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No Voice Against Evil?

W e are living in the age of marvels. The seven wonders of the ancient world are but children’s toys compared to the wonders of the twentieth century, and more wonders and more marvels are promised for the future. Constantly we are told that the atomic age will usher in this or that—all for our comfort and ease. And yet, people in general do not seem to be genuinely happy about this era of marvels and its promises for the future. There is no real enthusiasm about it. Probably this is due to the fact that the atomic age was ushered in with a bang. Mankind’s first experience with it was a devastatingly destructive one. Men’s hearts everywhere failed with fear.

This fear still haunts people. Although peacetime uses of atomic energy are being developed, humanity is constantly reminding itself of what a powerful destructive force atomic energy is. Each year new bombs are constructed, each bomb better than the previous one because it can kill more people. And so, although we have found a treasure, we are afraid of it, and our fear is growing. It is well, then, to recall the statement of our Savior that we should not fear those who are able to destroy the body, but we should rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul.

Here in America the atomic age seems to be characterized by another force. This force can be devastatingly destructive of human personality. It doesn’t affect our bodies: it sears our souls and warps our minds. This force is currently labelled McCarthyism, and rightly so. In the past few months we have again witnessed what a ruthless force this is when exercised by its godfather. Senator McCarthy’s one man investigations followed by a release of selected bits of information are anything but honest. It is anything but democratic. We were promised great things with the Fort Monmouth radar center investigation. People were charged with treasonable behavior, but the charges did not hold, and nothing has come of this.

An imitation of Senator McCarthy’s technique would be somewhat as follows: Mr. X is, he says passionately interested in improving moral conditions in the Christian Reformed Church. One way to do this is to root out adulterers. So Mr. X goes to Chicago and says that the church there is corrupt to the core. He charges every minister, elder, and deacon with flagrant violation of the seventh commandment. An investigation is made, and one such individual is found amongst all those named. Every minister, elder, and deacon has suspicion cast upon him, and many reputations are ruined. But this is all justified—was not one adulterer found out and cast without the gate?

The amazing fact is that as yet there has been no outcry against this technique in the journals from so-called orthodox circles. About all that has been stated is that the results have justified all of Senator McCarthy’s rantings. Many writers in these journals even seem to admire the results of McCarthyism. The Senator is spoken of in somewhat glowing terms.

It is time that the Christian press makes itself heard on this matter. The ninth commandment is being trampled underfoot in high places. And it is quite improper for those who sing “Oh how love I Thy law” to stand by and applaud. This is no time for our Christian journals to be silent on this matter. Let no one be intimidated by the threat that opposition to McCarthyism means sympathy for communism. Christians have no sympathy for treason. But there is a right way and a wrong way to combat it. By using the wrong way we cast out one evil spirit and let seven more come in, and we may be very sure that in so doing our last state will be much worse than our first.

Thedford P. Dirksé

1) It is good to note that in a recent number, the Covenanter-Witness has condemned the methods of Senator McCarthy.
The Philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd

II. Dooyeweerd and Hartmann

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This is the second of three articles on the philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd (hereafter referred to as VAD). We will take up here the question to what extent VAD have been influenced by their contemporaries. Our conclusion will be that the philosophy of VAD is a synthesis of Calvinism and Phenomenology, a post-Neo-Kantian contemporary philosophy of German origin.

It might be noted to begin with that VAD frequently (despite their fulminations against “synthesis-philosophy”) borrow things from other philosophers, and more particularly from Kantian and Neo-Kantian German philosophy. As Young says, “Dooyeweerd’s indebtedness to Kant is very great.”

Our interest here, however, is rather in following up the clue given by Dooyeweerd when he says he was “strongly influenced first by Neo-Kantianism and then by Husserl’s phenomenology.” And since the core of VAD’s system of philosophy is the notion of the fourteen law-spheres, or structural levels of the cosmos, and thus a core which lies in the field of ontology (the study of basic structure of the universe), we shall consider the Phenomenologist who has been most interested in the field of ontology: Nicolai Hartmann.

Hartmann, who died recently, was an older contemporary of VAD. He began his studies in the development of the new philosophy (Phenomenology) of Husserl and others, (a philosophy which arose from the turn-of-the-century Neo-Kantianism in German university circles, though in many ways a reaction against it) in 1909, with his Platos Logik des Seins. This was followed by a spate of books and articles, and Hartmann’s ideas were put in final form just before his death, in a trilogy on ontology.

Hartmann feels that Phenomenology marks a sharp break in the history of philosophy. Previous philosophies can be largely dismissed, for post-1650 philosophy disposed of older varieties, and recent criticism has shown that Kant’s position is untenable. Hence the necessity for a radically new approach. The old idea of metaphysical substance, for example, must be abandoned, as well as the old form-matter dichotomy. We must “radically unlearn the old.”

Hartmann finds the key to understanding the universe in the recognition of different metaphysical levels, different ontological realms, different strata. These strata are arranged in four main groups: the physical, the biological, the psychological, and the spiritual (or rational). These groups, and their subgroups (e.g., the rational includes language, history, economics, etc.) are arranged in a complex hierarchical structure. They are not completely separate, but rather closely related: the categories are united in a “meta-categorical focus” which Hartmann calls the principle of coherence, or the principle of hierarchy.

Each of the four main levels is higher than those underneath it, and lower than those above it. Each level (or realm, category, stratum) has its own laws, which apply in that level, but not necessarily on other levels.

Hence the new philosophy can solve the problem of antinomies which has bothered all previous philosophies. Antinomies simply are the result of applying the laws of one sphere to another sphere, which cannot be done.

Each sphere or stratum or level or realm has its own basic principle (Prinzip) which distinguishes it from other spheres. The higher spheres rest on the lower and are to some extent dependent on them. Thus a man, though he operates in the rational-spiritual world, remains dependent upon the laws of the spheresthe physical level.

1) W. Young, Toward a Reformed Philosophy (Grand Rapids: Piet Hein; 1959), p. 101. Cf. also p. 108 (influence of Heidegger on Dooyeweerd’s idea of meaning as a basic mode of created being); p. 110 (D.’s adoption of the medieval concept of the aevum); p. 113 (Heidegger’s idea that all of being is subject to time, an idea which reappears in D.); p. 126 (influence of Kant’s idea of antimony on D.); p. 131, (Scheler’s influence on VAD’s follower Stoker); p. 139, (post-Kantian influence on VAD’s practical denial of the philosophical value of the Logos-conception); p. 140 (influence of the Kantian idea of the transcendental subject on D.’s notion of the soul—Young calls it a “far cry from that soul defended by Calvin”).

2) H. Dooyeweerd, Wijsbegeerte der Weltsiege (3 vol., Amsterdam; 1935-6), I, v.
3) Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie, Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit, Der Aufbau der realen Welt (Stuttgart; 3 vol., 1935-1942). Also of value is his Neue Wege der Ontologie (1958).

4) Hartmann, New Ways, p. 14. The similarity in attitude to Dooyeweerd’s disdain for earlier philosophies is interesting.
5) The discussion here follows Hartmann’s Aufbau der realen Welt, pp. 30-45, 192-200, 418-39; also his New Ways, pp. 46-87. Hartmann does not break down his categories to the extent VAD do, though his subdivisions of the spiritual-rational category (Aufbau p. 38) correspond closely to VAD’s upper categories.
6) Hartmann, Aufbau, pp. 327 ff. and 423 ff.


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VAD's spheres is given an ritual sphere, is also bound by the laws of the physical sphere. The lower categories can exist without the higher; not the higher without the lower. But in a sense the higher categories are "free"; for they are more than the lower categories, and their functions are not exhausted by the functions of the lower categories. That is, though a man is bound by physical laws, his functions are not exhausted by action in the physical sphere; he has higher functions also.

Previous philosophies have failed to build a true philosophy because they did not recognize the existence of these strata or spheres, each governed by its own laws. All previous philosophies tried to make one sphere include all spheres, and hence their difficulties. Phenomenology, which recognizes the spheres each with its own law, can succeed where all previous philosophies have failed.²

Well, so much as a summary of Hartmann. The amazing resemblance to VAD on almost all the points listed above can easily be seen. The denial of metaphysical essences, the "new philosophy" approach, the notion of law-spheres, the relations between these spheres, the Prinzip governing each sphere, the division into four main groups of spheres, the treatment of antinomies, are the same in Hartmann and in VAD. A detailed proof of this would take too much space here, but even the summary so far given makes this obvious. A comparative study by a professional philosopher of Dooyeweerd and Hartmann's trilogy would doubtless show that the similarity extends to other aspects also. And doubtless many of the ideas of both can be traced back to Husserl, a major influence on the young Dooyeweerd and the young Hartmann both, and the founder of Phenomenology.³

It is hard to escape the conclusion that what VAD have produced is a synthesis-philosophy, a combination of Christian motifs and pagan ideas. The synthesis is not between Paul and Aristotle, as was that of Voetius; nor of Paul and Plato, as was Woltjer's; but rather of Paul and Phenomenology. And since Phenomenology was the coming thing when Dooyeweerd was a brilliant young student at the Vrije Universiteit it is not surprising at all. Nor is it a bad thing. What is bad is that VAD have presented this synthesis (or at least allowed it to be so presented by their followers) as a new thing based on Christianity only, quite different from the synthesis-philosophies of the past; based on Calvinism only, with no admixture of impure and worldly thought.

We are not yet through with our examination of VAD's newness of thought. If only Hartmann and VAD had developed the idea of spheres with their own laws, professional philosophers would doubtless pay more attention to VAD. Actually, as Loemker points out in a critical review of Hartmann, there have been many such philosophies developed since 1900, all of them stressing to greater or lesser degree this notion of law spheres.⁴

This can be clearly shown by considering the thought of James Feiblemann of Tulane University, who has never heard of VAD, and who has been only partially influenced by Hartmann. He develops a universe of law-spheres from quite a different background, which includes Whitehead, Peirce, and Reid. He acknowledges his debt to Husserl and Hartmann, but stresses his primary influence from Whitehead. Let us examine Feiblemann briefly.⁵

Feiblemann, like Hartmann, and like VAD, takes a contemptuous attitude towards previous philosophers. We must have a "new ontology" which will avoid the errors that have prevented all previous philosophers from solving the problems of the universe.

The key to understanding the universe is to be found in the recognition of different domains, fields, spheres, each governed by its own law. Each of these spheres rests on the one below it, and is to some extent dependent on it; thus a man, though he can think, is also dependent on the physical.⁶

As Feiblemann says, previous thinkers who have worked on this "new philosophy" didn't work out the number of spheres in detail. Feiblemann does this, and comes out with eight spheres. It may interest Forum readers to see Feiblemann's listing side by side with VAD's.

The Basic Law-spheres, domains, realms, strata, levels, are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feiblemann</th>
<th>VAD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Physical</td>
<td>1. Arithmetical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chemical</td>
<td>2. Spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Biological</td>
<td>3. Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Psychological</td>
<td>4. Biotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cultural</td>
<td>5. Psychical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Logical</td>
<td>7. Historical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ontological (or Philosophical)</td>
<td>8. Linguistic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ Affluv, pp. 418-425, explains this well; cf. also New Ways, p. 84 ff. It is this matter of dependence of the higher spheres on the lower which leads VAD into difficulty on the doctrine of the soul; for the soul (and angels) live in the spiritual-rational sphere, but are not bound by the laws affecting matter. Hence also VAD's attempt to escape this difficulty by denying the traditional notion of the soul as a metaphysical substance, and branding such a notion as "synthesis-philosophy."²

⁴ So Hartmann's colleague, Wein, op. cit., p. 563.

⁵ VAD and Hartmann also have differences, of course; Hartmann doesn't believe in God, VAD do. But this difference, as far as I can make out, has little major effect on the structures of their respective philosophies. The law that governs one of Hartmann's spheres is immanent; the law that governs one of VAD's spheres is given by God. But this means no more than that VAD's philosophy can be called a "Christian Phenomenology," just as Woltjer's philosophy can be called a "Christian Platonism."


⁷ The treatment here is especially from Feiblemann, op. cit., pp. 245-265.
Feiblemann also adds a ninth level, the supra-ontological or religious, for the convenience of those of his readers who wish to fit God in somewhere.

Now, any such system, whether that of VAD or Hartmann or Feiblemann, runs into difficulties. Among the ardent followers of Hartmann or VAD, these difficulties are ignored, criticisms are dismissed with name-calling, and the “new philosophy” is regarded as the only answer to contemporary philosophical problems. Professional philosophers (unless they become converts, which happens but rarely) remain unimpressed by the strident advocates of the “new philosophy.” Even Hartmann, the best-known of the advocates of the new ontology, has made few converts outside of the already convinced, namely his fellow Phenomenologists.

The philosophy of VAD, then, must be regarded, it seems to me, as an attempt, and an able one, at synthesizing Christian theology and Phenomenology. The synthesis is sometimes awkward; the two don’t always fit; and it is noteworthy, and somewhat alarming, that when this happens (as in the case of the traditional Christian view of the soul), VAD try to change the doctrine rather than change the philosophy.

For those who feel that Phenomenology is an important new departure in philosophy, that Hartmann will be recognized as one of the great thinkers of the 20th century, VAD’s attempt at fitting in this new philosophy into a Christian framework will be of utmost interest. For those who feel that Phenomenology is a minor philosophical school, imbued basically with the outlook of Neo-Kantianism, despite its revisions thereof, VAD’s attempt at working out a Christian version of Husserl and Hartmann’s thought will be greeted with interest.

New Views of Common Grace
in the Light of Historic Reformed Theology

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THE purpose of this article is to acquaint the readers with several difficulties that appear in Professor C. Van Til’s system of thought.

It is hard for me to reconcile some of his views with Reformed theology. I am writing this with a feeling of reluctance because it is so easy to leave a wrong impression. There is much in Van Til’s writing that is not only good, but so very good, that one almost hesitates to raise objections. He, and other members of the Westminster faculty, have distinguished themselves in their defense of the Reformed faith over against present-day Modernism. This and much more can be said by way of appreciation.

It is my prayerful desire that filial respect for brethren of the same Calvinistic persuasion may not be affected in the least in an open-hearted exchange of opinions. If such a discussion is carried on in the spirit of Christ, it cannot divided, but rather unite us in the faith which we mutually cherish. I now propose to evaluate this new system of thought that has made its appearance in the Westminster Seminary in the light of our historic Reformed faith. My chief objections to Van Til’s reasoning center on his epistomology. This in turn is directly related to two Reformed doctrines: General Revelation and Common Grace.

The VIEWS OF SCHILDER AND VAN TIL REGARDING EPISTOMOLOGY AND GENERAL REVELATION.

These views can be summarized under the following four basic premises, which control this whole system of thought:

1. First there is the negative premise— the break with the historic Reformed theology regarding its conception of general revelation and epistomology. Regarding this matter Van Til and Schilder are in basic agreement. In this article I will, however, limit myself almost exclusively to the views of Van Til.

Van Til states that Kuyper is not “Calvinistic” but “Platonic” and “Kantian” in his conception of the universals. By “universals” Kuyper means concepts such as trees, lions, stars, etc. Kuyper accepts the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the basis for his philosophy of science. Natural man still has traces of the divine image through which the general testimony of the Holy Spirit operates. Because of this, natural man still has conceptions of universals and of facts. As a reason for this Kuyper offers the fact that regeneration does not change our senses or the appearance of the world about us. He therefore feels justified in concluding that the whole area of the more primitive observation which limits itself to measuring, weighing and counting is common to both the Christian and the non-Christian. Kuyper states, “Whether somethings weighs 2 or 3 milligrams, may be absolutely determined by anyone able to weigh.” Van Til characterizes Kuyper’s reasoning here as a “sort of Ding an sich very similar to that of Kant.” Van Til further states that Kuyper is like the Roman Catholics, Aristotle, and the Scholastics in his views as to what believers and non-believers have in common (cf. Common Gra. e, pp. 22, 23, 35).
Van Til’s criticism of Bavinck is much like that offered against Kuyper. He charges Bavinck with “moderate realism and Scholasticism” (Cf. Idem, p. 45). Van Til claims that Bavinck identifies the Christian and the pagan conception of the unknowability of God. (Idem, p. 46). Van Til speaks of Bavinck’s view regarding the theistic arguments, or testimonies, as Bavinck calls them, for the existence of God as a “non-Christian form of reasoning.” Bavinck says that the non-Christian, by means of the testimonies of the Holy Spirit, has God-consciousness and moral-consciousness. This, according to Van Til, is a non-Christian form of reasoning. (Idem, pp. 47, 48, 49). Van Til also accuses Bavinck of wavering between a Christian and non-Christian concept of natural theology (Idem, pp. 55, 56).

Van Til’s criticism of the “Old Princeton Theology” is very similar to his criticism of Kuyper and Bavinck. Also, the theology of “Old Princeton” regarding epistemology and general revelation is characterized as “Roman Catholic” and a “non-Christian methodology.” (Idem, pp. 51, 52).

Van Til’s disagreement with Hepp follows the same line. Hepp, like Bavinck, speaks of “testimonies” of the Holy Spirit to the non-Christian whereby the non-Christian knows that God is. We quote Van Til: “Of these proofs, constructed on a neutral and therefore non-Christian basis [Hepp speaks of “testimonies” of the Holy Spirit, which certainly cannot be called a non-Christian basis. M.J.,] Hepp says they cry day and night that God exists. To this we reply that they cry day and night that God does not exist” (Idem, pp. 60, 61). Against Hepp’s view regarding the general internal and the general external testimony of the Holy Spirit, which is identical to the views of Bavinck and Waterink, Van Til comes with even stronger criticism. Rather than to have this taught in our school, he states, “We might as well blow up the science building with an atom bomb.” Van Til adds “I have apologized for that statement. But to the meaning intended then, I subscribe today.” (Cf. “A Letter on Common Grace,” p. 66) Hepp’s views of the twofold testimony of the Holy Spirit in general revelation are anchored in Reformed Dogmatics. Cf. Bavinck, Dog. V. 1, p. 398; Waterink, Paedagogy as Science, p. 50, 159ff.; P. Prins, Conscience, p. 141ff.; Calvin’s Institutes, Bk. 2, Ch. 3. In the above references both Waterink and Prins mention Hepp by name and affirm their agreement.) From these quotations it is clearly evident that Van Til has radically broken with historic Reformed teaching regarding general revelation and common grace.

2. The positive reasoning of Schilder and Van Til regarding general revelation and common grace can be considered in two basic propositions: A) Natural man inherently, apart from general revelation and common grace, possesses knowledge of God and morality. Schilder develops this view in his exegesis of Romans 2:14, where Paul speaks of “the works of the law” which the heathen do “by nature.” Schilder interprets the “by nature” to mean that natural man has this general revelation in his heart—he possesses it as a remnant of the lost image. Schilder maintains that “the works of the law” are part of natural man’s flesh and blood and that this has nothing to do with common grace or general revelation. When the question is asked, “Why does natural man still perform works in conformity with the natural law?” Schilder gives a threefold answer: 1) Because of self-interest; 2) Because of the left-overs of the former image of God; 3) Because by this God in His love can conserve the world and man. (Cf. Schilder’s Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism, p. 107.)

In Van Til’s exegesis of the same passage, he expresses substantial agreement with Schilder. Van Til agrees that natural man possesses knowledge of God and morality apart from common grace and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. “To be sure, I do deny that this natural knowledge of God and morality is the result of common grace.” (“A Letter on Common Grace” p. 16). Van Til further states, “A sense of deity is indelibly engraved on the human heart.” (Idem, p. 17). “Man does not start on the course of history merely with a capacity for knowing God. On the contrary, he begins his course with actual knowledge of God.” (Idem, p. 36).

Both Schilder and Van Til assert that natural man performs works in conformity to the law “by nature”—that is, because of the left-overs of the original image. Of Romans 2:14 Schilder declares that it “does not contain a hymn of praise for general revelation or common grace.” Therefore, according to Schilder and Van Til, natural man has innate knowledge of God and morality apart from general revelation and common grace. According to my judgment, this reasoning involves the logical denial of the Reformed doctrines of general revelation and common grace. Their reasoning involves even more—if this is carried through to its logical consequence, it must lead to a serious depreciation of the Reformed doctrine of total depravity, that man is dead in trespasses and sin. When I say this, I am not at all accusing Schilder and Van Til of Arminianism. I am only speaking of the logical conclusions that are contained in their major premise, as I see them.

B. The second positive premise of both Schilder and Van Til is that natural man possesses two (dualistic) principles, the one good and the other bad. Next to the good principle in natural man, which consists of true knowledge of God and true morality, there is also an evil principle which suppresses this knowledge of God and morality. According to Van Til, these two principles within natural man are similar to the good and evil nature of the Christian. We quote: “Fortunately the natural man is never fully consistent while in this life. As the Christian sins against his will, so the natural man ‘sins against’ his own essentially Satanic principle. As the Christian has the inebus of his ‘old man’
weighing him down and therefore keeping him from realizing the 'life of Christ' within him, so the natural man has the
inheres of the sense of Deity weighing him down and keeping
him from realizing the life of Satan within him.

"The actual situation is therefore always a mixture of
truth with error. Being 'without God in the world' the natu­
ral man yet knows God, and, in spite of himself, to some
extent recognizes God. By virtue of their creation in God's
image, by virtue of the ineradicable sense of deity within them
and by virtue of God's restraining general grace, those who
hate God, yet in a restricted sense know God, and do good" 
(Ibid., pp. 32, 33).

3. The third major premise of Van Til is that na­
tural man, notwithstanding the suppression of the
good principle within him by the internal wicked
principle, still has some knowledge and morality be­
cause of common grace. We quote Van Til:

"So, too, if we take common grace to be that which has to
be with the restraint of sin . . . . It keeps the man who will be
rational anyway, from expressing his hostility to God in
the field of knowledge to such an extent as to make it im­
possible for himself to destroy knowledge. And in restrin­
ing him in his ethical hostility to God, God releases his crea­
tural powers so that he can make positive contributions to
the field of knowledge and art. Similarly in restraining him
from expressing his ethical hostility to God there is a release
within him of his moral powers so that they can perform
that which is 'morally' though not spiritually good. As con­
stitutive of the rationality and morality of man these powers
had not diminished through sin. Man cannot be amoral" (A

Here Van Til states that natural man apart from
common grace and the internal witness of the Holy
Spirit has "creational powers" which enable him to
"make positive contributions to the field of knowl­
edge and art." Natural man also has within him
"moral powers" by which he can (apart from com­
mon grace) perform that which is "morally good." Ac­
Cording to Van Til, the function of common grace is
purely negative. It curbs the wicked principle in
man to such an extent that the internal moral powers
which he possesses by nature are released. Common
grace is therefore only negative in its operation.
Man's moral powers are there apart from common
grace. The only thing that is necessary is to have
these moral powers released, and then moral good
results.

According to our judgment this view must logically
lead to a depreciation of the doctrine of total de­
pravity, namely, that natural man is de-w in tres­
passes and sin. Van Til accepts the doctrine of total
depravity, but he apparently does not sense the logi­
cal conclusions that are involved in this premise.

4. Paradoxical as it may seem, Van Til now post­
ulates a fourth basic premise, namely, that of the
absolute ethical antithesis between God and natural
man. He writes: "We must begin by emphasizing the
absolute ethical antithesis in which the 'natural
man' stands to God" (Cf. Introduction to Systematic
Theology, p. 25). According to Van Til this seems to
be the starting point of his whole conception of
epistemology.

From what has been said, it becomes more and
more evident that there appears to be much ambi­
guity, confusion and even contradiction in Van Til's
system of thought.

II

OBJECTIONS TO THIS NEW SYSTEM OF
THOUGHT

These objections can be grouped under four gen­
eral heads:
A. Objections related to the new view of epistemo­
logy and general revelation.
B. Objections related to the new system of apolo­
goics.
C. Objections related to the new conception of
common grace.
D. Objections to the new philosophy of Vollen­
hoven, which is closely related to the new system.

A. OBJECTIONS RELATED TO THE NEW
VIEW OF EPISTOMOLOGY AND
GENERAL REVELATION.

1. We shall begin with the absolute ethical anti­
thesis, because this according to Van Til is the start­
ing point of his epistemology. We believe this termi­
ology to be wrong. Reformed theology never spoke
of the antithesis as it exists now between God and
natural man as absolute. It considers this antithesis
to be principal. Scripture plainly teaches such an
antithesis. The maternal promise of Genesis 3:15
speaks of the enmity between the seed of the woman
and the seed of the serpent. This antithesis is con­
tinued in redemptive history. For example, the
Bible also constantly speaks of those dead in
sin and alive in Christ, children of wrath and chil­
dren of God, the regenerate and the unregenerate,
the godly and the ungodly, the wide road that leads
to perdition and the narrow road that leads to life.
This antithesis indeed is very actual.

In principle (seed or germ) this antithesis is ab­
solute. This is involved in the Reformed doctrine
total depravity. By that is not meant that natural
man at present is as bad as he can be. He is not equal
to the devil or identical with the lost in hell. Na­
tural man, however, is absolutely depraved in prin­
ciple. In hell this wicked principle attains its awful
maturity. Dr. Abraham Kuyper rightly compares
him to a dead corpse. The process of decay is not yet
complete, but the principle of decay is most assuredly
present. So it is with the natural heart. The prin­
ciple of absolute corruption is curbed by God's com­
mon grace to such a degree that natural man can be­
come a recipient of the testimony of God's Spirit.
Through this Spirit's testimony, by means of the
media of history and creation, natural man receives
God-consciousness and moral-consciousness. Through
this he knows something of God and something of the
universe. This knowledge of God has some faint
ethical content—our Confession calls it "civil right­
eousness" and Calvin speaks of this as "external virt­
ues."

Van Til's "absolute ethical antithesis" logically
excludes all civil righteousness in the natural man.
It implies a complete break between God and the ungodly already in this life. It seems to deny the divine image in natural man as it expresses itself in God-consciousness and moral-consciousness. It also appears to be in conflict with the Reformed doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God in the creative sense. Neither does the absolute ethical antithesis leave room for man's conscience as a potent factor in curbing sin. Besides all this, this term has a very bad meaning in present day theology, because Karl Barth centers his whole system of thought on the absolute antithesis or the paradox between God and man. By this Barth means exactly what the term suggests, namely, the denial of general revelation and common grace. The use of a word determines its meaning. The term absolute is applied to God and always involves the idea of "infinity" or "to the last degree." So the Bible speaks of God as the one "who only hath immortality," God has absolute immortality. Our immortality is relative and is a similitude of God's immortality.

The term absolute ethical antithesis is indeed very unfortunate. It seems to me that it would be much better to speak of this antithesis as: principal, basic or fundamental. In this way we would avoid some of the difficulties that are contained in the term absolute ethical antithesis.

2. My second objection concerns the "moral powers" existing in man apart from common grace. According to Van Til common grace only functions to restrain the wicked principle in natural man in order that these inherent moral powers can come to expression. Against this whole process of reasoning we must register a serious protest. If natural man still has knowledge of God and morality, entirely apart from the operations of God's Spirit,—but only because of the remnants of the Divine image left in man, then it must follow that natural man is not "dead in trespasses and sin." In other words, this whole reasoning brings us logically to the Arminian position. This view, if it is carried to its consequential conclusion, denies total depravity. I know that neither Schilder nor the other advocates of his movement would go that far; but the question is not to which doctrines do they technically assent, but rather, what are the clear logical implications of their denial of the doctrine of general revelation? The question is, what are the only logical conclusions left open for us if we deny that man has knowledge of God and of morality only because of the twofold testimony of the Holy Spirit to his soul? Over against this, to our mind, unrefomed reasoning, let me again briefly state the old Reformed position. In summary form it is this: Man by his fall became totally depraved, dead in sin. His disposition is now polluted. God by His common grace immediately interposed. He checked the complete development of that principle of decay in natural man's heart so that sin can not come to its full development in this life. By God's common grace, the disposition of the natural man is still receptive to the external and internal witness of the Holy Spirit. By means of this twofold witness of the Holy Spirit, natural man still possesses God-consciousness and moral-consciousness. He not only knows that God is, but still has some ideas of God. He not only knows to some extent the difference between right and wrong, but he also retains some traces of morality, some civil righteousness, so that "the works of the law" are written in his heart. To this testimony of the Holy Spirit his carnal heart rebels. He seeks to suppress this external and internal witness of God's Spirit. But in spite of his wilful suppression, some traces of God-consciousness and moral-consciousness still remain. This is so because the twofold witness of the Holy Spirit in general revelation is accompanied by God's common grace. Therefore, the reason, and the only reason, why natural man still has God-consciousness and moral-consciousness is the operation of the Holy Spirit in general revelation and common grace.

Berkouwer says that by "seed of religion" Calvin does not mean any remnant of innate knowledge of God or of morality, for this is in conflict with the whole tenor of Calvin's teaching. When Bavinck contends against the Cartesian doctrine of innate ideas on the ground that they sever the relationship between man and creation and the revelation of God, he then speaks entirely in the spirit of Calvin. Calvin does not find the subjective corollary of nature-right in the autonomous, left-to-himself, natural man, who out of himself creates ideas about God, world, good and evil, right and wrong. (Cf. De Algemene Openbaring, p. 155).

Prof. Hepp also emphatically maintains that by "seed of religion" Calvin by no means implies that there are still remnants of God-consciousness and moral-consciousness in natural man. Such a declaration, according to Hepp, is in plain conflict with the whole tenor of Calvin's teachings. It was especially Calvin who stressed the operation of the Holy Spirit in connection with the God-consciousness and moral-consciousness found in natural man. Therefore, according to Berkouwer and his promoter, Hepp, both Schilder and Van Til are wrong when they make their constant appeal to Calvin for support of their views concerning this matter. (Cf. Hepp, De Algemene Openbaring, dictaten).

3. It is also difficult for us to reconcile Van Til's view regarding the two principles of good and evil in natural man (Cf. "Letter on Common Grace" p. 32). These two principles he considers to be in dualistic relationship one to another—the wicked principle suppresses the good principle of morality. These two principles, says Van Til, correspond to the new and the old nature in the Christian of which Paul speaks in Romans 7. The Bible however nowhere speaks of these two dualistic principles. Natural man has only one principle—his heart is corrupt and dead in sin. If there be any good in natural man, it must be ascribed completely to God's com-
mon grace and certainly not to any moral good inherent in natural man.

In this connection Van Til speaks of "sin against Satanic principles." This sentence surprises us even more. Sin is always related to God. David expresses the very essence of sin when he says in Psalm 51: "Against thee, against thee only have I sinned." The Bible nowhere speaks of sin against Satan or against satanic principles.

4. We cannot at all understand Van Til when he likens the knowledge of natural man to the knowledge of Satan. He practically identifies the knowledge that natural man has of God with the knowledge that Satan has of God. "As to the result of sin with respect to the soul proper, we may see something of this by comparing the knowledge of man with the knowledge of evil spirits." Van Til then goes on to say of Satan, "though he knows God, yet does not really know God." (Cf. Common Grace, pp. 88, 89) We are then told that natural man resembles Satan too in the "negative moral reaction to the revelation about and within him," (Cf. ibid., p. 91). We of course readily admit that natural man does not have true knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ. The same holds true of natural man's knowledge of the cosmos. He fails to see the relationship of all to God—he does not see the unity of it at all. Yet, we believe Van Til errs when he compares the knowledge of natural man with that of Satan. Natural man, like Satan, knows that God is, but he knows a great deal more. He still has some ethical conceptions of God and morality. Our Synod speaks of "civil righteousness," and the Confessions speaks of "glimmerings" of knowledge. We believe that Van Til fails to do full justice to the doctrine of common grace as well as to the doctrine of general revelation in all this.

5. Another basic disagreement between this new system of thought and historic Reformed theology centers on the conception of the divine image in natural man.

a. According to our Reformed view this divine image consists of two parts: 1) The image in the restricted sense is man's natural disposition, which was completely depraved at the time of the fall. This makes it impossible to be a recipient of God's general revelation. (Had it not been for God's common grace, natural man would have immediately become like the devil and the fallen angels, but by common grace God curbed this polluted disposition so that natural man now becomes a recipient of the twofold testimony of the Holy Spirit). 2) The image of God in a less restricted sense includes the God-consciousness and moral-consciousness which natural man receives through the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The curtailing influence of common grace makes this possible. The "civil righteousness" and "external virtues" of natural man are included in this image in the less restricted sense. In hell this image is lost but the image in the restricted sense, namely, man's disposition, is retained. The lost in perdition are still receptive to the testimony of the Spirit. It is because of this that they suffer the awful pangs of conscience.

b. The views of Schilder and Van Til regarding the image of God in natural man are completely different. According to them, natural man comes into this world with some seed of knowledge of God and of true morality. This in turn is immediately suppressed by man's wicked principle. Nevertheless, natural man comes into this world with true morality and true knowledge of God. We believe that this denies total depravity, and if logically carries out leads to Arminianism. This view wipes out the principal antithesis between natural man and the Christian. From all this it is evident that the Reformed doctrine of the image of God in natural man is basic for the Reformed conception of epistemology. When one is denied, then the other of necessity must also be denied.

6. The difference of opinion between Van Til and Reformed theology concerning the common ground issue has often been discussed. According to Reformed epistemology, there is but one logic for the believer and the unbeliever. Man's formal reasoning has not been obliterated because of sin. The fact that $2x2=4$ has the same significance for the Christian that it has for the non-Christian. This has been developed by Dr. A. Kuyper and other Reformed theologians such as Dr. Jan Waterink, Dr. Hodge, and others. The advocates of this new theology (Cf. Wm. Young, Toward a Reformed Philosophy [Grand Rapids: Piet Hein Press; 1952]) have made an erroneous appeal to Prof. Dooyeweerd to support Van Til's standpoint. This appeal, however, is futile. Dooyeweerd does not deny "common logic" as Van Til does. Says Dooyeweerd: "De wijsbegeerte der wetsidee beweert in 't geheel niet, dat het geloof een 'palingenesis' is, die een ander mens van ons maakt en een andere logica (in de ... zin van 'redeneerkunst') meebrengt .... Zij ontkent ten stelligste, dat de palingenesis, die zich in het menselijk hart vol­trekt door de werking van de Heilige Geest, andere denkwetten voor de Christen zou meebrengen dan voor de niet-Christen." (Cf. Philosophia Reformata, XVI, p. 149).

Dr. S. Ridderbos also objects to Van Til's reasoning regarding this matter. He writes concerning this:

"If this line of reasoning is carried through then the acknowledgment of the existence of the 'glimmerings' of the natural knowledge of God, the truth elements of the non-believing science and remnants of aesthetics of the non-believing art is impossible . . . . That Van Til has not entirely escaped the intellectual Anabaptism is evident, according to our opinion, from what he says concerning Platonism in Kuyper's epistemology" (Cf. Ridderbos, criticism on Van Til, in "Rondom Het Gemene Gratie Probleem," p. 45 ff).

7. There seems to be confusion in Van Til's whole conception of general revelation. He often identifies general revelation with: nature, history, conscience, human constitution, and man's rational and moral nature (Cf. Apologetics, p. 35). Such reasoning in—
volves many apparent contradictions. In identifying nature and history with general revelation he fails to distinguish between the objective revelation as it exists for God and the subjective revelation as it exists for man. Bavinck states: "to this objective general revelation there corresponds an enlightening from the logos, John 1:9, through the Holy Spirit, in mind and conscience, in heart and disposition of man; through which the general revelation of God in nature and history can be understood" (Cf. Dogmatics, Vol. III., p. 16 ff).

By identifying general revelation with human conscience, etc., Van Til fails to distinguish between that which is objective and that which is subjective. Nature and history are objective and exist outside of us, whereas conscience is something entirely subjective. The error in this reasoning must be emphasized. Conscience, consciousness, human constitution, man's rational and moral nature—these all are subjective and fallible. God's general revelation, coming to man through the twofold witness of the Holy Spirit, is objective. The Spirit's testimony itself is always infallible. Man's reaction to this revelation is of course fallible. All this is in conflict with Van Til's assertion that conscience is identical with general revelation.

B. OBJECTIONS RELATED TO THE NEW SYSTEM OF APOLOGETICS.

1. Our first difficulty here concerns Van Til's definition of apologetics: "Apologetics is the vindication of the Christian's philosophy of life against the various forms of the non-Christian philosophy of life." (Cf. Apologetics, p. 1) We believe that Kuyper and Hepp are far more correct than Van Til when they limit the task of apologetics to the defense of the dogma. (Cf. A. Kuyper, Encyclopaedie der Heilige Godgeleerdheid, dl.3, 1909, p. 459; V. Hepp, Geref. Apol., p. 29, Oct. 27, 1928.) Van Til's definition is altogether too colorless, and not specifically Reformed, according to my judgment. The Arminians and Anabaptists can also have a Christian philosophy of life in a general sense. Van Til's conception of apologetics is in harmony with the extreme emphasis on philosophy in his whole system, when he declares that the task of apologetics is "the vindication of the Christian philosophy of life."

We also have difficulty with Van Til's method of apologetics. He, together with other men from Westminster Seminary, repeatedly emphasizes that our apologetics must be militant. To this no one of course can object, provided that this term militant does not refer to our apologetics over against the views of fellow-believers of the same faith. When Van Til speaks of the views of Kuyper, Bavinck, Hepp, and "old Princeton" as Platonic, Roman Catholic, etc., one almost begins to think that this apologetics must also be militant. Reformed apologetics has always sharply distinguished between our defense of the dogma over against the ungodly, from our defense of the truth over against Christians of the same persuasion.

It is a very important principle in our Reformed Apologetics that we sympathetically recognize the great difference in our reaction toward those who deviate from the Reformed faith in less essential matters from our reaction toward those who repudiate the basic doctrines of our belief. Professor Hepp states that a much sharper attitude must be assumed against world-views that are diametrically opposed to our own, than against dogmatic positions with which we have many things in common. We must distinguish foe from brother. We may not encourage the inclination to combat in the fiercest manner those who stand close to us. In our Apologetics we must place principle over against principle, and position over against position. During the time of war a conflict must be carried on systematically. This also holds true when we contend for the Reformed faith. Our defense must be constructed according to the defense rules. (Cf. Hepp, Geref. Apol. 1922, p. 33. Hepp was prof. of Apologetics at the Free University for almost three decades and may be recognized as an authority on Apologetics as well as Systematic Theology). We believe that Machen adhered to this same, biblical principle of Apologetics in all his works. When he dealt with naturalism, and those who deny the supernatural, he was uncompromising. He speaks of it continually as a religion essentially different from true Christianity. But when he deals with the question of Premillennialism, he is lenient and conciliatory. He regarded many of those who adhere to these convictions as true brothers in Christ with whom he can have the warmest fellowship. (Cf. Cont. Am. Theol. 1922, p. 270). This Reformed principle of Apologetics is conclusively set forth in the Catechism. In defending the Biblical view of the Lord's supper against Rome it uses sharp language and even calls the mass an accursed idolatry, but when it defends the doctrine of Christ's Ascension over against Luther the language is entirely different. It is well possible that this fundamental Reformed principle of Apologetics has not always been observed as much as it ought to have been among the Westminster apologists, as for instance Van Til's extremely sharp opposition against the late Prof. Hepp regarding Hepp's conception of General Revelation. This is the more true because Hepp's views concerning the witness of the Holy Spirit coincide with those of Calvin, Bavinck, Kuyper and Waterink. (Cf. references mentioned before.)

2. Van Til's sharp criticism of Bavinck's testimonies regarding the knowledge of God's existence by the non-Christian has already been referred to. Bavinck, Hepp and others claim that the non-Christians have God-consciousness and moral-consciousness because of these testimonies of the Holy Spirit. Van Til repudiates this as an "unChristian method of thinking." Bavinck, Waterink and many others asserts that these testimonies of the Holy Spirit consti-
tute the only basis upon which certainty for the existence of God with the non-believer rests. These testimonies of the Spirit also give certainty to all facts of science. (Cf. Hepp, *Het Test. Sp. Sancti*, p. 104ff. and Waterink, *De Paedagogiek Als Wetenschap*, p. 160.) To all this Van Til objects (Cf. "Letter on Common Grace" p. 62ff.).

3. Van Til's unique conception of "facts" has repeatedly been discussed in this *Calvin Forum*. According to him, a fact is determined by the interpretation of it. Says Van Til: "One may well ask how even 'reasoning by presupposition' is possible, since, if one's interpretation of the fact is the fact, there can be no agreement between apologists of Christianity and non-Christianity over any assembly of 'facts' regarding reasoning by presupposition" (Cf. *Apologetics*, p. 39). This strange conception of "facts" is derived from the theology of Schilder. Schilder writes: "Beware that you do not separate the facts from faith" (Cf. De *Reformatie*, Nov. 10, 1939). Van Til expresses agreement with Schilder's philosophy of facts when he writes: "As over against a Romanizing type of natural theology, this warming of Schilder is no doubt in order" (Cf. *Common Grace*, p. 10). Dr. Abraham Kuyper reproduced the Reformed conception of "facts" in his *Encyclopaedie der Heilige Godegeleertheid*, Vol. II, p. 31ff. Kuyper maintains that facts as such can also be obtained by non-Christians. Van Til characterizes this reasoning of Kuyper as a "sort of Ding an sich very similar to that of Kant." (Cf. *Common Grace*, p. 39).

4. This new conception of epistemology is also directly connected with what Reformed theology regards to be the contact point in mission work. Calvin and all of Reformed theology with him connects mission work among the heathen with the doctrine of general revelation—the testimony of the Holy Spirit within the heart of the unbeliever. It is because of this testimony that the unbeliever has God-consciousness and moral-consciousness. Paul uses this as the starting point for his Areopagus address in *Acts 17* (Cf. Calvin's *Commentary on Acts 17*). In other words, man's God-consciousness and moral-consciousness produced by the Holy Spirit is the contact point for mission work. Van Til, however, claims that "the point of contact for the gospel, then, must be sought within the natural man." Deep down in his mind every man knows that he is a creature of God and is responsible to God—Only by thus finding the point of contact in man's sense of deity that lies underneath his own conception of self-consciousness as ultimate can we be both true to Scripture and effective in reasoning with natural man" (Cf. *Apologetics*, pp. 58, 59). Again the twofold operation of the Holy Spirit is completely ignored. Van Til must come to this conclusion because of his denial of the witness of the Holy Spirit within natural man. In this reasoning of Van Til, it seems he again must logically come to Arminianism or the denial of total depravity.

5. By denying the twofold witness of the Holy Spirit as the contact point for mission preaching, Van Til has also lost the contact point for Christian apologetics. If this contact point for missions is denied, then our conception of the essence as well as the task of apologetics is consequently altered. The task of apologetics then comes down to being a proclamation to the non-Christian that we have absolutely nothing in common. There is no contact point left which can serve as a basis of reasoning with the ungodly. If the God-consciousness and moral-consciousness as results of the Spirit's testimony within the soul of the non-Christian is rejected, then there is nothing left to do but to say, "between us and you there is an absolute ethical antithesis." This makes apologetics useless as far as practical results are concerned.

Over against this new view of apologetics, I would like to place the apologetics of the "old Princeton" theology. For decades this has stood as an impassable barrier to Modernism. Bavinck even spoke of Princeton as "the bulwark of Calvinism." The students who studied under Warfield and Machen can testify that through their positive apologetic emphasis the Christian faith was often greatly strengthened. Machen's brilliant defense of the doctrine of the virgin birth, the origin of Paul's religion, the resurrection of Christ, and other truths will live on. Machen says: "I believe with all my soul—in the necessity of Christian apologetics, the necessity of a reasoned defense of the Christian faith, and in particular a reasoned defense of the Christian conviction that the Bible is the Word of God . . . ." (Shall we *Defend the Bible*, p. 57ff.) The scientific reasonings of Warfield and Machen expose the emptiness and irrationality of the non-Christian attack upon the truth. This historic Reformed method of apologetics as believed in and practiced by both "Old Princeton" theology and the Amsterdam theology was blessed by God. If we discard this method, we embark upon a new course of action. Before adopting the new apologetics of Schilder and Van Til, we do well to consider carefully why we make the change. Even though Princeton and Amsterdam theology may have differed somewhat regarding the point of emphasis to be placed upon human reason in Christian apologetics, they were nevertheless basically alike in ascribing the contact point of apologetics to general revelation—more specifically to the twofold witness of the Holy Spirit. With this the new movement is in complete disagreement.

C. OBJECTIONS RELATED TO THE NEW CONCEPTION OF COMMON GRACE

1. There is a disagreement between Schilder and Van Til on the one hand and Reformed theology and the other hand concerning the very essence of common grace. This logically affects the whole thinking on this doctrine. Reformed theology always believed that common grace is related to sin. Kuyper, Hepp and others speak of this as "the essence of common
grace.” Kuyper distinguishes between the negative and positive element in common grace. By the negative element is meant that God restrains the devastating effect of sin in both creation and mankind. By the positive element Kuyper understands the operation of the Holy Spirit upon creation and mankind by which the cosmos is not only preserved but also in a measure developed. Think of the many achievements in the field of science. Through the Spirit's operation, natural man also manifests "civil righteousness" and "external virtues." Even though these are principally distinct from the Christian, they are nevertheless possessed by natural man.

Schilder and Van Til speak of common grace before the fall. This pre-fall grace was never identified with the Reformed conception of common grace in Calvinistic theology. It is something entirely distinct from it, because it was not related to sin. Whatever common grace is left in this new Schilderian system of thought is purely of a negative character. Van Til repeatedly asserts that because of this restraining influence upon man's wicked principle, natural man is enabled to perform moral good and to know God. In other words, moral good and the knowledge of God possessed by natural man is not the result of common grace within his heart but is, as Van Til says, the "presupposition of common grace" (Cf. "Letter On Common Grace," p. 16). From all this it is evident that there exists an essential difference between the historic Reformed conception of the doctrine and the conception of Schilder and Van Til.

2. In connection with this we must also emphasize the common ground issue. According to Van Til and Schilder, there is no common ground epistemologically between the Christian and the non-Christian. Van Til, as has been observed, even objects to Kuyper's thinking concerning formal reason and logic. Concerning this matter, Dr. Ridderbos observes:

"If this line of reasoning is carried through, then the acknowledgment of the existence of the 'glimmerings' of the natural knowledge of God, the truth elements of the non-believing science, and remnants of aesthetics of the non-believing arts is impossible. . . . That Van Til has not entirely escaped intellectual Anabaptism (we use this terminology to sharpen the intellect) is evident, according to our opinion, from what he says concerning Platonism in Kuyper's epistemology." (Cf. Rondom Het Gewone Gratie Probleem, p. 46.)

It seems that Prof. Henry Van Til endorses the views of his uncle, Prof. C. Van Til. Henry Van Til writes: "There is in the non-Christian scientist—no testimony of the spirit for ‘except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,’ and ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of God’ " (Cf. Torch and Trumpet, Jan. 1953, p. 4). The two texts quoted do not at all disprove the Reformed doctrine of general revelation through the Holy Spirit—or the general twofold testimony, as Bavinck calls it, of the Holy Spirit. These texts speak of a saving knowledge, but we here are speaking of a general cultural knowledge; surely the non-Christian also has some knowledge of Chemistry of which the Holy Spirit is the ultimate source. Neither can I reconcile the doctrine of common grace with this statement of Henry Van Til regarding literature: "As a work of man in his cultural striving it [literature—M.] arises either out of the spirit of Christ or out of the spirit of the abyss [italics added]." This statement of Van Til's is not entirely correct. There is still, thanks to God's common grace, something in non-Christian literature that is not absolutely confined to the "spirit of the abyss." Of course, there is an essential difference between Christian literature and non-Christian literature. It is also sadly true that much of the ungodly literature has the earmarks of Satan and hell but to say that all non-Christian literature has its source in the "spirit of the abyss" goes too far. It does not leave room for general revelation or common grace.

3. Immediately related with all this is our conception of the doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God in the creative sense.

It is assumed by Schilder and others that through the Fall of man the communion between God and man was completely broken. This communion can only be restored in Christ through the Covenant of Grace. In connection with this the Fatherhood of God in a creative sense is denied. We maintain that it is self-evident that if the break between God and mankind is complete after the Fall, there can be no talk of the Universal Fatherhood of God over all in a creative sense. By denying the Universal Fatherhood in a creative sense the "New Movement" repudiates this specific doctrine of Calvinism.

The Universal Fatherhood of God in a creative sense has an important place in Reformed Theology. It is granted the Bible does not say literally that God is Father of all men. Yet this doctrine as such is clearly stated. God's Fatherhood over all men is taught in many texts of the Bible. In Malachi 1:6 we read, "A son honoreth his father and a servant his master; if then I am a father, where is mine honor? . . . sayeth Jehovah of hosts unto you, O Priests, that despise my name." Here God is "Father" over the "Priests that despise my name," therefore not in the exclusively redemptive sense. But the classic passage is found in Acts 17:28, "For we are also His offspring," and in the following verses "being then the offspring of God." Paul with these words does give them a far more holy meaning than the Greek poets, but yet it is true that "we," i.e. men of Athens and Paul in this context, "are God's offspring." This cannot be exegeted in any other way than to say that between God and man there is a relationship. Mankind is God's offspring not through generation, but because of creation. Thus all men are children of God.

We must observe that we do not read, "we were God's offspring," but "we are God's offspring." Of this Calvin says in his commentary on this passage, "that men are God's offspring, because in the excel-
ience of their nature they manifest something divine. That is what the Scripture teaches,—(namely) that we are created in God's image and likeness. It is true the same Scripture teaches in many places that we through faith and through gracious adoption are God's children, in that we are ingrained into the body of Christ and being regenerated through the Spirit begin to be new creatures. But even as it (i.e. Scripture) signifies to us the Spirit Himself, because of His manifold grace with various names, so too it is not at all surprising that also the name of children is taken in different ways. Without distinction all mortals are called children, because through their spirit and intellect they find themselves to be nearest to God." Here we see that Calvin speaks of all mortals as children of God.

All mankind in virtue of creation still has the image of God even though it is almost destroyed by sin. Yet Calvin does not give support to the Modernist view as though all sonship is alike. No, he carefully distinguishes between the sonship of the believer and the general sonship of all men by virtue of creation.

Warfield and other Reformed theologians also speak of the Universal Brotherhood of Man in a creative sense in this connection. I quote: "—but the whole New Testament is instinct with the brotherhood of mankind as one in origin and nature, one in need and one in the provision of redemption." (Cf. Warfield's "Art, Antiquity and unity of the Human Race," Pr. Theol. Review, Jan., 1911). This general Fatherhood and general Brotherhood must be sharply distinguished from the Redemptive Fatherhood and the Redemptive Brotherhood. The Bible says, "For ye are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," (Gal. 3:26). "The children of the flesh are not the children of God," (Rom. 9:8). Liberal theology means something entirely different from Reformed Theology, with their unbiblical liberal emphasis on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. But just because Liberal theology distorts the Scriptural meaning of this term, is not a reason why Reformed theology may not continue to use it. In our Reformed dogmatics however we must make sharp Biblical distinctions. In a recent issue of the Reformed Review (June, 1952) Van Til offers a rather extensive explanation of Acts 17. It is very remarkable that Calvin's thought concerning the universal fatherhood of God and the image of God in natural man are completely ignored by Van Til. His whole exegesis on the other hand seems to point to the direction of the absolute ethical antithesis.

4. The cultural mandate issue must also be mentioned in this connection. Recently a series of articles appeared in the Christian Home and School Magazine by Prof. Clowney of Westminster Theological Seminary on "Transmitting Christian Culture" (Cf. December issue, 1952, p. 20ff.). We quote: "The Christian recognizes that the time for the complete fulfillment of his cultural task has not come. He must first enter into that city where his inheritance can be found. He must await the new heaven and earth in which dwells righteousness. There with the curse of sin forever removed from his heart and from his mind, the Christian will develop the potentialities of his personality and of the created world to the glory of God."

According to Clowney, the "potentialities" of man and creation will be further developed after the pangenesis when Jesus returns to usher in the new heaven and the new earth. The redeemed then will take up the task which Adam did not complete, and subdue the earth. The social mandate will then be progressively carried to its consummation. I feel sure that Clowney does not mean what he writes.

We consider this speculative eschatology. The consummation of the cosmos and the consummation of our sanctification will certainly be complete when Jesus comes. He will then present a church unto the Father "without spot or wrinkle." Further development of potentialities, and sanctification, will not be necessary. We believe that this view of Clowney does not do full justice to the completed atonement of Jesus Christ. Also, Schilder constantly confuses the Biblical relationship between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. We believe that Christ as head of the covenant of grace not only restored creation and man to where they were in the state of integrity, but also brings the unfinished task of Adam to complete consummation. This we believe to be the teaching of Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2. (For a detailed discussion of this, see Kuypers, De Voleinding, V. I, p. 474 ff., Hepp's class lectures on the Qualities of God, and Vos' Pauline Eschatology, closing chapter.)

4. The issue regarding the "Well-meant Offer of Salvation" deserves special mention in this connection.

In 1924 our Christian Reformed Synod confirmed the declarations found in the Canons of Dort that God comes with a well-meant offer of salvation to all. This offer comes to the non-elect too. According to the well known "Three Points" this offer of salvation is a manifestation of God's common grace. Hepp makes the following comment: "Is there not a sort of grace in the hearing of the Gospel by the non-elect? They hear that God has no pleasure in their death, but rather that they may be converted and live. As temporary believers the Word may bring them joy ... Let us not look at the lot of the non-elect in the congregation only from the viewpoint of judgment. Truly that judgment is a reality. But the enjoyments which they sometimes have under the preaching also have temporary reality as a nonsaving work, brought about as they are by the Holy Spirit" (Cf. Credo, July 1, 1940). Van Til makes the following comment on what Hepp says: "Hepp here speaks as though it were already known who are and who are not elect. He speaks as though a preacher may approach a certain individual whom he knows to be a reprobate, and tell him that God has no pleasure in his death. But this is to forget the difference between the earlier and the later. The general presentation comes to a generality" (Cf. Evangelical Quarterly, Nov. 1946, p. 45 (Italics mine, W.M.).

What Van Til's Criticism of Hepp Involves

(1) Van Til says that a preacher would not be able to say to one whom he knows to be a reprobate (an impossible case, W.M.) that God has no pleasure in his death. Consequently...
quenty God who surely knows who is elect, cannot say to the reprobate that God has no pleasure in his death. Therefore this passage in Ezekiel 33, according to Van Til, is exclusively limited to the elect. Of them only can God say, that he has no pleasure in their destruction, for this interpretation coincides with that of the Rev. Herman Hoeksema.

(2) The offer of salvation, according to Van Til, does not come to the individual, but to the "generality." This, too, I regard to be in conflict with the declarations of the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924. The "Three Points" certainly mean that the offer of salvation comes not only to a general- lity, but to the individual as well. This is also the teaching of Calvin in his commentaries on: Ps. 81:14; Ps. 147:19, 20; Isa. 55:2; Jer. 7:25, 26; Jer. 23:33; Ezek. 3:25, 26; Matt. 28:27; Rom. 10:21.

Van Til and Hoeksema view the offer of salvation just as they view the natural blessings to the ungodly, too much from the viewpoint of judgment. They fail to appreciate the present blessings (even though they are not saving) contained in this well-meant offer of the Gospel.

5. The Issue regarding "Natural Blessings" now comes up.

The Bible speaks of natural blessings that are shared by Christians and non-Christians. Regarding these natural blessings there exists some difference of opinion. Van Til speaks of this in his Introduction to Systematic Theology, p. 25). This point is indeed difficult if one accepts with Van Til "an absolute ethical antithesis" between God and natural man. The ground for the bestowal of such blessings upon the ungodly is thereby obliterated. God can bestow these natural blessings upon the non-Christian because he is still an image-bearer of God, in the wider sense of the term. There are still faint traces of the Divine image left in man. God loves himself, and therefore can also love his image wherever it appears. To this Divine image in its less restricted sense belongs God-consciousness and moral-consciousness. Natural man has some civil righteousness. This is the ground for these natural Divine blessings.

Van Til with his major premise of the "Absolute Ethical Antithesis" must find the reason for bestowing these blessings elsewhere. He attempts to answer the question by offering two solutions:

(1) He finds his first solution in his oft-repeated "generality" argument. Just as the Gospel is offered to mankind as a "generality," so also these natural blessings come to mankind as a "generality."

(2) He finds his second solution as to why God bestows favors of natural blessings upon the non-Christian in the same direction that the Rev. Herman Hoeksema seeks the answer. Van Til writes: "God's rain and sunshine come, we know, to his creatures made in his image . . . it comes upon the unbeliever that he might crucify to himself the Son of God afresh," (cf. Idem, p. 25ff.) This is basically the same as the position of the Rev. Herman Hoeksema. He writes: "God's Word wills that we shall understand that the Lord enriches the ungodly with earthly blessings in order that he might destroy them in eternity," (Cf. Niet Doopersch maar Gereformeerd, p. 55). Van Til as well as Hoeksema looks upon these blessings of common grace upon natural man too exclusively from the point of view of the final judgment. This is a basic error in all such reasoning. We may not fail to appreciate these present blessings.

D. OBJECTIONS TO THE NEW PHILOSOPHY OF VOLLENHOVEN, WHICH IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THIS NEW MOVEMENT:

It is my solemn conviction that in this new philosophy which is directly related to this new theology there are elements which appear un-Reformed and un-Scriptural. In this concern I do not stand alone. Objections have been raised against this new philosophy by the following leaders of Reformed Theology: the late Prof. H. H. Kuypers, Prof. John Waterink, the late Prof. B. J. de Klerk of South Africa, the late Prof. V. Hepp, the Rev. Dr. Steen, minister in the Gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands, and others. The most serious objections come from Hepp and Steen. The following grave charges have been lodged by them against this new philosophy:

1. This new philosophy is "anti-Confessional" and "un- scriptural" and logically leads to both pantheism and deism.

2. This new philosophy denies the immortality of the soul.

3. This new philosophy denies the continued existence of the soul after death.

4. This new philosophy denies the substantiality of the soul.

5. This new philosophy denies the Heidelberg Catechism's teaching regarding the meaning of the Christian's death.

6. The new philosophy denies the one person and two nature doctrine in our Reformed Christology.

7. The new philosophy asserts that what is taught in our Confessions regarding the soul comes from pagan philosophy and not the Bible.

8. The new philosophy has a creation-centered instead of a theocentric view of God.

9. The new philosophy denies man's unique place in the cosmos.

These and many other solemn objections have been raised from authentic sources in our Reformed theology. I have reproduced some of this material together with my own convictions regarding this new philosophy in my book on General Revelation and Common Grace. This material is supplemented with the necessary quotations as they appear in the writings of the new movement.

The advocates of this new philosophy tell us in the plainest possible language that the soul does not continue after death. After death it is even said of the Christian that he becomes a "dead soul." We are also told that the immortality of the soul is not found in the Bible. Neither does the Bible speak of the continued existence of the soul, they say. Vollenhoven says that in Christ, our Mediator, there are two persons: one to be written with a capital "P" which is the Divine Person, and the other must be written with a small "p," because it is the human person. This is in conflict with the Catechism when it speaks of one person and two natures in the Mediator. There may be some latitude of opinion as to what is meant by "person" and "nature" here, but to say the least, this language of Vollenhoven shocks and alarmed. It may be that this philosophy means something else with the term "soul" than our creeds mean. This would indeed be the most charitable interpretation. But even then it causes grave concern. Not only the contents but also the form of our dogmas has authoritatively been established by the church. If every one has the right to interpret our Confessions according to his own judgment, we may soon have, to quote Hepp: "A Calvinism without Calvin."

DIFFICULTIES OF A MORE PRACTICAL NATURE INVOLVING LODGE MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLICAL GROUND FOR DIVORCE:

My discussion regarding this can be very brief. According to our convictions the lodge member cannot be a member of the Christian Reformed Church. We are informed that such is also the opinion of some at the Westminster Seminary, and for this we are grateful. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has a notable history. It was organized to protect the
Reformed heritage which was being threatened in the Presbyterian church of America. To this glorious ideal it has endeavored to be faithful. We regret that they continue to tolerate lodge members in the membership of their church. Perhaps we of the Christian Reformed church can hardly appreciate the great difficulty involved in taking an uncompromising stand on this issue. The Westminster Seminary is not directly controlled by this church. Theoretically at least there is a difference. Practically the two are closely united. This Seminary provides the ministers for the O. P. church, and the members of its faculty not only belong to the O. P. church, but are ministers in it and administer the Word and Sacrament in it. For me it is difficult to understand how this is possible. The Bible speaks of a “half-way obedience.” Why not make the break with modernism complete and exclude the Lodge? Such a decision would make co-operation between us more easy.

There also exists a difference of opinion between us regarding the Biblical ground for divorce. Westminster Seminary together with the Orthodox Presbyterian church recognizes another ground for divorce besides adultery. The Christian Reformed church does not. Prof. Murray defended their views in this matter in his recent book Divorce. The last word undoubtedly has not been said. Perhaps a mutual exchange of opinion would be beneficial regarding this subject too.

In this article I have unburdened my soul. I trust that the reader will not conclude from my writings that anything of a personal nature was intended. I love the brethren with whom I feel that I must differ. Any open-hearted statement of my difficulties which I attempted to give, ought not to be taken amiss. Also, in these matters we confess that “we know in part.” I feel convinced that the brethren with whom I differ love the Reformed faith as much as I do. If I have misinterpreted them I shall be glad to correct myself. The historic Reformed Faith is too precious a heritage to be dealt with lightly. “Let us hold fast the profession withoutwavering; for he is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.” (Heb. 10:23,24).

There are some good comments in the chapter on Augustine about the difficult problem of the relation between faith and reason. But when the reader comes to the chapter on Cornelius Van Til, he is due for a shock. Space does not permit even a general examination of the many strange features of Van Til’s theology, but it is difficult to imagine how a less impressive or fruitful approach to apologetics might be formulated. One can only hope that Ramm and other “evangelicals” will not follow such a negative, scholastic, and unprofitable line of thought as that suggested by Van Til — From an editorial book review in the “Lutheran Herald” for January, 1954.

The Methodology of Christian Evidences

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Every student should think through these and related questions. While it would take a whole book or a whole course to begin to deal with them adequately, it is hoped that our brief remarks here and in the following chapters concerning some of these fundamental procedural issues will stimulate the reader to further and fruitful research.

I

The first point that needs to be made is that there need be no necessary contradiction between Biblical faith and reason, between Biblical authority and the use of evidences. Life itself is impossible without faith. Augustine long ago pointed out the common sense fact that faith is the basis of human life and not something peculiar to the religious sphere.

Taking into consideration what a multiplicity of things which I had never seen, nor was present when they were enacted, like so many accounts of places and cities which I had not seen; so many of friends, so many of physicians, so many now of these men, now of those which unless we should believe, we should do nothing at all in this life, lastly, with how unalterable an assur-
The fundamental outcome of this history of "the making of the modern mind" is the divorcing of so-called "religious truth" from scientific truth of knowledge. Religion becomes purely a matter of faith, feelings and values. One of the strange ironies of our time is that the strongest opponents of older dualisms have now become leading exponents of this new dichotomy!

II

Now it must be admitted that many a modern man's religious views fit into this popular categorization. The British essayist, F. A. Voigt, has summed up the "articles of the contemporary creed." Religion without God; Christianity without Christ, Christ without Antichrist; Heaven without Hell; works without faith; a God of Love but not of Wrath; a Church that can bless but cannot curse.

We believe that God, almighty and incarnate, is but a benevolent Spirit; that Satan does not exist; that Christ was the author of an ethical code, but not the Godhead crucified. We profess to believe that He existed, for agnosticism is no longer the fashion.

We believe that Gospels must conform with our time and not our time with the Gospels.

We believe that man is by nature good and can, by his own efforts, attain perfection, although what 'perfection' is we do not know and hardly even care.

But this is what man has done to Christianity. It is not what Biblical theism has been or need now be. E. J. Carnell, in his An Introduction to Christian Apologetics, has written a valuable chapter on "What Is Faith?" for the very purpose of showing that this "division between faith and the apprehension of truth is false." The thesis of James Orr's classic 1891 lectures, The Christian View of God and the World was that

A religion based on mere feeling is the vaguest, most unreliable, most unstable of all things. A strong, stable, religious life can be built up on no other ground than that of intelligent conviction. Christianity, therefore, addresses itself to the intelligence as well as to the heart.

Our study too will aim to give support to this balanced and Biblical view.

Jesus made it very clear what kind of knowledge is necessary for saving faith. "And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." (John 17:3).

John Calvin knew what it meant to come out of a scholastic system that left the multitude in ignorance as to the substitutionary work of Christ.

When we know God to be a propitious Father to us, through the reconciliation effected by Christ, and that Christ is given to us for righteousness, sanctification, and life,—by this knowledge, I say, not by renouncing our understanding, we obtain an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

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6) Eerdman, 1948, pp. 89f.
8) Institutes, III, ii, 2. Cf. I, vii, 4 and 5 where Calvin stresses the importance of the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. The neo-orthodox mistranslate Calvin's "witness of the Spirit" into their doctrine of the "inner meaning" of Scripture which enables one to recognize "the Word" contained in the Scriptures. One example is Alan Richardion, Christian Apologetics, Harper, 1947, pp. 207-217 and 1949, p. 585. But note that Richardson prefers Augustine (reason is a necessary "point of connection" between man's soul and the divine word) to Luther (reason apart from revelation "is altogether darkness") (pp. 24, 25).

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Christian faith is a divine gift whereby the Holy Spirit persuades men in the light of evidences of various sorts (depending in part on the type of problem that has been perplexing the individual) and in the light of the basic facts concerning Christ and His work. From the human perspective, then, we may say that Christian faith is a rational conviction founded on specific knowledge of one God and His Son Christ. In that it is a conviction it has a psychologically persuasive force that affects one’s emotions and volitions, one’s whole life. Faith is a “whole-soul trust in God’s Word as true.” In that it is a rational conviction it involves the right use of reason in testing the truth of the factual ground on which the faith rests.

III

Let us not make the mistakes of supposing that while it is the case that a man without this faith of which we have been speaking and hence a man lacking the inward persuading and informing presence of the Spirit, will look upon the revelation of God as foolishness (1 Cor. 2:14) that therefore the believer’s faith is irrational. The point in question is whether the objects of faith are consistent with all legitimate intellectual demands. And this is precisely the issue which a course in evidences for the Christian faith must investigate.10

B. B. Warfield, writing in 1909, rightly deplored the widespread inclination to set aside apologetics in favor of the “witness of the Spirit.” He also sums up very well the point we are making when he says, It seems to be forgotten that though faith be a moral act and the gift of God, it is yet formally conviction passing into confidence; and that all forms of convictions must rest on evidence as their ground, and it is not faith but reason which investigates the nature and validity of this ground . . . . Though faith is the gift of God, it does not in the least fail that the faith which God gives is an irrational faith, that is, a faith without cognizable ground in right reason. We believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in Him, not even though it be irrational. Of course mere reasoning cannot make a Christian; but that is not because faith is not the result of evidence, but because a dead soul cannot respond to evidence. The action of the Holy Spirit in working faith is not apart from evidence, but along with evidence.11

J. Gresham Machen also concluded that we are not faced with any either — or dilemma here. We must reject the faith or knowledge dualism advocated by the dialectical and paradoxical theologians and their naturalistic cohorts. It is not the work of God’s Spirit or evidence, but both and.

What the Holy Spirit does in the new birth is not to make a man a Christian regardless of the evidence, but on the contrary to clear away the mists from his eyes and enable him to attend to the evidence.12

It was for this reason that Machen became one of the great exponents during the first part of this century of the importance of founding faith on facts. He did not believe that the Christian needed to be afraid of any factual data.

The Christian religion is most emphatically dependent upon facts—facts in the external world, facts with which “science” in the true sense of the word certainly has a right to deal.13

What he meant by this is illustrated in unsurpassable fashion by his famous works, The Origin of Paul’s Religion and The Virgin Birth of Christ. Uppermost in his mind was the need for showing the critical that “as a matter of fact the Bible is not full of errors and absurdities.”14

We too need not hesitate to found Biblical faith on facts. The need for this is going to be even greater in the second half of the twentieth century. What are these facts on which we seek to found Biblical faith? The word “Biblical” itself implies that the facts are to be found in the Bible accepted as God’s special revelation to man. This is our source of our specific knowledge of the triune God. Christians are also interested in God’s general revelation found in the created universe of which they are a part. As intelligent individuals we seek true information wherever it is to be found and we are anxious, in so far as it is humanly possible, to see how the various facts fit together systematically. It is impossible to develop a truly Christian system of evidences without adopting this operational starting point.

IV

When we use the word “fact” what we usually have in mind is (1) some “matter of fact,” i.e., something or some person which actually exists or has existed, or we mean (2) some state of affairs or actual occurrence.15 In the second case (2) we refer to an action or an event as a fact. So, within the context of II Kings 5, we might state as a fact the proposition, “Naaman bathed in the Jordan.” Such a statement involves relatively simple perceptual data. We also use sentences or propositions to refer to what exists (1). Thus we may speak of something known to have a given character: “Naaman was a Syrian army captain who had leprosy.” Here we are offered interpretations of observable qualities. The particular truth may be personally observed or may be based on authentic testimony or records: “II Kings 5 tells the story how Naaman was healed after bathing in the Jordan seven times.” This assertion also illustrates how statements about facts may state some

10 Carnell, op. cit., p. 66.
11 For an excellent discussion of the nature of faith and its relationship to knowledge see Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Part III, Chap. 16. Note his statement on p. 82: “While the objects of faith as revealed in the Bible are not truths of the reason, i.e., which the human reason can discover, or comprehend, or demonstrate, they are, nevertheless, perfectly consistent with reason. They involve no contradictions or absurdities; . . . . nothing inconsistent with any well established truth, whether of the external world or of the world of the mind . . . . The contents of the Bible, so far as they relate to things within the legitimate domain of human knowledge, are found to be consistent, and must be consistent with all we certainly know from other sources than a divine revelation.”
14 Christian Faith, p. 55.
15 Ibid., p. 61.
16 Sydney Hook gives valuable analysis of “fact” within the context of historical writing on pages 123-5 of his Illustrations of the Problems of Terminology in Historical Writing” in the Social Science Research Council Bulletin 54 (1946), Theory and Practice in Historical Study.
determinate connection as between bathing and healing. Facts involving such causal connections are more difficult to establish than perceived and interpreted data, but we would insist that the same type of inquiry process is involved.

We like to use the expression, "The facts speak for themselves." Actually, facts assume evidential value only when they are seen to have a bearing on some problem into which we are inquiring. Such facts help to confirm or they disconfirm a hypothesis which we frame in reference to a particular inquiry problem which we are investigating. Indeed, the hypothesis itself acts as a guide in the collection of facts. The story of Naaman seems to imply a miraculous healing. The statement asserting this fact would be a hypothesis to be investigated in the light of the details of II Kings 5 and in the light of Christ's testimony in Luke 4:27. A consistent anti-supernaturalist would not accept a hypothesis involving the miraculous. But this raises a question of presuppositions and of values which we ascribe to facts. We shall touch on this matter later.

Here it is important to note that our hypothesis should be framed in such a way as to make experiment (broadly conceived as relevant and critical investigation) possible. In our example above an investigation of the two passages of Scripture would indicate that according to the testimonies of Old Testament history and of Christ, Naaman was healed in a sudden, unusual way. Whether we should receive these testimonies becomes a more comprehensive hypothesis which is open to investigation.

We have already noted those who, while within the fold of organized Christianity do not consider it necessary to know more about the alleged factual data of Christianity, since they can simply put their trust in the authority of a church and its traditions. For these earnest souls facts are first of all ecclesiastical. Others get their data from the Bible but proceed to treat it pietistically and view the investigation of Scriptural facts as the sacrilegious occupation of rationalistic Bible critics or as simply a waste of time. Whether we should receive these testimonies becomes a more comprehensive hypothesis which is open to investigation.

10 In the last century Cardinal John Henry Newman, in treating the doctrine of assent to religious propositions, tried to make the impractical distinction between the "investigation" into the credibility of that to which one gives assent (which he called "complex assenting" ending in "assenting to previous assenting") and "inquiry" which he took to be inconsistent with assent because it relies on "Inference" and on conditional probability arguments. "He who inquires has not found" the truth. It is difficult to see how any such distinction between investigation and inquiry can be maintained. Today, scientific inquiry involves tentative assent to hypotheses pending the investigation of relevant factual data. See our next chapter. On Newman, especially pp. 126-7.

16 Positively, we must insist that a scientific and factual system of Christian theology cannot be had unless we have a reflective Christian faith based upon fidelity to the whole of God's Word. One cannot reject the Bible any part of it without rejecting the source of facts that makes Biblical faith distinctive among religions.

Since the Christian believes that the same God who inspired through His Spirit the writers of the Bible also through His Son created the universe, he does not expect the one to contradict the other. Creation cannot take the place of the Bible, but both must be taken as serious sources of facts.

It is quite conceivable that a Bible-rejector could inconsistently leave room for a revelation from God through nature alone. In so doing he might come to a generalized intellectual knowledge of a supreme deity. Paul says the unsaved man is without excuse. From the things that have been created men should be able to clearly perceive God's eternal power and deity (Romans 1:19-20). But this would be a limited knowledge of deity and would not necessarily involve more than a rational acceptance of truth. By itself this cannot be a saving knowledge that commits the whole self by faith to the personal God of the Bible. Indeed, Paul himself says that men in their wickedness suppress this plain but restricted evidence of God. (v. 18).

Here then is a sharp contrast between the possible intellectual and philosophical knowledge of God through nature and the clear revelation of God's nature and grace found in revealed theology, the Bible. The unsaved or natural man is a Bible-rejecter and looks upon fellowship with God as well as knowledge of God as foolishness (I Cor. 2:7-10, 14). He has yet personally to accept the Bible as God's revelation to sinful man.

Many Christians assume that since they can get clear facts from the Bible concerning the nature of God and His work that therefore it is a waste of time to devote attention to nature and its witness of God. So it is said, for example, that the inductive arguments for God's existence can at best confirm the probable existence of only a supreme being (as cause or architect of the universe) rather than the theistic God of the Bible.

Professor Carnell argues in this fashion in his two chapters dealing with "Starting Point: Nature." He apparently wants to completely reject an empirical approach "because of its inability to provide immutable truth" (p. 126). It is unfortunate that Carnell does not consider the possibility of combining the method of coherence (his method) with the
inductive empirical approach. It might just be the case that since there are two sources of factual data available to men, resulting from the fact that God has seen fit to give us both a special and general revelation, that we are not faced with the dilemma of “starting point: God” or “starting point: nature.” In practice the non-Christian is faced with the need for seeing a Supreme Being’s handiwork in the universe and seeing that Creator as God of holiness and redemptive mercy as He is clearly and fully revealed in Scripture.

Now the strength of the nature-or-God dilemma lies in the fact that man cannot come to a knowledge of and fellowship with the God of the Bible unless the redemptive message of the Book is brought to his attention and applied in his heart. This is to say that the only logical place for men to get the kind of knowledge that he needs of God is by starting with the Bible and the God of the Bible. This is “starting point: God.” But this is not to say that men do in practice what the Christian (who is “in the know”) knows he should do. Chronologically men have tried to start with nature. And by the grace of God many of those men have been led to suspect the shortcomings of their non-Christian assumptions concerning themselves and their environment. By the grace of God and the help of His human instruments, many of these men have been led to consider one fact in their environment that they have previously ignored or have not been able to understand: the Bible and its redemptive message.

While it may be useful pedagogy within theoretical apologetics to decide in advance what saved and unsaved men should do if they are completely consistent, it would seem to be the case that in applying apologetics in the field of Christian evidences we must leave room for wider possibilities. At least one should be careful not to assume that because the logical starting point should be God that therefore there is in practice no value in natural theology. The Christian should welcome God’s creative work as a supplementary source of information and inspiration. The evidence it offers is of confirmatory value. God also uses the testimony of natural theology to leave unsaved men “without excuse” and to induce some of them to consider the claims of the indispensable revealed theology. They may not start chronologically with God, but if they are to know all that God intends them to know about Himself and His special and general revelations they must come to God and see all facts as they should be seen in the light of the creative-saving God.

This last contention raises another fundamental issue. What truth can the non-Christian learn by starting with nature? Are there not facts held in common by the Christian and non-Christian? This question cannot be answered without noting that men do differ in the meanings or interpretations which they give to factual data.

(To be continued)
READERS OF THE FORUM will be interested in Calvinistic stirrings here in Unitarian New England. At the suggestion of Gerald I. Williamson, United Presbyterian pastor in Fall River, Richard DeRidder of the Whitinsville Christian Reformed Church, and George L. Murray of the United Presbyterian Church in Newton, a small group of pastors, laymen and theological professors met at the First United Presbyterian Church of Newton on January 18 to consider the possibility of forming a fellowship of those of Calvinistic persuasion in the New England area. There was much enthusiasm manifested and a committee was chosen to formulate a constitution and bylaws for a proposed organization.

At a second meeting, held partially in connection with the annual Men's Brotherhood Banquet at Dr. Murray's Church, more than a score of interested persons assembled together and adopted a constitution and elected officers for the year, consisting of G. I. Williamson as President, Dr. Roger Nicole of Gordon Divinity School as Vice President, and Richard DeRidder as Secretary-treasurer. Additional members elected to the Executive Committee were Dr. Murray and Clifton Orlebeke, a graduate student in philosophy at Harvard University. Together with the Brotherhood, the group listened to a thought-provoking address by Richard DeRidder, "The Christian and the Totalitarian State." The Organization will be known as The Calvinistic Fellowship of New England and will include in its membership those who subscribe to any one of the following creedal statements: The Canons of Dort, The Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession, The Confessio Galilca, The Philadelphia Confession, The Savoy Declaration, The Westminster Confession of 1648. The Association will hold bimonthly meetings, one of which each year will be of public nature designed to spread the knowledge of Calvinism in this area. The newly formed Society will provide a medium for the oral and written exchange of thought connected with the exposition of Scripture and the application of Calvinistic principles to the problems of society, as well as making possible a warm fellowship of those who are like minded in their understanding of the system of doctrine contained in the Word of God.

The names and addresses of persons who might be interested in being identified with the Fellowship should be sent to Rev. Richard DeRidder. The next meeting is scheduled to meet at the Newton Church on Monday, April 26, at 7:30 p.m.

Sincerely in Christ,
Burton L. Goddard
Dean

THE first American Calvinistic Conference on Christianity, Psychology and Psychiatry convened April 7 and 8 on the Calvin College campus. Discussions were introduced by various leaders in the concerned professions who then turned the meetings over to representative chairmen for audience participation. The Conference served to open areas of thought that are commonly recognized within or between these fields of endeavor, making them more evident through verbalization.

The lead topics were "Psychiatry in our Christian Mental Hospitals," "The Christian Approach to the Understanding of Personality," "Pastoral Psychology and Psychiatry," "Psychology and Mental Hygiene in the Schools," and "The Christian Psychiatrist in the Community."

Notes on the proceedings of the Conference are available for a nominal fee to non-members who write immediately to the Conference Secretary, Dr. John Daling, c/o Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Yours truly,
James A. Split
Conference Reporter
THE CROWDED INTELLECTUAL

Company Manners, by L. Kronenberger. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril; 1954); $3.00.

America and the Intellectuals (New York: Partisan Review; 1953); $1.00.

These trenchant books constitute a picture of American culture and the place the intellectual occupies in it. They point out the chasm between our dominant low-brow culture and the civilized intellectual sniffing at a safe distance. Consequently, the fundamental problem is the difficulty of fruitful interaction between the rowdy, roaring philistinism of the masses and the highly critical, somewhat esoteric intellectualism of the high-brows, the chasm between the immobile spectators of T.V. and the learned commentators on Messers. Pound and Joyce.

Mr. Kronenberger's indictment of middle-brow culture is lethal, all the more so because it is expressed in a lucid, shining prose. Kronenberger, an authority on Eighteenth Century English Literature, writes with the satiric gusto of Swift and the icy urbanity of Chesterfield. His hard bullet-like phrases drill the Philistine to tatters, and he does it with the disciplined grace of a gentleman.

Here is Kronenberger's picture in boldest outline. Our art is inorganic, a matter of pragmatic gadgetry. Our Broadway plays are commercialized and insincere, a sop to illiterate audiences. Television plays are commercialized and insincere, a sop to illiterate people. Our literary critics are pedants, our historians are pedants, our literary critics heavy-handed. Americans neither respect scholarship nor honor dignity. They become clowns to prove they are "good-guys." We have now a large group of "creative people," who make over $75,000 a year, but outside their special gift are utter philistines, spending $100,000 on kitchens. Americans lack conversational power because they have no ideas. When they become social, they watch or play games. Our sense of humor has subsided into the gag. Conformity is at a premium, we distrust eccentrics and individualists. We confuse God and mammon, and in tirelessly serving the latter imagine we are serving the former.

In the first chapter Kronenberger admits that "you can no more epitomize a whole era than you can indict a whole nation." Having said that, he proceeds to do both with serenity. However, granting the many exceptions which we can all adduce, the basic picture seems to me reasonably fair and challenging. A sharp epigrammatic flavor gives added force to his criticisms. For instance: "more and more our criticism suggests the tred of elephants approaching a temple." In regard to T.V., "it is now the camera eye, and not the inward one, that is the bliss of solitude"; Hollywood, "it is a boom town that just happened to gush treacle rather than oil." Sometimes, alas, Kronenberger succumbs to the temptation to be merely smart.

The root problem, the relation of the intellectual to the crowd, is also the problem to which the twenty-six contributors (including Kronenberger) to the Partisan Review give most of their attention.

The contributors to the Partisan Review make abundantly clear that they are glad to be in America and that it is one of the few countries in which an intellectual has a possibility of fruitful existence. Therefore, they are seriously concerned with the necessity of cross-fertilization; they want the intellectual and the masses to improve each other.

The cardinal trait of the American mind, as Mr. Barrett correctly points out, is "the overwhelming attachment to the extravert and technological intelligence," and this mind produces a journalistic culture intent upon facts, know-how, speed, mechanical efficiency, and pragmatic achievement. The intellectual is interested in dispassionate assessment of ideas, in pure science, in seeing things whole, and, then, in making insight bear upon and alter current custom. To make the problem concrete, how can one change the reading habits of the masses from Spillane to Eliot, from the sports page to Whitehead, from H. V. Kaltenborn with his perennial quaver to Toynbee, from "bebop" to symphony, from canned still-lifes to Van Gogh? Can a genuine culture, generally available, leaven the masses, or are all classes in Literature, for example, merely formalistic lip service to an abandoned ideal, cultural sweat-shops for fruitlessly sweating philistines?

In looking for the answer, I think Newton Arvin is on the right track when he says "it is merely self-indulgent defeatism to assume that a democratic society 'necessarily' leads to a levelling of culture." Because we insist upon sending all youngsters through high school, does not necessarily mean that no youngsters become educated. Of course it can mean that but it need not. We can, for instance, have the courage to discriminate between youngsters; we can have terminal and pre-college courses. We could confer an S. A. (sat through) on some college students and a B. A. on others. In college we would not relax our standard; we would alter our degrees. We would then have not a levelling of culture, but levels of culture. With some ingenuity and courage, educators should be able to share the gifts of culture as far as individual capacities permit.

Both books make faulty, unexpressed assumptions. They both seem to assume that one can have an organic culture without a pervasive and commonly held religious and philosophical commitment. Great cultures of the past have been characterized by such a moral and religious framework, and I see little hope for an organic culture in an atomistic society. Both seem to me to overrate culture. Culture is important, but it is not the one thing needful. The cardinal criterion in assessing a society is religious; that criterion the intellectual tacitly disavows in these pages. Even Matthew Arnold insisted that life is three-fourths moral and only one quarter intellectual and aesthetic. The moral values in American life are underestimated also. Our political democracy, imperfect as it sometimes is, is a magnificent achievement even if it is not always practiced by men with eighteenth century sensibilities. Finally, both books slight our technical and economic achievement; they have been put to grand as well as impure uses.
Democracy needs its intellectuals or it will become a philistine mass, but the intellectuals need the pulsating life of ordinary people. Both need to be fruitfully united, instead of sneering at each other across a cultural chasm. Both need a larger commitment, a religious devotion which will transcend individual prejudices and unite all men through a higher loyalty. In that way alone can we have an organic culture.

JOHN TIMMERMAN

CALVIN LITERARY REVIEW REVIEWED

In reviewing the Spring 1954 issue of the Literary Review, we can best begin by outlining the contents of the issue, both poetry and prose. The poetry is either descriptive or reflective — unfortunately, not narrative. The prose is fictional or expository.

Poems which I should describe as purely descriptive, at least in their primary intents, are these:

"I. to J."
"Driftwood"

Poems which are primarily introspective are the others:

"Embers"
"Thoughts in the Moonlight"
"My Soul"
"To a Small Son"
"To D"
"Passion"
"In a Snowstorm"

It is at once apparent from this list of titles that the poets love to take the hard way and the difficult path. For it is obviously much more difficult to deal adequately and in the fresh way that all good poetry demands with abstractions such as "Passion" and "My Soul" than with specific, observable phenomena or with actual experiences. I indicated earlier that there were no examples of narrative poetry in the group and that this is unfortunate. A narrative poem has a form imposed by a definite plot or scenario, and it is (for that reason) much more apt to be concrete and unhackneyed.

Nevertheless, there is good writing here: examples of fresh observation and indications of sincere emotion. The two poems by Miss Duimstra, which I have categorized as purely descriptive, are melodic, warm, and carefully constructed. I find them somewhat too lush for my own taste — too deliberately "poetic." But this is mere personal caprice.

The other poems, which I have called reflective and introspective, are varied in quality as well as in subject matter. I entertain a personal dislike for poems dealing with abstractions and personifications of abstraction, unless they are superlatively well done as, for example, in Shakespeare's sonnets. Therefore, I do not like to read such lines as these:

"Love sat beside my fire . . ."

"Oh City! Breathe on"

I feel that they are insincere, at least in 1954. By now a poet should be able to say more precisely what he means. Of course, love never sat beside my fire — or yours, either. It never sat at all. It never was at all — in any but a highly figurative sense. People love other people, or things, or (perhaps) ideas, and (certainly) books, paintings, music. But there is no such thing as Love (with a capital L), and it destroys the validity and the honesty of a poem to pretend that there is.

Let us look at the entire poem. I quote it here not because it is bad but because it could be so much better . . .

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * MAY, 1954

EMBER

Love sat beside my fire — a timid stranger
Come to warm herself.
A cricket chirred a muffled serenade
And sharp flames darted up to peer
With shameless curiosity
At her shy, modest presence.
She lingered in the stealthy, dimming dark
Until the flickering shadows went to sleep.
I did not see her go. She stole away
When Life brushed out the shifting saffron sparks
The hollow embers scattered at his feet.

We can agree at once that this is melodic, finished, and appealing. But what, really, does it mean? The poet experienced love for a moment only? Perhaps. However, this is scarcely enough of an idea to support a poem. In any case, the meaning fails to come through.

"Thoughts in the Moonlight," despite its unfortunate title, is somewhat more specific and, for all its feverishness, more honestly felt. It represents, unless I am entirely mistaken, the raw material of a poem not yet conceived. The completed poem would possess not only feeling but a rounded and integrated experience — in a word, it would get somewhere.

"My Soul" is again rather confusing to this carping reader. It is technically proficient and acceptable, but mystifying and lacking in clarity. "To a Small Son," on the other hand, I find wholly admirable and "To D," by the same author, only slightly less so. The poem "Passion" is almost narrative in intent. Its very slight but real scenario provides a sort of unity and integration.

"Poem in a Snowstorm" is apparently part of a much longer poem and should, I suppose, be judged within a context we do not possess. There are fine moments in it but also a sort of emotional confusion. We shall have to content ourselves with saying that it shows promise.

The prose consists of two short stories and a number of literary essays.

"No Time Grey Man" consists of a series of highly mannered loose sentences with a vague sort of allegoric intent. It is beautifully done but, like many of the poems, it lacks precision and exact definition. Its moral reminds me somewhat of Tennyson's line, "Somewhere, far off, some good may fall . . ."

"A Sketch," on the other hand, has all the virtues of good fiction. It is clear, sensitive, and gets somewhere.

The literary criticism deals with Joyce ("Joyce's Neoterisms"), Sandburg ("Carl Sandburg's Portrait of Lincoln"), Donne ("A Hymn to Christ, at the Author's Last going into Germany"), Arnold ("Sweetness and Light — Eighty Years Later"), and Herbert ("George Herbert").

The least pretentious of these is the essay on Herbert which is, for the most part, strictly chronological and descriptive. The Sandburg essay is more rhapsodic in tone, but sensitive and sympathetic, nevertheless.

The essay on Donne is the most ambitious project in the Literary Review, since it aims to "give an existentialistic interpretation of Donne's poetry." I am glad to report that the author has not done so. Certainly a less impressionistic reading of Donne's poetry and even a casual reading of his sermons will fail to support the charge. In any case, the author's use of the term "existential" is rather more literary than precise. He does, however, say a great many penetrating and illuminating things about the poet, about his use of conceits, and about his "passionate logic."
The essay on Joyce is a fine introduction to the great writer's diction, a bit uncritical in its enthusiasm but basically very sound, indeed.

This leaves to the last the essay on Matthew Arnold, a careful (and even cautious) exposition of Arnold's evaluation of Victorian culture in terms of our own.

In summary, no one can deny that the Spring 1954 issue of the Literary Review is an interesting and challenging one. I can merely suggest, as I have done repeatedly in this review, that the authors be encouraged to deal more modestly with their own ambitions, frustrations, experiences, likes and dislikes—in terms that are specific, concrete, and definite. They already know very well how to write; there remains now the much more difficult problem: to find something to say.

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ELLICOTT'S COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE. Edited by C. J. Ellicott. Vol. VI, covering the Four Gospels (Grand Rapids: Zondervan; 1953); pp. 563. $3.95.

I FEEL constrained to congratulate the publishers upon their project of republishing certain volumes quite generally regarded by conservative orthodox scholarship as being classic. These volumes are now out of print and practically unavailable. These volumes have merited an excellent name for themselves since their appearance, and have not been adversely affected by the rapid and influential rise of modernism during the last century.

Among these classics that deserve to be reprinted is Ellicott's Bible Commentary for English Readers. It appeared in eight volumes, and is now in the process of being reprinted. The first of the reprints is now before me. The print is unusually clear and it is beautifully and sturdily bound.

Ellicott, who died in 1905, was an Anglican scholar of superior exegetical acumen. His commentary on the Greek text of most of the Epistles of St. Paul witnesses to his interpretative skill. The volume that has just appeared is one of a series prepared for English readers unfamiliar with the Greek language. It can be profitably used by every Bible student, and would make a profitable and beautiful addition to every home library. Certainly no church library should be without it.

The explanatory comments are concise and to the point. They appear on the same page upon which the English text is printed, thus making the profitable use of the volume very easy.

The theological position reflected in this series is sound. Ellicott was very fortunate in his selection of co-workers. They are favorably known among men of orthodox scholarship. I am particularly pleased that by this reprint the orthodox scholarship of such men as Ellicott is being revived.

HENRY SCHULTZE


THE author of Letters to Young Churches uses various New Testament passages as the basis for the five lectures that make up this slender but revitalizing volume; he lists the passages at the beginning of each chapter as a suggested study portion. The power of Christianity to integrate lives in today's world of confusion is his theme.

This integration results in a "whole" man: renewed emphasis on God in control of what seems to our small understandings a world out of control, and on Christ as a living, operative source within every true disciple and up to give the Christian a "whole" view of life and its purpose.

Such a view makes our scope large. In Christ there is integration not only for the individual but also for the Church and the whole scattered human family. We see the immediate present and we see the heaven to which we are bound. Thus we obtain comfort; thus we are enabled to "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him." Love between God and man is redefined.

All this in a smoothly flowing vocabulary that is delightfully direct. The cover description is correct: Mr. Phillips does use language "cunningly shaped to pass men's defenses and explode silently and effectively within their minds."

ANN JANSSSEN

BOOK BRIEFS


In these days of augmented interest in Biblical theology and the whole phenomena of revelation, the republication of this respected work is a desideratum. This Scots scholar of the past century was a devout soul, but no less a ripe and mature student who set his face like flint against any and all adulterations or denials of the infallibility and inspiration of the Word of God. With Barthianism and Neo-Realism vocal and militant, his voice deserves to be heard once again in our day.