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# *the* CALVIN ORUM

**We Are American**

**Evanston---An Appraisal**

**Trends of Biblical Studies**

**St. Augustine---**

**Philosopher and Churchman**

**Correspondence**

**Book Reviews**

**VOL. XX, NO. 5**

**THREE DOLLARS  
A YEAR**

**DECEMBER, 1954**

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THE CALVIN FORUM

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# The CALVIN FORUM

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## The Faith of Mary

(Luke 1:26-37)

SIX months after the angel Gabriel had announced to Zacharias and Elisabeth that they were to become the parents of John the Baptist, "the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin . . . and the virgin's name was Mary." In reporting the Annunciation Luke tells us three things: the salutation, the sermon, and the response. As you enter the house of God in the Christmas season, you will be welcomed with the minister's salutation, you will hear the sermon, and—you should make the response that Mary made.

### The Salutation

Gabriel greeted Mary with the words: "Hail, thou that art highly favored; the Lord is with thee." He did not say that she was highly favorable. Mary was not the subject of favor; she was the object of God's favor. There was nothing in Mary that elicited this greeting; but there was much in God that made it possible. Mary was aware of her low estate. She depended on the mercy of God and she felt the need of God as her *Savior*. The only reason for calling Mary favored lay in the fact that God was with her and if God be for us, who can be against us?

Because Mary was keenly conscious of her low estate, because she sought the mercy of God, and longed for his salvation, she was greatly troubled at the salutation of Gabriel. Everything seemed to indicate that things were in a bad way with her people and with herself. Israel was under the heel of Rome, and it seemed as though God had forgotten his glorious promises respecting the house of David. Mary lived in the despised Nazareth of the Gentiles. She was poor in earthly goods. She was to be married to Joseph, who was an ordinary carpenter. She came of a proud race; the blood of royalty coursed through her veins, but what a dreadful humiliation she and her nation had suffered! Had the development of her race and nation been normal, Joseph, to whom she was betrothed, would have been the heir to the throne of David. But her hopes and dreams had turned to ashes. Her pride had been broken, and her nation had become a subject people. No wonder she was greatly troubled at the salutation of Gabriel. The basic reason for her disturbance was that she cast about in her mind, in her own mind, for rays of light to illumine the darkness that had fallen upon her people. She could find nothing in herself to give warrant for so grand a greeting. God

is with me?, she asked. It seems as though God has forgotten to be kind to Israel.

### The Sermon

To remove Mary's perplexity at the salutation, the angel had to bring the sermon, the word from God, to Mary. As long as Mary kept on casting about in her own mind, her darkness could not be dispelled. That is why Gabriel added: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast *found favor with God*. God knows of your low estate and the shattered hopes of your people, and he has not forgotten that mercy of which he spake to the fathers, to Abraham and his seed. The dayspring from on high has already visited his people and God will shine on them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; he will guide your feet in the way of peace."

How will this be accomplished? This is the answer: "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Mary is to become the mother of Jesus who shall save his people from their sins, and he will be great because he is the Son of the Most High. The throne of David will be restored beyond the glory of Solomon and his kingdom, will never end!

When Mary heard this stupendous message, she was troubled the more, she was shocked, and she replied: "How shall this be seeing I know not a man?" She was unmarried and a virgin. When Gabriel had told Zacharias that his wife would have a son in her old age, he too had asked, How can this be since I am old and my wife is well stricken in years? The angel rebuked him sharply for his disbelief. He does not rebuke Mary, however. Mary's question was not the result of disbelief, but was motivated by her belief in the Word of God. She was seriously concerned about the commands of God, especially the seventh commandment. How then, can I, an unmarried virgin, bring forth a son? Gabriel was pleased with her question and it gave him the occasion to explain. He answered her query: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called the Son of God." Mary believed in a God who can do great things, who performs miracles. But

God also reckoned with her difficulties. To aid her in the acceptance of this stupendous fact, he suggested that she call on Elisabeth, who had conceived a son in her old age. To implement her faith he told her, "For no word from God shall be void of power."

#### The Response

The response of Mary is a classic statement of the essence of faith. "And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." It must be my response and your response. That is the only way out because it is the way of deliverance from trouble and fear, from perplexity and doubt, from sin and mortality. Mary's faith must be our faith today. To be sure, Mary is unique in that she alone of all women became the mother of Jesus. On this account all generations call her blessed. But having said this, we need to remember that our position is analogous to Mary's, and that what took place in Mary must have its spiritual counterpart in us. To us comes the salutation of the "angel of God," i.e., the minister of God, who speaks forth in God's name. The familiar words we hear each Lord's Day, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord

Jesus Christ" are not one whit less significant than the salutation the angel Gabriel brought to Mary in Nazareth in Galilee some two thousand years ago! But as long as we cast about in our own minds for reasons within us, we shall be as troubled as Mary was. We are not highly favorable in our own right, but God is favorable to us. That is what Mary learned progressively, and that is what we need to know increasingly. That God should be gracious to us and grant us his peace which dispels all fear requires a stupendous miracle. And this is precisely the miracle that must be performed on us and in us: The Holy Spirit must come upon us and the power of the Most High must overshadow us. We need to be born, as John phrases it, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, in order to become children of God. That is beyond our power and conception; but for us, as for Mary, no word of God shall be void of power. As for Mary so there is for us but one proper response and it is this: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; *be it unto me according to thy word.*"

John Weidenaar

## We Are American

John H. Kromminga  
Calvin Seminary

**I**N 1957, the Christian Reformed Church will be one century old. The time of the centennial ought to be something of a period of introspection and self-assessment. Things not generally known about the Church will have to be given some publicity. Other things, some of them perhaps quite obvious, will have to be said and written, so that they can be confronted black on white and evaluated.

It is my purpose in a brief series of articles to bring forward for examination a few matters which ought to promote a general understanding of the Christian Reformed Church. This first article concerns itself with the fact that we are an American denomination; more specifically, with the evidences and implications of that fact. This is not intended to loom in the mind of the reader as the central fact—or even a central fact—to be borne in mind with respect to the Christian Reformed Church. We are not proceeding in this fashion, to ask first, "What is the Christian Reformed Church in its deepest essence?" and then to give, as the first part of our answer, this statement, "We are American."

The intent of this article is rather to correct a misconception which is rather common and quite serious. The idea has some currency among us that the environment in which we live has left us practically untouched. Or another version of this misconception has it that we have indeed been influenced

by our American environment, but that this influence has been limited to the past four decades and has consisted in a growing worldliness, no more, no less. The idea is that we are in America, to be sure, but not of America in any sense. That is to say, ideally we should not be of America, and in our early history we were not, and if we wish to be true to our essence, we should resist anything that smacks of "Americanization."

If I am not mistaken, this idea is quite common, although the way it has been stated above may not be an exact description of it. I wish to contest this idea—not because it is necessarily a bad idea in itself, but because it is contrary to fact. And if it is contrary to fact, any programs which are based upon it are bound to be unrealistic and impractical—and in so far, wrong. Briefly, then, what are the facts of our relation to our environment, and what are the implications of those facts?

#### I

We begin with something of deep interest not only to the denomination, but to the institution whose name this journal bears. It was not long after the Christian Reformed Church was born that the need was felt for a school to train her ministers. Less than twenty years after the founding of the denomination the school also came into existence. In course

of time the educational program was broadened to include those who were studying for some other profession than the ministry. "The Theological School and Calvin College" became the new name of this institution. In order to pave the way for higher education for boys from the farms, "Calvin Prep" also came into being. These are well-known facts of a history very dear and very significant to many of us.

All of this might be described as a measure directed against the influence of the environment. We didn't want ministers—or other professionals—who were trained just anywhere, so we set about the gigantic task of training them ourselves. This reasoning was, I think, very much to the point, and the results are a credit to the denomination. But, unless I am mistaken, we are not all aware just how closely we followed a previously established pattern in doing all this.

Listen to a few selected passages by Peter Mode on the small colleges:

To understand the spontaneous multiplication of small institutions in newly-settled regions, it is necessary to keep in mind that to the folks who in the early part of the nineteenth century made their way from the seaboard to the interior, the church was a revered and cherished institution . . . Rarely, if ever, in the entire course of its history has the Christian church been confronted with a task more herculean than that of a century ago when it was summoned to supply religious ministrations to the hundreds of thousands scattered in the recesses and salients of the changing frontier zone. . . . Most of the frontier colleges were (therefore) founded for the explicit purpose of helping to solve the problem of ministerial leadership. . . . Sometimes this was the only declared object of the institution; sometimes it appeared along with other avowed purposes. In the latter case it usually ranked first among the several aims.<sup>1</sup>

Mode goes on to note curricula which correspond closely with Calvin's of the past. Further, he indicates that most of the early presidents, faculty, and board members were clergymen; but that the proportion of clergy in these offices declined. The problem posed by students coming fresh from the farm and small town without adequate academic preparation was solved by the creation of the Preparatory Department.

Of particular interest to us, however, is the description of the emergence of general college training and the manner in which it was defended:

How clearly the civic significance of a religious college education was appreciated by men of midwestern frontier times appears in the reply given by John Todd to the question, "Why must our churches be called upon to endow and raise up colleges in which to educate lawyers and physicians?" He answers as follows: "Let us look at it in its true light. There can be no doubt but we must have lawyers and physicians; and they must be educated by somebody. Which is wisdom—to have them brought under the power of an education strictly Christian, which will exert a silent influence upon them for life—imbued with the philosophy of the church—trained by her intellectual principles, breathing in her atmosphere, or to have them cast off to be educated under the influence of infidelity or even by teachers who live for this world alone? . . . I have no hesitation in saying that the influence of Christian edu-

cation upon these men is ample compensation for all the church has expended on that college, even if not a single minister has been educated. Would not a church forget herself greatly, were she alone to make provision for the spiritual education of her own children?"<sup>2</sup>

Is more necessary? He who cannot hear the echoes of our own discussions does not know our history. There are points of divergence, of course. Calvin has not shared the decline which Mode notes for many of the small colleges. We have shown greater consistency in following out the system of Christian education throughout the grades. Our church-college relations are closer and more lucrative to the college than average. Our theory of church responsibility for education is worked out to more than an average degree. The only point I wish to make—and in spite of these divergences it remains an important point—is that we fell to some extent into an American pattern *at one of the very points at which we sought to combat the antagonistic forces of our environment*. At least to the degree in which we share this pattern with our compatriots, we are American.

## II

Here is another straw in the wind. One minister of the Christian Reformed Church described the period between 1900 and 1915 in part as follows:

Our numbers were so few and our isolation so complete that we were entirely self-contained. Our denomination was a very small drop of oil floating on the great sea of American life. Moreover, there was loyalty to and pride of denomination that were [*sic*] striking. Every member felt that he was Christian Reformed. The happenings within the denomination and the discussions in *De Wachter* were the dominant issues within the home and the friendly circle. In many cases a secular newspaper was taboo, and there was no knowledge of world happenings besides what *De Wachter* and other papers of a semi-religious nature would state. Hence the denomination was the little world in which our people lived.<sup>3</sup>

Now there is no question about the fact that the age described above was something of a golden age. In these days we tend to be startled when we learn that people read anything at all, let alone religious news or doctrinal articles. But if we should suppose that the Christian Reformed denomination of that bygone day was something unique, something without precedent in American tradition, we would be mistaken. If there was a difference between us and our neighbors, it was rather in the length of time that this fine reading habit continued than in the fact that it existed.

For evidence of this, we refer to a paragraph by Robert T. Handy.

Professor Whitney R. Cross, for example, in his recent and useful work on *The Burned-over District* records how widespread was the circulation of religious journals in the first part of the nineteenth century and how avidly they were read. He comments, "Now that theology is a very nearly dead subject, one finds it extremely difficult to realize how such journals could have an extensive appeal. But appeal they did, in demonstrable fashion." Then he

<sup>2</sup> *Colleges Essential to the Church of God, Plain Letters Addressed to a Parishioner*, quoted in Mode, *op. cit.*, pp. 73f.

<sup>3</sup> W. Groen, in *The Banner*, Sept. 13, 1935; quoted in H. Beets, *The Christian Reformed Church*, 1946 edition, pp. 85f.

<sup>1</sup> Peter G. Mode, *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity*, (New York: Macmillan; 1923), pp. 61-65.

seeks to explain this appeal; ". . . But suggestion of such indirect influence begs the major question. It seems an inescapable conclusion that a considerable proportion even of laymen read and relished the theological treatises."<sup>4</sup>

We may mention just in passing that the same parallel development, with approximately the same time lag, is evident in other respects. Thus, for instance, the Christian Reformed Church experienced a heresy trial in connection with higher critical findings about two decades after the similar Briggs trial in the Presbyterian Church. Again, a discussion and attempted revision of the order of worship followed at some distance a similar discussion in other denominations. Thus, on both the credit and debit sides of the ledger, we shared developments with other religious groups in our own country.

### III

We must not suppose that all of the approximations of the American way of life were on the part of the man in the pew. Both through immigration from abroad and visits to the old world we are constantly being reminded of a difference between Europe and America in the way the ministry is regarded and regards itself. In this respect we are not generally ignorant of the distinction. Sometimes we act a bit apologetic about it; and then again we act as if the difference is wholly in our favor. But, however regarded, the difference is something of which we are aware.

And yet we cannot resist another quotation from Mode to illustrate how strikingly this difference puts us with America and not with Europe.

In the course of a hundred years, while thousands of American preachers have been thus absorbed in the administrative tasks connected with the planting of churches and kindred institutions in frontier communities, and have been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the demands of new settlers for a pulpit message, simple, direct and searching, the American type of minister has been in the process of making. With a preference for the topical style of sermon, a ready fund of illuminating and human anecdotes, a conversational manner of delivery bordering at times upon bluntness and colloquialism, and a passion for a church membership numbering hundreds or thousands . . . he stands out as the conspicuous product of the frontier stage in our national development. . . .

But the most outstanding feature in the life of the American minister has yet to be mentioned—its non-clericalism. Probably in no other country as in America does the clergy come into such intimate contact with everyday secularized callings and activities. The vast majority of the preachers of America refuse to don a ministerial garb. Many of them feel gratified at their ability to move among their fellow-citizens without being recognized as preachers. In the rounds of pastoral visitation, they prefer to dress as laymen. In the same type of dress, some, iconoclastically inclined, proceed to the pulpit.<sup>5</sup>

It must be granted again that the parallel is not complete. The Christian Reformed minister probably spends more time in sermon preparation than the American average, preaches in a style somewhat more reminiscent of the old world and of the Re-

formation, and is not quite completely averse to the title "domine." Certainly he mentions doctrine more often than the average, however earnestly he may seek to camouflage that fact. But that there is an influence is not to be disputed. Democratic America has placed its stamp on him as well as on the building in which he preaches, the atmosphere of the worship which he conducts, and the lilt of the music which he announces.

### IV

At no point, perhaps, can the impact of America on the Christian Reformed Church be seen more clearly than in the language problem. By this we intend to say much more than simply that our characteristic language has changed from Dutch to English. In our very efforts to resist this transition, in our very fears as to what this change might involve, we suffered along with other immigrant groups. If ever we need an illustration of the hopelessness of *completely* resisting the environment, we have it here. The very resistance to the environmental language is part of the pattern which the environment helps to impose upon us.

Early Christian Reformed leaders visualized dangers to the Reformed system which threatened in the American scene. Among them they correctly discerned a certain activist tendency.<sup>6</sup> To ward off such dangers, our people were urged to settle in homogeneous communities, to perpetuate the use of the Dutch language in Catechism, to resist "Americanization." Some among us advocated separate Christian schools in order to preserve the use of the Dutch language. Others stoutly resisted the introduction of church services in English.

They would no doubt have been surprised to know how very American they were in this activity. To illustrate, let us simply quote from H. Richard Niebuhr:

One of the most important elements in culture is language and every European church in America, save those whose native tongue was English, has been required to make its accommodation to this factor. The language question has been one of the most difficult problems with which the immigrant churches have had to deal, for it involved the problem of rebirth in a new civilization. Conservatives in these churches have always maintained that the abandonment of the old, European tongue and the adoption of English as the language of worship and instruction involved the abandonment of all the ways of the fathers and the introduction of a new "English or American religion." Their intuitions have usually been correct, for the adoption of the native tongue is only the most obvious symptom of the assimilation of the native culture as a whole. Progressive, that is more Americanized, leaders have argued for two centuries in immigrant church after immigrant church that the abandonment of the foreign language was essential for the self-preservation of the denomination concerned.<sup>7</sup>

How disconcerting, when one has talked himself blue in the face against Americanization, to discover that to talk oneself blue in the face against Ameri-

<sup>4</sup> Robert T. Handy, "Protestant Quest for a Christian America," in *Church History* (magazine), March, 1953.

<sup>5</sup> Mode, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan*, Vol. I (1897), pp. 146f.

<sup>7</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, (N. Y.: Henry Holt; 1929), pp. 211f.

canization is an American trait! What can one do to resist the process? Isn't that precisely the lesson? *One cannot wholly resist, for resistance itself is part of the pattern.* One may reconcile himself; he may be selective about the type of impact the environment shall have; he may joyfully capitalize upon the changes involved and the new opportunities given. But if complete resistance is to be found, the way to find it has not yet been demonstrated.

## V

Many other elements of our adjustment to our country could be cited. But it is time that we try to be more than merely descriptive. What is the moral of the story? What is the lesson we may learn?

The lesson is not what some would like to make of it. There are those who make the Christian Church in every age the product, almost wholly, of its environment. It makes little difference to them whether they speak of the Church in nineteenth century America or the Church in second-century Asia Minor—or even first-century Judea; the Church, say they, is the product of its location and times—no more and no less.

To surrender to this way of thinking would be to deny our faith somewhere along the line. Something would have to be given up—perhaps the conception of the Church as an institution with a heavenly origin and destiny; perhaps the precious conviction that we are and forever shall remain living members thereof. The faith says that the essence of the Church does not change, and that the changes which have been observed, sweeping though they may be, are changes of the face and not of the heart.

Nor does faith alone speak against the conception of a Christianity shaped wholly by environmental factors. The way we read history, it, too, maintains that the Christian Church cannot be adequately explained on such a wholly horizontal basis. True, it is in many respects explained as other institutions are; but it is precisely in the remaining, baffling, unexplained points of difference that the distinctive essence of the Christian Church lies.

We cannot help feeling just a bit relieved that we have something like this to fall back on. One hates to think of himself, and particularly of something so precious as his church, as a mere statistic. We are not inexorably caught up in the hands of a blind fate. The popularly expressed idea that the Christian Reformed Church is just like denomination X in its progress toward liberalism, only about thirty years behind, perturbs us more than a little. But it isn't necessarily so.

So let us say again what we said at the beginning. We are dealing in this article with matters of the

circumference rather than the essence. We have to do with matters of practice rather than of principle. The Christian Reformed Church has in some respects a distinctive history and need not despair of having its distinctiveness continue into and through the second hundred years.

But there are lessons which we may learn. Perhaps there are ten of them, or conceivably a hundred. But we shall mention only three, and those but briefly, and then we shall be finished for the present.

What may we learn? We may learn humility. That is to say, our sometimes vaunted uniqueness is not so complete as it is pictured. The Christian Reformed Church in America has not wholly discredited the adages that history repeats itself or that there is nothing new under the sun. We may learn humility, I say—and when did a liberal dose of this fine Christian virtue ever harm an individual or a church?

We may learn watchfulness. Watchfulness, I mean, against the environment. The environment is not to be forgotten, not to be ignored. If I have by these lines given the impression that it is, I have completely misspoken myself. This is the lesson: the environment is much closer than we think. We eat and we breathe, and lo, it is within us! In our resistance then, let us bear in mind God's warning—let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

And we may learn aggressively to employ the very situation in which we find ourselves. We may honestly face the fact that when we speak of sojourning in a strange land, this no longer applies to the difference between the Netherlands and America, but only to that between heaven and earth. As ambassadors from the one realm to the other it is an advantage, a precious point of contact, to wear the clothes and speak the language of those among whom we move. We can say to our environment, "Look, fellow Americans; we are an American denomination. If there are oddities remaining in us, they are no greater than in millions of your other fellows in the melting pot; in fact, they are part of what we have contributed to the character of our country. There is no reason why you should not be able to understand us when we speak to you. But there are differences between our understanding of the Christian faith and that to which you have become accustomed; and we would appreciate the opportunity to tell you why we think they are essential."

If we *can* speak thus, we certainly *ought* to. May I humbly suggest that if we do not do a pretty good job of speaking thus in our second hundred years, there will be no third hundred for us, no matter how long our Lord tarries.



# Evanston---An Appraisal

Jacob Hoogstra\*

Minister, Christian Reformed Church  
Holland, Michigan

ONE of the speakers at a plenary session for accredited visitors took a taxi from the station to his dormitory room. Said the driver, "There's lots of people from all over at Evanston these days." Speaker, "Yes." Driver: "What are they here for?" Speaker: "They are attending the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.)." Driver: "What is this W.C.C.? What do they expect to do?" Speaker: "They expect to do this and that." Driver, "Thank you, you are the twelfth person I asked in this cab going there, and this is the twelfth answer."

Perhaps all of us would like to be a taxi driver who could take the delegates back to the train. We should like to ask: "What did you folks accomplish?" The answers are apt to be legion. The mind of Christendom, however, will persist in asking: What does Evanston mean to us? Pageantry left only a momentary impression, the massiveness tickled the American pride in doing big things in a big way. Can we see a hit on the target after the smoke of the firing has disappeared?

We venture a prophecy. The First Assembly, at Amsterdam, Netherlands, was signaled by the slogan: "We are one and shall remain one." Who remembers anything else of it? Who remembers that Karl Barth eclipsed Reinhold Niebuhr and that J. Hromadka argued communism with Dulles? The Second Assembly at Evanston is apt to be known as the Assembly mature enough to have differences and still strong enough to remain together. Many things will be forgotten in the course of time: J. Hromadka from Communist Czecho-Slovakia, Peters, a communist suspect from Hungary, both present at the W.C.C.; the theological differences and spirited debates around the "Message to the World"; President Eisenhower the recipient of a doctor's degree; years of study without producing anything substantially new about the Christian hope. No doubt what worried delegates and was often repeated in tense moments may become this assembly's characteristic: We are one, we remained one, and we have grown sufficiently mature these six years to differ and still be one. This may even set a pattern for future assemblies to take the risk to face controversial questions without encountering the fear of disintegration.

## I

Through its gigantic organizational machinery,

\* Rev. Hoogstra was an official observer from the Christian Reformed Church at the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston.

press, radio and television, the W.C.C. has blazoned against the lowering thunderclouds of contemporary despair: "Christ, the Hope of the World." Wherever a man could plug in his radio he could hear this message. It was beamed to both sides of the Iron and Bamboo curtains. Believers heralded it, and, no doubt, unbelievers may have defamed it, but the fact remains that this great machinery of human communication was harnessed to tell the world that Christ is our hope. Irrespective of one's interpretation the message monopolized the air waves and the light waves—a promise to some and a judgment to others.

Who would not be fascinated by attending the World's greatest and most representative theological forum? Here decorated, vested churchmen of Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Free Church, and Reformed traditions hob-nobbed together. Whether or not when hands of friendship were unclasped again each held to his own theology, the fact remains that Christendom has talked together.

The World Council of Churches has challenged our systematic theology. It has brought to the foreground and underscored the growing trend of Eschatology in recent years. Eschatology became a living word—Let us thank God for that. The gift of "hope" was introduced into our systematic thinking. Theology has spent much effort on such words as *faith* and *love*, but, in comparison with these two, gave *hope* a niggardly reception. This has changed. Roman Catholics in Paris, France, have made an independent study of Christian hope. The International Council of Christian Churches also dealt with this theme. Whether or not the World Council of Churches has made a substantial contribution, men do focus their attention on Christian hope. Even some ardent admirers of the W.C.C. are skeptical about its success on that score. From now on, however, there seems to be a good chance that any man of eschatological stature will not dare to ignore the Christian hope in his systematic thinking.

## II

The *Christian Century* gives expression to a common feeling present at the W.C.C. that the leaders felt rather uncomfortable regarding the theme of the assembly. Such repetitious expressions from the floor that "the Holy Spirit guided us in adopting this for our theme (Christ the Hope of the World)" seemed to be a psychologically erected barrier against fear. As the *Century* looks at it, the Holy

Spirit led them, but did they interpret Him correctly? This theme had eschatological dynamite in it.

The theme, "Christ the Hope of the World," itself is ambiguous. Nowhere do we find it in the Bible. Christ is the Light of the world, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; Christ is the hope of glory, which is eschatological, but not the hope of the world. Consequently we are left to grope about for what do we mean by "hope" and "world." The two possibilities we state are not academic but basic to the discussions on Christian hope. The first one is, that hope is the gift for the redeemed only, and that the Church in its evangelism reaches out to the world with the promises of God. The other possibility is that Christ is the hope of a better life for all mankind. It could be a revamped, re clothed social gospel. The way some Americans talked about hope and the better life, one wonders whether they have gone beyond our American gospel. The W.C.C. adopted "The Message" after a few changes. In general the Message is warm and heart stirring. The discouraging thing, however, is that, according to the *Christian Century*, "the deep emotion stirred by the first hearing of the Message was quickly shattered when blocks of delegates rose to vote No."

The Third Report of the Study Group on "Christ the Hope of the World" was sent down to the churches for study. This seems to have been a face-saving way of disposing of it. The Message of the Assembly, in fact, is a gracious disapproval for its failure to come out stronger for Christian Hope in this communistic age. It is a marvel how men of such diverse theological backgrounds — Baillie, Barth, Calhoun, C. H. Dodd, Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Schlink, and H. P. Van Dusen, could write such a joint report. One cannot refrain from wondering whether a chosen terminology had been adopted with a self-chosen interpretation to cover up differences and to present an artificial unity. This, of course, is risky to aver, because the use of the same word with a conscious cover-up of difference of position for the sake of unity is highly unethical and un-Christian.

That this is not mere fancy on our part, however, is evidenced from the discussion at the Assembly. Dr. E. Schlink and Dr. Calhoun set off the debate at an opening session. Dr. Calhoun, in our judgment, did not get far beyond the social gospel of yesterday. It was asserted by some one else that the focusing of our hope on a future event only was immoral since such made us neglect present responsibilities. In the above sectarian abuse the clearcut doctrine of Scripture was misinterpreted. A literal interpretation of Scriptural data was daubed by one, "a sin of mental laziness." Such literalism lacked imagination. The Greek Orthodox Church gave the typical Catholic answer that the Church is the hope, reminiscent of the Roman position that the Roman church is the kingdom, a deathblow to the study of eschatology

for years. It was also admitted that apocalyptic preachers had at times a great following, a fact that should serve as a warning. Perhaps the message of the current church, it was conceded, had lost something in not being apocalyptic. Of course, the discussion also centered on the literalists and the symbolists, the fundamentalists and the ultra modernists. In speaking of the O.T. prophets one report says: "Their testimony has often been distorted, both by the literalists who have mistaken symbol for fact, and by those philosophers who tried to treat facts as mere symbols of timeless truths." In other words, we trust that many who adopted the Message believe the Bible as it requires us to believe it, but the fact cannot be denied that we are not sure that all members meant the same thing when they quoted the Bible.

Two related matters present themselves: 1) The W.C.C. must first of all agree upon the authority and the use of the Bible; (2) The Council should have agreed upon the theme itself—Hope of the World. Is this hope through conversion for the converted only, or is this hope for all mankind, (for example, common grace)? Or both?

### III

Another matter of interest is: Has the W.C.C. advanced the cause of Christian unity? The General Secretary, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, emphatically asserted that the W.C.C. is not aiming to become a super-church. He adds, however, that he hopes that the walls of denominational separation will progressively disappear. The W.C.C. refuses to serve as an agency to effect church unions, but will lend its offices to assist in creating a better understanding between interested churches. The Report of Section I, Faith and Order asserts the same position: "In the World Council of Churches we still 'intend to stay together.' But beyond that, as the Holy Spirit may guide us, we intend to unite. The World Council is not . . . a Super-Church. Hence we do not ask the World Council of Churches to initiate plans for union, but keep providing occasion for honest encounter between divided churches." Again, one of the first drafts of the Message included the phrase "to grow together," which was changed to "to go forward together" before it was adopted.

At the surface this seems to be a tactful ambiguity designed to create a super-church without saying so. It may be possible that the membership of the W.C.C. is not unanimous on this point. Evidence may not be hard to find. Such is our personal appraisal. On the other hand, we must be on our guard against unfair judgments. The fair picture seems to be that members are optimistic that churches, when they talk over their differences in a brotherly way, will understand each other better and progressively come closer to each other. Thus the barriers will disappear. That may mean an entirely new structure of

the church of tomorrow, now unknown to us in its nature. We should not run ahead of the Holy Spirit, who, in His own time, will give to the unified church its new structure. Consequently it is correct to say that the united church is a goal. The way to obtain this ideal is through honest encounters. The structure, without being a super-church, is known for the present only to the Holy Spirit.

With this background we face the question of the advance of church unity. As we see it another spectacle has arisen on the church horizon. This is the reawakening of denominational consciousness, and the danger of denominational blocks which perhaps even determine the voting. The Presbyterian Alliance wanted to shy away from being a "block." The Anglicans are strong denominationally. The Lutherans do not lag behind. The Greek Orthodox as a block flat-footedly invited the church to return to the traditions of the first nine centuries. The great mistake of Protestantism was the departure from these traditions. The Reformation played a necessary corrective role but it was too one-sided. Church unity was as simple for the Greek church as it was for the Roman—we are the true church, return to us. As we mingled in with the crowd after the Greek delegation spoke we heard people say: "What are they doing here if they believe that?" There have been several church mergers within given traditions, but no major *approchement* across the historical denominational lines.

#### IV

Is the W.C.C. the embryonic apostate church? This is the impression made upon us by the International Council of Christian Churches (I.C.C.C.). This organization has come into existence specifically as a protest against the W.C.C., and membership therein excludes membership in its organization. Two things must be considered: (1) The W.C.C. is not a church but a council of churches; (2) Within this council there are avowed orthodox churches who do not suffer the loss of any denominational liberty. What the outcome of this Council will be, God alone knows, and hasty application of prophecy may be very dangerous. Whether or not the W.C.C. will ever become a super-church, at present considered a monstrosity by some members of the W.C.C. themselves, and dominate ecclesiastical life to the point of squelching orthodox recalcitrants, depends upon the spiritual integrity and moral fortitude of its members. Having said this, we can foresee the psychological danger of always attempting to agree for the sake of unity which ultimately may lead to a fuzzy and compromising confession.

Pursuing this question a bit farther, we face the very line of reasoning of the W.C.C. to the effect that, if we have one Christ, if we recognize one baptism, are we not essentially one church? And if we are essentially one church, should we not then say we are one, and then after we show it, smooth out our dif-

ferences? This position is bolstered by the direct teaching of Jesus to be one, and hence the W.C.C. is considered an answer to our Savior's highpriestly prayer. It also answers to the need of a unified church, as taught by Christ, to evangelize the world.

This logic supersedes, the requirement of accepting Jesus Christ as God and Savior *according to the Scripture*. To be doctrinally one is only secondary. The Personal Christ is greater than a man's doctrinal statement of Him. This logic demands of the Council to be very sincere in regretting that the Roman Catholic Church is not within its orbit. This is true even in face of the fact that theologically Evanston was a failure without Rome: how much more then, should Rome enter upon the podium? This logic would demand to assume that the birth of the W.C.C. is the burial of all heresy, for who would be so foolish to admit that every last heretic is not in Christ? And how could any one assume there is heresy, and discipline such a church for it, and then invite it as an equal in the same Council? These questions could readily be multiplied. But the basic error is this, not only that we confuse the invisible with the visible church, but that we by implication deny as the first requirement that we must stand under the judgment of the Bible, God's Holy Word, upon churches *as churches*. It is not the question whether one is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ours is the question laid upon us of faithfulness to the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. A church stands or falls according to its allegiance to its "constitution"—the Bible—, not according to the number of saved in it.

Further questions then arise: would the W.C.C. have the daring to exclude any who would not interpret their basis according to the Nicene Creed? Are we doing any one a favor (for example, the Roman Church), by granting them parity when we feel they are in extreme error? Is division always a sin? Was Martin Luther in error when he exercised the God-given right to break away from a church in sin?

#### V

The foregoing sheds light on the W.C.C. battle for the right. In language warm and touching the Assembly at Evanston encouraged all who are being persecuted for the faith. But will such declaration give comfort to those who are in distress? There are two examples we have in mind: (1) The Greek Evangelical Church sought in vain for help against the Greek Orthodox Church, which is persecuting it, and still both are members of the W.C.C. How can two churches be in the same council, the one persecuting the other? The Greek Evangelical Church was absent at Evanston. (2) Why did the W.C.C. not mention the Roman Church as the great ecclesiastical persecutor of our brethren in Latin countries? There is only one answer to both—do not disturb the unity. The W.C.C. could have withstood in a Christian manner the "Roman Peter" to his face.

The W.C.C. had to face the question of making the top brass minority ecumenicity effectual in the lives of the grass root majority. This is also the question in Reformed ecumenicity—to make its movement a living something in our churches. There is no doubt that the W.C.C. is a bishop's, archbishop's, right reverend movement. The *Christian Century* rightly jokes about it when it says that the common parish priest or pastor had to get in the inside as a press reporter at Evanston as "a sheep in wolf's clothes."

Another problem is the relation of a man's political views to his Christianity. Many of the W.C.C. denounced communism in no uncertain terms. This fact gives the lie to those who think that the W.C.C. is communistic in aim and purpose. In fact this Assembly even favored a limited free enterprise. At the same time there may be some who think politically as communists and theologically as Christians. Should a man be judged by his political or by his theological beliefs? Should a man's allegiance to Christ be the standard? We think we are true to the position of the W.C.C. when we say that a man's political views should be no barrier among Christians. Christ is Lord above democracy as well as above communism. Perhaps this may be a mark of this Assembly. It requires no genius to sense great problems in this position.

As far as the race problem is concerned we are happy to say that our brethren from South Africa gave a good account of themselves and turned the tide of hypocritical criticism against their church into one of better understanding, and to self-criticism of our Northern States' attitude toward the Negro. Perhaps the greatest segregation in the world is on Sunday morning, when the Negro is not made to feel at home in our white churches, right within our own borders.

The Assembly took a sane position in its resolution about the abolition of segregation within society and within its own circle when it declared: "In doing so the assembly is painfully aware that, in the realities of the contemporary world, many churches find themselves confronted by historical, political, social and economic circumstances which make the immediate achievement of this objective extremely difficult." It then goes on to encourage individuals and churches to overcome the obvious difficulties by being faithful to the Master. This is not expediency. We believe this is trusting the power of the Word of God to conquer life's ticklish situations, rather than the power of force, more successful at first, but more bitter in the long run. Of course, even this position may not become a camouflage.

## VI

The question is: What is our responsibility toward the W.C.C.? Supplement 21, *Acts of Synod, 1944*, p. 348, (a report too frequently absent from ecumenical discussions in the Christian Reformed Church) avers

in a slightly different context: "And the Christian Reformed Church is not of Cain's mind. It does not insinuate that it is not its sister's keeper. It yields to the divine injunction of Gal. 6:1 . . ." It continues to say, particularly in reference to the Reformed churches in our land, that we should not remain separated any longer than we have to.

Doctrinally we are committed to unity. The barrier to unity is the method through which it must be acquired and maintained. There is no way to unity except by mutual agreement on what the Bible is, and what it teaches. No doubt our position, in addresses (not official) by speakers of W.C.C. is daubed "literalism" and "fundamentalism." At one session a speaker placed fundamentalism in the same category as Romanism, scientism, statism, as slavery of the mind. Whether we like it or not we are fundamentalists in the sense that we believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Some of the leaders of the movement, not at the W.C.C. meeting, however, have called our position bibliolatry. What *the* basis is to us, is "Bible idolatry" to others.

What further complicates the picture is that the Ecumenical Reformed Synod has adopted as its basis the infallible Scriptures. It was mandatory for the Christian Reformed Church to accept this, in consonance with the report quoted above. The problem is this: Can a church have two bases for ecumenicity, one for the Reformed and the other for a world comprehensive ecumenicity?

To complete the picture on this score we must remember the Anglican and Greek Orthodox position in elevating tradition as equal in authority, or as one Orthodox man averred, above, the Bible. If we take a lame attitude in this matter what will prevent Protestantism from becoming Anglican?

We doubt the correctness of any position that seeks for closer fellowship without agreement on the basic question: What is the Bible? We know this might jeopardize the very life of the W.C.C., but should it not address itself to this question? Unexcelled references have been made to the Bible at the W.C.C., not inferior even to the addresses of the I.C.C.C., but that is a different matter from being the official position of the W.C.C.

Further, we despair, as a denomination of a membership approaching 200,000, of making any indentation for good upon a big machinery. A drafting committee had such powers and held such a strategic position that our little testimony would spell nil. The W.C.C. is a movement of the top ecclesiastical brass. At one of the press conferences a reference to the drafting committee brought forth a chuckle.

We believe that we can live more responsibly as a Church if we, first of all, abhor becoming a Christian Reformed "ghetto," a word now in vogue. We must take seriously the prayer of our Lord. This prayer is normative and our indolence cannot ease our conscience.

We know our Ecumenical Reformed Synod is only a babe, and a weakling at that. Who knows the history of any synod that may not have been weak at birth? This may never crush our spirits to make it strong. We must advertise it, write about it, speak about it, and make it vital in our life. If we do not we shall move into an ecclesiastical ghetto. This Synod should speak as the Reformed voice, to the W.C.C. or any council, in praise of the good and in warning of the evil. We are our brother's keeper.

We should become better acquainted with the International Congress of Faith and Action, which

is a kingdom project with a pretentious program, if we are willing to make it succeed. Its next Congress will be held the last week of July, 1955, in Detmold, Germany.

Let us be serious and courageous in this business of ecumenicity, in obedience to our King, lest the hour slip by. We may never become a top-brass minority. The grass roots must be fervent in their responsibility. If we produce anything worthwhile we can speak on the highways of the world, provided we are prompted by love to all the brethren and for the edification of Christ's church, his bride.

## Trends in Biblical Studies of Old Testament Theology

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FUNDAMENTALLY, there are only two trends, for Christ and against Him, Christian and anti-Christian, a totalitarian service of Christ or a totalitarian allegiance to the anti-Christ in the world,—these two trends are recognized in Scripture, but there are also many trends that the Scriptures deal with and that are not so summarily classified, because of their mixed character. This mixed character is especially found in trends that are taught by men who wish to be regarded as Christians, but who are greatly influenced by men that do not wish to be so regarded. We need to know these trends as well as we are able.

There is one general trend that influences the academic orientation in every branch of Old Testament study. This is the turning of the tide in the field of the Higher Criticism. We do not accept higher criticism, but we need to know its trend. Essentially it has been in the world since the days of Porphyry and Celsus, against whom some of the apologists in ancient church history wrote. In recent years the tide has not been on the increase but on the decrease with respect to Wellhausenism. We wish to point to four writers and their way of expressing this thought.

### I

Dr. Raymond A. Bowman, of the University of Chicago, in his article, "Old Testament Research Between the Great Wars," in a book edited by Dr. Harold R. Willoughby called *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, says, "The documentary hypothesis seems firmly established. Perhaps our current views, somewhat less loyal to the former scissors and paste method, which was so essential in the classical Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, should

not bear the designation "Wellhausenian," but that name has served as well to indicate a belief in multiple sources, as over against the former concept of the unity of the Pentateuch. In this sense, at least, the documentary hypothesis still stands. Its critics have nowhere presented a competing explanation that will account as adequately for the literary phenomena of the Pentateuch" (Page 18). Although this author here writes that he believes that "the documentary hypothesis seems firmly established," he has made the following admission on this score, on page 14: "Not all who believe in the documentary hypothesis, however, would argue for the existence of *separate* documents, however, for quite a few consider the editing of the Pentateuch not as a scissors and paste performance but rather as a supplementing of existing documents. Such a concept of supplementation, which has been recognized as early as the work of A. Klostermann and B. D. Eerdmans, has been recently supported by D. B. McDonald, U. Cassuto and A. T. Olmstead, among others, all of whom stress the present unity of thought and style in Genesis. But the conception of supplementation is far removed from the view that separate documents were used in the Pentateuch."

A. Klostermann and B. D. Eerdmans are mentioned above. These very men are also mentioned by Dr. G. Ch. Aalders of the Free University of Amsterdam, a Reformed institution, in a chapter entitled "Recent Antagonisms to the Wellhausen Theory," in his book entitled *A Short Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Says he, page 20: "The conclusions which follow from the ideas of Gunkel have been adopted by the Dutch professor B. D. Eerdmans, who was a successor of Kuenen in the chair of O. T. Exegesis at Leiden." . . . and a little

later on the same page Dr. Aalders continues, "But as early as 1893 the German August Klostermann had rejected the naive belief in the *veritas Hebræica* and criticised the use of the divine names as a criterion for the separation of documents." In this chapter, Dr. Aalders mentions, and discusses as illustrating the title of the Chapter "Recent antagonisms to the Wellhausen theory" the following scholars: Gunkel, Sievers, Eerdmans, Klostermann, Lepsius, Dahse, Redpath, Wiener, Moller, Griffiths, Kegel, Oestreicher, Staerk, Welch, Kennet, Holscher, Smend, Eichrodt, Lohr, Volz, Eissveldt, Rudolph, Jahuda, Naville, Kyle, Cassuto, Dussaud, Dornseiff, Rubow, Coppens, Humbert, De Groot; and he quotes this Joh. de Groot of Utrecht as follows: "The vessel of literary criticism will have to be docked for entire reconstruction, before it will be able to render reliable auxiliary service; the repair, I fear, will last very long." To this Aalders adds: "This fear, indeed, seems to be fully justified." A more extensive and detailed presentation of some such materials has been presented by Dr. Aalders in the Dutch language.

Having quoted Bowman of the University of Chicago and Aalders of the Free University of Amsterdam, we now come to an article by Dr. G. Ernest Wright of McCormick Theological Seminary entitled: "The Study of the O.T.: The Changing Mood in the Household of Wellhausen," in a book edited by Arnold S. Nash, *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century*. Says Wright, page 32: "A vast accumulation of facts from every quarter of the ancient Near East is brought to bear on the understanding of Israel's literature, and to Albright they mean the devastation of the Wellhausen positions, including a more positive and conservative respect for Israel's historical literature. To the fundamentalists his work has been a source of great encouragement, and a major reason for the return of an increasing number of their younger scholars to serious and technical graduate training in the Old Testament. Liberals have blamed Albright for being misleading and overly reactionary (he has even been labelled a 'galloping fundamentalist' himself), but a sympathetic reading of his works would lead one only to a more conservative position and by no means to a fundamentalist one." On page 28 Wright had said the following: "Each item of tradition has its own history, which must be examined on its own merits. Consequently the history of Israel cannot be reconstructed simply by dating final literary compositions; and the ground is cut from under the older Wellhausenian assumptions. Thus, while there is no reason for assuming that the documentary hypothesis is set aside, (quite the contrary!), the work of Pfeiffer, important as it is, probably represents the end of an era in that type of purely literary introduction."

The fourth writer that we wish to mention is James D. Smart, author of two articles, entitled

"The Death and Rebirth of Old Testament Theology" in the *Journal of Religion* for 1943. Says he: "That O.T. theology sickened and died and was quietly buried, as the twentieth century began constitutes a theological event of the first importance, which would appear to warrant the most careful consideration but which, strangely, has been passed over generally in silence. That in the last decade O.T. Theology has sprung again into life—and a vigorous life indeed, having already produced a considerable literature—is known to everyone who has been in touch with what has been happening in theological and Biblical studies on the continent of Europe." His articles in sketching this death and rebirth of O.T. Theology mention the following scholars and in the following order, discussing their part in the history: A. B. Davidson, G. B. Smith, Eichorn, Dewette, Ewald, Vatke, Frans Delitzsch, Oehler, Killmann, Schultz, Cheyne, A. E. Taylor, S. R. Driver, in the history, allegedly of the death of O.T. Theology, and the following scholars, in the history, allegedly of the rebirth of O.T. Theology: Oesterley and Robinson's *Hebrew Religion*, A. Alt, Gressmann, Sellin, A. C. Welch, T. K. Cheyne, Ewald, R. Kittel, Edward König, Carl Steuernagel, Karl Marti, Johannes Hempel, Otto Eissfeldt, Schultz, Procksch, W. Eichrodt, Sellin again, W. Vischer, L. Kohler, A. C. Welch, W. J. Phythian-Adams, H. W. Robinson, L. Kohler again.

In passing, kindly permit a reference to a discussion by Dr. J. L. Mihelic of the University of Dubuque of many writers in the movement called Form Criticism, in the *Journal of Bible and Religion* for 1951, and a reference to an article on semantics, under the title "Limits in O.T. Interpretation" by O. R. Sellers, in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, for 1946, and an article by H. L. Ginsburg on "A Ugaritic Parallel to 2 Sam. 1:21," in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* for 1938. These articles represent samples of present trends in the Biblical Studies of O.T. Theology. Similarly, J. A. Montgomery's articles and works in the field of textual criticism, and Jastrow's in the *History of Religion*.

The various authors whose articles are referred to above are valuable for orientation, though they all make concessions to Modernism or Liberalism that we do not share, for our position is strictly that of Reformed theology, as expressed in the Reformed confessional standards.

The conservative trends are well represented in this society, and we can all make use of the concessions of the Liberal and radical schools and scholars of our day. All these conservative trends are highly appreciated by me, and I have a deep fellow-feeling for the Christian fellowship in this society, with its great variety of views. To single out names in our own group for special mention would lead to the rudeness of omitting some of the most important names. We shall avoid that thin ice.

We shall now present an outline of our sermon,—to complete this sermon we would have to follow the praiseworthy example of Paul, who stretched out his sermon until midnight, but we would need the permission of the consistory for that. We treat O.T. History, Introduction, Exegesis and Biblical Theology.

## II

In O. T. History some trends are more general, some more specific. The books of Kent of Yale follow the Wellhausen pattern. Kittle's historical works accept the literary criticism of the Pentateuch but not the Historical. In the Form Criticism Gunkel's saga theory sets a pattern, and many writers have added new patterns but a greater unity in motif or story is recognized than the Wellhausen theory had accepted. Mowinkel's theory in the field of form criticism that the workers of iniquity in the Psalms were wizards, witches, magicians, or the like, receives a thorough double check in many psalms in a doctoral thesis emanating from the Free University of Amsterdam, with a negative result. The Albright School, as it is called by Wright of McCormick but which Albright prefers to call the Baltimore School is said by Wright to have even more influence in Europe than in America. A master of theology thesis on Albright emanated from Calvin Seminary, of which we shall present a summary, by its author, Prof. Leon J. Wood of the Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary. There are Jewish trends without integration with the New Testament, and Christian trends, some of which are conservative in their Christology but liberal in their Isagogics, in a way that we would call inconsistent and unacceptable, others of which are conservative both in their Christology and in their Isagogics, and with such trends we can do far more in our Calvinistic circles, for in a subject like O.T. History there is much common ground between Pre-Millenarians and A.-Millenarians. To be as fair as possible to the Pre-Millenarians, we have requested Prof. W. H. Pardee of the Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary to sketch recent premillenarian trends, in summary, and we expect to read this summary also, to show that Grand Rapids is a real center of theological lore.

In addition to general trends in O.T. History, there are also more specific trends. Concerning the age of the world, there are especially three views current in our Reformed circles, and these three views might be considered to cover the entire field, just as well as all Gaul which was divided into three parts. There is the view of Berkhof that the creation days were days of 24 hours, and it has standing in our Christian Reformed circles. Then there is the view of A. Kuiper, Sr., that the first three days were periods and the last three days were days of 24 hours, delimited by the sun, which had been made by that time, and this view also has standing

in our Christian Reformed circles. Then there is the view of Bavinck that all six days were periods, and this view also has standing in our Christian Reformed circles. All three views agree in this that we have to do with miraculous acts of God, in the creation story of the six days, whether the Hebrew verb is *bara*, *asah*, or *amar*. For the rest, the problems thus raised are not yet solved according to any consensus in our Reformed circles. We also hold to the revelation of God in nature, and favor the research of the natural sciences into it, but thus also the problems are not yet solved, according to any consensus of opinion in our Reformed circles. We take a very cautious attitude toward any estimates concerning the age of the earth, and the age of man or of life upon the earth. We reject Ussher's chronology because of the linguistic and historical argument involved in the instance of Cainan in Luke 3:35 and 36 mentioning Shelah, verse 36, the son of CAINAN, the son of Arphaxad, for this particular CAINAN does not occur in the genesis genealogy at Genesis 11:12, where we read, And Arpachshad lived 35 years and begat Shelah, which in the light of Luke's genealogy, Luke 3:35, 36, seems to mean that Arphachshad at 35 begat CAINAN and CAINAN begat Shelah. The conclusion is thus drawn that the Genesis genealogical links are not uninterrupted, but interrupted by this Cainan mentioned by Luke but not mentioned here in the Hebrew of Genesis, though the LXX does have this genealogical link, CAINAN. A somewhat similar linguistic argument can be based for N. T. usage on Matthew 1:8, where we read, Joram begat Uzziah, omitting Ahaziah of 2 Kings 8:25, Joash of 2 Kings 13:1 and Amaziah of 2 Kings 14:1, while the Azariah of 2 Kings 15:1 equals the Uzziah of 2 Kings 15:24. Thus Joram begat his grandson's grandson, in Matthew 1:8 where we read that Joram begat Uzziah, and three genealogical links are omitted by Matthew, namely Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah though these three are mentioned in the Book of 2nd Kings. Hence, linguistically a genealogy can skip one link, as in the case of the Cainan above or three links as here. Matthew is interested in the historical style, as it is called by Van Gelderen or the symbolical style as it is called by Schilder, of three times fourteen generations, fourteen being David's number, *daleth* plus *waw* plus *daleth*, four plus six plus four, equalling fourteen generations, and being the grouping of David's ancestors. Genesis also has an historical style featuring ten generations, and omissions may have been made to get that historical style; at least Cainan of Luke 3:35, 36, was omitted in Gen. 11:12. Hence the age of man cannot be computed from Scripture. This leaves Assyriologists, Egyptologists, and scientists that experiment with Carbon 14, etc., free to seek to approximate the age of man and of life upon the earth.

### III

In O.T. History, there are still other trends that can be cited in brief outline form. Concerning the stories before Moses, we reject the Pan Babylonian views of Friedrich Delitzsch and Jeremias and others, and favor the view of a common origin in oral tradition, for at least some of them, according to the view of Ira M. Price, A. T. Clay, A. Noordtzij, and J. D. Davis. Even so there was the infallible inspiration of Scripture, to correct the oral tradition.

On the flood, we can say that its universality includes at least mankind, the world that then was, the world of sinful men, as the New Testament interprets the story, while Abraham Kuiper, Sr., wrote a commendatory introduction to the Dutch translation of Wright's *Scientific Confirmations*, (*Wetenschappelijke Bijdragen*), in which a view is advanced that the flood may not have been geographically universal. (Cf. ISBE article).

On the patriarchal history, we accept the entire record as infallibly true, and welcome the Albright trend to accept much of this material as history, though we are satisfied with nothing less than the acceptance of all of it.

On the Shiloh prophecy the trend of Vos and Fairbairn seems the best, to follow the LXX, and the Vulgate and an Ezekiel parallel passage.

On the early eschatological hopes of the Shiloh prophecy, the old school of Hengstenberg is still the best, though Gunkel and Gressman's acceptance of a royal eschatology as early, at variance with Wellhausen, is based on the History of Religion, which cannot be accepted as a standard of what might or might not occur in special revelation.

On the early and late of the Exodus, no one who believes in the infallibility of Scripture can accept the late date, as the dates are now accepted generally, and the monuments and clay tablets seem to favor the early date too. The Palestinian iron age is today not interpreted as the beginning of iron, but as the beginning of its more plentiful use, according to a publication called *Palestine*, for sale at the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, in Toronto, and we think this is correct, seeing that both Egypt and the Hittites had iron earlier than the early date of the Exodus. The excavated cities of Palestine are dated for Jericho and possibly others in southern Palestine in line with the early date of the Exodus, while for northern Palestine the book of Joshua tells us (Joshua 11:13), "But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn." Later Sisea and his Egyptian crowd may have burned others.

Chronologically there is a view of the seventy weeks of Dan. 9:24 that will check allowing for the differential of less than a year to be added or subtracted, to the *terminus a quo*, on account of the

fact that every date has a plus or minus of some days or weeks or months. And then the view of James Orr in the *ISBE* and of Pusey will check Ezra 7 the verses 8 and 13. There are several other trends in the literature that do not work out chronologically.

The solution of the chronological problem of Ezra 4, which regards Ezra 4:6-23 as involving later attempts to suspend the rebuilding by means of royal decrees, and which attaches Ezra 4:24 to Ezra 4:5, is correctly favored by Faithweather, Boyd and Machen, VanAndel and Dachsel. Of all the matters of this outline I have more extensive treatments in the syllabi used in my O.T. History courses, which can be utilized in discussion, if so desired.

Excellent works in Isagogics have emanated from members of this society. We need not mention them. They are known to us all. They all come at a fortunate time, when Wellhausenism is weakening, as we have seen above, and when other Liberal and radical constructions are in the air, several of which we have mentioned in other connections.

### IV

We now wish to present in brief outline several conservative trends. Though James Orr had won a big money prize with his *Problem of the O.T.*, he nevertheless did not use his own material in the *ISBE*, but H. M. Wiener's summaries of Wiener's books for articles on Pentateuch, Sanctuary and Priests and Levites. Wiener's work is excellent, in many respects, representing the contributions of a legally trained mind and a good linguist.

On Isaiah, Prof. J. Ridderbos of Kampen, Netherlands, has a view that the prophecies concerning Cyrus are a later addition to the book. Dr. Ridderbos is meticulous to make clear that this position can be maintained without coming into conflict with any express statement in the book of Isaiah, and without coming into conflict with any N.T. passage, ascribing a text to Isaiah as author. Dr. Ridderbos holds to the infallibility of Scripture, in the full sense of the word. We greatly appreciate this position of Dr. Ridderbos, especially in view of the contrary position of Barthianism, so evident, for instance, in Brunner's *Revelation and Reason*. In connection with the Cyrus sections of Isaiah, and closely related sections, Dr. Ridderbos' argument is especially that it seems strange that Isaiah should expostulate with people that were not the contemporaries of the prophet, but those of Cyrus. This argument of course has some force, but it cannot be regarded as decisive. Somewhat distantly related to the problems involved is the statement of Jesus, that certain prophecies were written, in order that, when they shall have been fulfilled, men may see and believe (Cf. John 13:19; and 14:29). Meanwhile, the main prophecy concerning Cyrus, in Isa.



44:24-27, has been analyzed by Dr. O. T. Allis, into three sections, dealing respectively with the past, the present, and the future, but Cyrus occurs precisely in the futuristic section, which is apparently at variance with the interpretation of Dr. J. Ridderbos. At least, we do not see how Dr. J. Ridderbos can escape from the sum total of the arguments of Dr. O. T. Allis, in this matter.

### III

The introduction to the Pentateuch is so vast that we shall touch upon only one matter in this brief outline of trends in O.T. theology. Dr. G. Ch. Aalders of the Free University of Amsterdam has made a noteworthy contribution to this part of the discussion, although we do not accept his contribution. Others may wish to do so, and methodologically it is also noteworthy.

Various alleged indications of a later date, geographical, archaeological and historical as alleged by the critics, have been treated in three ways, and now by Dr. G. Ch. Aalders, in a fourth way. Of these three ways, the first that we shall mention is that of the higher critical school, for this school uses them to attempt to prove that well nigh the entire Pentateuch is later than Moses, excepting only a few sections, such as all or a part of the so-called book of the covenant as found in Ex. 19-24 or approximately those chapters. This position denies many express statements of the Scriptures, and is therefore entirely untenable. The second position is that of Raven, Keil, Havernick, Bissel, McDill, and Finn, which, in the main, regards practically all these explanatory remarks, and the like, as Mosaic. The third position is that of R. D. Wilson, Hoedemaker, Girdlestone, Orr, Robinson, and Beardsley. In the hands of at least some of its adherents, this position is considered to be fully loyal to the demands of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures. This regards at least some of them as coming from one or more infallibly inspired writers, later than Moses, like Samuel, Nathan, Gad or perhaps Joshua, the successor of Moses. Then there is the view of Aalders, found in the introduction to his Dutch commentary of Genesis, in the *Korte Verklaring*, pages 38-43, and less definitely indicated in his English volume, *A Short Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Accordingly, not only such geographical, archaeological and historical remarks, in one or two sentences each, are then regarded as coming from a later, inspired writer, after Moses, but the historical framework, *historische omljsting*, written in the third person, in Exodus through Deuteronomy, is regarded as Post-Mosaic, though from an inspired hand, the Pentateuch then having been completed before David captured Jerusalem. What position is to be taken in this matter? Not the first alternative, that of the higher critics, for it frankly sets aside Scriptural statements. Of the other three

alternatives, I think that of R. D. Wilson is the best, though the other two are also possible. The least familiar position may be that of Aalders. On it I have a very extensive refutation in my mimeographed syllabus, in the part dealing with the Pentateuch. Methodologically, the position of Aalders, like that of Ridderbos, concerning the Cyrus prophecies, is compatible with a strict adherence to the infallibility of Holy Writ, and Dr. Aalders' treatment certainly is worthy of a very detailed study, which I gave to it several years ago when it first came out. The two positions, that of Ridderbos and that of Aalders, both of which I reject, show a possible method, which may prove to be very useful some day, in connection with some problem or other of O.T. Isagogics, and in any book of the O.T.

Among archaeological evidences to the O.T. the Ugaritic differentiation of sacrifices is certainly not the least in importance. As for the Psalms, Mo-winckel has a view of the Miktam, cited in Young's Introduction, that it means *to cover*, in the sense of atone. In the light of the Arabic and the Babylonian, the word has some meaning in connection with the verb *cover* or *hide*. Though one could think of a mystery or of a penitential psalm or of atonement, as appropriate to the verb "hide" these meanings are not especially appropriate to the six psalms called "miktam" (16 and 56-60). However, the hiding in these contexts and with the superscriptions can well be understood as hiding in or taking refuge in Jehovah from dangers—Cf. Psalm 16:1: In thee do I trust, take refuge, hide. The superscriptions of Psalm 56-60, all miktams, speak of dangers of war, and again promote the idea of hiding under the protection of Jehovah, taking cover in Him, from danger.

Then there is the Ugaritic parallel to David's lament for Saul and Jonathan, in 2 Sam. 1:21, treated by H. L. Ginsberg in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, for 1938, and favored by the Revised Standard Version, as follows: "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor uprising of the deep." That translation can be argued pro or contra. The Hebrew for the questionable "Uprising of the deep" is *u-sedey theruu-mooth*, corrected by Ginsberg, in the light of the Ugaritic to *shin* (or *sin*) *resh ayin* followed by *tau he mem tau mem*, and Ginsberg's transliteration has *shin* and not *sin* in the first word concerned. In this word the *daleth* then has to be read as a *resh*. That kind of a reading or misreading occurs occasionally in ancient versions of the O.T., and an *ayin* occurs in the Ugaritic instead of the Hebrew *yodh*. In the second word the *resh* and *waw* would have to be read together as *he*, which goes very nicely in our square Hebrew letters, but not perhaps quite so nicely in older Hebrew scripts. The final *mem* is not in the Masoretic text, here, nor as the initial letter of the next word, nor suggested in the textual critical

footnotes of the Kittel Bible. When Ginsberg interprets the upsurgings of the deep as "the uprush of the subterranean ocean through the springs," or when T. H. Gaster interprets the phrase as "the inrush of the sea," neither interpretation is commendable, though others might suggest themselves. Fields of sacrifices is perhaps to be understood in the light of the layman's altar of earth or unhewn stones, of Ex. 20:24, 25.

For the interpretation of the Song of Songs, the Odes of Solomon, the LXX and the Vulgate, as well as the ancient church, made valuable contributions to a typical-allegorical interpretation. Ewald Godet and Van Andel contributed the idea that there are two motifs in the Song, both love and politics; Meek of Toronto and other Assyriologists contributed the idea that like Assyrian love songs, the book of Canticles is not secular but religious in its thrust; Jastrow made valuable comparisons with Arabic parallels, to show that the book may contain many songs brought together, with new ones that were added, and Wetstein and Budde are probably right that not only Samson and Jacob but also others had a wedding lasting a week, with literary riddles and wedding songs especially to enliven the festivities. Solomon, the theocratic representative of Jehovah and the type of Christ, could well cultivate the loyalty of the theocratic nation by presenting it with a literary product that could be sung at weddings and as for the Shullammith, what do you see in the Shullammith? According to Canticles, chapter 6, which give a good basis for a typical-allegorical interpretation right in the book, she is like a company of two armies, fair as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, majestic as a bannered army.

Among the various views touching the interpretation of Ecclesiastes, the general position of the Targum, the Hagada, Hodgkin, Erdman, Moorehead, the Scofield Bible, Loyal Young, and St. Augustine is probably the best, that there are two approaches, one delineating a problem and the other delineating its solution, followed by many another problem and its solution. The book itself says that the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails,—as goading problems, and as well nailed-down solutions.

## V

Leaving the goading problems of O.T. Introduction, we now come to trends in Exegesis. If conservative theology were as dead as Dr. J. D. Smart seems to hold, in his articles on "The Death and Rebirth of O.T. Theology" in the *Journal of Religion* for 1943, there would not be a great competition between Zondervan, Eerdmans, Baker and Kregel to get their share of the profits in reprinting Calvin, Keil and Delitzsch, Barnes Notes, Lange-Schaff, and many other conservative works. May the Lord continue to bless them in their splendid efforts.

Coming to methodology in Exegesis, Dr. J. D. Davis emphasized the study of the alternate exegetical positions found in the commentaries, a very good method. Dr. Wardfield was a good quizzer in class on grammatical points, and on ideology, and could give a wonderful synthesis of the ideology. Dr. Armstrong could plow thru difficult grammatical points very successfully, and difficult materials as well. Dr. Jastrow taught word-study methods from Brown, Driver and Briggs, from Mandelkern and a Bible Dictionary or Encyclopaedia. Two graduate years with R. D. Wilson in textual criticism, two years with J. A. Montgomery in the same field and a half year with B. W. Bacon in the Canon and Text of the N.T. certainly gave the present writer an appreciation of the value of the textual critical approach in exegesis and of the footnotes in the Kittel Bible.

## VI

Leaving the branch of O.T. Exegesis, we finally come to O.T. Biblical Theology. There are many works on the Religion of Israel, but the title suggests that the method will probably be that of the school of the History of Religion. One can profit by the material adduced, but it is utterly at variance with our faith to deny the normative and infallible character of Scripture, as many books of this kind do. Oehler and Davidson are valuable to represent two points of view, and both are very instructive, but the palm of victory goes to Gerhardus Vos in this field, whose work however should be supplemented by a good outline by the instructor for didactic purposes, an outline in which the instructor leaves room for a good deal of lecturing himself.

There is hardly any topic in Biblical Theology that can show diverging tendencies as well as that of the kingdom,—with Liberal trends leaning toward Ritschl or Rauschenbusch, or Barth and Brunner, and with conservative trends leaning toward Reformed theology or toward a Millennial Hope. I should like to present two supplements to this discussion, one on Recent Millennial trends by a millennialist, who received his Th.M. from Calvin Seminary, Dr. W. H. Pardee, Professor of Systematics at the Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, the other on Albright, by another man who also received his Th. M. degree from Calvin Seminary, Prof. Leon J. Wood, Professor of the O.T. Branches at the same Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, and whose master's thesis in the O.T. department at Calvin dealt with Albright. I am very glad to have received these two supplements from these men, at my request, and for the particular purpose of this writing.\*

\* *Present Trends In O. T. Theology As Represented In the Albright Influence*, by Prof. Leon J. Wood; and *Recent Trends In Pre-Millennial Interpretation of Scripture*, by Dr. W. H. Pardee, will appear in the January number of the *Forum*.

# St. Augustine--- Philosopher and Churchman\*

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**A**LTHOUGH Augustine is not classed with the modern philosophers, the fact remains that the Reformation appealed to his authority in its main theses, that his theory of time is literally an anticipation of the conception of time in contemporary relativistic physics, and that for an adequate historical orientation of the fundamental problems of religion one must go back to him rather than to, say, Luther or Calvin or St. Thomas Aquinas. As the one really great philosopher to spring from the soil of Christianity he combined Christian and Neo-Platonic elements into a way of thinking which dominated all of Christianity's subsequent intellectual history. Add to this that for a thousand years ecclesiastical Christianity educated Europe and guided its secular governments, and that our own free society owes its existence to that Christianity—and it seems clear that Augustine's importance in the history of Western civilization is not readily exaggerated. Next to Plato it is he who most determined our intellectual evolution; but while Plato consummated the thought of Greece, he inaugurated our own intellectual age. In spite of the limitations of the Greek philosophical vocabulary he clearly expressed the new conception of reality embodied in the Christian faith by rejecting certain dominant concepts, creating new ones, and giving old ones new meanings. And in rejecting the Aristotelian eternalistic theory of nature with its notion of the perpetual recreation of individuals bearing eternal specific forms, he repudiated the very spirit of the Greek theoretical tradition.

## I

The intention of early Christianity was deeply philosophical in that it placed the "Spirit" over against "the law," thereby emphasizing the claims of the present and future in opposition to those of a dead past. In spite of the fact that this could never be assimilated by Greek thought, which deprecated the present in the interest of eternal recurrence, and subordinated individual character to abstract form and law, the early Church Fathers had nevertheless tied Christian theology to Neo-Platonic rationalism, thereby injecting the insoluble epistemological and metaphysical problems of Greek philosophy into

\*A speech delivered at the Conference on Augustinian Thought at Wheaton College on the sixteenth centenary of the birth of St. Augustine, November 13, 1954.

Christian doctrine, where they properly have no place. Now, although Augustine never repudiated this earlier theology, he definitely recognized the revolutionary intellectual shift involved in the Christian outlook, and by his individualistic and creationistic doctrines liberated the thought of the West from that theology. These doctrines were the result of his literal adherence to the primary concepts of his Christian faith, and of his acceptance as metaphysically real the facts of religious conversion as he had experienced them.

In conceiving nature as a drama of temporal creation, a drama centered upon the life, death and resurrection of Christ, he departed from the most basic conceptions of pagan philosophy. For here his thought assigned to individual beings the function of directive agencies of what occurs in nature, thus giving them a kind of absoluteness, something radically different from the conception of the individual as a local and imperfect appearance of eternal and universal Being. In short, for the Greek eternalistic or non-temporal metaphysics he substituted a temporal or developmental conception in which nature became a progressive creation in time. And, although this concept may elude philosophical definition, it has nevertheless inspired all the subsequent revolutions in natural science and modern philosophy. The transition from the Greek concept of eternal form to the Christian concept of temporal progress is the picture of the movement of the history of thought in the West, including the shift of the Latin Church from Plato to Aristotle.

As we know, Augustine's intellectual history began in skepticism, shifted to Manicheism, from which "dreadful doctrine" it escaped into the affable optimism of Neo-Platonism, finally to settle in Christianity. In Augustine's day Christian theological thought had already adopted the language of the Greek philosophical tradition. Inasmuch as Neo-Platonism was the form in which that tradition was most familiar to educated converts, its vocabulary was used to interpret the new doctrine to the intellectual society of that day. This intellectualized form of Christian doctrine had reached its most systematic elaboration in the work of Origen, whose language had become authoritative for Christian theological thinking. The relation of Christ to God and to man was interpreted in terms of the three highest categories of being found in Neo-Platonism:

God the Father was made to correspond to Neo-Platonism's supreme Being; God the Son, to its Logos or divine mind; and God the Holy Ghost, to its world soul. In fact, from the beginning of the third century there had existed in Alexandria a kind of Christian Neo-Platonic school which, although rejected by the Latin Fathers (Tertullian, Lactantius, etc.) as a heathen thing, had been cultivated by the Greek and Egyptian Fathers, who felt that philosophical attacks directed against the gospel compelled them to study it. Incidentally, some of these early formulators of Christian dogma do not appear to have been easily frightened by the lengths to which speculation might lead. Thus there were those who believed that the teachings of pagan sages were the result of a divine revelation similar to that of the gospel. Others—perhaps a minority—believed that the great philosophers of antiquity had been inspired by the same divine reason (logos) that had been revealed in Jesus. Justin Martyr held that inasmuch as divine reason is universal in its operation, those among the pagans who had thought and lived in accordance with divine reason (logos) would at the end of the temporal dispensation be found in the company of the redeemed. It was left to Origen to rationalize all this by means of a distinction which later formed the basis of Scholastic rationalism. The fundamental doctrines of faith set forth by the Apostles, according to Origen, could be understood by learned and ignorant alike; it was, however, the peculiar calling of their successors, the Fathers, to discover the *reasons* for these doctrine, a task truly the work of the Holy Spirit, i.e., the world-soul or universal reason—"all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (I Cor. 12: 11). It is this peculiar intellectual atmosphere that accounts for the Neo-Platonic vestiges—or at least some of them—found in Augustine's final metaphysical beliefs. Science, says Augustine, is the exalted life of the thinker, who by philosophising can attain to a direct vision of absolute truth, including the vision of God. Of course, faith is a condition to knowledge; yet faith is but a provisional state and, therefore, inferior to knowledge.

## II

Augustine's thought exhibits various tendencies, tendencies which are not adjusted to one another, so that each tends to develop in isolation. As the thinker he seems to regard faith, authority, and ecclesiastical order as matters of expedience; as the churchman, however, he makes assertions of the most fanatical kind, and he at times treats culture with the contempt of a narrow-minded sectarian. Although some of these contradictions tend to disappear as the result of his inner development from a philosophical and universal treatment of things to a positive and ecclesiastical one, nevertheless the most serious ones remain, so that it is impossible

to put his thought as a whole into a system. In other words, we find Augustine the metaphysician and Augustine the doctor of the Church almost perpetually at odds. As the metaphysician his doctrine of determinism embraces both God and man; as the doctor of the Church he teaches that only man is determined and that God is absolutely free. As the metaphysician he teaches that God manifested himself to the world in Christ by virtue of an inner necessity; but as the doctor of the Church he maintains that the incarnation is but one of an infinite number of ways in which God could have realized his aims. As the metaphysician he holds that the essence of the divine Will is absolute goodness; as the doctor of the Church he teaches that good and evil both depend upon the will of God. On the one hand he is convinced that the individual life of the soul is the dominating center of religious reality because it has an immediate relation to God; and on the other, he is persuaded of the necessity of a system of absolute ecclesiastical authority. He believes that love is the soul of life and, in fact, the power by which God moves the world; but this does not prevent him from displaying an almost fanatical animosity toward other faiths. He defines regeneration as a radical liberation of the spiritual and the moral from natural conditions; at the same time he confuses natural events and free actions, and he crudely materializes the moral life—goodness consists in obeying the regulations of the church. The saint who declared in the *Confessions*, "Thou awakest us to delight in thy praise; for thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless till it rest in thee" also declared that "without a strong rule of authority the true religion cannot subsist," and "I would not believe in the Gospel were I not constrained by the authority of the Catholic Church."

Now all this is complicated by at least two other contrasts which throughout characterize his writings. On the one hand his longings are concentrated upon happiness as the complete self-realization of man, as a power able to transform all intellectual activity; and on the other, he seems entirely absorbed by the desire to construct a total philosophy of Being, including man's inner life. This is variously intersected by an antithesis in which we find in him a striving for pure spirituality opposed by an insistence upon the tangible and the logically certain. The result is that whatever of systematic unity pervades his metaphysics must in the end be ascribed to the Latin churchman rather than to the Christian philosopher.

## III

The metaphysical problems with which Augustine is chiefly concerned and which indicate his essential divergence from the Greek point of view, are the result of two radically non-Greek concepts, namely, the concept of creation and the concept of the pri-

macy of the individual will. God, a personal will, is the source of all reality, a being without whom nothing exists, so that apart from him there is only unreality, evil, and death. This does not mean, as the Neo-Platonists taught, that the universe by a process of emanation somehow participates in the divine life, so that God cannot be conceived without the universe. The universe is the result of a creative act on the part of a free ethical will whose motive is one of benevolence. Inasmuch as creation is not a matter of metaphysical necessity or immutable decree (which would subject God to determinism) we must consider divine freedom to be the supreme norm of things. We can only affirm, therefore, that God called the world and its creatures, including man, into being simply because he freely willed to do so. For example, if we ask the artist why he painted this or that famous painting, the answer in the last analysis can only be that he did so because he felt like doing it. Obviously, any feeling which results in a great work of art is its own justification. Analogously the final answer to the riddle of the universe can be supplied only to God himself, and to the question of why he chose to create just this particular universe the answer can only be that he chose to do so "of his own good pleasure," something, again, its own justification. Here we face the mystery of origins, a riddle no man can solve; we cannot understand it by analogy but can know it only by being told of it. For us it is sufficient to know that origins proceed from a rational will for a benevolent end, and inasmuch as moral ends alone are of absolute worth, the world was constituted for moral ends. Consequently, the nature of this world is not a matter of indifference, as some of the earlier Fathers were inclined to think, but a revelation of God's fulness and glory. The natural was produced for the sake of the moral, and the consummation of God's world-purpose is the Kingdom of Heaven in which "all things work together for good to them that love God."

Augustine rejected the Neo-Platonist and Origenian notion of creation as an eternal process, asserting that eternal creation would be identical with emanation. To the objection that if the universe was created at a certain date, an infinity of time must have elapsed before the event, so that a benevolent God must have been inactive for an eternity, Augustine replied with his now famous theory of time. Although the universe came into being at a certain date, it was not created *in* time, for nothing can be *in* time unless something existed before it, and no creature could have existed in time prior to the existence of the world. Time is not an empty and infinite medium in which events are located but rather a result of God's creative act. Furthermore, eternity is not an infinitely long duration, for duration is essentially the measure of motion, and since we cannot suppose motion to exist in eternity, let alone in God, we must conclude that there is no

duration in God and that time, therefore, begins only with the existence of finite things. In other words, eternity does not express an infinitely long duration but rather the "timeless necessity of God's existence" and, therefore, the principle relating things in the succession of time without itself being involved in the succession. Accordingly, it is false to say that God did not create until after an infinitely long period of inaction. (Incidentally, to scientific orthodoxy Augustine's theory of time was nonsense until about fifty years ago, when relativistic physics was compelled to accept it.) And it is now universally recognized that Augustine's conception of time is inevitably involved in any developmental conception of nature and history, something entirely foreign to Greek philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV

Although Augustine never entirely rejected the eternalistic theology of the earlier Fathers, it is in his treatment of the problem of evil that he most radically shifts from the notion of the world as a materialization of the timeless ideas of the Logos. The emphasis is not upon a cosmic substance apart from which nothing has reality, but upon a person with whom human beings can commune and with whom they can be enemy or friend. The guide to philosophical understanding is no longer a unitary principle but a history of the emergence of reconciliation out of conflict. And evil, instead of mere non-existence, is an active force in the form of individual wills opposing the divine will. Man in separation from God does not lose his existence, for without God he can be evil (although without God he can not possibly overcome it). On the other hand, although a diabolical counterpart of God which could apparently maintain itself against him, evil is not, as in Manicheism, a necessary and eternal condition of existence.

In his attempt to reconcile the fact of sin and evil with the fact of God's beneficence Augustine makes use of certain Greek notions, upon which, however, he builds a kind of Christian superstructure. Evil is needed to enhance the glory and beauty of the world—as in the case of a painting in which both light and shadow are required in order to obtain the most impressive aesthetic effects. Inasmuch as evil is negation of being in the form of an attempt to abolish the works and acts of God, it functions in God's plan as a mean of manifesting his moral perfection by showing both the stern reality of the moral order and the merciful goodness of God. The evil in the world loses its irrationality when we see that justice and mercy, severity and goodness form a complete harmony in which the potency of sin is overcome by God's omnipotence, and ruin is rehabilitated by his grace. God permitted man to sin in order that God might suffer with him and sacri-

<sup>1</sup>Curiously, Augustine's idea of time does not appear again until Leibniz, who was probably the first modern thinker to see that time is adjectival rather than substantial.

fice for him, bringing him nearer to holiness by lifting him out of evil to a glory higher than he could otherwise have attained. In the absence of sin man could be declared good, but it required the presence of evil to enable him to be transformed into a being who could be declared holy.

In fact, the very existence of suffering and evil gives us an assurance of a life beyond the present one. Among both men and animals we find that the most miserable existence is preferred to destruction, and since we know that life in its essential nature is good and capable of making for happiness, the present world cannot be the whole of reality. The pain of immediate experience awakens in the Christian the conviction that he may not renounce the reality of human blessedness, so that the more intense his misery the more certainly he knows that he is superior to it. This is simply a fact to be explained, and since it cannot be justified on the basis of the ultimacy of the natural world, we may conclude that man is something more than nature and, therefore, established in God and surrounded by the divine life. Augustine closes the argument with a final declaration of faith—"if it were not good that there should be evil, evil would in nowise have been permitted by omnipotent goodness." Nature was created in order to provide a home for the human spirit, and "centuries of human sin and evil are the working of the will of God who has determined man's salvation."

## V

The Augustinian doctrine of the primacy of the will receives its clearest emphasis in connection with the problem of the relation of man's moral responsibility to God's omnipotence. Inasmuch as evil and sin are the result of man's free action in disobedience to God, and inasmuch as the divine will is the source of created beings, how must this freedom be conceived? The problem is not avoided by saying that God does not determine but only foresees man's actions, for if God foresees them they become necessary. If necessary, then in what sense necessary for a responsible finite moral will? Although in the end Augustine simply maintains both the reality of determinism and that of freedom, he seems to have suspected that the idea of human freedom is not really a metaphysical concept (man does not have an infinite number of alternatives among which to choose), so that he comes near to substituting for the concept of freedom that of moral responsibility.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, he seems to

<sup>2</sup>Augustine practically adopts a procedure which in contemporary philosophy is known as the "principle of exceptional cases." For example, some of the early geometers attempted to define geometrical figures, especially conic sections, in terms of the circle, considered to be the "perfect" geometrical figure. Failing this they eventually found it convenient to regard the circle as an "exceptional case" of a conic. Accordingly, the circle is now defined as a conic having an eccentricity equal to zero. Analogously, instead of trying to understand moral responsibility in terms of the concept of freedom, Augustine tends to look upon human freedom as an "exceptional case" of the concept of human moral responsibility, a thing evident and demonstrable.

have realized that although determinism is presupposed in every inquiry into fact, we cannot deny that the human individual is a real and effective being, so that as applied to the moral life the traditional concept of causation is not quite correct. Accordingly, he weakens the notions of determinism and causation, reducing their meaning to something more akin to the idea of persuasion. Although God is the reality upon which the reality of everything else depends, nevertheless man is a being whose moral responsibility can determine his actions, so that God by holding him responsible persuades him to a godly life.

And so, although Augustine recognized an eternal order in the background of all historical development, he nevertheless took a temporalistic view of men and things. Apparently the mercy of God must be supplemented by the will of man—man is capable of self-assertion even against rightful control, and it is the sinner who does the repenting and the believing; God does not do this for him. In fact, according to Augustine, it is precisely the primacy of the will that constitutes the key concept to an understanding of the Hebrew religion and its role in history. God is a purposive and authoritative will who has a plan for his people and through them for mankind, and the human response to this is either a willed disobedience or a willed submission. Salvation, therefore, does not consist in a kind of Neo-Platonic union with the divine substance but rather in a harmony of the will of man with the will of God. Grace is irresistible, not because man is nothing, but because man's will is overpowered by God's will.

## VI

Greek rationalism had assumed that the virtue of nature consisted in its wholeness, and that this wholeness was properly the presupposition and the objective of scientific inquiry. The laws of logic supposedly stated and applied an insight into nature's moral unity, and any science failing to discover that unity was thereby proved inadequate and fallacious. For Augustine, however, there is no virtue in universality as such, and a homogenous nature is not superior to an infinitely diversified one—nature is not made good merely because it obeys mechanical necessity. Virtue and value are doubtless characters of real being, but real being is individual being, and real value, therefore, must be differentiated. Logic and reason are indifferently the tool of truth and error; not so the individual will, and where there is a will to truth, logic will implement that will. Even so, logic itself indicates a moral law incumbent upon all men, namely, the law of justice to all individuals. Logic does not demand the comprehension of nature under a single theoretical notion, nor does it demand that nature be homogeneous; logic demands that we do justice to particular facts and leave none out. Just as truth

looks beyond identity so as to perceive individual differences, and justice looks beyond sameness to appreciate individual character, so God knows and values each creature in its uniqueness. True, individual diversity has a fixed order and all created things have a graduated being, but the harmony of the universe springs from the diversity of being in its relation to God, the perfect individual. Ultimate reality, therefore, may be defined as a tension between God and the diversity of individual things and individual men.

The end of nature is a moral one, namely, a creature "fitted for the Kingdom of God." Augustine's final break with Neo-Platonism is seen in his emphasis upon the human soul as a will whose striving for well-being organizes all the other mental functions, and in his conception of reality as a tension between God, the supreme individual will, and the individuality and uniqueness of his creatures. And so creation, fall, and redemption become a meta-

physic of history, a vehicle of philosophic truth. And truth is the long progress from the secular powers of error and evil to the City of God, a world of perfect grace "in which the visible acquires invisible powers, the temporal directly communicates the eternal, and man is securely sheltered in divine relationships."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Translated in terms of contemporary world realities, this involves the truth that above government there is a moral authority which no political power may exert.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The following members of the College faculty have been elected to serve as associate editors of THE CALVIN FORUM for 1955:

DONALD H. BOUMA	CALVIN GEORGE ANDRÉ
LESTER DE KOSTER	ROBERT T. OTTEN
JOHN VANDEN BERG	

THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.

## From Our Correspondents

To the Editor of  
The Calvin Forum  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Dear Sir:

October 15, 1954  
Wayne, Pennsylvania

A RECENT issue\* of *The Calvin Forum* carries a review of my Critique of the RSV Old Testament, which was published under the title, *Revised Version or Revised Bible?* That the review is not favorable does not surprise, since opinions differ widely as to the merits and demerits of the new version. What does surprise me is that the reviewer has made the charge that in dealing with the much discussed rendering of Isaiah 7:14 I have been unjust to, and seriously misrepresented, Dr. Orlinsky, who was a member of the RSV Committee. Since the question of the proper rendering of the word *Almah* is of great importance of itself, and since the charge of misrepresentation is a serious one, I feel that I should ask you to permit me to place before your readers *in extenso* the statement which I made regarding Dr. Orlinsky, in order that they may be in a position to judge whether the charge of misrepresentation is justified. The statement is as follows:

In his essay on "The Hebrew Text and the Ancient Versions of the Old Testament" (see *Introduction*, p. 30), Professor Orlinsky of the Jewish Institute of Religion (New York) goes out of his way to attack the historic position of the Christian Church as stated in the Apostles' Creed, "conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Speaking of one of the ancient Greek versions, that of Aquila, he tells us:

"Early in the second century A. D., Aquila, a convert to Judaism, made an independent and unique Greek translation of

the Hebrew Bible. He incorporated that kind of Jewish interpretation which was current in his day, and he avoided the Christological elements which had been introduced in the Septuagint text. Thus Aquila rendered the Hebrew word *ha-almah* in Isaiah 7:14 literally, 'the young woman' in place of the word 'virgin' which Christians had substituted for it. Unfortunately, only fragments of Aquila have survived."

This means, to state it bluntly, although Professor Orlinsky cannot be accused of trying to spare the feelings of Christians in his statement of the case, that the presence of the word *parthenos* (virgin) in the Septuagint is an alteration or forgery of the Septuagint text, a "Christological element" which was "introduced" into it in the interest of the Christian interpretation of Isa. 7:14 which is given in Matt. 1:23. As to this Addison Alexander pointed out a century ago in commenting on the word '*alma*:'

"That the word simply means a *young woman*, whether married or unmarried, a virgin or a mother, is a subterfuge invented by the later Greek translators, who, as Justin Martyr tells us, read *neanis*, instead of the old version *parthenos*, which had its rise before the prophecy became a subject of dispute between the Jews and Christians."

It has been the claim of Christians throughout the centuries, and there is no reason for changing it or relinquishing it today, that there is no evidence that the Christians tampered with the text of the Septuagint, but that it was the Jews who adopted a different rendering in order to avoid finding in Isa. 7:14 a prediction of the virgin birth of Jesus.

There is nothing new, nor is there anything surprising in this charge of falsification which is now renewed by Professor Orlinsky. It is an old calumny which red-blooded Christians in the past have not hesitated to brand as malicious and false. It is not surprising that Professor Orlinsky, having been asked to serve on the RSV committee, which entitled him to contribute an article to the *Introduction*, should regard this as giving him an unprecedented and unparalleled opportunity to state and defend this distinctly Jewish claim in the forum of Christian opinion. The amazing thing is that he was asked to serve on the committee. The still more amazing thing is that Dean Weigle and his other colleagues permitted him to air this old calumny in their joint *Introduction*. The most probable explanation is that they were more or less fully in agreement with

\*See the *Calvin Forum* for October, 1954.

the Jewish interpretation which he has presented. However, explained it represents a bill of indictment against RSV which will hardly be answered to the satisfaction of Evangelical Christians.

(Revised Version or Revised Bible, pp. 47-48.)

Sincerely yours,  
Oswald T. Allis

Letter to the *Calvin Forum* from Holland\*

Dear friends, readers of our *Calvin Forum*:

**I**N THE first place I owe you a word of explanation for my absence of many months from the column in which the letters of foreign correspondents appear.

That is not due to a slackening in my love for our monthly. On the contrary. For years I have felt myself intimately associated with it. It is only because the new labors which I have been privileged to perform during the past three years as pastor and preacher in three Amsterdam prisons, have occupied my attention so fully, and have demanded so much time for the study of punitive and criminological problems, and have, furthermore, involved so much correspondence, that I simply have had no time to spare for our beloved *Calvin Forum*.

But now I am enjoying a vacation and now I have a fine opportunity to catch up on all kinds of overdue work, which includes making good the deficiencies in my moral obligation to the *Forum*. While I am writing the letter, I am in the U.S.A., for the third time in my life. This time not in Grand Rapids, the editorial home of the *Forum*, but now in the city of William Penn, i.e., Philadelphia. The third Congress of the I.C.C.C. is being held here from August 3-12. It is strange to spend one's entire vacation in another hemisphere, but I could hardly refuse to accept the invitation to attend this congress, because this movement is too important to pass it up with a shrug of the shoulders.

The circle of *Forum* readers includes a number of persons who have a personal acquaintance with this organization and who are favorably disposed toward it. Therefore, it seems of significance to me to pass on to you some of the impressions which the congress has made upon me.

But first another item about the Netherlands. During the past months we have commemorated several anniversaries. All of them pertain to Christian movements, such as "The Anti-Revolutionary Party." This is a Christian political organization, begun by men like Groen van Prinsterer. It has been in existence for 75 years. In most countries, including the U.S.A., such a movement is unknown. People often ask us all kinds of questions which indicate that they simply cannot imagine how such an organization operates. It is thought that the Kingdom of God is not compatible with preoccupation in "dirty" politics, let alone the establishment

of a Christian political organization. However, this is indeed possible.

Much good fruit has been borne, organizationally, in the Netherlands during the past 75 years. One of our celebrations was in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Union of Christian Schools (Unie van Scholen met de Bijbel). What an incalculable treasure of Bible knowledge has been passed on to the youth of our homeland during the past three-quarters of a century. And not only knowledge of the Bible, but also a Christian view on all of life. And we are also about to celebrate another 75th anniversary. Soon it will have been three-quarters of a century ago that Dr. Abraham Kuyper founded the Free University. Those are the mighty institutions of the people of the Netherlands which have been active for so long and which have been a blessing not only upon the Christian segment of the populace, but also to the whole people of the Netherlands, whose numbers have by now grown to 11 million. Coming now to the Congress of the I.C.C.C., which is being held in the same month and in the same country as the World Council of Churches (at Evanston), I desire to point out a connection between the I.C.C.C. Congress and the movements mentioned above. Here I meet all kinds of representatives of Bible-believing churches from various countries. I believe that there are now 52 denominations met together from 32 lands. But it strikes me how little they know about the developments in the Netherlands. I shall limit my comments to the Free University. Many have never heard of it, and that is probably our own fault in large part, because we gave so little publicity to this mighty work of faith. Of late there has been a change, however. The Free University has begun the publication of a quarterly journal. It is a wonderful journal. Every reader of the *Calvin Forum* should read this journal. It is very reasonable in price. An entire year's subscription costs only fl. 2.65. That is practically nothing for dollars. In the daily news-sheet of this conference I wrote a brief article, based on an expression in Isaiah I, about this journal.

Now you probably ask: What is your over-all impression of the I.C.C.C., with which you are now in such intimate personal contact? Well, dear readers, in brief it is as follows: Every Bible-believing church in the whole world, notwithstanding its professed disagreement on matters of detail, should join this organization. Both the cause for which the I.C.C.C. stands, and the struggle which it prosecutes against the enemy, make I.C.C.C. worthwhile. We may not leave these people alone in their striving. That is my final conviction. Indeed, I see things that I would like to have changed. But that does not detract from the fact that its basis and objective are good and highly necessary. Now I will close, and I certainly hope to better my life in

\*Mr. Walter Lagerway of the College faculty kindly consented to translate this letter, originally written in the Holland language.



the future and to write regularly again. Whoever desires to keep up with all branches of learning in the various faculties of the Free University by means of its splendid organ, need only to write: Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Netherlands and he

will be in for a surprise. Wishing you everything that is good from God and men,

Yours sincerely

Peter Prins, D. Theol. Clio 1b  
Amsterdam 21, Netherlands.

## Book Reviews

*Jan Waterink, BASIC CONCEPTS IN CHRISTIAN PEDAGOGY, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; 1954) \$2.00. pp. 139.*

This book is composed of six lectures delivered at the Pedagogical Institute during March and April, 1954, at Calvin College, under the auspices of the Calvin Foundation. True to the title of the volume, these lectures are scholarly expositions on principles basic to the science of Christian education.

One can sense immediately that the author, Professor of Education and Psychology at the Free University of Amsterdam, writes with authority from a plenary background of study and writing on the integration of religion, education and psychology.

Common to all six lectures is the theme: unity inheres in the foundations, objectives, the child, the Christian educator and the whole process of education.

The approach to basic issues is direct. The author uses no rhetorical fanfare to warm up to each subject. He plunges right into the task by naming the basic concepts and then by isolating the problems. Every sentence is freighted with meaning, but not laboriously so. In fact, the language is not heavy, considering that many basic concepts can hardly be explained without the use of some philosophic parlance.

In the first lecture, "Foundations of Christian Pedagogies," Dr. Waterink raises and answers three questions: (1) may the theory of education properly be regarded as a science? (2) In what way are theory and practice influenced by principles? (3) if there is such an influence, what are the basic principles of Christian pedagogies?

The answer to the first question is in the affirmative. Pedagogy uses the data of auxiliary sciences, sociology and psychology, but it adjusts itself to the fundamental or normative sciences, such as theology. This position dignifies the field of education and gives it a mission of its own to use the data of the auxiliary sciences independently and to apply the norms of fundamental sciences into a unified system.

"The Objectives of Christian Education" is the title of the second lecture. It is impossible to summarize the exposition in a few sentences. The compound thought expressed, however, that education which lacks an objective cannot educate, and that the manner of determining the goal of education is based upon religious conviction, must be considered essential to the second lecture. Dr. Waterink is not satisfied with attempts to use one Bible text or a combination of texts as a formulation of the aim of education. He may shock his audience somewhat by that assertion unless they enter into his reasoning.

His single-sentence statement of the aim of education is analyzed in the remainder of the lecture. Its worth can hardly be evaluated by the terse quotation, but, for the reader's consideration, this is it: "The forming of man into an independent personality serving God according to his

Word, able and willing to employ all his God-given talents to the honor of God and for the well-being of his fellow-creatures, in every area of life in which man is placed by God."

In the third lecture on "Authority, Discipline and Freedom," Dr. Waterink "comes to grips with one of those typically pivotal questions about which the whole problem of modern education turns."

Here again the author singles out the basic elements in parent-teacher-child relationships and shows in almost severe logic how the concepts of love, authority, obedience, discipline and freedom form a unity which determines the practice in education. One is tempted to offer the hortative remark, "Every committed Christian ought to read and study this dissertation."

"Personality and Character formation in Christian Education" is the fourth lecture. The contention made in the first lecture, namely, that pedagogics is an independent science, is proved and applied in this lecture. The concept of character is borrowed from psychology. "Character formation" depends on norms as given, for example, in the law of God. The concept of formation of character properly belongs to the science of education. Educators must find the "pedagogical form" for normative rules, which activity points up an independent science. The school which is operated in harmony with this mandate is certainly making its distinctive contribution.

The fifth topic, "Cultural Forming and Christian Education," is admittedly a difficult problem. Dr. Waterink admits the difficulty by circumscribing rather than defining the term. Yet with keenness he methodically singles out the elements that make up the problem.

The factor of sin, the problem of the self-expression of the artist and the proper nomenclature of culture products preceded by the adjective "Christian" are discussed.

One description is somewhat baffling to this reader. "All culture-products in the world fall within the classification 'culture' if they reveal and honor God or 'non-culture' if they do not reveal and honor God. I am not suggesting that the treatment of this point is fragmentary; I merely reflect on a lack of clarity.

For popular appeal the professor is at his best in the last lecture, "Religious Training." He gives guidance to those who are responsible for Bible curriculum planning and offers practical suggestions based on principles, on methodology. The position of a few Christian educators, which advocates that it (Christian education) is possible without regular Bible instruction, is untenable, in his judgment.

The last lecture is definitely a fitting climax to a series of lectures which no doubt will buttress the foundations of Christian education so that the superstructure may be improved with intelligence and consecration.

John A. Vander Ark