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Editorials

We'd Better Pray

The Creation Story

Articles

The Methodology of Christian Evidences: Part III.

The Cross Versus the Crescent: Part II.

Correspondence

Book Reviews
THE CALVIN FORUM

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Contents

Editorials

We’d Better Pray ........................................................ C. D. B.

The Creation Story .................................................. T. P. Dirkse

Articles

The Methodology of Christian Evidences: Part III ...................................... William W. Paul

The Cross Versus the Crescent: Part II ........................................ Stuart Bergsma, M.D.

Correspondence

Letter from Ceylon .................................................. John Van Ens

Letter from the American Calvinistic Conference on Christianity, Psychology, and Psychiatry .... James Split

Letter from South Africa ........................................ S. Du Toit

Another Letter from Ceylon ........................................ Clarence Van Ens

Letter from Washington, D. C. ........................................ Normund W. Leas

Book Reviews

The Craft of Fiction ................................................ Henry Zylstra

The Optional God ................................................... Lewis Smedes

Calvijn ............................................................... Henry Van Andel

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * AUGUST-SEPTEMBER,


**EDITORIALS**

**We'd Better Pray**

French colonial rule in Indochina, like European colonial rule everywhere, has always been for the benefit of the home country first and for that of the native population second—if at all. Whatever of countervailing good may have resulted from the work of Christian missions was apparently not sufficient to modify significantly the native way of life. Nor does it seem to have neutralized the overwhelming native discontent with Western imperialism; and nowhere in the colonial territories of Southeast Asia has post-war native leadership exhibited anything resembling a Christian outlook upon the problems that emerged from the war years.

In the wake of American naval power in the Pacific after the defeat of Japan, the French in Indochina, like the Dutch in Indonesia, seem to have entertained the quaint notion that by once again allying themselves with former ruling rajahs and petty kings they could simply continue where they had left off. Unfortunately, they found themselves facing a number of highly determined political and guerrilla groups, groups either anti-Japanese or anti-French or vaguely nationalistic or a mixture of all three. All of them, however, seem to have been sufficiently anti-imperialistic for trained communists to get a hearing and a foothold. Meanwhile colonial military operations were nullified by a disastrous succession of coalition governments at home, French unwillingness to admit that their post-war policy in Indochina had failed, the consequent inability to consider seriously a system of free partnership with the peoples of Indochina, and French unreadiness to realize that by reason of the world-wide threat of organized communism, the problem of war today must perforce be internationalized.

Asiatic people generally, having witnessed during World War II how the Japanese handled white overlordship in Southeast Asia, have shed their superstitions about white supremacy. They are ready for a new order of their own, and any group, preferably non-white, proclaiming an ideology promising self-determination and new beginnings will have an advantage almost impossible to overcome. Accordingly, Red China is evidently in a position to give direction to whatever rebellion may happen to break out in the old colonial areas. The Chinese, themselves the frequent victims of Western aggression, come with a new gospel for Asians; and their geographical position makes for ease of infiltration and the use, if need be, of the enormous Asian man-power. In the light of these facts it has been repeatedly suggested that the West, and especially the United States, counteract Communist influence by assuming the role of a crusader for a counter ideology. If self-determination and a new beginning is what the peoples of Asia want, let them look to the ideology of freedom with its basic human liberties, its enjoyment of the prerogatives of human dignity, and its high material standard of living. The United States could well take the lead in this because, so it is said, its hands are relatively clean of imperialism—at least in the Far East. Mere collective defense involving America, Europe, and the Asiatic areas not yet enslaved by the Communists, it is argued, can only mean a balance of power on a world-wide scale; and from history we know that balances of power are always temporary and always end in war. Diplomatic negotiations backed by military power have never produced peace but only a truce. Our only hope today, therefore, lies in the direction of a counter ideology which will somehow change men’s minds while the truce is on.

While admitting certain general truths embodied in these suggestions it should be observed that some of the democracies of the West have had several hundred years to demonstrate the efficacy of the democratic way of life in their Southeast Asian colonies, and that the results for the exploited peoples can hardly be regarded as exhibitions of liberty, human dignity, and high standards of living. In view of this, any crusade for democracy as an ideology will to the native peoples seem either abstract or hypocritical—a case of “when the devil sick was . . .” Because of ancient wrongs and ancient resentments the exploited peoples of Southeast Asia can hardly be expected fully to realize that communism, especially when brought to them by fellow Asians as the true gospel, liberates today in order to enslave tomorrow. The peoples of Indochina had no heart for the recent war simply because they apparently desired considerably more self-determina-

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1) Incidentally, it has been said that had the people of the Netherlands spent half or only a third of the money, effort, and time on Christian missions in Indonesia, which they put into exploitation, the relation between the Netherlands and Indonesia might today be something like that now subsisting between the United States and, say, the Hawaiian Islands. (Before World War II the natural resources of the island of Sumatra were in the possession of about a half dozen Dutch and English families.)
tion than the French are prepared to give them. Which shows, incidentally, that military weapons—including our own billion dollar aid—are rather useless where a cause lacks more or less obvious political and moral grounds. And our own threats of “massive retaliation” can only be a source of embarrassment to the United States as a crusader in Asia. Just now the problem for the free West in Asia is the problem of how to liquidate its colonial past. Admittedly, the attempt to do so was earnestly made in some areas shortly before the present era of world wars, but subsequently events have shown that this was just another case of “too little too late.” Wounds proved to be too deep and memories too long.

Furthermore, since the United States could not hope to interfere in matters pertaining to Southeast Asia without arousing the suspicion of imperialism, it had wisely decided upon a policy of co-operation with the free peoples there, offering to back any nation clearly the victim of aggression and requesting our help. But this meant that it could not act in Indochina without recognizing its people as a free nation, a point of view for which our sister democracy, France, did not appear to be ready. Nevertheless, we may be sure that Communist propaganda will portray us as the chief instrument of a reaction which is bent on replacing the old European colonialism by the new American “imperialistic capitalism.” For evidence of this it will point to our billion dollar aid to reaction in Indochina, to the fact that we have virtually made Japan a base for operations against the Asiatic mainland and the Southeast islands, and to the fact of Hiroshima, where the new “imperialists” first used Asians for guinea pigs in testing improved methods for future warfare. White dominance, in other words, will be presented as synonymous with cruelty and racial arrogance and, in fact, the determination to stop at nothing in order to submerge every Asian hope for a better order.

Finally, just how our own high material standard of living is to convince Asians of the superiority of democracy and freedom as an ideology is an open question. Our standard of living is at least partly the result of nature’s free gifts, and our conception of individual worth and of human dignity are the by-products of the Christian gospel. And the Christian gospel is primarily concerned with transforming men into sons of God rather than with the freedom to make a good living and to live a life of personal ambition and physical plenty. Now if the democratic ideology involves only the results of a natural accident plus the by-products of religious convictions which most of our fellow citizens no longer hold, one wonders just how forceful and convincing our inter-

2 If after the last war we had been as prompt in urging the French to leave Indochina as we were to get the Dutch out of Indonesia we might today be in a better position, morally, to interfere with the spread of communism in Southeast Asia.

national salesmanship in regard to a counter-ideology will prove to be.3

II

Meanwhile, humanly speaking, we have no other recourse than military preparedness, trusting that eventually something can be done by way of diplomacy or that something will happen to ease the international tension, deter the spread of communism, and avert the threat of a hydrogen war. Unfortunately, our military preparedness has taken the form—doubtless perforce—of an atomic striking power so formidable as virtually to enable us to wipe out just about all the major cities on earth. This makes for tension and an uneasy truce, not for peace. Furthermore, just what deterrent effects upon our probable enemies this will have is not clear. This kind of cold war can hardly be expected to continue indefinitely, and unless there is a deliberate reversal of the present trend of expanding indefinitely our atomic war potential, the danger of its being used will increase by the day. However much we may hate war and whatever deterrent effect our readiness for war may temporarily have upon a probable enemy, history shows that deliberate preparation for war with a particular enemy does not in the long run avert it. To argue that since an atomic war means just about total destruction for both sides, therefore both will avoid it and settle their differences by argument and compromise does not seem realistic. More likely both will continue the armament race in the hope of either devising some superweapon or somehow taking the other by surprise. Meanwhile the pressure of mutual fear, instead of making for good sense will simply promote increasing mutual hatred until a point is reached where each, rather than face domination by the other, chooses to go down with it in common ruin.

It is evident that our prior possession of the A-bomb did not deter the spread of Communism anywhere. Russia’s economic backwardness together with the terrific beating it took in World War II did not visibly ease the pressure of Communism in China, Korea, and Indochina, not to mention Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Roumania, and the Baltic countries. This would seem to indicate that if we merely entertain the threat without the actual intention of using the H-bomb, our bluff will sooner or later be called. If, on the other hand, we really intend to use atomic weapons in case the Communists continue their conquests, whether by intrigue or revolution or Asiatic man-power, then, of course, we are no longer entertaining a deterrent threat but actually announcing to the world at large that we fully intend to use

3 Speaking of the spirit of the South and of Southerners as a homogeneous people, William Faulkner says this, “We are defending not actually our politics or beliefs or even our way of life, but simply our homogeneity from a federal government to which in simple desperation the rest of this country has had to surrender voluntarily more and more of its personal and private liberty in order to continue to afford the United States.” (Intruder in the Dust)
atomic weapons irrespective of whether they are used by the enemy. And it is not self-evident that this will get us very far with the peoples of Asia, who probably have not yet forgotten Hiroshima. We would doubtless forfeit the trust of those Asiatic peoples who for the time being happen to be anti-imperialist rather than pro-Communist. To them it would signify American military dominance in Asia, a dominance unfortunately associated with Western "imperialism," something of which they have apparently had their fill.

In this connection it may be profitable to consider briefly a hypothetical question. Assuming that a hydrogen war would mean annihilation or near-annihilation to both sides of the conflict, which, from the Christian point of view, would be the greater evil, total war or universal communism? These are admittedly abstract alternatives, but their consideration touches upon the question of the ethics of using such a thing as the H-bomb at all. Incidentally, there are those with a simple and, of course, final answer. Rather than submit to universal communism, so they say, a free man will choose death. Well, to this we can only say that such a preference is, after all, a man's own business, provided he does not impose his choice upon others who prefer life under communism to "death in a free world." Naturally, to the Christian, life under Communism could only be thought of as something in the nature of a Divine judgment upon a society or a culture. On the other hand, he will remember that as "the Lord's freeman" he is nowhere promised a life of complete freedom and ideal conditions—"take heed to yourselves, for they shall deliver you up to councils ... and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them ... ; and except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened those days." (St. Mark, 13) And it is not clear that self-destruction is the Christian way out. Life under Communism may involve martyrdom and the catacombs, but the Church has faced that before. We do not overcome sin and the devil by destroying both our enemies and ourselves; and to any Christian who knows his religion and its history it is axiomatic that Communism, like any other evil (if it is to be overcome at all,) must ultimately be challenged by the gospel, by the power of the Spirit of Christ at work in the hearts of men. (The least it will do is to force governments to be decent and to remain within proper bounds.)

On the other hand, the Christian recognizes certain definite obligations to the state, to the "powers that be," recognized as having been "ordained of God." Also he is nowhere enjoined to seek martyrdom; which, from the point of view of common sense, would seem to mean that short of denying the faith he should usually avoid it—even where such avoidance involves war or the preparation for war. However—and here we note the peculiar character of the present situation—there is a decided moral difference between the normal use of force in the defense of persons and property against force and the use of force in the sense of total mutual destruction by way of a hydrogen war. The use of force in the traditional sense is limited, its purpose being the preservation of the individual and the community. There is always involved the idea of healing a breach and preserving the possibility of a future reconciliation. Total atomic war, on the other hand, means destruction unlimited, something in the nature of a final and utter condemnation of the race. Quelling a riot for the sake of order and peace, or fighting a battle in the field for the protection of home and country, do not seem to be in the same category with dropping a bomb or directing a guided missile to destroy a city of millions. Defeating an enemy in order to stop him is not the same as destroying him or bringing him down with you in the course of your own self-destruction. It can hardly be denied that here the Christian faces a problem unique in the history of war and peace, a problem in another dimension, and therefore, not reducible to the traditional one of the individual and the state. Today we live in the shadow of an armament race between forces which have divided just about the entire world into two opposing camps. Armament races in the past have invariably led to war. This war, if it comes, could mean the eventual annihilation or near-annihilation of our race. What, then, is the Christian judgment on this world situation, and how, if at all, does it affect the Christian's obligations in regard to the state?

Let us suppose, however, that the enemy assumes the initiative in the use of atomic weapons, that we retaliate in kind, and that this results in the near-annihilation of both of us: Could the Christian conscience justify our action as a case of self-defense? If it did, it would thereby declare the destruction of the race to be a lesser evil than, say, persecution for the faith under Communist tyranny. (Once engaged in this retaliatory destruction the Christian citizens would probably not be in a position to place restraints upon it.) And if at the conclusion of this near-annihilation we could be said to have "won the war," just what would the few surviving Americans do about themselves and the rest of the world? The job of political and economic and moral reconstruction would have become so enormous that whatever of government we had would have to take complete control for years to come. It would be a long time, if at all, before the relation of the individual to the state could in any way be described in terms of demo-
cracy and freedom. Accordingly, the supposition that both universal communism and total war can be prevented must be the assumption underlying any policy which from the Christian point of view can be called at all sensible and hopeful. And it would appear to be a dictate of the Christian conscience to support whatever measures, however precarious, show any probability of being successful.

III

The present equilibrium, however unstable, between Communism and the democracies and near-democracies of the West does, of course, prevent an actual world-wide shooting war for the time being. The Communists, quite naturally, would rather inherit the earth than destroy it; and they hope, just as we hope, that given time and enough rope, the enemy will eventually hang himself. Again, just as they hope by conspiracy and revolution to gain new territories, so we hope by material aid to the peoples behind the Iron Curtain to disturb the present equilibrium to our advantage. Finally, just as they would welcome any discord between the democracies of the West, so we would welcome any breach in the partnership between Russia and China. The Communist assumption of power in China, the policy of the West and the military strength of the Soviet Union must all be the assumption underlying any hope by conspiracy and revolution to gain new territories, so we hope by material aid to the peoples behind the Iron Curtain to disturb the present equilibrium to our advantage. Finally, just as they would welcome any discord between the democracies of the West, so we would welcome any breach in the partnership between Russia and China. The Communist assumption of power in China, the policy of the West and the military strength of the Soviet Union must all be the assumption underlining any hope by conspiracy and revolution to gain new territories, so we hope by material aid to the peoples behind the Iron Curtain to disturb the present equilibrium to our advantage. Finally, just as they would welcome any discord between the democracies of the West, so we would welcome any breach in the partnership between Russia and China.

To say nothing of the probable physical changes on the earth's surface—its utter barrenness, like the crater of the moon and the terrific forces unleashed in the atmosphere, "the sea and the waves roaring"—so that we would have to begin anew in a wild and devastated landscape, something in comparison with which life in the Catacombs would seem to have kept a snug and homey. Not long ago Dr. W. A. Bodey, of the AEC's Argonne National Laboratory declared that none of the present methods for the disposal of radioactive waste from atomic enterprises are satisfactory, and that even the oceans would eventually not be large enough to keep radioactivity within safe limits. Just what strange deadly diseases would the survivors of a world-wide atomic war have to face? It all sounds rather familiar. The interested reader might take another look at the Revelation of St. John the Divine, which tells of men strangely dying "of the waters because they were made bitter"; of the death and destruction of "the third part of the waters"; of "noisome and grievous sores"; of "Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle"; and so on.

We are told by observers, supposedly in a position to know, that Stalin favors a non-communist China, that in order to prevent peace through negotiations, the West must be prepared to resist what it considers unjust and dangerous enemy demands. Unfortunately, such is our international climate more favorable to the realization of Moscow's objectives: Today North Korea, formerly a Russian vassal by virtue of its separation from China by Russian imperialist. The present equilibrium, however unstable, between Communism and the democracies and near-democracies of the West does, of course, prevent an actual world-wide shooting war for the time being. The Communists, quite naturally, would rather inherit the earth than destroy it; and they hope, just as we hope, that given time and enough rope, the enemy will eventually hang himself. Again, just as they hope by conspiracy and revolution to gain new territories, so we hope by material aid to the peoples behind the Iron Curtain to disturb the present equilibrium to our advantage. Finally, just as they would welcome any discord between the democracies of the West, so we would welcome any breach in the partnership between Russia and China. The Communist assumption of power in China, the policy of the West and the military strength of the Soviet Union must all be the assumption underlying any hope by conspiracy and revolution to gain new territories, so we hope by material aid to the peoples behind the Iron Curtain to disturb the present equilibrium to our advantage. Finally, just as they would welcome any discord between the democracies of the West, so we would welcome any breach in the partnership between Russia and China. The Communist assumption of power in China, the policy of the West and the military strength of the Soviet Union must all be the assumption underlying any hope by conspiracy and revolution to gain new territories, so we hope by material aid to the peoples behind the Iron Curtain to disturb the present equilibrium to our advantage. Finally, just as they would welcome any discord between the democracies of the West, so we would welcome any breach in the partnership between Russia and China.
race, which in turn daily brings us a step nearer to war.

Furthermore, collective security, aside from the fact that it is no final guarantee against war, is not an easy road. There is the danger of its leading to the existence of a kind of super-government consisting of international agencies (UN, EDC, NATO, etc.) whose decisions become the law of the land. Eventually every civil uprising and foreign war, however remote and petty, become matters of world concern. In the end every government gets more or less involved in every war, a situation easily leading to big wars. For the sake of continuing peace men begin to conjure up all sorts of possible dangers, with the result that they find themselves continually at war. If a nation or group of nations has bases all over the world to defeat any possible enemy local disputes and incidents tend to take on an importance far beyond their original meaning.

Then too the attempt to police the whole world brings with it the danger of free men assigning to the state unconditioned power to do "whatever is necessary for defense." And inasmuch as the waging of "preventive wars" may be necessary for defense, a nation may find itself on the road to militarism long before the average citizen becomes aware of just what has been going on. And militarism (as distinct from military preparedness), because it involves huge conscript armies, the authority to compel citizens to fight the wars of foreign governments, tremendous concentrations of power in a few individuals, secrecy in government, almost unlimited powers to tax, and so on, comes close to being a kind of aggression by the state against its own citizens. We all know the historic proposition that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." No one knows the cost to a free people called upon to organize half the world in order to protect both itself and others against the blight of an alien ideology and an alien will to power—the cost in wealth, initiative, and, eventually, the will to be free. Plato observed long ago that men tend to become like the enemy they fight. Crusades, like conquests, increase both a nation's responsibilities and its liabilities. And the liabilities can never be calculated. No one can say what may be involved in the attempt to defend the entire free world. To avoid World War III Russia must be kept out of what remains of Europe, and China out of what remains of Southeast Asia. On the other hand, to avoid World War III it is no less essential to curb the momentum of the present armament race, a direct result of the necessity of keeping Russia and China within present bounds. In the presence of this most dangerous and most baffling world situation the generals and the politicians can only hope somehow to blunder through.

IV

Peace in the absence of something more or less approaching national and international justice is a snare and a delusion. Today the probability of arriving at international agreements on even a tentative definition of justice as a basis of enforceable law (in the absence of which coercion of any kind is a form of aggression) seems remote. Our attempt to come to terms with Moscow seems almost irrational. How can one reach a meaningful agreement with men who neither think, will, nor feel in accordance with the traditional ethical distinctions of right and wrong; whose actions are determined by the will to power; whose consciences are "seared with a hot iron"? On the other hand, how do Asians, and especially the Japanese, who recently for the third time were the victims of our atomic preparedness, look upon us? The Christian conscience cannot but have severe misgivings about the very existence of weapons which are a threat to the whole of humanity before they are a threat to the enemy. That our government is promoting the production of such weapons because it feels that eventually it may use them is a clear and unavoidable challenge to the spirit of Christianity and, therefore, a most critical problem for Christian ethics. The good faith of the American churches and that of their missionaries will be severely questioned by the pagan peoples of the East.

Unfortunately, the influence of organized Christianity in the direction of justice and peace has been, and apparently continues to be, handicapped by the apostasy and consequent impotence of large sections of the Christian world, sections where in the name of ecumenism the meaning of Pentecost is apparently identified with organizational machinery and the application of economics and sociology. No believer denies that the gospel is relevant to the problems and difficulties of our times, and that this relevance must be shown, proclaimed, and acted upon. What seems to be neglected is the fact that the thing to be proclaimed and acted upon is precisely the gospel and not this or that bright clergyman's exposition of social and political phenomena. If there is one thing that the New Testament seems to make clear it is that the power of the Church to make for a better society rests upon the presupposition that the believers are really new creatures, and as such appointed to be intercessors and, therefore, channels by which the grace of Christ and the mer-

8 The hydrogen blast at Bikini last March, which showered a Japanese fishing trawler with radioactive ash and sealed its crew with "radiation sickness" seems to have become the worst postwar threat to amicable Japanese-American relations. The fact that the vessel was well outside the danger zone, from which the United States had warned all shipping, would indicate that the experiment may have been somewhat out of hand.

9 Most orthodox Protestant laymen will probably agree that the highest calling of a minister of the Word is not that of giving at Fourth of July and college commencement exercises, eulogizing at expensive funerals, and generally pontificating on just about everything. His first calling is that of a "steward of the mysteries of God," which, presumably, involves the cultivation of godliness, so that as a man of God his words and his acts constitute a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," and his prayers really make a difference to the progress of the Church militant. And not until he has shown his knack how to be effective in his work and his debt to society—to say nothing of his obligations to God and to those who pay his salary.
cies of God and the power of the Spirit can come to the notice of the community and make something like national righteousness possible. The politicians and generals of the West don’t need the advice of pamphleteering parsons who tinker with statecraft and economics. What they need and seem to need badly, is intercession. The Christian religion offers men a radical change, not a mere improvement upon “the wisdom of this world.”

One is therefore, thankful—at least one wants to be—when an assembly of the World Council has for its main theme “Christ—The Hope of the World.” And it is encouraging to note that our “statesmen of the Church” have the broadness of vision to propose and the courage to tackle such problems as The Responsible Society in a World Perspective, The Church Amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions, Christians in the Struggle for World Community, and so on. If only one could have the assurance that the ecclesiastical “statesmen” together with the millions they claim to represent really knew how to pray. C.D.B.

The Creation Story

RECENTLY a scientific conference was held at Calvin College. The purpose of this conference was to air some of the views held by Christian scientists with regard to the meaning of the first two chapters of Genesis. Some Christians in the field of science believe that investigations of the workings of the universe definitely show that the age of the earth (not man) is of the order of billions of years. The evidence in various fields of science rather definitely indicates this and independent researchers have arrived at the same conclusion. On the other hand there are other Christian scientists who dispute these findings and believe that the age of the earth is of the order of several thousand years, not necessarily six thousand as so many of us have been taught.

This difference of opinion is no reflection on or indication of the Christian orthodoxy of the individuals. Devout men are found on both sides of this debate. Both sides have a love for the Word of God. Both treasure it as a rule of faith and life. It is not a question of whether the Bible is true or not. The infallibility of the Bible or its inspiration is not in question. The problem centers on the interpretation of the Bible, particularly the first two chapters of Genesis. There is no thought of listening to scientists rather than to the Bible. The question is: what does the Bible actually say about this matter? Does special revelation contradict general revelation? The answer to this latter question is a unanimous no. But are we certain what special revelation says on this matter? And have men interpreted general revelation correctly? That is the great problem.

For many years a rather simple interpretation was given to these first two chapters of the Bible. It was generally considered that God took an ordinary work week and fashioned the universe. He started on Monday and quit on Saturday. But as scientific investigations broadened it seemed that such a simple interpretation was not in accord with what appears to be happening in the universe today. And a closer inspection of the first chapters of Genesis has led many to doubt that such a simple interpretation is justified. For instance, when we read that God took dust of the earth, breathed into it, and thus produced man is God saying to us that He scraped up a little dust in a field, molded it into the shape of a man and breathed into it? Or is God saying that He took some other object of his creation—an object that also turns to dust—and breathed into it? Or did He mean to say something entirely different? Is it possible that general revelation may throw some light on this matter? Or must we refrain from asking the question?

In any event we are faced with a question of the interpretation of Scripture. We desire to know what God has revealed to us. But we should also consider that God’s revelation in the Bible is not always crystal clear to man. It may take further revelation to disclose its full meaning. The recent controversy over the rendition of Is. 7:14 in the new RSV Bible is a case in point. The difficulty here was the translation of a Hebrew word that permitted of two interpretations: either a maid, or a virgin. Looking back with the advantage of all that God has revealed to us since then we can readily see that it was a virgin of whom Isaiah spoke. But the people to whom Isaiah preached did not have these advantages of ours. To them Isaiah was using a word with a double meaning. And doubtless, if we had been in that audience we would have interpreted the word in the sense of a maid. That would have seemed more logical. It is possible that at that point in history the people did not know exactly how the Savior was to come to earth. At the time they may have figured on an ordinary conception. Actually, God was saying something else.

In spite of all the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming Messiah the people did not recognize him when he appeared. Each Old Testament prophecy gave, as it were, an additional clue, but few people interpreted the clues. It was prophesied that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. And yet He was rejected because He was not from Bethlehem. In John 7:41, 42 we read “But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?” Al-
though Christ fulfilled these prophecies he was rejected for the reason that he did not. It wasn't special revelation that was at fault. The people apparently had a fixed idea of what the Scripture meant and since Jesus did not fit into that pattern, he was rejected without any further investigation.

But John gives us another amazing example of this. In speaking about Christ's resurrection he mentions that Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre and found the stone rolled away from the tomb. She immediately ran and told Peter and John. They went back to the sepulchre to investigate. Then we read, "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." John 20:9. Here were two of Jesus' most intimate disciples. They had been with Him, absorbing His teachings for several years. They had heard His comments about His coming death and resurrection. They had been on the Mount of Transfiguration with Him. And yet, for all this special revelation, they—Christ's intimates—confess that they had not interpreted all this special revelation correctly.

Is it any wonder then that we also disagree among ourselves as to the interpretation of certain parts of Scripture? We should beware lest we too have such a rigid interpretation of certain parts of God's Word that we fail to recognize the truth when we see it or hear it. God has used the revelation of history to show what He meant in His revealed word. Isn't it possible that He is still doing so? Is it not possible that He is even using the developments in the field of science to elucidate what He said long ago? We should be humble before the Word of God and let it speak to us.

The Christian scientist is perturbed. The results of his work indicate that the traditional interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 is in error. So at the conference the Christian scientist, in effect, placed his problem before the theologian and the philosopher. He asked for a renewed study of these chapters by the theologians. The idea of such an investigation would be to find out just what the Bible does say and what it does not say in its opening chapters. Such a scholarly study could do much to answer our Christian scientists. They must and will, of course, forego their conclusions if the Bible definitely indicates they are in error. Their only conclusion can then be that they are reading the book of nature incorrectly.

If such a research is made of Genesis 1 and 2 it may be necessary to discard the ideas suggested by the theologians of the past. Views of theologians, past or present, are not infallible. Perhaps theologians of the past would have come to different conclusions if they had lived today. Perhaps they were wrong. In the light of what good, legitimate scientific investigations seem to reveal today we need to know—we must have an answer to these questions. Refusal to face the issue by either the theologian or scientist is an admission of little faith.

T. P. Dirkse

NOTE—The Editorial Committee regrets that owing to technical difficulties in make-up, Part II of THE EFFECT OF THE DOLEANTIE ON THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, by Mr. G. Van Groningen, must be held over. It will appear, however, in the October issue of the Forum.

The Methodology of Christian Evidences III

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Scientific Methods

The very fact that we have called our study a methodology is, perhaps, in itself, sufficient to indicate that we believe the subject of Christian evidences can and should be approached scientifically. "Scientific method" and "methodology" are employed by some thinkers as interchangeable terms standing for "the systematic analysis and organization of the rational and experimental principles and processes which must guide a scientific inquiry, or which constitute the structure of the special sciences more particularly." There is nothing objectionable in such a definition. Indeed, it is simply a recommendation of the use of reflective and logical procedures, combining both deduction and induction, to particular problems arising in particular subject-matters. It may be viewed either as a method or as methods depending on whether one wishes to emphasize the general intellectual temper which advocates full and free investigation or whether one has in mind the particular procedures of analysis employed in the special sciences.

I

Obviously this is not all that has been labeled "scientific" or "scientific method." There are connotations of the methodology which deserve much of the sharp criticism they have received. Hence, before stating more fully some aspects of the methods actually being employed successfully in many fields, let us make it quite clear what we are not here defending.

In an age when many worship science and its conclusions as if they were God, it is fundamental to
distinguish science from the religion of science. Let us call this "scientism." It takes many different forms, but I believe we can say that they fall into two general classes.

First, "scientism" may consist of the religious views of the scientists. However we may wish to praise the achievements of a natural scientist as a scientist there is nothing there which necessarily equips him to speak with authority either in favor of or against religion. The Christian finds no more comfort in the God of Sir James Jeans who is a "pure mathematician" than he does in the atheistic and anti-supernaturalistic pronouncement of some philosopher of science. Not all scientists, of course, fall into these two extremes. Many notable figures, such as those who are members of the American Scientific Affiliation, have been and are Bible-believing men.

Second and more influential has been that type of "scientism" which looks upon the findings of the physical sciences as all inclusive. In the seventeenth century the universe was viewed mechanistically and mathematics was taken as the general analysis thereof. Hence science consisted in a rational deduction of events from postulates and axioms. Descartes had a hard time working human freedom into this picture. Then came the empirical emphasis of the eighteenth century, the passive observationism criticized in the preceding chapter. Newtonian physics was now the model and experimental verification became the method. This became the phenomenalism of Kant and the positivism of August Comte (1798-1857). The anti-theological and anti-metaphysical emphasis of the latter movement continues in our own day under the label of logical positivism or logical empiricism. *

II

The strongest condemnation of this abuse of science that I have seen has come from the pen of a naturalist who pays lip service to a finite God.

The criticism that it is not legitimate to introduce God to fill up the gap in a system is based either upon an anti-religious bias or upon a misapplication to philosophy of one of the methodological maxims of science. And in neither case is it justified.

* This is the connotation of "science" which Carnell justly criticizes in his "Suffering for a Method," A Philosophy of the Christian Religion, Eerdmans, 1952. But positivism and scientific method need not be equated.

** Logical positivism was started as the Vienna Circle in 1924 by Schlick. Other members include Carnap, Wittgenstein and Russell. A fundamental philosophical difficulty with the movement is its limited view of experience (derived from the older empiricism of Hume, Comte and Mill). Knowledge is limited to simple description of presumed sensory phenomena. Pragmatism extends the interpretation of experience to include ethics, aesthetics and metaphysics. But most pragmatists agree with the positivists in being anti-theological. This is just the place where the Biblical theist should extend the pragmatists' interpretation of experience one step further, as we indicated at the end of the last chapter.

Since the function of metaphysics is to give a complete picture, it cannot exclude the mind of God from among its hypotheses. If there is such a mind, and if that mind makes a difference to the facts of the world which metaphysics has to explain. . . . The supposition that a philosopher has no right to bring in God as a hypothesis is one more example of the stupid anti-theism of science by philosophy, which infects our generation; and of the unintelligent application of scientific principles to matters outside the scope of science. 4

The evolutionary emphasis of the nineteenth century did not correct this one-sidedness. Rather, it substituted temporarily at least, biology for physics, until theoretical atomic physics came into its own again.

Whatever the changes and developments, the Spenserian dream that man can comprehensively know reality is not a necessary ideal of twentieth century science. 5 The development of the social sciences in the last one hundred years with its emphasis upon the importance of particular individuals and groups of individuals has both broadened our interpretation of experienced reality, as we indicated at the close of the last chapter, and it has caused us to discard nearsighted empiricism for the broader view of the science (including psychological, social, historical and theological) in terms of the hypothetico-experimental methodology. 6

The foregoing religious and philosophic overtones are not inextricably bound to the scientific methods as practiced by the various sciences nor with the overall intellectual attitude of science based upon critical thinking. Science goes beyond "common sense" in that it takes a more conscious discriminating and systematic approach to its problems. The flexible methods of inquiry employed are not dogmatic in that self-correction of human errors is taken as fundamental to its cumulative quest for knowledge. Professor Ernest Nagel urges a "judiciously skeptical and yet tenaciously reasonable temper that characterizes at its best the continuum of inquiry that is science. 7

To the extent that this general method is employed by Biblical theologians in their attempt to systematically understand the truths of Scripture and their correlation with other knowledge, to that extent will Christianity stand in sharp opposition to the flood of

3 T. Stace, The Nature of the World, An Essay in Phenomenalist Metaphysics, Princeton, 1940, pp. 241-42. For Stace's "naturalization" of God see the Presidential address at the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, Dec., 1949, in the Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, 1949-50, pp. 22-49. 4) Also his Religion and the Modern Mind, Lippincott, 1962. 5) See the humorous but revealing analysis of the limits of the sciences by Chemist Anthony Staden in Science Is A Sacred Cow, Dutton, 1950. 6) Alan Richardson has suggested that theology, like the social sciences, must be based on "categories" (his word for broad principles of interpretation which I call "hypotheses") which are "independent" of other sciences. These categories included revelation and inspiration. (Christian Apologetics, Harper, 1947, Preface and Chapter Two.) I believe myself that there should be an analogical or comparative relationship between the sciences with the method of one branch of study illuminating that of another. Cf. Kurt Lewin, "Cassirer's Philosophy of Science and the Social Sciences," The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer, ed. Schilpp, Library of Living Philosophers, 1949.

cynical irrationalism which debases the work of many
religionists today. The intellectual attitude of modern
science, apart from the biases of particular scientists,
is a desirable one also for the handmaidens of Bibli­
tical theology: apologetics and an inductive system of
Christian evidences.

But what about the claim that the scientific at­
titude of mind is one of disinterestedness? This re­
mains an ideal of science though, of course, it is
neither desirable nor possible to rule out human in­
terests (let alone human biases) from the quest for
knowledge. The ideal is to marshal evidence on ob­
jective grounds alone. It is a worthy aim of any in­
quirer that he should be aware of the danger of per­
mitting his own prejudices to distort his descrip­
tion of reality (facts and events) or his explanation
of the described phenomena. It would be difficult to
find an area of study which more clearly illustrates
the way in which assumptions alter objective anal­
ysis than in the higher criticism of the Bible. On the
other hand, the textual critical study of the manu­
scripts of the Bible for determining the reading of
the original text stands as a leading example of the
approach to science's ideal of objectivity. The same
may be said of the historico-grammatical method of
exegesis of the Bible, which the Reformers adopted
from the Renaissance classical scholars.

III

Our methodology recommends a searching anal­
ysis of the objects proper to Christian evidences by
applicable scientific methods. These objects include
God, the Bible, the created world, the spiritual sta­
 tus of man, the process of historic events, the person
and work of Christ, and Christian experience. The anal­
alysis should include (1) the manner by which these
objects have developed and can be known, (2) the
type of statements which properly describe these ob­
jects and actions, (3) the basic assumptions involved,
(4) the relationship between Christian evidences and
other sciences, and (5) the applications of the
evidences. We have touched on these points in the
preceding discussions, but an adequate considera­
tion of them would have to center around specific illus­
trations within Christian evidences proper. These chap­
ters are offered as a methodological introduction to
this project.

It is fitting here to terminate this study with a
brief review of the general procedures of the scien­
tific method which have been employed most precise­
ly in the physical sciences but which, we believe, may
also illuminate the methods to be employed in the
social, historical and theological sciences. Indeed,
most of the steps listed below play a part in the solu­
tion of any inquiry problem.

1. Inquiry problem. It is when we are faced with
conflicting opinions concerning practical or theoreti­
cal matters that we are stimulated to think reflec­
tively. We pause to think critically when facts or
meanings seem somewhat out of the ordinary to us.
It is then that facts "speak" as they become evidential
for the inquirer. Important problems of natural and
revealed Christian theology find their place here.

2. Hypotheses. It is in such inquiry situations, as
Dewey has called them, that hypotheses are formu­
lated as possible solutions suggest themselves to us.
If these theories are testable (and it is important to
have in mind appropriate means for confirming or
disconfirming a hypothesis when one is framing it)
then it may be that one of them will lead to the res­
olution of the problem. This is easily stated. But it
requires men with "know-how", insight, and imagina­
tion to propose hypotheses which will guide them
in pursuing research. Let us not take our theories for
interpreting the Bible from the "outsider" who knows
little Bible truth in English, let alone in Greek or
Hebrew! This is something in which Christian
scholars must take the lead. Their fidelity to Scrip­
ture and their previous experiences in dealing with
analogous problems should enable them to meet
many of the critic's challenges with proposed solu­
tions which can meet the tests of truth.

3. Deduction. It is not always recognized that
deductive as well as inductive logic has an important
role to play in the scientific method. It is frequently
the case that though proposed hypotheses are not im­
mediately verifiable in themselves, it is possible to
test consequences which can be logically deduced
from an assumed explanation. There are very def­
inite rules of logical inferences by which we can de­
termine what conclusions follow validly from the
original proposition. The testing of these deduced
conclusions has at least the negative value of enab­
ing us to eliminate unsuitable theories.

Let us mention an example appropriate to Chris­
tian evidences. Suppose our inquiry problem con­
cerns the value of the Bible as a history. Perhaps
we are challenge by the claim of 2 Kings 18-19 and
Isaiah 37 that in the attack on Judah and Jerusalem
by Sennacherib's Assyrians, the taking of the city
was halted through the slaying of 185,000 Assyrians
by the angel of the Lord. A testable hypothesis
would be, "If the Biblical account is true history Sen­
nacherib returned to Nineveh without taking Jerusa­
lem." This is one of a number of conclusions which
must be substantiated if the more general Bible ac­
count including the miraculous defeat is not to be
ruled out as a possible presentation of historic events.

4. Verification. This is where all of the elaborate
procedures of inductive experimentation, controlled
observation and statistical measurement enter into
the methodology of the physical sciences. Within
the framework of a specific problem the scientist
selects a hypothesis which he considers most likely
(probability) to be true (i.e., justified or confirmed).
But it should not be supposed, as some physical scien­
tists do, that verification procedures are limited to
controlled laboratory experimentation. Admittedly, there is much work for the philosopher of the sciences to do in the field of confirmation theory. Theology and the social sciences need their canons of evidence. But there exist cumulative lines of argumentation in the light of evidences for determining the adequacy of proposed solutions.

In the illustration suggested above, we turn to archeology to exhibit the historicity of the Bible on the point in question. Sennacherib's own account of his battles in Palestine is to be found on two clay cylinders in the British Museum and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. He does not admit defeat at Jerusalem, nor is he able to claim victory. "As for Hezekiah the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, . . . himself, like a caged bird, I shut up in Jerusalem his royal city . . . ." We conclude then that the proposition "Sennacherib returned to Ninevah without taking Jerusalem" is confirmed. We have not shown that there was a miraculous slaying of 185,000 Assyrians nor have we shown that all the Bible is historical. This we accept by the authority of the Word of God. But at the same time these more general hypotheses, it should be noted, are compatible with the verified hypothesis (and with many others of a like nature).

This illustration may serve for the present to indicate how the adoption of scientific methods of investigation within Christian evidences may not only lead to factual objectivity and increased clarity of analysis but also may help to distinguish Christianity based on the authority of the Book from mere authoritarianism. The Cornell logician, Max Black, puts the point well:9

Anybody who uses the Bible as an authority on the history of the early Israelites, but is willing to defend the general credibility of the text by reference to the work of archeologists, historians, and geographers, is appealing undogmatically to authority. If he can in this way make out a good case for the general credibility of the Bible on the subject of early Hebrew history, he will have established a valuable additional source of further knowledge concerning that subject. Whether he is right or wrong in his special contention, he will be making a use of authority that is unavoidable in all branches of science and scholarship.

IX

We have argued that Christian faith is conviction grounded upon evidences. The evidences with which the Biblical theist is concerned consist of numerous facts and events relevant to his view of God, the universe and man, both Biblical and extra-Biblical. We have recommended the employment of the scientific methodology for the determination of what facts and events are indeed evidences justifying the Christian view. Such a faith will be a belief, not for lack of evidence, but on account of evidences actively sought after by the best empirical and intellectual methods available to man.

A good Scriptural example of the employment of the scientific method is to be found in Paul's word on the Bereans. "These were more noble . . . in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily. Therefore many of them believed." (Acts 17:11 and 12). Here we have 1) an openness to new facts, new experiences, (2) a comparison of these facts, with knowledge already publicly available and putting the whole to the test, and (3) the formulation of conclusions which they could accept and act on pragmatically.

The scientific method rightly understood gives due place to authority, without being authoritarian; it allows for creative insight or intuition, without being imaginative speculation; and it insists on the importance of faith where there is evidence for it.

One last qualification which deserves reemphasis is that no methodology, certainly not the scientific method will lead the user to the God of the Bible if he proceeds to ignore the fact of the Bible. Our job as witnesses is to keep people from ignoring that fact. The appropriate employment of the method will aid the Christian in the understanding of the Bible and in a presentation of the challenge of the Gospel that the Holy Spirit can and does bless.

9 Jack Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past, Princeton, 1946, p. 177.
The Cross Versus the Crescent II*

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We have seen the strength of Islam as resident in its creed, its monotheism, its concept of the splendour and power of the One God. Let us now look at the weakness in Islam.

Islam's primary weakness is in creed, which is fatalistic theism. Because of its monotheism Islam has been called the "kernel of Judaism transplanted to Arabian soil." How these mullahs and maulvis remind one of the scribes and Pharisees and rabbis! However, it must at once be stated that the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the God we worship, is not the same as the Allah of the Moslems. The Moslems have a magnificent conception of God, but it falls far short of Judaism's God or Christianity's. True, since the same God is in the universe He must be the same for Jew, Mohammedan or Christian. But our concepts of that same ONE God may differ greatly.

We Christians believe in the providence of God, election, reprobation. God works His plan through us all. The Mohammedan believes these truths also, but it is hopelessly dark fatalism. While there is a similarity between Islam's conception of Allah at its best and our Calvinistic conception of God, a vast abyss nevertheless lies between the two which can be bridged only by Christ in a God of absolute sovereignty and absolute love. Our God is a heavenly father, Islam's is a despot. Islam's Allah is like a glorified sovereign of an Indian free State, if we can imagine such a one who is really not like his subjects in being nor has any real love for them. Such a God would understand his subjects as little as did Marie Antoinette of the famous remark: "They have no bread? Then why don't they eat cake?"

A few years ago my pastor quoted a Dutch expression which states: "We Frizians submit to God alone!" That is also a typical Mohammedan declaration: "We Moslems submit to God alone!" Man is answerable to God alone but God is answerable to no one but Himself.

IV

Our God is revealed in the Old and New Testaments. The Moslem, while admitting some of our Scriptures are noble, will have none of them for himself. For example, we go to a village bazaar to preach. After about ten minutes of explanation of the Christian faith we are usually interrupted by a maulvi, a Mohammedan religious teacher, or by a leading Moslem in the crowd. He objects: "We are Mohammedans. We do not believe what you say because it is not in our holy book, the Koran." We have at times parried with the question: "What does your prophet Mohammed, in your own holy book the Koran, say are the four books that are good books and worthy of acceptance?" He will answer: "He has written that the law or five books of Moses, the Psalms, the Gospel and the Koran are all good books."

We say: "Then why not take this Bible home and read it for yourself and know all the truth?" In deep abhorrence at the idea of taking a Bible to his home he answers: "The Koran came last of all and automatically cancelled or fulfilled all the books that came before it. We need only read the Koran and we have all the truth." He may add: "You people are called Christians and your book is the Bible. We are Mohammedans and our book is the Holy Koran. It is the will of God that these things are so." Stark fatalism!

Our God is revealed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Islam will admit Jesus was a great prophet, always second to Mohammed. There is no quicker way of raising the wrath of a Moslem audience than to refer to Christ as the Son of God. Running like a black thread through the whole fabric of Islam is the most vehement protestation that God has no son, Jesus is merely a prophet. To the Moslems the incarnation is anathema. Moslem teachers have said to me: "You Christians make God a carnal being who, in your minds at least, must have physical connection with a woman Mary to produce a son. God has no offspring." They revolt at the thought, become incensed at it.

a. Islam confuses Trinity with Tri-Theism.

To emphasize that God has a Son, who is a person in the Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit seems Tri-theism or a form of polytheism to the Mohammedan. His One-God in one person is much easier to comprehend than One-God in three persons. He abominates anything like polytheism or idolatry.

And yet Moslems, in spite of their abomination of idols, their bare churches with no pictures and no images, do at times approach idol worship in their reverence for sacred relics. In Kashmir I saw thousands each Friday noon bow unitedly at a mosque when the religious teacher brought forth a bottle containing a red hair from Mohammed's beard. If a Moslem may be said to worship any object it might be the Koran. How lovingly he fingers it, with what awe he breathes the word "Koran."

*This is the second and concluding part of Dr. Bergsma's discussion on the subject of Islam.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1954

12
b. Islam Denies the Crucifixion.

The Sunni or Orthodox Mohammedans flatly deny the whole crucifixion story. The death of Christ even as a prophet on the cross would exalt him above Mohammed. The modern group (Shiah's) are much more liberal in their views. In one village in which we held services we were very courteously treated. Our Christian staff was invited to sit in a circle with the maulvis and leading men of the village. About us sat the Moslem villagers intent on the discussion. To our surprise no objection was raised when we read the crucifixion story. But when we came to Christ's actual death on the cross the maulvi courteously stopped us. "We believe Christ hung on the cross," he said. "But he was taken down before death came, he revived. Does not your Bible say Christ should not see corruption? He lived for many years after this, roamed the earth as a holy-man. He died a natural death like any fakir. His grave is in India up in the vale of Kashmir."

How is one to answer these ready made arguments that explain away the very essence of the gospel and simply close the door to further discussion?

c. Islamic Teachings Fetter the Soul.

By denying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Islam as a world faith has become sterile of all good works, unprogressive, and set in a mold in which the creative imagination is distorted, cramped and dwarfed. Islam has also thus isolated herself from the Christian nations who are outstripping her in the race.

One of the fundamental teachings of the Koran is that God is not like us and did not create us in His image. Christianity holds before us the ideal: "You can and must be Christ-like." If we keep the goal of becoming sons of God before us we can rise to any heights intellectual and moral on this earth. Christianity has been the greatest dynamic of all ages, was meant to be so by God. Christianity gives man dignity, enhances his personality, for the Christian keeps before him as ideal the greatest personality that ever walked this earth. Christianity leaves room for human initiative, Islam stifles it. Therefore from Mohammedan lands comes no modern progress. It is the Christian nations which lead in literature, science, art, invention, exploration, philanthropy, democracy, and missionary effort. May we humbly say: "It is the will of God. Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

V

The Christian ideal of marriage, personal purity and the place of women in society, and that of Islam, are poles apart. A Mohammedan is permitted to have four wives at one time by the Koran. Added to this number are concubines if the man be wealthy. If the husband tires of one of the four he need merely repeat: "I divorce thee" and he is free as far as the Koran is concerned, but must still satisfy the Moslem civil courts today, a task not difficult. Hence women remain submissive to their husband while the Moslem husband remains submissive to God alone. One old Mohammedan ruler of a Moslem part of Ethiopia, whom I visited in my travels, had eighty wives and concubines. It added to his prestige.

Both the Koran and common opinion place women at a low level both for time and for eternity. Since some believe women have no soul they argue that there is no personal immorality involved if women are made to sin, which makes for greater laxity in morals.

Since God is the source of evil, according to Koranic teachings, man is not to blame if he is immoral. The thought of faith overcoming sin, of victory over sin, does not arise in the Koran, for it offers no restraint to sin and no impulse to holy living. The thought: "I have done wrong I shall be punished" does arise, but not the thought: "I have sinned, I have offended a just God."

The Mohammedan objects to the demand for personal chastity and monogamy. With heaven pictured as carnal pleasures he sees no reason why he should not begin on earth what is permitted in heaven. Instead of personal purity it is much easier to go through certain forms, ceremonies, prayers, and fasts, and hope God will wink at past indiscretions.

4. Islam's Formalism Becomes Morally Deadening.

We have noted Islam's strength in its creed and formal prayers and in performing outward rites. But this is also its weakness, for by adhering to the formal prayers and by reciting the creed all personal evil-doing is automatically wiped out. One need merely repeat: LA ILLAL LA ILAHILLA. Life or morality can be divorced from faith, it matters not.

Not far from our Mission hospital in the north of India, the portion now included in Pakistan, was a tribal territory outside of Britain's domain, entirely populated by and administered by Mohammedans. Here men were very religious yet did as they pleased. It was a region in which blood feuds abounded. People lived in walled villages with a turret at each corner, with slots in the towers through which guns could be aimed at an enemy approaching. The only safe place in this tribal territory was the macadam highways running through it, which Britain had made and guarded. Tunnels or ditches ran from the villages to the highway so that men could crouch down and reach the highway safely, for once on the highway they might not be shot at according to the rules of their feud. It was region of cruelty, sex sins, kidnappings, threats and fear. They manufactured their own rifles. Local rulers closed their eyes to many misdeeds. Women went about in burkas and man's inhumanity to man and to woman was nowhere more in evidence. The Gospel was not permitted in these tribal territories. In one large prison in British administered territory near the tribal territory we
saw 1500 prisoners, almost every one a Mohammedan, a murderer. 200 of these murderers were under 15 years of age, yet all these men were good Mohammedans, worshipped Allah, prayed and kept the fast of Ramadan.

To our hospital came a young woman of about twenty two years of age, once beautiful, now horribly disfigured. It is the barbaric custom in certain tribal areas for the Moslem husband literally to cut his wife’s nose from her face if she has committed adultery or if he even suspects she has. We had several such cases. This husband had made a thorough job of it, tying her down, then cutting off the nose and part of the upper lip. He left her bleeding and helpless, tied in a lonely house while he made his escape. She was found after three days. Her father brought her to our hospital for plastic surgery. The husband was caught and imprisoned. In the many weeks while the nose was being reconstructed we observed his orthodox Moslem father. He worshipped at the mosque, prayed, read the Koran. But his main topic of conversation was about what he would do to his son-in-law when he had served his sentence. He would wait for him. He would dismember him piece by piece until he died. I said to the father: “How can you go to the mosque, pray, read the Koran, be a good Mohammedan, yet constantly plot murder in your heart?” In surprise he replied: “These things have nothing to do with my religion! I must avenge my family!” Then he said rather wistfully: “Make a nice nose for her, doctor, and we will go back to our valley and show it to everyone. So many women will come to you, for we have so many women without noses in my valley!” We called it the Valley of Noseless Women.

VI

We have stated that one of the duties required of every good Moslem is almsgiving. Not only do they fall short in this but are deliberately as deceitful as Ananias and Sapphira at times in their conduct. While on a medical tour about a hundred miles from the hospital, treating the sick from our tent hospital, a rich head-man of a village still a day’s journey away sent a messenger. His request was that I go to his village and remove his two cataracts, for he was blind. What would my fee be? I did not wish to leave my tent hospital for three days and answered it would be impossible, he must come to the mission hospital for operation. His servant returned a second time with an offer of 300 rupees for the operation, or $100.00. Again I replied he must travel to the main hospital. A month or so later, among many other cataract patients, I operated on a man dressed in beggar’s clothes. He paid 33c per eye for the operation. I found out a few days later it was my rich friend! When I upbraided him, and told him his conduct was keeping from the hospital funds that were meant to help really poor people he laughed in glee and said: “The operation has been performed successfully, thanks to Allah. Try and put the cataracts back if you can!” Another wealthy man dressed in poor clothes, swore by Allah he had not one rupee to his name and a major operation was performed free of charge. Later a fat purse rolled from his bedding and one of our dressers was curious and opened it before he returned it. It was full of notes. When we upbraided this man he burst into tears and admitted he had shamed his religion.

Observing the corruption in Islam coupled with their intense zeal to propagate their faith; pondering on the meagre results of Christian missions in Moslem lands, so meagre that all the converts to Christ in certain vast territories in a whole generation can be counted on the fingers of one hand; grieving over the backsliding of the few who reach the “inquirer” stage, or their mysterious disappearance from society when their brethren hear of their interest in the gospel, one is moved to cry out: “Has Christ any elect among all these millions in the Moslem world? Can the leopard change his spots? Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Can the Moslem change his religion?” By the grace of God we know he can. But somehow God’s spirit does not seem to be operating mightily there.

Islam is today as fanatical as it ever has been. Millions are ready to testify and to suffer, if need be, for the crescent. There is so much to admire in these sturdy men; observing their devotion, their willingness to sacrifice for their faith, one cannot help paraphrasing the words of one who exclaimed: “What magnificent Christians these men might make!”

Coleridge, in The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner, has made the mistake of describing the crescent moon arising in the heavens with a star poised between the points of the crescent.

>“From the sails the dew did drip—
>Till clomb above the eastern bar
>The horned moon, with one bright star
>Within the nether tip.”

The position of such a star is obviously impossible as stars are infinitely farther from us than is our moon, and the dark area inside the crescent is not just blank space but is solid darkened moon.

Islam has made a similar error in her emblem of religion, for although we have been speaking of the crescent, the real emblem of Islam is the crescent enclosing a star. It is obvious that no such star of light can arise from Islam. Islam has a tiny crescent of light reflected from all the truths Mohammed and his followers borrowed from Judaism and Christianity and incorporated into the Koran and the Islamic traditions. Nevertheless, the major part of the circle of Islam remains not just empty darkness but a solid fact of evil and corruption. From the background of this darkness no star like the Star of Bethlehem can arise. Though the solid background of evil the rays of no star can penetrate. The light shineth into the
darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

It is only as the full light of the Sun of Righteousness shines on the Moslem world that the crescent of Islam will disappear to become the full orbed reflected light of the sons of God; not by arising from the darkness nor by penetrating the solid evil, but by banishing the night of sin.

But today at least, as Dr. Samuel Zwemer lamented, we must still confess to our own shame and as a reproach to Christianity this strange paradox: Today no single messenger of the cross of Christ has proclaimed the gospel in the streets of Mecca, birthplace of Mohammed, or in Medina, in which Mohammed did many mighty works. We rejoice that at long last Christ's name can be proclaimed in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, closed for centuries to Christianity until General Allenby entered in triumph at the close of the first world war. But this morning also from Islam went forth a powerful call to worship and prayer. This very morning, from the crescent-crowed minaret of the mosque of Bethlehem, where Christ was born, this morning from the minaret of the mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, where Christ did many wonderful works, over which he wept, outside whose gates He was crucified, before whose wondering eye he arose and ascended to heaven—this morning over the streets of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the muezzin cried:

LA ILLAH LA ILLAH. MUHAMMED RA-SUL ILLAHILA.

REFERENCES

From Our Correspondents

Dutch Reformed Church

The Manse, Dehiwala, Ceylon, May 2, 1954.

Editor, Calvin Forum,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Mr. Editor:

WHILE spending a month in the cool, fresh, relaxing atmosphere of the mountains in Kodiakanal, South India, I read the February, 1954 issue of the Forum. I call your attention to an error in the article, “Calvinism in Ceylon.” The author is not a minister in the Reformed Church in Ceylon. Mr. H. H. Collette, Sr., is a retired elder.

Presently the following men, besides Brother Clarence and I, are active ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon:

Rev. R. V. Metzeling
Rev. L. N. Hitchcock
Rev. L. A. Felsianes

Rev. Hitchcock's primary task is amongst the Tamil Community in Colombo. Rev. A. G. W. Foenander is still inactive due to a heart condition.

There are seven English-speaking congregations in Colombo and one in Galle and another in Matara.

Ceylon needs ministerial assistance now!

Thank you for noting the correction.

Sincerely,

JOHN VAN ENS.

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

Dear Sir:

Please insert the following announcement in your next issue, if possible:

First American Calvinistic Conference on
CHRISTIANITY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND PSYCHIATRY

This Conference, which was held April 7 and 8, 1954, in Grand Rapids, aroused so much widespread interest that the Committee felt obliged to publish a short summary of the proceedings. A more extensive review is also available to those who are particularly concerned with the Calvinistic approach to Psychology and Psychiatry. It came as no surprise that many more questions were raised than could possibly be answered.

Dr. Klaire V. Kuiper, Medical Director of Bethesda Sanatorium, spoke on “Psychiatry in our Christian Mental Hospitals.” He pointed out that Christian mental treatment should not stop short of establishing or renewing the patient's relationship to God. Among other things he posed the question of the source of abnormal fear and anxiety, and how these could be overcome. Discussion was also given to the prevention of mental illness, and how the Christian mental hospital could make its contribution by research, education, and the stimulation of greater

Pine Rest Christian Association

May 17, 1954

THE CALVIN FORUM * AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1954
interest in the field of mental health. More workers, such as doctors, nurses and social workers, are required to carry on this program.

Dr. Jan Waterink, Professor of Pedagogy and Applied Psychology at the Free University of Amsterdam, discussed the “Christian Approach to the Understanding of Personality.” Prof. Waterink described man as a unity who must be regarded as a totality. He defined the created kernel of the human individual. A real personality requires integration and regulation. Character and conscience were also defined in their relation to the personality. This discussion of Prof. Waterink’s was also highly stimulating and pointed the way to further study.

The Rev. Wm. L. Hiemstra, Chaplain of the Christian Sanatorium at Wyckoff, New Jersey, speaking on “Pastoral Psychology and Psychiatry,” defined pastoral psychology as “that form of Christian care of the individual soul which utilizes a knowledge of psychology in conjunction with the use of the Word of God and prayer in order to promote spiritual health:—a life lived in relationship to God through faith in Jesus Christ, guided by the revealed will of God, and directed into paths of Christian service.” The speaker distributed a mimeographed outline which covered the field of pastoral psychology ranging from its basis to an evaluation of recent trends.

Dr. Cornelius Jaarsma, Professor of Education at Calvin College, in his paper on “Psychology and Mental Hygiene in the Schools” following a solid introduction on the scriptural doctrine of man, and definitions of basic terms, discussed the psychological problems in classroom teaching as they pertained to motivation, learning, aptitude, appraisal of outcome of learning, and the teacher as a factor in the learning process. He emphasized the needs of the child as well as the requirements of the Christian teacher. The teacher must be disciplined, have understanding, and exercise self-control as a Christian.

Dr. Andrew L. Hoekstra, practicing psychiatrist in Grand Rapids, discussed the role of “The Christian Psychiatrist in the Community.” Here again the problems and difficulties of applying Christian principles were outlined for evaluation and discussion by those in attendance. He emphasized the different forms of mental ill-health, the variety of social factors contributing to the disturbance of mental health, and the many types of technique that must be employed in the treatment program. The Christian psychiatrist must attempt to understand the patient as thoroughly as possible, and serve as a guide not only in social, but also in spiritual relationships.

At a business meeting it was decided to hold the next Conference in March, 1955. The meeting place again will be Grand Rapids, but subsequent meetings will be held in other centers of Reformed thinking. A representative committee was elected to plan the agenda for the next meeting. It was obvious during this first Conference that much remains to be done, but the enthusiasm that was evident inspires fruitful progress in this important Kingdom endeavor.

Dear Dr. de Boer,

It is with great pleasure that I start my career as successor-correspondent to Prof. Coetzee, who for many years has kept you informed as to spiritual trends in our country, although I fully realize that it will be a struggle to keep up to his standards.

It gives me pleasure to be your correspondent, because when I speak to you it will be as if I am in your midst, as was the case in 1946, a time which I shall never forget. We have made many friends and it is impossible for me to write to every one of them separately. I hope, therefore, that they are all of them subscribers to the Forum, so that they may be able to keep in touch with our country in spite of the fact that I am such a poor correspondent. From the start I must confess that I am not used to writing English (pardon me—I intended to say the American language!) and I hope the editor will use the red pencil freely.

During 1953 Prof. Coetzee kept you informed as to political and racial questions. In this first letter I want to draw your attention to developments in connection with the Bible in Afrikaans and with the expansion of the kingdom of God in general.

Marginal Notes (“Kanttekeningen”) to the Afrikaans Bible.

By the grace of God we received the Bible in our mother tongue for the first time in 1933. In the year 1953 a thorough revision was completed and immediately a start was made in the direction of a short commentary to the Bible such as accompanied the Dutch Bible (Statenvertaling) in the older editions. Thanks to the initiative of The United Protestant Publishers (Verenigde Protestantse Uitgewers) this work is now well on its way. Eleven professors and a number of ministers who are specialists in either Hebrew or Greek, try to find as much free time as possible to devote to this work.

Just as was the case with the translation of the Bible, scholars from the three Afrikaans churches could find a solid basis on which to build, namely the Reformed confession of the infallibility of the Word of God. There will be mutual control and it is hoped that all will be in a position to recommend the work wholeheartedly to the members of their respective churches. We regret it sincerely that the original translators could not find the time also for these marginal notes, as they had to labour to the last bit of their strength to complete the revision. All except one have already passed to their reward, among them my beloved and highly treasured father. It is with deep piety that we of a younger generation walk in the footsteps of our leaders in spiritual matters.
We realize that the “Kanttekeningen” to the 
Statenvertaling had a profound influence on our an-
cestors who learned their Calvinism from these notes 
and from heavy print authors like a Brakel, Smyte-
geld, etc., and that the notes that are now in prepara-
tion may have the same influence. Therefore they 
have to be not only scientifically up to date, but 
above all doctrinally sound.

Unfortunately the Institutions concerned could not 
see their way clear to give the necessary leave to the 
professors so that the work has to be done in the 
moments which can be saved in the midst of strenuous academic work. We hope, however, that 
we shall be able to devote all our time to this work 
during a certain part of 1955.

THE VISITS OF PROF. J. H. BAVINCK AND REV. J. 
OVERDUIN.

During 1953 Prof. dr. J. H. Bavinck—well known 
also in your country—stayed here for the greater 
part of an academic year as guest professor of the 
Theological Seminary and the Potchefstroom Uni-
iversity. He lectured mainly on missionary prob-
lems and pagan religions and preached every Sun-
day.

This year Rev. J. Overduin is our guest. As your 
readers will know he is the author of Hemel en hel 
von Dachau and other works. In Amsterdam he did 
colossal work in the field of Evangelism. Thousands 
of people came under the influence of the Word of 
God as brought by him. In Potchefstroom he lec-
tured during a whole week and we were surprised 
to see the audiences. Every night the floor of the 
church building was filled to capacity. People came 
from all the surrounding towns and farms. I think 
I judge the effect correctly when I say that every 
one present received a blessing. It is the age-old 
Word which he brought, but God has bestowed spe-
cial gifts on some of his servants.

Both Professor Bavinck and Rev. Overduin are 
fluent speakers who appeal to the heart, and nobody 
remains untouched while they speak. What struck 
me most is the way they put the living Christ in the 
centre. The first thing that matters is the “existen-
tial” confrontation with Christ. Now every reader 
of the Bible knows that the central question is: 
What think ye of Christ? But I think that reformed 
people in the past have treated this question too in-
tellectually. There was not always that appeal to 
the heart.

Both here and in the Netherlands there are be-
lievers who are of the opinion that the direction in 
which these two servants of God lead is is not exact-
ly the same as that in which the traditional stream of 
reformed life flows. The way in which Rev. Over-
duin, for instance, brings the Gospel is called by 
some the Methodistic way. And once you say that 
in our circles in South Africa there is a measure of 
scepticism because we know by experience to what 
excesses Methodism can lead.
awakening of your church to a lost heritage. The Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon, true to her motto “Spes Est Regerminat” is putting forth a tender branch, which we under God’s blessing will develop into what He has purposed and planned for this Institute.

In any step we might take today for the welfare and expansion of our Church in Ceylon, it would be foolish for us to ignore our Church’s debt to the past. In an age that ever prides itself on striking out on some new venture, let us be realistic enough to acknowledge the Rock from which we have been hewn and the pit from which we have been digged. Our link with the past must ever remain the starting point of any new enterprise we seek to undertake today. Thus only can we remain true to the heritage that has been handed down to us as loyal sons of the Reformation, which under the guiding hand of God preserved for us the Faith that was once and for all

Our roots of today go down to the Colombo Seminary established in the early years of the Dutch occupation of this island. The need for indigenous workers qualified to do the work of the ministry was met by the opening of a Seminary. The educational courses provided included Latin, Greek, Hebrew, the Principles of Logic, Theology, Sinhalese and Tamil. The most promising students were sent to Leyden where they completed their education and were ordained before returning to Ceylon to engage in active work, while others were appointed as Proponents, Catechists and School Masters. For 156 years (from 1640-1796) during the Dutch occupation many Churches and Schools were opening in all parts of the country, particularly in the maritime provinces. With the British occupation in 1796 most of the Dutch ministers, of whom there were never many in comparison with the large number of schools and Churches established, left the country and both Church and School systems suffered greatly. In 1882 we joined the Presbytery of Ceylon, (first established here in 1863) on the basis of equality and fraternity, and not without a definite understanding that in so doing we would still retain our Laws and Usages and have still preserved for us and left untouched all questions of property and Consistorial rights. At a meeting of the Presbytery of Ceylon on August 14th, 1889, the Rev. John Watt brought forward the following resolution: “That whereas in the present state of the Church, it is highly expedient to carry out the original resolutions of the Presbytery anent raising up a native ministry connected by birth with the country and whereas the high salaries generally prevailing in India are a strong temptation to young men who go thither to study to give up Theology and take to secular employments, and whereas it is manifestly impossible to expect young men, however devoted to the work of the Lord to incur the risk and expense of attending an eight years curriculum in Scotland, a Committee be appointed to consider the whole subject, to inquire whether any and what steps can be taken to insure a proper theological training free from the drawbacks aforesaid.”

The following committee was appointed, Messrs Watt (convener) Burnett, Lindsay, and Brewster. In time, the suggestions of this Committee for the training of divinity students were embodied in a report to Presbytery, and prescribed the following subjects as the course of study—Theology (dogmatic systematic and pastoral), Church History, Hebrew, Criticism including Hermeneutics, and the bearing of modern scientific research on the exegesis of Scripture and the preparation of a Homily, Lecture and Sermon on prescribed texts. The student was to be examined at the beginning of each annual Session by the Presbytery to test the progress he had made, and also his knowledge of the Catechetical teaching of the Church. How history repeats itself is seen in the following comment made in that report: “As at first this must be an experiment and as there are no Funds for a separate Staff of Teachers, it is hoped that the three clergymen resident in Colombo will lend assistance by devoting an hour or two a week during the session to teaching the subjects recommended.” The Presbytery was to fix what fees would be payable, and a first charge on the Funds was to provide some remuneration for the Teachers. When a student proposed to enter on a Theological course he was expected to produce to the Presbytery the following certificates,

a) from the Kirk session of the Parish where he resides that he is in full communion with the Church.

b) From his minister that his character is suitable to his views.

c) That he has passed the local F. A. examination. He would then be examined by the Presbytery in New Testament Greek, and also be required to know a little of Hebrew grammar—the nouns, pronouns, and verb in Kal.

Today we are starting all over again, and although much water has flowed under our bridges since 1889 our problems remain very much the same. We want for our ministry today, suitable young men connected by birth with this country in which our Church operates. We have no endowments whatever for the Scheme which we are launching. We have no separate Teachers who can staff the Bible Institute, and our ministers already harnessed to parochial duties are constrained to shoulder this fresh responsibility. But whatever we may seem to lack, we do have faith that the hand of our Sovereign God is moving in our midst, and His command is that we go forward! We must not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. We have heard His call, and forward we must go at all costs. In the words of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, let us, then, go on, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the
throne of God." To Him be the praise of the Church in all ages now and for evermore. Amen.”

So ended the fine narration by our senior padre.

The Institute is only the beginning of the educational efforts of this Church. A committee is now studying the matter of getting the Seminary started. Though our limited ministerial staff may be able to commence such a school, it is clear to all of us that we'll need at least one man whom God has qualified, to see such a seminary on its way. The General Consistory is making this need known to the Reformed Churches around the world.

Christian greetings.

57/4 Dickmans Road,
Colombo 5, Ceylon.

468, Ravenhill Road
Belfast North Ireland.
14th July 1954

Dr. Cecil De Boer,
Calvin College and Seminary,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dear Dr. De Boer:

SINCE I last wrote for the Forum we have had a number of unusual events in our national experience. Amongst these one must list the Spring campaign of Dr. Billy Graham at Harringay Arena, London. Your readers will be familiar with the statistics of the campaign and its general success. Dr. Graham made a very great impression on these islands, and for some weeks his name was a household word. In the train, hairdresser's, church hall, park or wherever one happened to meet his fellows, the same question was asked—"What do you think of Billy Graham?" It is a long time since religion was so easily discussed with the man-in-the-street. Whatever one thought about Graham or his technique there was a wide open door for a sincere discussion of spiritual topics. Dr. Graham's "fundamentalism," while severely and caustically criticised by the liberals was, nevertheless swallowed for the occasion by the theological critics in the general cooperation of the campaign, which eventually won the sympathy of the majority of the churches, newspapers and news commentators throughout the land.

Some conservatives, however, were rather concerned because Dr. Graham failed to make a frontal attack on the sins of modernism, ritualism etc., which are undermining the religious life of Britain today. Such conservatives feel very strongly that unbelief and sacerdotalism constitute a far greater obstacle to the reawakening of Britain, than our social sins and immoralities. Yet it is gladly admitted by all that Dr. Graham was sincere, his message was Biblical, and many liberals and sacerdotalists heard the Gospel preached, and were deeply impressed. The whole question which calls for consideration, in view of the criticism just noted, is whether Dr. Graham was justified in openly co-operating with liberals and sacerdotalists, as well as conservatives, thereby ensuring the success of his campaign. The conservatives who say he was not, urge the reason already given as touching the root-cause of Britain's declension. To this, there are conservatives who reply that Dr. Graham only co-operated with the Churches as such, that he welcomed any minister who cared to come, without necessarily endorsing his theological views, that he in no way adjusted his message lest he should give offense, even when criticised by liberals, and that had he attacked modernism and sacerdotalism, he would have failed to reach the churches and their leaders with a message which in itself condemned the errors in question, this being confirmed by remarkable, and indeed, spectacular results. The debate continues. While thanking God for undoubted blessings on our land, many conservatives are concerned about the spiritual welfare of the converts, and are anxious lest they should drift to churches where the Gospel as we know it is not preached. It remains to be seen whether the "follow-up" work will show any appreciable discernment in this connection.

Controversy seems to dog your correspondent's steps in preparing this report, but he cannot overlook the next item of news. At the last General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, there was a "great debate"—so it is spoken of—between Dr. George Macleod, leader of the highly controversial "Iona Community," and Dr. J. Pitt-Watson. These giants clashed over the church's attitude to the H-bomb. Soon the old war with pacifism was renewed with much oratory and skill. The British Weekly, June 24, in response to a shoal of requests, reprinted the text of the addresses. Dr. Pitt-Watson's address was extemporary and the text was prepared by him afterwards from memory. If you are eager to read the speeches in full, you might be able to obtain a copy of that particular issue of the British Weekly, from its publishing office, 46-47, Chancery Lane, London, W. C. 2., for about ten cents. If you do write, it would be wise to make reference to the debate.

Dr. George Macleod threw his oratory and enthusiasm behind the case for banning the H-bomb. He spoke of Hiroshima, and all the horrors of atomic warfare. His whole speech seemed to say—"will the Church accept responsibility, in any degree, for another and far more terrible Hiroshima?" His words, even in print, indicate how strongly he felt about the matter. Dr. Pitt-Watson's reply was no less eloquent. Dr. Macleod had impaled him on the horn of a dilemma, but there are two horns to a dilemma, therefore he had no option but to impale Dr. Macleod on the other—which he proceeded to do. Dr. Macleod had made men like Dr. Pitt-Watson responsible in a measure, for another and worse Hiroshima, so now Dr. Pitt-Watson made men like Dr. Macleod responsible for another and worse Belsen. Dr. Pitt-Watson stressed the terrors of Belsen, as Dr. Macleod had stressed the terrors of Hiroshima. He admitted that the dilemma was terrible, but stated that
one could serve neither the glory of God nor the peace of mankind by ignoring the lessons of the past. As a result of the debate, the Church of Scotland will not adopt any pacifist outlook, but will follow the lines indicated by Dr. Pitt-Watson in striving with others to secure international control of nuclear energy. The banning of such weapons in present circumstances was felt to involve, possibly, the danger of a war that might have been averted.

Many professors and ministers are now studying "Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics," an abridgement of the 6,000 pages of Barth's eight (now nine) volumes of Church Dogmatics, by Professor Otto Weber of Göttingen University, Germany, and translated into English by Professor Arthur Cochrane of the Seminary of the University of Dubuque, Iowa. Published in Britain by Lutterworth Press at the reasonable price of 16s., this 253-page abridgement, carrying Barth's endorsement, provides a valuable introduction to Barth for our professors, ministers and students. Not many will be able to purchase the large volumes on Church Dogmatics when they appear here in English as the result of the labours of a group of translators now busy in Scotland, and even those who do have the money and the time to purchase the works and read them, will find Otto Weber's Introductory Report, as his book is called, a useful aid to the understanding of Barth's position—insofar as it is humanly possible to understand Barth.

Other books which are arousing interest on this side of the Atlantic, as well as on yours, include, A Faith to Proclaim, by James S. Stewart and Dr. Merrill C. Tenney's historical and analytic survey of the New Testament. Ulster Calvinists who have rejoiced in the opportunity of purchasing Calvin's commentaries and Institutes, will welcome the reprint of Dr. Charles Hodge's Systematic Theology.

The recent visit of Sir Winston Churchill to your shores has reminded us again—and did we ever forget?—that the biggest barrier between our countries consists of water. Culturally and religiously we are remarkably close to each other. It is my privilege, however, to send you greetings from a small but growing group in Ulster—the northern province of Ireland—a group which is united to you in a common allegiance to the reigning Christ and a wholehearted acceptance of the doctrines of sovereign grace.

With greetings from Irish Calvinists,

Yours in His Service,

Fred S. Leahy

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

Dear Sir,

For the past two and one half years a group known as the Reformed Fellowship of Washington, D. C. has been holding monthly meetings for the purpose of studying and propagating the Reformed Faith.

At present four (4) churches are cooperating. They are Knox Orthodox Presbyterian Church, The Christian Reformed Church of Washington, the River Road United Presbyterian Church, and the Wallace Memorial United Presbyterian Church. The four ministers, Rev. Mr. Glenn Coie, Rev. Mr. Willis De Boer, Rev. Mr. Harry Rankin and Dr. Donald Irwin have led the discussion. We have used Berkof's, Systematic Theology as a text and are at present finishing the "Doctrine of Christ."

Once a year we hold a large open meeting in one of the churches, but ordinarily we meet informally in the homes of our members.

Guest ministers have been the Rev. Mr. John Bratt of Calvin College, Dr. John Gerstner of Pittsburgh—Xenia U. Presb. Seminary, the Rev. Mr. Peter Eldersveld, the Rev. Mr. Harold Dekker, the Rev. Mr. Robert Smoot, and the Rev. Mr. John Clowney of Westminster Seminary.

If any of the Forum readers are in Washington we will welcome them to our meetings. We meet the fourth Friday of every month at eight o'clock. For information write to Normund W. Leas, 21 Kennedy St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Very truly yours,

Normund W. Leas
THE CRAFT OF FICTION


For twenty-six years, that is from 1915 up to her death in 1941, Virginia Woolf systematically kept a diary. Unlike Robert Louis Stevenson who held that keeping a diary was a "school of posturing and melancholy self-deception," Virginia Woolf felt that it was a real benefit to a writer. She discovered that "... the habit of writing thus for my own eye is good practice. It loosens the ligaments." Being almost a perfectionist in her scrupulous concern for the craft of writing, she at one time forbids her future self to "let the eye of man behold" her journal confidences. Yet, at another time, she herself gives her husband, Leonard Woolf, the signal for drawing up just such a book as A Writer's Diary: "If I died what would Leo make of them? ... Well, he should make up a book ...."

The book Leonard Woolf made up is well named A Writer's Diary. His principle of selection has been to include "practically everything which referred to her own writing." The result is that this fascinating book of journal entries "throws light upon Virginia Woolf's intentions, objects and methods as a writer." And, as the Editor goes on to say in his Preface, "it gives an unusual psychological picture of artistic production from within." In kind--I do not say in quality and importance--the Diary belongs with Goethe's Conversations and Henry James' Prefaces. It is not often that we readers and students of fiction have a chance thus to stand by at the conception, birth, and career of a modern writer's books.

Virginia Woolf's whole life went into books. She made them also in the physical sense, at the Hogarth Press situated in her home. She read them. Her journal shows how deliberately selective she was in her purposeful reading. She criticized and reviewed them: in fact, she gave out a solid body of criticism, at first to the periodicals, particularly to the Times' Literary Supplement, and eventually in her first and second Common Reader and in other books. And, of course, she wrote them. She did some biography--of Elizabeth Barrett in Flush and of her artist friend in Roger Fry. She did some stories and sketches and vignettes. But her main effort, of course, went into her novels. They came regularly in the 20's and 30's, Mrs. Dalloway, To the Light-house, The Waves, The Years, and the rest. This, then, is to live the literary life. And she had the background for it. Daughter of Leslie Stephen of the Dictionary of National Biography (one wonders whether he will eventually be called Virginia Woolf's father or she Leslie Stephen's daughter), she was, as Anne Freemantle pointed out in a recent Commonweal, "dandled on every literary knee in England." She grew up to move in the brilliant and unconventional Bloomsbury circle: Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, Roger Fry, Saxon Sydney-Turner, Lytton Strachey, Maynard Keynes, and their friends.

What we get in the Diary, naturally, is her personal shop-talk with herself about the writing and the reception of her books. It is valuable reading for anyone who cares about Virginia Woolf, modern fiction, and the art of writing. The diary entries are well written. If her random scribblings are thus shapely, one says to himself, what must those conscientiously fashioned novels be? Well, one has only to turn to them to find out why Virginia Woolf is referred to as a "pure artist" so frequently. She inherited the aesthetic way of life and art. The ritual that some indulge at mass, and others in the finesse of theological dialectic, she carried out in the asceticism of a style which was agonizingly perfected.

Her Diary is the best of commentaries on her work. She knows her own weaknesses, her strengths. "But is it 'unreal'? Is it mere accomplishment? she asks of Mrs. Dalloway. It is a good question for the heirs of Pater's aestheticism to be asking. She delights in Fausset's comment on her in the Manchester Guardian: "brilliance combined with integrity." In point of craft, she had that, she certainly had it. Were her books novels? She wonders sometimes, even considers casting about for a new name, a sort of private genre for the works of Virginia Woolf. She speaks with a kind of disdain of Hardy's old-fashioned Aristotelianism in clinging to a beginning, middle, and end in his novels. But she knows too that this is her lack: structure and architectonics. She admits it of To the Light-house: "... it is hopelessly undramatic. It is all in oratio oblique." What Virginia Woolf lacked was idea and purpose. When one thinks of this, the Diary takes on tragic dimension. She is haunted by Leonard Woolf's comment on her Jacob's Room: "I have no philosophy of life, he says ...." And there is pathos in her remark about Mrs. Webb's book: "But then there were causes in her life: prayer; principle." Mark Shorer once called fiction a "technique for discovery." There is a sense in which Virginia Woolf's series of novels were a technique for discovering her unbelief. Leslie Stephen, whom the Times calls "the parent of Bloomsbury," did not leave his daughter a good spiritual legacy. The conviction of futility seizes Virginia again and again with suicidal force as she writes herself towards progressive disillusionment.

It seems base to be quoting diary entries against a person. What would people think of any of us if all the world eavesdropped at our confessional. But it comes as a surprise to see that even a pure artist can have the feet of clay. She holds it against Joyce that he is a "self-taught working-man" but is herself about as money-conscious a writer as could be. She is terrible process-conscious, too, in her writing of books, and waits in fear and trembling for what the Times will say of her new book. She is a little patronizing towards the generation of novelists that preceded her—Galsworthy, Hardy, Bennett, Conrad, and the rest—and a little jealous of the praises that go to her younger con-
temporaries. And she easily gets off balance when the newer critics, Wyndham Lewis, Cyril Connolly, Q. Leavis, and their kind, begin to criticize her work unfavorably in Horizon and in Scrutiny.

The importance of the Diary will hinge eventually on the reputation of the novels. One thing may be against that future reputation. Virginia Woolf stands at the end of the aesthetic movement. Hers was an attempt to show that you can, by artistic sublety, make up for a lack of belief and thought and cause. It was an attempt to show that art can be a substitute for life. Two other figures of our century, both of them also heirs of aestheticism, have made the same attempt. Theirs was herculean, compared with Mrs. Woolf's. They are Joyce and Yeats. In one of her entries, Virginia writes: "I reflected how what I'm doing is probably being better done by Mr. Joyce." This seems to me indisputable. In both aestheticism is on trial. In both the verdict is unfavorable. But Joyce's is far the bigger demonstration of that failure.  

HENRY ZYLSTRA


BISHOP BAYNE'S book reads well. His message is set in Everyman's idiom, which is worth a good deal. We more or less expect this from an Anglican writer. It is the sort of thing we enjoy in B. I. Bell and in such Englishmen as Mr. Bayne's model, William Temple. The book evokes a comparison with Miss Dorothy Sayer's Creed or Chaos of a few years back, though it suffers somewhat by the comparison, I think. At certain points it suffers from the liberal Anglican's tendency to be teasingly vague, even when being entertainingly caustic about the ills of the church. But most often in pointing up the problems of a society to which God is optional, Mr. Bayne is quite engagingly concrete. And since this is the major part of the book, we need not belabor the negative point. The writer believes that our society is organized "as if it made no difference whether there were a God or no." The existence of God is optional. We, modern Westerners and particularly we Americans, want to go on as if we were, though refusing to decide to be, Christian. We want no decision; we want to go on as if the issue did not count. We are, hence, post-Christian; we want to feed off the table, but won't take our seats as members of the family. We find it useful to accept the fruits of the hypothesis, but we organize ourselves as if it were not necessarily true. We are what Elton Trueblood once called a "cut-flower civilization." But since the age is not specifically anti-Christian, Mr. Bayne is not ready to damn the works. Furthermore, he is convinced that the Church has aided and abetted the post-Christian secularism through her own irrelevance to the times. This is the thesis of the first chapter, and the rest of the book attempts to survey a few of the problem areas of secular society from a Churchman's perspective.

But there is something to this which, to our mind, does not quite satisfy. What Mr. Bayne describes is the liberal society. He is surely right, though certainly not original, in calling it post-Christian. But when a society is organized as if it made no difference whether there is a God or no, is it not really organized as if there were no God? Does it not presuppose that God is absent rather than that God is optional? That is to ask, is there a middle ground in this world? Practically, of course, it makes a great deal of difference to the Church whether she lives in a society dedicated to the disavowal of God or in a society that does not care. It is better for the Church to exist in America than in Russia—a least it is easier. But a society that has decided to be not for God is one whose secularism must be taken a lot more earnestly than Mr. Bayne takes it.

The first problem area that he approaches is that of the state. He wants nothing to do with a positive Christian construction of the state. Rather it is part of Christian wisdom to view the state with healthy suspicion and scepticism. A Christian will never call the state good; the best that he will say of it is that it is a "neutral guardian" of internal and external security. The Christian fears the state because, left to itself, it becomes a self-justifying, self-contained positive force—and that always leads to evil. Furthermore, the state is like a dumb ox which, left alone, will shove itself into any old stall. The Christian, rather than trying to make the state Christian, will tend to the needs of a free society. There is truth to this. But is it accurate to pit society against the state in this way? In an organic society does not the state play its needful and providentially rightful role? And is it not, as such, good? Need we as Christians adopt only a negative attitude toward a divinely instituted organ?

Nevertheless, Mr. Bayne scores an important point when he insists that the reason why the state has tended to occupy so much territory is that Christians have not occupied enough territory in society. "The reason why the State is moving more and more into the role of the benevolent parent is that the free and voluntary agencies of kindness and wisdom have not kept pace with the actual needs of the people." Mr. Bayne says this, and Abraham Kuyper said much the same thing to us a long time ago. The state has grown too big because we have stayed too small. But Kuyper also saw that if the state is given only the role of "neutral guardian," as Mr. Bayne thinks it should, it will find more and more to guard until it secures complete hegemony for itself. Logically, if not always in practice, a liberal view of the state runs itself out in socialism.

Mr. Bayne has something to say about public education, of which he is rightfully critical. Some of his remarks will fall like music on the ears of us who believe strongly in separate Christian schools. Indeed, I fear that we may find too much reason for simple self-congratulation and self-justification in such remarks as: "I can see nothing but disaster ahead if the present crippling and imprisoning secularism of the public schools continues." Lamentation is more appropriate for us here than smugness. It is most likely true, but there is so much to be done in our own back-yard that we hardly have time to enjoy the delights of seeing the mess in our neighbor's.

As a corrective, the author suggests that the Church should take a stance oblique to the public schools. She will have to accept them; they are the choice of our society and are the best that our society can offer under the circumstances. But she should, first, leave the lump by sending good Christian men to penetrate the system. And, secondly, she should form a working partnership with the schools by instilling into the boys and girls on Sunday the Christian perspectives necessary for a correct understanding of what they learn on Monday. But this surely will not do. With the secularism of the schools established as it is, we would not have partnership but conflict between Sunday and Monday learning. And the Sunday school will certainly be on the losing end. All of which suggests that Mr. Bayne has not correctly gauged the depths of public school secularism.

There is a chapter on the dignity of work. Mr. Bayne is concerned that production has become the be all and end all
of work and of our economic system. Our one passion has become to keep the lines rolling and the public buying, lest the economy fall flat on its face. What the lines produce and what the public buys is secondary as long as men are kept at some kind of job earning money to buy enough of some kind of product in order to keep men working at some kind of job—who really cares what kind. But what of the man, the person bearing God's image, and his work, his supposed vocation, in all this? Can a man's work have dignity if its purpose is only production and not creation? And if a man's work has no dignity, can a preacher seriously tell him that God is concerned with his work? Give a man an uncreative, tedious, meaningless job on a line producing an intentionally second-rate product, and you can hardly impress him with the God-given dignity of labor. Pad his existence with paid vacations, off-job recreation, social services and security and you will do him some good. But you will have left the matter of his work untouched. This is the monster of a problem that modern industry and economy have given the Christian to think about. Mr. Bayne has given a right-headed view of the problem, and he puts it pungently and provocatively.

This is somewhat how Bishop Bayne's book goes. It covers too much ground to be full on any one thing. It inclines to be rhetorical at times when we would desire analysis. But it does take some sharp jabs at some sore spots in our society's skin. And, as I say, it reads well.

Lewis Smedes


THE author of this new life of Calvin, Dr. L. Praamsma, is the same as the one whose History of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands since 1800, under the title Het Duwaal Gods, has just made its second edition, and whose interest in the Evangelical ecumenical movement is well-known. This new volume must have taken the writer years of patient research for he has combed Calvin's Institutes, Commentaries, Smaller Works, and Letters carefully and also most of the outstanding works about Calvin in German, French and English (except the American ones), and many letters to Calvin by his friends. His book is well documented with mostly short quotations, and betrays a remarkable insight into Calvin and his fellow Reformers besides an admirable and interesting way of handling detail without tiring the patience of the reader. The printing errors are very few, and the historical inaccuracies are of a minor nature, so that they could easily have been enumerated in an extra page. All in all this is a popular scientific work of great significance, not only for the Dutch Calvinists, but for Calvinists all over the world. For it ably discusses all the controversial material on Calvin and his doctrines, pointing the way to further research in the twenty pages of footnotes, and it leaves no bitter taste with the reader of Calvinistic descent, even if the author is open and above board about Calvin's shortcomings and faults.

We should like to stress some of these points in a few additional paragraphs. This volume is first of all a scholarly answer to the many malicious legends about Calvin spread by Humanistic and Catholic writers who had an axe to grind during Calvin's life and thereafter. French, German and English Calvinists have in the course of the last century defended Calvin, and his reputation has improved considerably even among those who differed from him, but there was need of an up-to-date study by a Dutch Calvinist, for though many Reformed graduates of the Free University at Amsterdam and even of public universities in the Netherlands, did able research on certain details about Calvin, there was no scholarly work covering the whole territory. This book then is an answer of the Dutch Calvinists to their adversaries in Holland, but it is also an up-to-date challenge to scholars all over the globe. It is not an unwieldy volume, and it loses nothing of its scholarly value by an imaginative and gripping account, for it is composed for the cream of an intelligent audience. We believe that this book will do the Calvinistic cause (and thereby the Kingdom cause) an excellent turn. It does not camouflage any facts, and also turns the spotlight on Calvin's mistakes and his choleric temperament, but it is a masterful defense of the greatest genius of the Reformation as a man, as a preacher, as a scholar, as a leader in church, state and society, as an appreciated friend of hundreds who lived, or corresponded, with him, as the founder of a famous university, and as the originator of a religious movement which was broader and more profound than any other evangelical one.

Another item which deserves closer attention is that this book of Dr. Praamsma is a regular storehouse of information for the significance of Calvin as well as for Calvin's contributions in regard to such outstanding doctrines as Predestination, Common Grace, Authority of Scripture for every field of human activity, educational, political and economical principles derived from Scripture; sphere sovereignty and Article 36 of The Belgic Confession; and Biblical principles of church government. The legend is still alive and even believed by some Calvinists that Calvin was a theologian, and not a philosopher. But though this new work does not tackle the question of a Calvinistic theory of knowledge, of reality, and of culture, it discusses Calvin's ideas for several cultural territories and his struggle for the principle of liberty for church and society, and it makes plain beyond doubt that, though Calvin was not a B笛cist who wanted to infer secondary or technical principles from the Word of God, he was a Scripture-ist, that is, he believed that the basic principles for all science are contained in Special Revelation (p. 290). Calvin did not advocate the idea of Aquinas that the Bible is only a supplement and corrective of general revelation, but maintained that without the Scriptures it is impossible to have an adequate knowledge of religion and morality, and an adequate world view or philosophy. It is good to see this foundation once more pointed out to us. It is of utmost interest for the development of a Christian culture, especially sciences and arts.

All in all, Dr. Praamsma's book is a standard work for scholars and intelligent laymen of every faith. May it soon be available in English.

Henry J. Van Andel