. Here, too, the true prophet took a different position than did the false. Whereas the false prophets did not hesitate to advise alliances with foreign powers and coalitions with pagan neighbors, the true prophets warned against these entangling alliances. We have but to mention Isaiah who issued stern warnings to Judah when it planned the making of alliances with Assyria and Egypt. The true prophets regarded, and rightly so, such mergers as incompatible with a theocracy. If Israel was Jehovah’s peculiar people it must remain polit-
ically isolated, because failure to do so would mean that its theocratic distinctiveness would be dissipated.

b. The moral and spiritual. The true prophets were imbued with lofty moral and spiritual ideals. Not so the false. They were pragmatists and utilitarians. They were chauvinists. In a burst of mistaken patriotism, for instance, they asserted strongly that God would never banish His people and later, having sent them to Babylon, that God would not leave them there more than a few years. A seventy-year exile, as Jeremiah predicted, was unthinkable. That would be too great national humiliation. As Orelli puts it, “they (the false prophets) related themselves to national ideals apart from spiritual qualities.” They said nothing about God’s justice and the people’s sin. They, in contrast with the true prophets, issued no calls to repentance and consequently the net result of it all was that “they led the people away from God” (Edersheim).

c. The personal. Whereas the true prophets exhibited earnestness and conviction and adorned their messages with a godly and blameless life, the false prophets were often insincere and self-centered. Think of Balaam, for instance, who set himself in opposition to the message that was his to deliver and who, like others of his ilk, craved the acquisition of material goods (cf. Micah 3:5). Their personal lives left much to be desired. No wonder that they find clear exposure and sharp rebuke in the Word of God.

To accentuate the contrasts, we aim in this paper to set in bold relief some true and false prophets whose characters and careers are sketched for us in the Word of God and in contemporaneous Old Testament history.

When Israel encamped on the borders of Moab preparatory to entering the Promised Land, there was fear and consternation in the heart of Balak, king of Moab. It looked like the end of his kingdom. The threat of national extermination hung over the heads of the Moabites unless something radical were done. In his extremity Balak sent for Balaam, a soothsayer from Mesopotamia (Joshua 13:32), and sought to use him to curse the people of Israel and thus check the onrush of this apparently invincible invader coming out of the wilderness. It is my intent at this juncture to set in contrast Moses, the intrepid leader of Israel, and Balaam, the soothsayer or prophet from Mesopotamia.

III

Moses is the first great prophet in the history of Old Testament revelation. Providentially born in time of grave crisis, and providentially preserved by the daughter of Pharaoh who unwittingly served as an instrument of Jehovah, he functioned as the first leader of the theocracy. Later on kings would supersede prophets in that capacity and still later, that is, from the exile, the high priest would come into the ascendency, but in its inception the prophets held that office and of them Moses was auspiciously first. Here was a prophet in the real sense of the word—one who truly knew the Lord and hence could reveal Him to men—one who was privileged to spend forty days in close communion with God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24) the lustre of which lingered so that the glory of God was reflected in his countenance. Here was a man who trembled and was filled with awe and reverence at the presence of God, and yet one who exercised such intimate communion with Him that he called him his “dwellingplace” (Psalm 90), his eternal home in which he found repose for his soul. No wonder that he was honored in being designated the type of the great Prophet that was to come, even the promised Messiah (Deuteronomy 18:18).

No one can read the history of Moses without being impressed at once with his nobility of character. Wonderful opportunities presented themselves to this “foundling prince” in the court of the Pharaohs. The favorite of a favored daughter who was princess of the realm, he might well expect a life of ease, lolling in wealth and luxury. Honors and gifts would be heaped upon him by office seekers and fawning courtiers, and if secular history is authentic on this score, in due time he would ascend the throne and become ruler over Egypt. All of this he renounced. Truly it is the “Great Renunciation” in which Moses rejected all that would humanly appeal, and cast in his lot with the despised people of God, thereby exchanging a life of carnal pleasure and ease for one of hardship and danger and oft unappreciated service. And, mark well, it was a decision that he never regretted. Basic to this renunciation, of course, was his deep sense of duty towards God and towards the people he loved and to whom he was bound by ties of religion and blood. Moses was a man with a mission. A ponderous burden was laid upon him and he must fain bear it. Not that he shouldered it bubbling over with enthusiasm and confidence. He did not. There were timidity and self-distrust at first. The magnitude of the task appalled him, but when he was assured of the constant presence of Jehovah he went forth fearlessly and encouragingly. He did not hesitate to stand unabashedly before the potentate of a mighty empire in the heyday of its power and make demands on the part of Jehovah. When we note his calm and majestic bearing before Pharaoh, we recognize a man impelled by high mission, convinced that he is engaged in prosecuting the right, and assured that the King of kings is with him. And so when arrogant Pharaoh throws out the challenge and asks scornfully, “Who is Jehovah?” (Exodus 5:2) Moses accepts the challenge and proceeds to show him the sovereignty of God.

Closely related to his sense of duty is his meekness, a virtue for which Moses is expressly celebrated (Numbers 12:3). To execute the program
of God to which he was committed, he was willing even to suffer criticism and endure insult and injury on the part of his own people. Aaron and Miriam may seethe in sedition against him, Israel may rail at him for taking them out of Egypt and leading them into the barren wilderness—he in his meekness will endure it all with long-suffering and patience and again typify his Saviour of whom it was also said that He was "meek and lowly of heart." Willing endurance of wrongs for the sake of the right was his. And not only would he bear patiently with the foibles and sins of his people, but he would even intercede for this murmuring and stiff-necked people. In that unique example of unselfishness and self-sacrifice, when God in His righteous anger would destroy this ungrateful people, Moses steps into the breach and imploringly pleads for them, even to the extent of abjuring his place in glory if only they may be spared. Certainly our world has seldom seen such an example of self-sacrifice and nobility of character.

That is not to say that Moses is without faults and failings. Being human he, too, was fallible. And if we were to select his besetting sin, we would very likely select his impulsiveness and impatience that evidenced itself in occasional outbursts of temper. Think, for instance, of his killing the Egyptian and burying him in the sands. It is true that he resented the injustice being perpetrated (as he also did later in the desert when rude herdsmen imposed on the poor shepherd girls) but nonetheless the act was rash because the time was not yet ripe. He had not been summoned to service and in his impatience he would do "God's work in his own way rather than in God's way." There is an impetuousness about him that reminds you of Peter of New Testament days and which, as in the case of Peter, needs refinement and chastening in the crucible of divine training. Think, too, of his striking the rock at Kadesh instead of speaking to it as he had been commanded. It was his anger that flared up at the moment, and in its outburst he disregarded the command of God and took matters into his own hands. He had his failings and yet Moses is a great and noble character of whom said St. Augustine (cited by Wilberforce):

"... resigned in undertaking (his great service), faithful in discharging, unwearied in fulfilling it; vigilant in governing his people; resolute in correcting them, ardent in loving them, and patient in bearing with them; the intercessor for them with the God whom they provoked—this Moses—such and so great a man—we love, we admire, and, so far as may be, imitate" (p. 30).

IV

Of an entirely different stripe is his contemporary, Balaam, whose name means "people-devourer" (volks verslinder). Here is a passingly strange character who has been variedly interpreted. He is called in the Scriptures a "soothsayer" (Joshua 13: 32) and yet he bears some distinct marks of being a prophet of God. It is said about him, for example, that Jehovah put His words in his mouth (Numbers 23:5) and that the Spirit of God came upon him (Numbers 24:2). In his parables, beautiful as they are, he gives evidence of knowing about the power and the immutability of God, about the ideal destiny for mankind, and about the Messiah who is to come. Van Oosterzee quite appropriately calls him a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Knap, after observing that he was a believer in the supernatural and in the power of the invisible world, says pointedly, "Twee machten kampen in zijn binnenste." He did not know God as did Moses, but he did know about Him, and even as God used an evil ecclesiastic like Caiphas to utter prophecy, so, too, he used this schizophrenic, this apparently split personality, to communicate the truth of God. It may appear strange on the surface that God would forbid divination among Israel and then employ a diviner for the communication of His truth and yet on second thought, is it not another striking indication of the sovereignty of God? Does it not disprove at a sweep the contention of the Higher Critic that at first Jehovah was merely the Deity of the Hebrews? Is it not conclusive evidence that God can use and will use all things and all types of men to advance His Kingdom and attain His purposes? This episode proclaims in bold letters, so it seems to me, the unlimited and universal sovereignty of God.

There is little good to be found in Balaam—much of evil. His besetting sin seems to be covetousness, and covetousness drags Balaam down to destruction. Spurgeon once said that he never knew of a covetous man who entered the Kingdom, because when a man was enveloped in its toils, he could not extricate himself from them. Covetousness ensnared Balaam. It was love of money (and along with it a subsidiary love of fame and honor, I presume) that dictated his actions and made him a slave of sin. A fitting epitaph for his tombstone would be the words of Peter—"he loved the wages of unrighteousness" (II Peter 2:15). Covetousness made him "profane," that is, a man who did what he wanted to do rather than what he ought to have done. Duty in him gave way to selfwill and self-gratification. That covetousness, too, made him hypocritical and insincere. If he had been sincere he would have refused to receive the second deputation from Balak. He would have summarily dismissed the emissaries. Instead he dallied with their tempting offer. Covetousness made his pious wish, "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his," but an idle platitude because he refused to substantiate the wish with a righteous life, and thus he made of himself a man of "fair words but foul life." Covetousness made him brutal, compelling him to strike the ass unmercifully in the way and indicating that cupidity is brutalizing in its effects. And it was a covetousness that was thwarted and remained unsatisfied.
that led him to seek revenge upon the Israelites by giving them shameful counsel and leading them into the sins of fornication and adultery with the Midianites. He wreaked his vengeance upon them and in the ensuing warfare lost his life, going down in history as a covetous person and one who advocated unholy alliance with the world (Revelation 2:14).

There is some similarity between this character Balaam and two men who figure in New Testament history. One of them is Judas, the betrayer of the Lord. He, too, was in contact with divine truth but refused to allow it to grip his soul and "bring every thought into captivity to Christ." Hence he went down to destruction. The other character to whom he bears resemblance is Simon Magus in apostolic history. He, too, knew the power of God but failed to experience the grace of God and hence he, too, went down to destruction.

What a contrast then between Moses and Balaam—the one noble, the other ignoble; one humbly unselfish, the other proud and self-seeking; the one kind and true, the other brutal and insincere; the one interested in propagating the gospel "without money and without price," the other in using the truth to line his own purse; the one offering his life for God's people, the other bringing thousands of them into ruin; the one a true prophet who knew God and went to glory; the other who merely knew about Him and went down to eternal destruction.

(To be continued)

Notes on the Relation of Theology and Philosophy

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SINCE Greece as well as Palestine has inserted a component part into the body of our culture, we have lived for centuries with the problem of faith and reason. For perfectly obvious reasons this problem comes to a focus in theology. As long as the realist method and content of Platonism or Aristotelianism set the style for philosophic activity, the tension between faith and reason was felt mainly inside the orthodox camp. Many Church Fathers were reluctant to use philosophic terms in stating and explaining belief; yet it was recognized early that a systematic statement of doctrine could not do without them. Today we witness a late stage in a process of alienation, growing ever more violent, between philosophy and theology; as the rift widens, philosophy moves away from theology through idealism to pragmatist naturalism and positivism. Surely the estrangement produces mutual damage—philosophy is less true to itself than it has been; and in the present state of divorcement, we owe our attention to anyone who tries to reconsider the nature of the two disciplines and their appropriate relation. The ancient problem, more pressing today than ever, is not one it is safe to neglect: it is not theoretical merely; no problem is. How can you or I be one integral self while our reason and our faith are not on terms of amity?

First rate thinking on this problem is offered in the recent volume, Christianity and Reason: Seven Essays (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951). At the December 1947 meeting of the Anglican Guild of Scholars, five of these essays were read and discussed. Useful biographical notes on each writer are given. The editor's preface (by Professor Edward D. Myers) contains a statement of the aims of the Guild; I recommend these aims to the notice of all who are qualified by intellectual competence to serve the cause of Christ. The order of the essays is as follows: (1) Theodore M. Greene, "Man, in the Twilight, Need Not Falter," (2) John Wild, "The Present Relevance of Catholic Theology," (3) George F. Thomas, "Theology and Philosophy," (4) Wilbur Marshall Urban, "The Language of Theology," (5) Lewis M. Hammond, "Theology as Theoretical and Practical Knowledge," (6) Howard Dykema Roelefs, "Theology in Theory and Practice," (7) Helmut Kuhn, "The Wisdom of the Greeks." The first and last essays were not read at the meeting of the Guild.

Together these papers compose a strong and important work; yet in my judgment its strength would not be diminished by the absence of Greene's essay. In it he offers a partly sentimental (and never very thorough) response to W. T. Stace's extremely sentimental remarks in "Man Against Darkness" (The Atlantic, September 1946). The spectacle of an erstwhile Hegelian, by the law of the proximity of opposites, embracing positivism (and lamenting in public over his loss of hope) is perhaps an instance of tragic justice; but the instruction that might help Stace is only faintly evident in Greene's essay, while the comfort he gives the orthodox is not certain to their real good. It is difficult, however, to overestimate the value of Kuhn's contribution, and I shall begin with it. Later I shall turn to the three other papers which for my purposes are most useful, those of Roelefs, Wild, and Hammond.
In the minds of several contemporary leaders in Christian thought the relation between theology and philosophy has shifted from the character of an alliance to that of divorce or even hostility. Kuhn is convinced that theology cannot live without philosophy, that in fact the hostility of a Barth is predicated upon his having adopted a special conception of what philosophy is, and that such hostility is misguided because it rests on a confinement of attention to certain modern distortions of philosophy. His argument is worked out both positively and negatively; I shall restrict myself chiefly to the negative pole.

Pascal—Kierkegaard—Barth: these three mark the stages of growing estrangement. The first two still practice philosophy, though they mistakenly identify philosophy with the current form of it which they justly reject. Pascal attacked reason as Descartes employed it; yet he elaborated a concrete philosophy of his own, faithful to the depths of man in his relation to God. Kierkegaard confused philosophy with Hegelianism and imposed strictures on both; yet he developed and universalized a philosophical concept, that of the crisis experience, which involves the dialectic of immanence and transcendence or of becoming and being. The bridgehead still linking faith with reason is exploded by Barth. For him there is no Anknuepfungspunkt; a philosophical discussion of God has "nothing to do with" the living God. Natural theology makes idols, "ana­logia entis is the invention of Antichrist." The resistance to Hitler's state offered by the German Confessional Church, says Barth, was really a fight against natural theology.

Barth is certainly most impressive, and no doubt he knows what he is about. But it is not the case that he is innocent of philosophy. He identifies reason with what the modern pragmatist or positivist, taught by Nietzsche and other post-Kantians, says it is; thus he begins with an irrationalist description of reason and moves on to an anti-rationalist account of faith. Reason, says Barth, limits its object, masters its object, and assumes an identity of knower and known. Now this is caricature, of course; it has "nothing to do with" the Platonic-Aristotelian account, which is sternly realistic and demands the subject's submission to the nature of things.

It is ironical to notice that besides the provincialism of a positivist theory of reason, there is in Barth a high-handed speculative exposition of Christian doctrine. The Anglican theologian Leonard Hodgson, who acknowledges the competence of reason in both philosophy and theology, makes careful use of the Bible in a study of the Trinity. Barth, however, violates his own rule of obedient hearing of the Word by compelling the Bible to say what his speculative method demands. It is not exegesis to argue, as he does, that we grasp the Trinity by reflection on the triadic structure of the statement, "God reveals Himself" or "I show myself." He darkens counsel by speaking of the indirect identity (!) between the Bible and this construction. He mystifies by treating the image of God in man as a copy that does not resemble the model. Also, while he discards the philosophical concept of God as sumnum ens as in contrast with the Biblical God of Werk und Handeln, he fails to notice that Aristotle's God is defined as life and actuality (i.e. perfect self-activation or work); and since for Barth our knowledge of God rests on God's self-knowledge, his definition of God is strikingly similar to Aristotle's notion of God's life as self-knowledge.

Barth's case is ironical, negative evidence of the trouble the theologian manufactures for himself by despising and misrepresenting reason. Kuhn's negative demonstration is followed by excellent positive analysis, which I desire to praise but have not time to present. I turn to the paper of Roelofs, who, like Kuhn, offers reflections directed to the question, What is meant by saying that theology is knowledge of God (logos of theos), intelligibly stated? More specifically, How is theology like and unlike the other sciences, and what does the difference imply?

Every science contains three factors: primary data, intelligible language which fits the object, and criteria for applying and testing its statements. The theologian has to be especially clear on the first of these. For the ordinary science there is no great difficulty in passing from experience or data to the object. To clarify the reasons why religious experience is ambiguous and puzzling, Roelofs offers a fascinating study of the recognition by the two disciples going to Emmaus that the stranger was God's Son, the Christ. This experience contained, besides the non-cognitive factor of emotion, a "common­sense object," an ordinary object apprehensible by the senses, viz. the stranger who was seen and heard, who made intelligible statements. Most important, it contained the recognition; this calls for special analysis. The recognition depended on instruction; without preparation of the mind the disciples could not make a proper interpretation of the data. And what was recognized was not the man Jesus; if this were what they recognized, the disciples would have had new doubts: did Jesus really die, would he not die again soon and "for keeps"? And would not his vanishing have produced new problems? Yet the two men hurried to Jerusalem to report that they had seen Christ! That is, they recognized Christ, not Jesus; therefore a report could be made, no problems were produced by the vanishing. Thus the common-sense object served to represent a something not itself, the natural revealed the supernatural. This pattern persists through all the appearances of Christ after the resurrection; it occurs also in the burning bush and in the voice heard by Samuel. Sometimes the sensible object is a wonder or miracle; yet it is natural in respect of the kind of properties that are apprehended.
The essential peculiarity of theology lies not in the emotional response nor in the occurrence of an subject for this act. It is the *kind* of interpretation that is unique: a common-sense object is understood by the instructed mind as a sign of something else, of the supernatural. No other science calls for a leap from nature to God. Accordingly there is ambiguity in both factors of the interpretive response: the subject has to be prepared for making a specific theological interpretation; and the data are only sensible, natural items. If we are uncertain about the data in chemistry or another ordinary science, we take a second look; in theology this device is useless—we see again only the rainbow, the burning bush, the stranger, even Jesus the man. Thus theology cannot confirm its procedures of stating or testing conclusions by going back to data. The ambiguity in the data is ineradicable. Also, the subject who makes the leap to the divine must have been prepared to do so.

The useful distinction between revelation and religious experience does not set aside the foregoing analysis; in both there is the same pattern in coming to know. Nor does the distinction between natural and revealed theology alter matters. Roelofs urges the view that it is time to cease thinking of these two as independent. The natural theologian, trying to know God, needs and uses a clue from revealed theology. But the dependence runs the other way too: revelation is not self-explanatory, how does anyone ever come to think that God has spoken to him? In either case there has to be a mind which is able, by innate capacity developed by preparation, to interpret a common-sense object as evidence of God. Revealed theology ought to cooperate with other methods in stating a single doctrine of God; natural theology should learn that it cannot reach a revelation of God in nature without aid from "special" revelation.

Because of the ambiguity in both data and interpretation theology cannot demonstrate its conclusions and it is possible to reject theology in *toto* without being stupid. Confirmation of theology is found only in action, in a life of prayer and obedience. Why does God leave matters so? Perhaps in order to preserve our freedom. Were God's self-disclosure compelling, we could not be free to believe or to ignore Him.

The conclusions of Roelofs do not satisfy me entirely and may not satisfy others. It will be useful for a critic, I believe, to reconsider the implications of Kuhn's essay, to note certain remarks of Roelofs himself, and to ponder the papers of Hammond and Wild. Roelofs observes that it is confusing to doubt theology on the ground of general scepticism. This is not only confusing, it is instructive: unless theology and religious experience (including a reception of revelation) can defend or assume the efficacy of reason to know objects of any kind, it cannot carry on discussion of God. Roelofs is confident that reason can know such objects as water; if so, has he not already performed the task of testing such philosophies as are entirely incompatible with the attainment of knowledge of God? Kuhn's exhibition of the weaknesses of those types of theology that embrace questionable philosophical theses points up the need for and the possibility of a kind of critical activity which will safeguard the base of operations, if only by negative dialectic. Philosophy needs the help of affirmative ontology, says Kuhn. Wild's paper is a strong and forthright argument for the sort of presupposition which has to be made if there is to be any metaphysics or theology at all. One feature of his discussion calls for special notice. Contrary to the habit of many recent analysts of knowledge, Wild states principles which are not represented as postulates, i.e. as rules with which, but not about which, we think. They can be defined, inspected, and explored; they can be defended, at least dialectically. Of course, they necessitate choice, but the choice need not be blind decision.

Wild explores the base of operations and notes its conformity to what he calls classic realism. Also he offers a statement of certain prime achievements of past theology. In this last matter his paper is superior to that of Thomas, who seems to agree with liberal orthodoxy in stressing the truth of Christian faith while hesitating to learn from the earlier expositions of the faith. And finally, I wish to recommend the essay of Hammond as contributing a clear study of the kind of thinking (essentially analogical) which goes into the interpretation of religious experience and the construction of theology. Where Roelofs prepares us to recognize interpretation, Hammond discusses the structure of the thinking present in it.

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Calvin's Golden Booklet

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A few decades ago a Dutch translation of Doumergue's oration on Calvin's Devotional Ideas was published. In the introduction to this work written by Professor F. L. Rutgers of the Free University of Amsterdam, the reader's attention was drawn to a little book of Calvin which had been long forgotten, but which has been of great significance for the development of devotional and cultural life among his followers, especially in the Netherlands. It was really not a separate book; it was only a separate edition of the five chapters in Calvin's Institutes, on "The Christian Life." The Latin edition was published separately during Calvin's lifetime, though not by himself. The Dutch translation without the Latin preface was published under the title: Johannes Calvijn's Gulden Boekske over den recht Christelijken Wandel, that is, John Calvin's Golden Booklet About the True Christian Walk. A Dutch edition of this little work was even published as late as 1938. The title does not correspond to the one in the Dutch Institutes, for this was originally On the life of the Christian. Yet we would prefer to use this new title designation, because it expresses more accurately than Calvin's own title the purpose of this treatise.

Calvin undoubtedly wanted to write something that might correct the influence of several mystical works' like Thomas a Kempis' Imitation of Christ and Menno Simons' Foundation Book. However much good there is especially in Thomas' treatise, there are three chapters in it on Nature and Grace and many expressions throughout the book, which confuse the natural and the sinful. Besides, the thrust of the book is the emphasis on meditation and not on action. Thomas is known for his maxim: "With a book in a nook" (Cum libello in angello). Calvin believed in meditation on heavenly matters, as is plain from one of the chapters of the Golden Booklet, but also in a reformation of doctrine and life according to the Scriptures. He found it necessary to protest against the Platonic and medieval strain of asceticism which saw sin in corporal or sensuous pleasure as such. The greatest enemy of a sound and sane religious life is false mysticism which sees the origin of sin in the human flesh, that is in matter. The pagan notion is still very popular among numerous religious groups, be they Catholic or Protestant, humanist or evangelical. It is a self-deception which is in direct conflict with the Scriptures, and Calvin does not hesitate to brand the philosophy which condemns all physical pleasure as inhuman. He calls attention to the fact that out of the heart, that is the spiritual center, are the issues of life, and that the heart needs to be regenerated, that is, completely changed by the Holy Spirit to make it fit for the service of the Lord. No amount of abstinence from earthly work or pleasure can bring about the desired peace of mind. We must be reborn. And then we must learn to live holy and sacrificial lives, to be patient in adversity, to be heavenly-minded, and to be moderate and faithful in our temporal occupations. To be spiritual does not mean to despise the visible world or to cultivate a forced separation from others, or to neglect our daily duties, or to deny ourselves some or all diversion, but it means a spiritual separation from sin and sinful associations and wholehearted consecration to the service of God and to the welfare of our neighbor.

I

The Golden Booklet is, therefore, still of great significance. If it is read and studied again, it will foster a sane Christianity among all those who are of an orthodox protestant faith; and it will call the younger evangelicals away from the morbid influences of a Separatism by which they are constantly drawn away from the Scriptures. Evangelical protestantism has become weak in Europe and in America because it has given its ear to the unbiblical maxims of a false mysticism. We are living in a sinful world, and this world and its culture are so contaminated by sin that Satan is even called the Captain of this world. It may be necessary to form separate organizations in many fields of activity and to found Christian schools and separate institutions of charity and labor, but this is not the same as total abstinence from the world's activities. On the other hand, Scripture demands preparation for the world's great battle which is being fought between Christ and the Devil. This battle we ought to wage with all the power that is within us. We ought to keep ourselves unspotted from the world of sin, but such battles cannot be fought in the inner room only. There we meditate and fall on our knees to confess our transgressions in order to withstand the onslaughts of sin and to prepare ourselves for the coming conflicts of life. No Christian can excuse himself from such an engagement with evil forces. And in our day we ought to use the means that are offered us. It is for this holy war against

1 Even Augustine in his Confession says that the sunlight is sweet, but dangerous. Ch. XI, 52.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * MAY, 1952
evil within and without that Calvin wants to arm us in his Golden Booklet. He recognizes the pilgrim as well as the soldier in the Christian. His devotion book, therefore, ought to be read and studied again. And there is nothing more excellent of this character in all religious literature.  

II

The chapter on “The Christian Life” were absent from the very first edition of the Institutes, but they were found at the end of this great work in the three following editions. And finally they were rewritten and put in the third book on the Work of the Holy Spirit, right after the chapter on Faith and Repentance, and before those on Justification.

Originally there were ten sections, as follows:

1. On the Christian life
2. Reasons for loving the good
3. On love for our neighbor
4. On self-denial
5. On patience
6. On the Cross and afflictions
7. On the contempt of this world
8. On the longing for the other world
9. On the true use of the goods of this world
10. On what every one should diligently regard as his vocation.

In the fifth and sixth, i.e., final editions, these ten sections were combined two by two into five chapters:

1. The Life of a Christian: Scriptural arguments and exhortations
2. Summary of the Christian life: Self-denial
3. Bearing the Cross which have permeated modern so­ciety
4. Meditation on the future life
5. The right use of the present life and its supports.

III

It seems to us that Calvin took his cue from the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew and Luke, and from Christ’s answer to the Greeks’ question: What is eternal life? (John 12:20-26). The gist of the remarks in John is Self-denial and Obedience. The five themes of The Golden Booklet occur in Matthew 5. Holiness, or Obedience, in verse 8: Blessed are the pure of heart. Self-denial in verses 5 and 44; Blessed are the meek, and Love your enemies. Patience in suffering in verse 4: Blessed are those that mourn. Heavenly mindedness in verse 3: Blessed are the poor in spirit. And faithfulness in one’s calling in verses 13-16: You are the salt of the earth.

The discussion of the Christian Life is, therefore, not a commentary on the Ten Commandments. Calvin must have thought of Matthew 5:20: Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Calvin points to a higher goal than the outward obedience to the law of God. He enumerates the spiritual principles which must be written on the table of our hearts, starting with: Be thou holy, for I am holy. Separation from sin, that is, sincere obedience such is what he calls the imitation, or following of Christ; but not contempt of the visible world.

IV

Calvin’s discussion is not mere meditation, but is at every moment anchored in sound exegesis of the Scriptures. On the whole Calvin remains in the meditative mood. However, he often has lyrical flights. He cannot divest himself altogether of the rhetorical repetitions of the classical Renaissance, and of the complicated style of many Humanists. The three German scholars who edited Calvin’s complete works, and the French translation of the Institutes (1865) have this to say about the latter and about his style in Latin and French: “In the French editions a number of mistakes, omissions and trifling and embarrassing additions occur, because the translation is only partly Calvin’s work.” Further, “His Latin style is a masterpiece of simplicity, elegance, conciseness, and masculine vigor. These same qualities are only found in a small degree in the French edition, and only in the chapters which treat the popular subjects of religion and morality.” This means that the French of The Golden Booklet is very simple and charming and must be Calvin’s exclusive labor, for the “omissions, additions and changes” are very few, and insignificant.  

The French is even simpler than the Latin, so that one cannot forego the conclusion that Calvin put forth an extra attempt to reach the common

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2 Calvin’s Golden Booklet, or to use his own term: Christian Life, is looked upon as a very significant contribution to Ethics by several modern scholars. We refer first of all to Georgia Harkness, John Calvin, The Man and His Ethics (1943). Palm in his Calvinism points to the two great ideals of frugality and the pursuit of one’s calling which have permeated modern society (Golden Book, chs. 2 and 6). Niebuhr in Children of Light gives Calvin credit for the idea of stewardship (Golden Book, ch. 2). Durnmergue in Art and Feeling in the Work of Calvin (Dutch ed., p. 82) quotes from Golden Book, ch. 3, to show that Calvin despised the hardness of the Stoics. Dakin in his Calvinism devotes a whole chapter to the Golden Book and calls it “The Calvinistic Way of Life.” He assures us that Calvin impressed upon thousands its peculiar ethical ideals and aims (Life of Calvin, p. 180). He also believes that it took the place of Zerbo’s Spiritual Exercises. Fairbairn in Cambridge Modern History, Vol. II, states that Calvin never appealed to the Imitation of Christ (p. 347), whereas Luther referred to a mystical work of the fourteenth century, Theologia Germanica. This preference became even a cause of jealousy between the Lutherans and the Calvinists since it hangs together with the idea of Calvin that every item in worship should be sacrificed which Scripture does not directly sanction or justify. We may add to this that Calvin in his Golden Book explains that the Key to the Christian Life is holiness and not contempt of the visible world. Holiness means humble obedience of God’s law and this is the true imitation of Christ. Dahlhaus in his Essays, of which the Golden Book is the gist or core of Calvin’s principles of morality (Free University Quarterly, Vol. 1, I, p. 77; review by Nauta). The Reformation broke with the Christian Renaissance because of its Catholic doctrine of lifting grace and its Oriental mysticism. We may safely say that the Calvinists burned the books of the New Devotion, perhaps already in the “wonderful year” 1566.

3 These scholars are G. Baum, E. Canitz, and E. Reuss. (4) Golden Booklet IV, 1, 2. Cf. separate edition by this author. Calvin’s style has been praised by not only the three German scholars of 1865, but also by Warfield, Fairbairn, and Palm. Warfield in Calvin and Calvinism (p. 7) mentions elevation, crispness, energy, and eloquence. Fairbairn in the Cambridge Modern History (Vol 2, pp. 363 and 373) uses the following adjectives: elegant, lucid, incisive, exact, sober, precise, restrained; and for his French: refreshed, vivified, simple. Palm in Calvinism (p. 10) attributes to Calvin: profundity, conciseness, clarity, and readableness. He adds that many scholars consider the Institutes a French classic.
people. We have, therefore, taken the liberty to make the last French edition the basis of our new rendition (1952), comparing it with the English translation by Allen, the final Latin edition of Calvin, and the Dutch translation of the Latin edition of the three German scholars referred to above. We found Allen’s translation very accurate but sometimes more rhetorical than Calvin’s, for Allen does not hesitate a few times to add another adjective, adverb, or verb. He may have found encouragement for this in the French edition, though this on the whole is simpler and less rhetorical than the Latin. However, we judged it necessary to discard antiquated terms, rhetorical constructions, complicated sentences, and old idioms. And we tried to render Calvin’s eloquent remarks in modern, vital, simple, and imaginative language without obscuring, or changing the real meaning of the original. Allen’s work bears the stamp of the Humanistic Renaissance as well as the verbose romanticism of the beginning of the nineteenth century. Therefore, though we owe much to his accuracy and suggestions, we often had to break radically away from his mannerisms, and sometimes even from Calvin’s own oratorical turns, to bring the message up to date. We hope, however, that we have not altogether failed in keeping the meaning of Calvin intact, while putting forth an effort to prepare a work for our own day.

V

It is our conviction that all of Calvin’s Institutes ought to be rendered into modern English. This tremendous and far-reaching book ought to be read and studied again, and not only by the scholar who does not mind the cumbersome terms and constructions of the past, but also by the intelligent layman. All of the Institutes is not as simple as The Golden Booklet, but all of it was written in an almost untechnical style for the thousands of adherents who had no academic training. It was Calvin’s aim to instruct the people at large in the truth of the Scripture and to show that the Reformation was a return to the old Gospel and the old truth. The Institutes are, however, not yet antiquated. They are very much alive and in many respects up to date. For the old heresies are still around us, and Calvin attacks them in a masterly fashion. Behind his arguments is deep conviction, sound logic, and profound reverence for the Scriptures. Thus his exposition has been and still is of world-wide significance. No one, it has been said, has ever written a more compact and logical, and at the same time, simple and appealing work on Reformed Dogmatics than Calvin. His Institutes will remain unique and authoritative.

This can be stated with more emphasis of his Golden Booklet. This little work should be read and reread more than any other part of his Institutes, because it is not only devout but also positive and practical, sane and rational. We need books of this kind to be kept from the tide of false philosophy round about us. Many are the new thought fashions that try to beguile the young people. There are false pragmatism, false idealism, false asceticism, false moralism, false altruism. The gist of all this is the avoidance of externals. God demands regeneration and a clean heart. We need not be lured away from nature and culture as such, but we should be urged, continually and ardently, to separate ourselves spiritually from sin and the semblance of evil. Calvin’s demand that we be holy because God is holy and that we turn to Christ for forgiveness, for cleansing, and for a new life in every sphere of activity is the Biblical demand which comes to us as absolute and final.

VI

The question may be asked: Is then this Golden Booklet a guide for only Christians, or can it be read with profit by every one? Calvin’s answer would be: There is no dual morality, one for believers and one for unbelievers. The command of God comes to all, and we all should obey. But Calvin would add: There can be no genuine imitation of Christ for those who deny his Godhead and his Mediation. The first question for every mortal is not How shall I live? but What do I think of Christ? Calvin and the Bible cannot be modernized, not even by Kierkegaard, or by Barth! Calvin says: We either follow Christ, the Son of God, Who shed His blood that we might be saved, or we march in the army of Satan. If we obey Christ, our Imitation of Him will be humble, sincere, and genuine, even though it may not be perfect. A Christian may fall into sin, but he does not want to live in it. However, if we listen to the siren call of the Devil, our obedience, self-denial, patience, hope, moderation, contentment, and faithfulness will be false, and at bottom, according to Paul, egotism, and according to Christ, materialism or worship of Mammon, which points in the same direction, for hunger after gold is gilded selfishness. In our own strength we become only hypocrites. But in Christ we are more than conquerors, for in Him we can enjoy the peace of God which passes all understanding. These may seem to be harsh words for some, but they are sweet gospel for those who obey in sincerity, and they will bear much fruit for the whole world, if the church of God will return to the Biblical truth, and testify of it in the pulpit, in the school, and in every sphere of activity.

From all this it should be plain that Calvin has been sadly misunderstood. Precisians and Armenians both have appealed to the Institutes. So have even Liberals like Professor Scholten at Leyden. Calvin has been called an Intellectualist and a Voluntarist by his orthodox followers, as if he did

(5). We gladly acknowledge the editorial suggestions of Miss Alice Penenga of the Editorial Office of the National Union of Christian Schools.

THE CALVIN FORUM * • * MAY, 1952
not believe that both intellect and will were depraved, needed to be reborn. He has been accused of teaching thorough or utter depravity but he actually advocates the belief in total depravity, that is, depravity in all human faculties. Calvin believes in the "virtues of the pagans" and certain "glimmering" or "vestiges" in their philosophy. His followers have from the beginning been divided into Preciscians, Moderates, and Latitudinarians. The last group were those who shield their worldly-mindedness with Calvin's principle of Christian Liberty, (Institutes, III, 19) though Calvin himself was a man of moderation according to Institutes, III.

VII Calvin has been accused of over-emphasizing the doctrines of election, original sin, and sovereign grace, and of under-emphasizing Christian living. But he gives an exposition of the Ten Commandments and writes a little handbook on the Christian Walk. It has been said that Calvin did not develop his ethics. These allegations are merely legends which multiplied because Reformed leaders stopped reading his Institutes. In them Calvin preserves a remarkable balance of religious, moral, and philosophical values. He not only points back to the simple faith of the Apostles but also to the sincere Christian practice of these same Apostles. Calvin believes in a double or mystical unification with the Triune God through Christ, and the practice of a living faith (which means, in short, obedience, self-denial, and fidelity in our threefold calling in church, state, and society, as portrayed in the Golden Booklet, and in the chapter on Christian Liberty (Inst. III, 19)) are the three degrees or steps of true piety; but it must be evident that the climax of the devotional life is found in the small, but rich volume of The Golden Booklet of the True Christian Walk.

From Our Correspondents

FROM ONE OF OUR READERS

Dr. Cecil De Boer, Editor
The Calvin Forum,
Calvin College and Seminary
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan

Dear Editor:

In the February issue of The Calvin Forum an article appeared from the pen of Mr. Andrew van der Zee entitled "William Cowper, Calvinistic Post." It was with a sense of pleasure that I read it. But near the close of the article the author made some remarks concerning the hymn "There is a fountain filled with blood" which I call into question. The author writes:

The image of the first verse is very disturbing to one's sensibilities. One visualizes a host of sinners bathing in a flood of blood. Scripture gives no warrant for such a use of the image of a fountain. In the Bible is the beautiful imagery of a fountain flowing with life-giving waters. If Cowper had taken his cue for this hymn from Biblical imagery, he would not have fancied such an absurd image as a fountain pouring forth a shower-bath of blood.

In such a hymn as this, theology and imagery are very closely united. I trust however that the author is not calling into question the theology contained in it, but only the imagery. The Modernist would reject the theology of this hymn. Mr. Vander Zee calls into question its imagery. I am not accusing Mr. Vander Zee of being Modernistic. But the thing that disturbs me is that the Modernist in rejecting the "blood theology" and Mr. Vander Zee in rejecting the imagery of this hymn are using the same reason. Mr. Vander Zee writes: "The image... is very disturbing to one's sensibilities." We are on dangerous ground when we argue from our sensibilities instead of from Scripture.

There is a danger that we also are becoming too "refined" to think, to speak, to sing and to rejoice in the "blood theology." Yes, indeed, this blood theology is a gory thing. But so was also the worship ritual in the old Testament with its sacrifices and sprinkling of blood. It was by the sprinkling of blood that things were cleansed. Heb. 9:23. The people themselves were sprinkled with blood. Cf.
Ex. 24:8, Hebrews 9:19,20. We in our days tend to shy away from such gory business. But let us not forget that the cross of Christ which is Paul’s only glory is not a cross of gold inlaid with ivory and precious stones but a cross which is streaked with blood, although it be the precious blood of Christ. If the image of “bathing in a flood of blood” is disturbing to our sensibilities, how much more shocking is not the statement of Jesus when He said: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves.” John 6:53.

I am not so sure that we even need to reject the imagery of this hymn. Mr. Vander Zee writes: “One visualizes a host of sinners bathing in a flood of blood. Scripture gives no warrant for such a use of the image of a fountain.” Of course, if there is no warrant in Scripture for the image, then the image must be rejected. In Zechariah 13:1 we read: “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.” I realize that this may refer to a fountain of waters and yet it is plain that this Scripture finds its fulfillment in Christ, whose blood cleanses us from all sin. I John 1:7. Explaining the text in the light of the context we notice a prophetic reference to the Christ as One whom they pierced (12:10) and as One who was wounded (13:6). If it refers to a fountain of waters, it can only be waters which symbolize the blood of Christ. That fountain is for sin and for uncleanness, and the blood of Jesus cleanses from sin and uncleanness. It should not be “disturbing to our sensibilities” to think of “sinners bathing in a flood of blood.” “These are they that come out of the great tribulation and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Rev. 7:14; cf. Rev. 1:5, and Heb. 9:14. The form for the Administration of Holy Baptism used in the Chr. Reformed Church contains this statement: “And when we are baptized into the Name of the Son, the Son seals unto us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins....” To speak of sinners being washed in blood may be gory imagery, but it is Biblical.

Yours truly,

(Rev.) Gerrit Vander Plaats

FROM THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The University
Potchefstroom, South Africa
January 16, 1952

Dear Dr. De Boer,

This will be my first letter to you as Editor-in-Chief of The Calvin Forum. May I extend to you a word of congratulations and of welcome! The Calvin Forum is such an important and valuable publication for the Christian world that I consider the editorship thereof as an honour to the holder. That this task has fallen on your shoulders is a compliment to you and in our Calvinistic view a great responsibility. May the Lord give you the light and wisdom so necessary in editing a paper that can have no higher calling than solely “To the glory of God!”

That you have become the new editor brings to my mind the fact that you have succeeded a very capable predecessor. The name of Dr. Clarence Bouma has been so intimately associated with The Calvin Forum that readers will find it difficult to accept the fact that his name has disappeared from our forum. We shall miss his inspiring and revealing “leaders.” The first articles I consistently read on receiving my copy of every Forum were the “leaders,” the longer and the shorter ones. They were always very much up-to-date, very timely, very clear, and very reliable: Calvinistic truth was uncompromisingly stated. May Dr. Bouma return to the Editorial Committee in the near future! May the Lord grant him complete recovery of health!

The new year has started and with it new tasks and responsibilities. A week ago the South African primary and secondary schools reopened after the short summer holidays. Next month most of the schools for higher education will start on their new programme. In South Africa all educational institutions are organized on the basis of a year’s work beginning in January or February and ending in December. School programmes are organized on the yearly unit. At the beginning of the educational year, scholars start on their new course and in December they have to write examinations on the year’s work in order to be promoted to the next and higher step in the educational ladder. Our primary schools usually cover seven or eight years of the scholar’s life: there are two sub-standards (also called grades) and five or six standards. Our secondary schools begin after the fifth or sixth standard, and they again cover four or five years. The duration of a scholar’s school life is twelve years at the end of which he matriculates, that is to say, passes an examination which gives him entry to the university. At the university the student takes three years over his first degree. On completion of a first degree, the student may proceed with his master’s degree, on which follows the doctor’s degree. In the case of a very successful student the course of study from the matriculation standard to the doctor’s status lasts as a minimum seven years, usually ten years.

Educational opportunities are wide-spread. Education is compulsory from six to sixteen, that is for at least ten years, usually for twelve years. Primary education is free and so is secondary education. On the other hand, higher education is fee-paying, and considerably so.

Education is a very expensive governmental concern. Besides the two main European populations, there are in South Africa at least three important non-European populations: the Coloured or mixed, the Asiatic or Indian, and the Bantu or black populations. The education of the Europeans—the En-
glish-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking—brings with it a dual system, because each group is keen on its own medium of instruction. The education of the non-Europeans brings with it a treble system, because Coloureds, Indians, and Bantus are keen on their own separate schools. A very difficult problem for the European government is the vast difference in cultural and financial development of these five sections. On the whole, the two European groups are better off than the non-European groups in culture and wealth. There is further the problem of numbers: for every European there are five non-Europeans. The European minority must bear the burden of the education of the non-European majority. And I must state most emphatically that the Europeans are doing their utmost to give the non-Europeans equality of educational treatment. There is no important centre in the Union of South Africa which has not the necessary primary and secondary schools for non-Europeans. Vocational and university training facilities are gradually improving.

The racial, and more particularly the linguistic, problem in education in South Africa forms a most difficult and acute problem. In a future letter I might return to the problem of the medium of school education.

Before closing my letter, I may just remind you that on April 6 we shall celebrate in South Africa the fact that on that date Jan Van Riebeeck landed exactly three hundred years ago at the Cape and established here the first European settlement, from which has developed this large country—South Africa. In commemoration of Van Riebeeck’s landing, nation-wide celebrations have started early this year and will continue right up to the exact date on April 6. All Europeans are taking a keen interest and an active part in these festivities. From a mere handful of Europeans South Africa has grown to its present status. We need many more Europeans to equalize the position between Europeans and non-Europeans. With the exception of a few aborigines—Bushman and perhaps Hottentots—all the present inhabitants are “comers in”: the Europeans from the South and the Bantus from the North, and the Indians from overseas.

A very mixed population and a non-existent South African nation as yet!

With kind regards,

J. Chr. Coetzee

THE STATE OF THE HUNGARIAN CHURCHES EARLY IN 1952

The following letter came from behind the Iron Curtain early this Spring. Its authenticity will be obvious to the reader. For security purposes the FORUM must withhold the name or names of those through whom the manuscript reached us. We present it in its original form.—Ed.

The most vital change for the vast majority of the clergy in Hungary, with which they have to face the possibilities of their very meagre living, in 1952, is that they have lost the main and most stable source of income, their glebe lands.

When The State Office for Church Affairs was created, in the first half of 1951, one of its first activities was to regulate the stipend subsidies—usually called congrua—granted to all members of the clergy at a unified rate, which meant 700-800 forints monthly, about 60 U.S. dollars (but in purchasing value no more than half of it) to the parish priests and pastors; and 500-600 forints (about 40 dollars) to curates and assistant preachers.

Generally speaking, the clergy had accepted this Trojan gift—“Timeo Danaos at dona ferenet,” to quote the words of Vergilius—suspiciously. And they were right. Later in the year, last September, a government decree was issued, which ordered that all glebe lands must be “offered voluntarily” to the State.

When the drastic, but no doubt just and necessary, land reform of March 1945 was introduced, the churches lost far the greater part of their landed estates. These were huge indeed in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, while the landed estates owned by the Protestant bishops, many of the parishes and church schools, mostly through endowments, were considerably less. The uniformly established upper limit of estates left in the possession of each bishop, chapter, religious order, parish or church institution, was 100 yokes, about 60 acres. The glebe lands used by parish priests or pastors, were in most cases smaller than this upper limit, but even so the income of it was invariably higher than the miserable sum offered in the form of stipend subsidies. But what was even more important, the income from the glebe lands gave independence to the clergy, while stipend subsidies were paid by the State.

One of the monstrosities born out of the repulsive hypocrisy of totalitarian treatment of religious freedom, pompously asserted in the constitutions of all so-called peoples’ republics, is “illegal religious instruction”.

Education Minister, Joseph Darvas, who is also Lay President of the Montana District of the Lutheran Church, having addressed the heads of the educational departments of County Councils, a political and most influential group, on January 7th, severely reprimanded the headmasters and teachers of general schools (age group 6-14) because they thought that “the destructive and threatening influence of clerical reaction” all but disappeared. It did not, Minister Darvas told his audience, and gave them at once the following illustrative story: One of the school inspectors visited a general school in Hajdudorog in N.E. Hungary, the seat of the Hungarian Uniate Diocese, and found to his utter despair that out of 382 pupils no more than 79 were present. The others, he was told, went
to a Virgin Mary festival. This was by no means the single occasion when four-fifths of the pupils of the school went to the cathedral. There were 20 to 30 schooldays over the year when the Greek Uniate Church had similar festival days, the school inspector was told in innocent frankness.

Then Minister Darvas said that in Budapest itself 62 cases of illegal religious instruction were detected. He did not say exactly what he meant by illegal religious instruction, but it could be inferred from the cases he enumerated. Thus he said that the Roman Catholic parish priest in Mezőtúr, a large agricultural community, organized "sports societies" for the Catholic youth, and used this pretext for giving the boys religious instruction. The Protestant pastor in Ózd, a mining town, was accused for having instructed older boys to gather their boyfriends in their homes, and give them "illegal" religious instruction there.

"We must be careful," the Minister insisted, "that regulations issued in connection with religious instructions in schools, must be observed more exactly and faithfully." He also expressed his view that "the best means to succeed in the fight against ecclesial reaction was to strengthen educators in their knowledge of materialist ideology." And he is, mind you, the Lay President of a Lutheran Church District.

The situation of religious instruction in state schools in the beginning of 1952 was briefly this: The Communist Party—having used the Minister of Education and also the State Office for Church Affairs as their handy tools—succeeded in annihilating religious instruction in all grades of schools in the large metropolitan and industrial area of Budapest and also in most other industrial or mining towns of the country, almost without trace. As against this, the country districts, including most of the larger towns as well, resisted vigorously, and there 80 percent, and in no rare cases 100 percent, of the parents used their rights to demand religious instruction in the schools for their children.

The success of the Communists in the towns was not due to industrial workers being more ready to let their children grow up without religious instruction in the schools than the peasants of the countryside. No. But the pressure applied to the workers by the Communist Party was so methodical and relentless, that after two years (optional religious education was introduced in the autumn of 1949) there hardly remained a single industrial worker or state employee in the city areas, who dared to send his children to religious instruction in the schools. Sunday Schools are still being permitted in the Protestant churches, but their enrollments also fell to a third or fourth of what they were before.

Voluntary contributions or free-will offerings are practically unknown in Hungary, as anywhere in the churches of Continental Europe. Though church taxes have been and are still being collected by the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches alike, they have not been very important in the past, with the exception of smaller and poorer parishes. The Roman Catholic Church had its vast landed estates, and the State had always granted essential sums to the "accepted" churches—religious receptae—including the major Protestant bodies as well.

Church taxes are not a real problem for country parishes or congregations in the country, even today. Having been stripped of their parochial schools in 1948—the upkeep of which was their only serious burden—they have no serious anxieties about remaining in existence, mostly because village folks have an old and well-ingrained custom to contribute, often in kind, various agricultural products for the upkeep of their parishes. City congregations, however, first of all in Budapest, are much more dependent on incomes drawn out of church taxes.

The spectacular success of the Communist regime to kill part-time religious instruction in State Schools in the Budapest area may tempt them to paralyze the activity of the churches in the large industrial city areas where the church is their deadliest and most annoying ideological enemy, by depriving the churches of the right to collect church taxes.

To reach this goal, as I was reminded by one of the Protestant Pastors in Budapest, they may either interdict the churches to collect church taxes or they may apply pressure on practically all who are receiving their salaries or wages from the State not to pay church taxes, threatening them in the same time that if they do, they will be regarded as traitors of the labour class and its great embodiment and life giver, the Communist Party, and all what it stands for. Should this happen—which presently cannot be predicted—it may bring most city parishes and congregations to the brink of financial collapse.

Bishop Andrew Enyedy, of the Cis-Tibiscan District of the Reformed Church, announced his retirement early in January. He was elected bishop in 1942 and was pastor of the Miskolc Reformed Church since 1924. He is going to retain this pastorate even after his retirement as bishop. He is 64 years of age.

Bishop Enyedy has disliked the too-eager and too obliging cooperation with the Communist government of the country of such top leaders of the Reformed Church as Bishops Albert Berecky and John Peter, and also Mister Roland Kiss, one time Lay President of the General Synod. Though he never thought of such politically tinted opposition to the temporal rulers of the country, as that which led to tragic consequences in the case of Bishop Ordass, he wanted to remain at his post. Then it happened during 1951, that it was decided to close the over 400 year old theological school of his church district in
Sárospatak, as of September 1951. The whole church district, as one man, stood up against this decision, but it was no use and the theological school had to be closed.

The opposition and disgust against the closing of Sarospatak School became so strong that the students themselves revolted. About 100 of them were transferred to the Debrecen school of theology; they took the train—this happened last autumn—but next morning returned to their school in Sárospatak. That did not help them either. They had no choice but to return to Debrecen. Thereupon Bishop Enyedy gave up the fight also, and he sent in his resignation to the presidents of the General Synod, who forced him into retirement.

One of the most disturbing factors in the religious situation of Hungary is (presently) that the largest Protestant group, the Reformed Church with over 2 million adherents, has very talented and active but at the same time most unpopular and even hated and despised leadership in the persons of the three men mentioned above, bishop Berecky and Peter, and Lay President Roland Kiss, who also form the presidential council of the General Synod.

The real tragedy of the situation is that all three men, especially Bishop Berecky (whose name became widely known in western Protestant circles during the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Rolle, Switzerland last summer), are not only good Christians but also men fit to be leaders of their Church, if their leadership had not been spoiled by the poisoned atmosphere created by the present totalitarian regime and supplanted upon the most unwilling and dismayed Hungarian people and their country by the will of the Kremlin.

Bishop Berecky and the other two men were sincere men of the resistance during the rule of Hitlerism in Hungary. By preference and true conviction they would be good democratic church leaders also. But this won’t do, and in actual fact they cannot afford now to let the spirit of an otherwise healthy and natural opposition flourish in the councils of their Church.

Thus it happened that when the newly elected General Synod, constituted of 50 ministerial and 50 lay members, was first convened in October 1951, the spirit of the above-mentioned healthy opposition to church leadership tried to assert itself, but was crushed cruelly at its very beginning.

One of the first tasks of the General Synod was to elect a Synodal Council, a continuing legislative and consultative body between the sessions of the General Synod.

The plenum of the Synod, to show that they are not in complete agreement with the leadership of the Church, rejected two candidates who were recommended for membership in the Synodal Council by the presidents of the Synod, and elected instead their own trusted men, namely Rev. Imre Szabó, Senior of one of the Budapest Classes, and Rev. Béla Pap, Pastor of Karcag, a large agricultural community in East Hungary.

This the presidency of the General Synod would not tolerate. It was branded as an attempt to organize Church reaction, and the two men were summarily dealt with. Both were forced to resign their membership in the Synod. Rev. Imre Szabó had to resign his seniorship as well, and leave his Budapest parish where he was minister for more than twenty years, and accept a pastorate in a small village called Buj in North Eastern Hungary. Pastor Béla Pap was less lucky. A week or two after the meeting of the General Synod, he was first questioned and later arrested by the State security police, and nothing certain has been heard of him ever since. He is aged 45 and has a large family.

Continuous lull characterizes the life of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church since the closing down of the Grosz trial last summer and the subsequent change in the policy of the hierarchy from resistance to a more or less sincere submission to the will of the government.

The situation however has remained substantially the same as it was before the Grosz trial. The suspicion of the government towards all members of the hierarchy has not been allayed, and the bishops know more than well that the present truce can be broken by the government, by the use of any flimsy pretext, and in any moment.

Apart from this general aspect of the situation, no further development in the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church has occurred during the last six months. The scope of the movement of the so-called “Peace priests” (these members of the lower clergy, as well as minor, newly and locally [not Vatican] appointed members of the hierarchy, who have joined, and are active in the work of the National Peace Council of Priests) has considerably widened. But so far not a single bishop has actively joined this organization, though most of them have passively approved its activity and have given their approval to appoint such “peace priests” as members of their diocesan staffs even transferring them from their parishes to work at their aulea. In this respect even Joseph Pétery, the Bishop of Vác, one of the most stubborn opponents of the present communist regime, seems to have given up his resistance and does everything to avoid open conflict with the government.

The most important feature of the present situation of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary is the deep and unmoving loyalty of the Roman Catholic masses to their Church. This can be equally found in agricultural districts and among industrial workers and miners. All the Roman Catholic Churches are full on Sundays and the workers are jealously insisting on their right to be free of work on all the major Christian holidays. Large crowds attended the midnight masses held in the churches
of Budapest last Christmas. Tens of thousands attend the solemn processions in Budapest and the larger towns organized on Eastern Eve (the so-called Resurrection Procession) and on Corpus Christi Day. The crowds of the devout are constantly reminding the Communist Party of the unconcealable fact that the same masses can be persuaded to be present at the parades or rallies organized by the Communist Party only through the application and use of the strictest coercion.

One hundred Roman Catholic priests, mostly the members of the abolished religious orders, were released from prison or concentration camp a few days before Christmas—so I was told by a Roman Catholic journalist. Father Miklós Nagy, a former Jesuit, who was tried and sentenced together with Cardinal Mindszenthy in February 1949, was amongst them. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment and was released only after having spent the entire three years in prison.

Book Review

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS CRITICALLY APPRAISED

Professor Carnell’s prolific pen has again been dipped deeply into the inkwell and has produced another large book on an important subject. It is a delight to know that he seeks to defend and propagate the orthodox Christian faith. He writes popularly and stimulatingly. This well-written, clearly printed, and firmly bound volume deserves a wide audience.

Carnell does not aim to give a conventional defense of the Christian faith. “The positive delineation of Christianity found both in the Scriptures and in the endless volumes of commentary on them, is so well known to Western culture (sic!) that one would hesitate to use up more valuable paper printing the story again . . . . But there is a conspicuous paucity of literature which lays bare what is left if we leave Christianity in favor of another option” (p. 44). This need Carnell seeks to meet. He gives no positive demonstration, but at best tries to establish “a dialectic of despair” by showing that nothing is left if the Christian faith is rejected.

The major portion of the book is an axiological analysis of a set of typical value options facing contemporary men. These value options—hedonism, materialism, positivism, rationalism, humanism, finitism, universalism, Roman Catholicism, and existentialism—are like stones in a stream. Just as boys crossing a stream jump from one stone to the next to keep from falling into the water, so Carnell takes the reader from stone to stone, and points out that one must move from the lower to the higher and from the higher to faith in the person of Christ.

The reader follows Carnell as the author attempts to cross the stream. The first stones—pleasure and bread—he calls the lower immediacies. Carnell evaluates them as to their satisfying power as values for which to live and die. But the search for pleasure ends in the boredom of distaste or the frustration of disappointment from which grow guilt and exhaustion. Materialism as an end in itself follows the same cycle. The socially and economically discontented are frustrated while the rich are bored. And Communism which seeks to solve the problems of injustice “does it at the cost of rejecting the very spiritual and moral vitalities by which alone all decency is preserved.”

With Carnell we jump to the stones of the higher immediacies. The scientific method is legitimate and its relevance incontestable (sic!) when applied to quantitative data. But when it is used to measure qualitative and normative data, it ends in the cult of positivism which worships the scientific method. On to the next stone—rationalism. “Whereas animals can think, man alone has the power to think about thinking,” says Carnell. But the rational ideal is another form of immediacy. By defining satisfaction as the union of a person with a thing, it underwrites the power of man for fellowship.

The inadequacies of these lower and higher immediacies whips up spirit to jump on to the next stones in the stream. It seeks devotion to man rather than to things. Humanism accounts for both head and heart by combining the skill of the scientific method with the satisfactions found in serving humanity. But humanism fails because humanity too is impersonal. The second table of the law is floated without the dignifying foundation of the first. So the cycle of guilt and forgiveness forces us to the next stone of theism where the heart is driven from faith in man to faith in God. Here the author finds that philosophy has not been able to offer more than a finite god. When fellowship is sought, we are driven back by the knowledge of our own sinfulness. The problem of man is the uneness of guilt which gnaws his heart. And so it is to faith in Jesus Christ that Carnell turns attention after viewing these “threshold options.”

But “just as the heart was on the verge of resting trustfully in the person of Jesus Christ . . . a golden apple of discord was suddenly thrown across the path by the universalist.” Faith in agape takes the place of faith in the person of Christ. Again a thing is juxtaposed with a person and love is destroyed. As one moves on to the next stone in the stream, he is ready to yield to the institution of the Roman Catholic church because it is “too vast, too old, too wise to be wrong.” But after spirit has conducted a private investigation by the rule of whole perspective coherence, it sees that “an a priori Pelagianism has replaced the plain revelation of Jesus Christ.” Rome leads to another complex immediacy by blocking the way to wholehearted fellowship with Christ.

“The imminent danger one faces in revolting from an all-embracing absolute such as Roman Catholicism is that, having tasted of the elixir of independence and freedom, one may become completely drunken with his own autonomy,” Carnell warns against resting upon S. Kierkegaard’s stone of subjectivism. Neither dialectical theology nor ex-
istentialist philosophy can satisfy. Scripture does not encourage a subjective "leap" but always grounds cordial trust in Jesus Christ in reasonable evidences. "Only the Christian system makes an individual or anything else meaningful." Revelation and science and philosophy must not be bifurcated, for there is "a single genus of knowledge which envelops both time and eternity."

The discussion of the alternatives to Christianity consumes 507 pages. It is an axiologically analysis in which he seeks to create a "dialectic of despair." In a short closing section of six pages he attempts to answer the question: "To Whom Shall We Turn?" If prejudice is overcome, he says, one will not so readily reject Christianity. Admitting that there are blind spots in the Christian revelation, he points out that prudence dictates that the rational man accept the system attended by the fewest difficulties. "Christianity at least explains man's predicament from the center of his heart, and that is accomplishing a great deal. Fairness at least requires that any substitute accomplish as much." Carnell himself believes that the premises of Christianity are able to satisfy the whole man and therefore a rational man ought not to pass it by. "This is the sum of the matter: Since we must suffer for something, let us endeavor to suffer for the right."

The question the reviewer must now consider is whether Dr. Carnell has done justice to his subject. One can certainly agree with the author that there is no option which can rightfully replace Christianity. The reviewer rejoices in the fact that Carnell accepts the inerrant Scriptures as his guide and seeks thereby to advance the cause of evangelical Christianity.

But is the book really "a philosophy of the Christian religion?" No, the title is really a misnomer. The title awakens expectations which the book does not satisfy. What is a philosophy of religion? What is a philosophy of the Christian religion? These questions the author does not answer, although brief indications may be found. Carnell does not examine the possibility of a Christian philosophy nor does he relate his thought to the popular philosophy-of-religion school which rejects the infallible Word. It would have enhanced the value of this volume if the author had dealt with these matters and taken account of what has already been written on the subject from a Reformed standpoint. But it can hardly be said that when a Christian seeks to refute current non-Christian philosophies, he has thereby written "a philosophy of the Christian religion."

It is to be regretted that Carnell did not devote more space to the positive statement of Christianity. Western culture is not sufficiently aware of its Christian heritage. This is demonstrated in Carnell's own statements, for what there is here of a positive nature is not flawlessly when evaluated in the light of Scripture. He places an emphasis upon reason and the will which would tend to release them in a measure from the totality of human depravity. He says that he can not make one a Christian because "only the Spirit of God can create a heart of love." This part of the sentence is good, but unfortunately he adds that "only the will of the individual can summon the Spirit." This does not harmonize with the Biblical account of Saul of Tarsus, later called Paul.

In spite of himself, Carnell refers again and again to the judgment of reason and the rational coherence of the Christian system. "Philosophy presupposes that reason guides the wise man into life, and Christianity does not gainsay this. Reason stands guard over the heart . . . (p. 29). Again, "the Bible defends the primacy of reason as the faculty through which all options must clear" (183). Carnell does not point out that reason has also been vitiated by sin. He constantly appeals to reason as if it were an adequate judge. But fallen man considers Scripture foolish and irrational, while the sanctified heart and mind embrace it as the highest rationality. The author admits that he cannot make anyone a Christian any more than one can make the horse drink. But he fails to bring out that God must open the understanding as well as the heart, and that it is therefore foolish to appeal to reason and expect the natural man to act rationally toward Christianity.

All of this brings us to the basic question of the apologetic method employed. In spite of the fact that he does not want to give a conventional defense of Christianity, he has fallen into the rut of conventional apologetics which seeks at best to set up a "probability" case for Christianity. Bishop Butler has set the classic mold. Although Carnell aims only to create a "dialectic of despair," he attempts to create it only by showing to the universally "rational" man that all other options do not satisfy, but that Christianity "probably" will. He is content to end with Plato's method: As long as men cannot find an absolutely satisfying system, they must settle for the "second best." Obviously, Carnell himself does not view Christianity in this way, but he does when he attempts his apologetics. Once one has fallen prey to this method in apologetics, he usually waters down Christianity in some aspect to account for the inadequacies of the man to whom it is addressed. But the Christian apologist has no right to present Christianity as a "probability" or "second best." On the basis of Carnell's apologetic method, how do we know that Christianity will not prove to be another form of immediacy and is not really a stable stone upon which we can safely cross the stream? What basis is there for believing that the stream will not widen, or change its course so that this stone may later prove inadequate? The stream might even dry up and this stone might not be needed. The "probability" method in apologetics has no answer to these questions.

The case for Christianity can only be stated upon the full basis of God's revelation. It allows for no probability or second best. And it will not do to push back the problem of certainty for the individual to an element of uncertainty in Christianity itself. The Christian apologist must realize that an appeal to reason negatively is just as fallacious as a positive appeal. Scripture presents faith in God as the only rational, satisfying position. Christ and him crucified is foolishness to the world but to the believer who has the mind of the Spirit, it is the essence of truth. Only the Holy Spirit opens the heart and the mind to bring conviction. Therefore the Christian apologist, like the preacher, must seek to present the Christian position in its fullness, without compromise. It is to be regretted that Carnell's apologetic method is not wholly in harmony with the infallible Scriptures which he seeks to defend.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Klooster has just returned from Europe where he received a Doctor's degree in Theology from the Free University of Amsterdam under Dr. Berkouwer, who recently lectured in this country.

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