The Philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd

Holland vs. the Sea

A Comment on "The Christian and Philosophy"

Sins with a High Hand

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The Philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd* (a reply to Mr. D. Jellema, Ph. D.)

J. P. A. Mekkes

In the April, May, and October, 1954 issues of the Calvin Forum, Dirk Jellema, Ph. D., of the University of West Virginia (History Department) has attempted a judgment of the Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee. He wished to do this from an historical point of view, for he excuses himself in the beginning of his presentation by saying: "This treatment is dictated first by the fact that our professional training has been in the history of ideas rather than in formal philosophy; and second by the fact that we do not have sufficient time available to attempt the formal analysis of VAD which should some day be done by trained philosophers."

Speaking from this historical point of view, he expresses astonishment that Rev. J. M. Spier, one of the adherents of the W.d.W., should have asserted that before the appearance of this philosophy, no Christian philosopher has ever really subjected himself to the Word of God. Further, from this historical point of view, he believes that different critics from the most divergent Dutch "gereformeerd" circles support his view.

Dr Jellema complains that Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd (VAD) have never repudiated Rev. Spier, and so he attributes to them what he finds condemnable in Spier. Especially condemnable is our underevaluation of the truths in previous philosophies.

However, aside from this objection to Spier, and while appreciating VAD's philosophical labor, Dr Jellema has one insurmountable objection to the pretensions of the W.d.W.: their view that every synthesis with a non-Christian philosophy is unacceptable and their belief that they themselves have avoided such a synthesis.

If we may permit ourselves one criticism before entering into the material proper of Jellema's article, it is this: after honestly recognizing one's own limitations in "formal" or "systematic" training, it would have been more prudent to be careful in drawing "formal" or "systematical" conclusions from one's historical study.

In place of Jellema's "formal" (systematic is meant) we should prefer to use the term "principal," that is, based on principle. For the time being we will gladly use his word.

The necessity of being more careful should have occurred to Dr Jellema in note 18 of his first article. Here, after presenting Vollenhoven's division of philosophical periods into 1) ignorance of the Word-Revelation, 2) synthesis between Christian and Greek philosophy, and 3) breaking up of synthesis, he comments that "such superficial classifications are useful as generalities, but if used for more than that, they become misleading."

We readily understand that a historian of philosophy would want a more fully developed division, but then we are surprised by precisely contrary criticism in notes 14 and 16 of the same article where he reproaches Vollenhoven of going too far. How can a Historian fit these two criticisms together? (a)

Yet, it could be that for those, who from other considerations than only interesting historical ones busy themselves with philosophical problems from a Christian viewpoint, what Jellema calls "superficial" appears to penetrate to the depths of human consciousness. In any case, a more "systematic" (formal?) orientation would certainly have been useful for Dr Jellema's intention.

That a bit more systematization could have helped him is evident when in the beginning of his second article he poses a question and, before beginning the investigation, follows it immediately with his desired answer: "our conclusion will be that the philosophy of VAD is a synthesis of Calvinism and Phenomenology, a post-Neo-Kantian contemporary philosophy of German origin."

This hastiness is not limited just to the choice of an unfortunate example in style; when Jellema historically and controversially pronounces judgment over the deepest ground of the W.d.W. he does it in a, from a systematical point of view, certainly inadmissible manner.

"Since the core of VAD's system of philosophy is the notion of the fourteen law-spheres or structural levels of the cosmos, and thus a core which lies in the field of ontology, we shall consider the Phenomenologist who has been most interested in the field of ontology: Nicolai Hartmann." Then Dr Jellema describes Hartmann's "Schichtenbau."

The "Schichtenbau" (structural levels) is of course nothing exceptional and certainly not an original discovery by Hartmann (not even with regard to the W.d.W. which developed its ontological studies about the same time.) The entire investigation focused by the nineteenth century upon the

* Prof. Jellema's answer appears in the form of footnote comments found at the end of this article. These comments are indicated by small letters appearing in parentheses throughout the text.

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foundations of the cultural sciences bumped into the continuous ordered bases in the kosmos. If the historian in Dr Jellema had been more alert here he would not have so emphatically presented Hartmann and Feiblemann as a new discovery. There are also many others. (b)

However what is exceptional is that Dr Jellema finds "the core of VAD's system of philosophy" in the "structural levels of the cosmos," and then in note 7 of his second article he concludes: "It is this matter of dependence of the higher spheres on the lower which leads VAD into difficulty on the doctrine of the soul; for the soul (and angels) live in the spiritual-rational sphere, but are not bound by the laws affecting matter. Hence also VAD's attempt to escape this difficulty by denying the traditional notion of the soul as a meta-physical substance, and branding such a notion as synthesis-philosophy." (c)

Dr Jellema is an historian, and historians like to look for similarities. He observes a likeness between Hartmann and the W.d.W. An historian also, because he is an historian, hangs on to tradition, and therefore Jellema gladly dictates: "the soul lives in the spiritual-rational sphere." (e)

But the method of historical study as Jellema conceives it will never give insight into what forms "the core" of a "system." And such a method can echo "the soul lives in the spiritual-rational sphere," but it certainly cannot prove it.

There is a bit more to the matter, than the looking at systems as historical objects, and as soon as anybody takes the trouble to look deeper into history he will be wise enough not to write: "hence VAD's attempt to escape..." (f)

Nevertheless, Dr Jellema boldly presumes that further study will show up more likenesses and influences. And he calmly concludes that we of the W.d.W. are involved in the synthesis of Christian faith and phenomenology à la Husserl and Nicolai Hartmann, just as Stoker's philosophy of the creation-concept is a synthesis with Scheler. Now Dr Jellema does not disapprove of this; but what he does disapprove of is that the W.d.W. tries to deny it and presents itself as a purely Christian philosophy.

At the end of his second article he draws the final conclusion, which his last article just embroiders: "The philosophy of VAD then, must be regarded, it seems to me, as an attempt, and an able one, at synthesizing Christian theology and phenomenology. The synthesis is sometimes awkward; the two don't always fit; and it is noteworthy, and somewhat alarming, that when this happens (as in the case of the traditional Christian view of the soul), VAD try to change the doctrine rather than change the philosophy." (my italics)

We hope later to say more about this last article (October, 1954). But first, we believe that we have sufficiently reiterated the opinion of Dr Jellema, although already accompanied by criticism (we should wish to call it "formal" criticism) in order to lay down our position in the discussion.

It centers on "the core" and the "escape." It will probably be difficult to discuss a systematic (formal?) question with this "historian."

He writes somewhere that followers of the W.d.W. are finished with criticism by just naming a few names. Fortunately he also mentions Prof. Dooyeweerd's English publications, where the reader can read for himself that Dooyeweerd calls for an immanent critique of the deepest foundations of philosophical systems—a critique which so many have neglected. Such investigation has this purpose: that in spite of mutual differences we may learn to understand each other and at any rate maintain a community of thought. As historian Dr Jellema has passed these "systematic" questions by as trifles. (d) In his own criticism he does not scruple to do what he reproaches in the followers of the W.d.W.: he wants to support his insight with tradition by hauling in a few names with a Dutch Gereformeerd sound.

He himself explains that as an historian he has not had time to carry out a careful investigation of the bases. And that is why particularly he has not grasped how "the core" of VAD lies in the thesis that human theoretical thought does not have the power in itself to give us insight into truth, but that it must be imbued from top to bottom by the basic motifs [sic] of the Holy Scriptures, the proclamation of the universal Mediator and Saviour. (e)

Dr Jellema has not understood this and that is why he so readily thinks he discovers a synthesis between Christian theology and phenomenology in the W.d.W.

For him truth has to come from philosophy or from theology (or perhaps from both together), but in any case from theoretical thinking. Remember: "the soul lives in the spiritual-rational sphere."

Jellema is certain of this. He has read it in so many heathen and Christian philosophers, yes, in "gereformeerd" Dutchmen; historical tradition appears to him generally to appeal to it, and—most important—this presupposition lies hidden at the bottom of all the world's scientific undertakings. What could a man of science do if he could no longer count on this theoretical thinking as the trustworthy discoverer of scientific truth?!

Precisely this silent presupposition VAD attack. (f)

If Dr Jellema had taken the trouble to compare his lists of "levels" of Feiblemann with that of VAD, he would have at least discovered a striking difference in the placing of the logical "level." With all deference, I should like to ask him to take a look at our critique of Nicolai Hartmann (Beteekenis van het subject in de moderne waardefilosofie, Univ. Pers, Leiden, 1949). Then he shall not be able to deny the conclusion that there is precisely the opposite of a synthesis between Hartmann and us. (g)

That the soul does not live in the earthly recognizable "spiritual-rational sphere" (how does Dr J.
“know” about the angels?) rests neither on a theological nor on a philosophical nor on any other theoretical propositions of VAD. For them and for us it is not an “escape” but a pretheoretical faith dogma. We believe, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, that only God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ is sovereign, and that before Him the created logical thinking is to be counted as nothing. (h)

We believe that His grace has rescued us from the power of the deifying deification of reason and that we must express this especially in our scientific practice.

That is why we place such strict demands on scientific criticism.

That is why we also take account of the elements of truth which the ages of philosophy had to see, since these elements rooted in God’s truth. We object to just this in the non-Christian philosophy: she has not recognized God as creator, Who is to be praised eternally, and that she therefore repeatedly had to fall into errors. To clarify this we present to the interested reader the following passage which may be found on page 117 f. of Dooyeweerd’s A New Critique of Theoretical Thought (the American edition of his Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee, I.): (i)

“By adopting an antithetic attitude against the entire immanence-philosophy in its evolution from Greek thought to the latest time, is not, for an authentically Christian philosophy, all connection with 1. The difference in principle with regard to “the levels” between the VAD on the one hand and immanence philosophy on the other is that the latter makes their mutual order and quality entirely dependent upon the choice of the archimedian point in the logical-analytic thinking. (j) Concerning N. Hartmann as an ontological critic, I have dealt with this in the booklet mentioned in the following sentence in the text.

The W.d.W. on the other hand has developed her modalities (something completely different from “levels”) out of a faith in the mutual irreducibility of the diversity of our temporal existence and the equal relatedness of each modality to the religious root of creation. When VAD began to work on this problem, basing their solution on the practical-Calvinistic teaching of sphere sovereignty, N. Hartmann had not yet published his doctrine of “levels.” (b)

The Calvinistic teaching of the mutual irreducible modalities is born of the irreconcilable antithesis to the belief in the autonomy of theoretical thought—which believes that it can arbitrarily bring the aspects of reality under a logically determined common denominator. (j) The historical development of philosophic thought cut off? That is to say, does not the latter place itself outside this historical development? If this were really so, then at once the sentence of doom would be pronounced over the attempt undertaken in this work at a reformation of philosophic thought from the Christian point of view. Reformation is not creation out of nothing.

“But if an appeal is made to the Idea of the “philosophia perennis,” one should know what is to be understood by it. Philosophic thought as such stands in an inner relationship with historical development, postulated by our very philosophical basis Idea, and no thinker whatever can withdraw himself from this historical evolution. Our transcendental ground-
Dr Jellema rather appreciates the W.d.W.'s attempts, but he too uncritically posits a bond between phenomenology as a contemporary philosophical movement and the W.d.W.

In the light of the above quote from Prof. Dooyeweerd over the "philosophia perennis" it is not surprising that phenomenology and existentialism as well as Kant and Plato have significance for us. (1)

Yet, also as an effect of history, our eyes are wide open to the fact that there is an unbridgeable gulf between the principles of phenomenology and the Christian faith.

This should have been clear to Dr Jellema from Prof. Dooyeweerd's leading problem, the "transcendental critique of theoretical thought," which finds its highpoint in the critique of Kant's and Husserl's idea of the transcendental "cogito." (m)

Dr Jellema has paid too much attention to the "levels" and has missed the real "core" of VAD's philosophy, presumably because of Dutch influences.

We certainly realize that today's phenomenology and existentialism have something to say to us. (1) But precisely because of this we want to be very alert against the penetration of that which poisons these modern methods — just as it did in earlier systems: the autonomy of theoretical thought of the creature over against the Creator. We want to keep our eye on this autonomy of theoretical thought in spite of the protective hood of a belief, submissive to scriptural norms, in a separate supernatural sphere. (n)

We ask Dr Jellema to watch us and at the same time over us on this point, just as we will do for him.

Meanwhile, and this may be viewed as the essence of it all: the question in dispute is the critical question of the archimedean point where I, a thinker submissive to God's creation-law, can choose a position for the study of scientific problems. Shall I place my greatest trust in my theological or philosophical thinking, or in the living relation to my Creator born out of His Word to me? (o)

The consequence of this choice controls my entire scientific activity. (p) We still have a lot to think through together on this point. But a decided position we cannot avoid, since we who call ourselves Christians know that God will not suffer any other gods beside Him in our heart, any gods who would make the heart a "in the spiritual-rational sphere living soul." We should like to close this article with the expression of the hope that Dr Jellema and the readers of the Calvin Forum will together with us reflect seriously on this primary question which forces itself upon the Christian philosopher. This can perhaps bring us to a fruitful cooperation in the interest of our science and of our faith. (q)

**Answer to Mekkes**

Dirk Jellema

(a) Quite simply. V's general classification may be useful, though superficial: his attempts at more detailed classification have been attacked as at best questionable and at worst preposterous.

(b) The idea that there are ordered levels in the cosmos goes back at least to Aristotle. Hartmann's "Schichtenbau" and VAD's "Weltidee" both emerge from the attempt to escape the apparent impasse reached around 1900 by Neo-Kantianism, and are quite different in degree from the earlier casual interest in the problem. Both Dooyeweerd and Skemer acknowledge their early interest in Phenomenology. Phenomenology (and specifically Hartmann) took up the question of cosmic levels as a basic question before VAD began working on it.

(c) Reformed theology, whether working from Scripture (as Voetius and the others claimed), or under the influence of Aristotelianism (as VAD claim), pictured the soul as a metaphysical substance independent of the laws of space and time. VAD, driven by their notion of levels, picture all created things (including the soul) as subject to the laws governing these levels. This leads them to revise drastically the picture given of the soul by earlier Reformed thinkers. If acceptance of traditional Reformed theology means "dictation," I plead guilty.

(d) Since I specifically mentioned VAD's immanent critique of post-Cartesian philosophy as the most valid part of their system, I am puzzled by these remarks. It should also be said that VAD's immanent critique of pre-Cartesian philosophy is open to grave question.

(e) Mekkes has some point here. The core of VAD's system is, as he says, Christian faith, in a sense: it is the point from which they set out. On the other hand, that is the core of every Christian philosophy worthy of the name. The core of VAD's ideas in the sense of the basic difference between VAD's system and other Christian philosophical systems is, however, the notion of "Weltidee" or "Schichtenbau."

(f) Mekkes here does exactly that for which VAD have been attacked by Hegg, Smeenk, and others: he distinguishes sharply between Reformed theology and Biblical faith. It seems to me, rather, that our Reformed theology is based on the Bible, not contrary to it: that our creeds are based on faith, not on reason: and that our theology is not merely theoretical thinking based on reason. If it will make Mekkes happier, however, I would gladly state that I regard VAD as an often unwieldy synthesis between Biblical faith and Phenomenology, rather than between theology and Phenomenology.

(g) VAD attack Kuyper and Wolther for "synthesis-philosophy" because they take over some ideas of Plato—even though they have many criticisms of Plato. By the same token, if VAD criticize some details of Hartmann's Schichtenbau, this does not prove that VAD do not have a synthesis-philosophy. "Synthesis-philosophy" indeed implies a critical acceptance of something. VAD have a Christian Phenomenology in the same sense that Wolther had a Christian Platonism.

(h) Assumed here again is that the traditional Reformed view of the angels is based on theology and reason rather than on the Bible. This assumption is one many Povorn readers would question. Also open to question is the view (similar to Barth's) that logical thinking can tell us nothing about God: this is contrary to Calvin.

(i) Dooyeweerd here acknowledges that VAD are involved in intellectual matters, much to my own philosophico-metaphysical advantage, VAD are, I believe, much more concerned with non-Christian philosophy (i.e., non-Christian philosophy), and regard non-Christian philosophy as of some value. In many other places he seems to have forgotten what he here writes; and many of his disciples (e.g., Spier and Mekkes) do not seem to have read this passage carefully.

(j) The difference would rather seem to be that VAD take a different "archimedean point" (starting-point) from Hartmann's. The similarity is that both accept Schichtenbau and Weltidee, and describe the levels and their rela-
tions in similar terms. Hence, in brief, VAD is a synthesis of Calvinism and Phenomenology. An unkind critic might say that VAD accepts Phenomenology and sticks God in as an afterthought—I personally would not go that far.

(k) The question might be raised whether VAD are not just as “guilty” of accommodating non-Christian contemporary philosophy as Aquinas was of accommodation to Greek philosophy. Pious thunderings, whether in Aquinas or in Dooyeweerd, do not answer the question.

(l) Mekkes first says there is no bond, then admits there is. His idea that even if VAD’s Schiltenbusch and Wetterdijk has been greatly influenced by Phenomenology there is nevertheless no bond between VAD and contemporary Phenomenology is puzzling.

(m) (1) Mekkes does not seem to understand what “synthesis” means. It does not mean an uncritical acceptance of all the ideas of Platonism or Phenomenology or whatever it is the Christian philosopher is trying to synthesize with Christianity. It means acceptance of many elements of Platonism or Phenomenology, and rejection of those which do conflict with Christianity. VAD have a Christian Phenomenology, in the same sense Woltjer had a Christian Platonism—which VAD demance as a synthesis-philosophy. (2) If Mekkes would read my articles more carefully, he would find that I praised VAD’s critique of post-Kantian philosophy, as he does here; and also that I attacked VAD’s critique of pre-Cartesian philosophy as weak.

(n) Being interpreted, this means that anyone who agrees with Calvin, Voetius, Kuyper, etc. that there is a separate supernatural sphere is actually supporting the autonomy of human reason. This, if I may use understatement, is open to question.

(o) Mekkes is way off base here. That question is precisely what is not at issue with VAD. That statement is not something which VAD have discovered after 1500 years of darkness; it is the basis for all varieties of Christian philosophy worthy of the name. Perhaps Aquinas or Augustine or Voetius or Kuyper or Bonaventura or Pascal or Woltjer did not always carry this idea out consistently in their thinking: but this was the basis, the “core,” of their thinking. The question is rather this: have VAD been consistent in carrying out this basic belief which they share with so many other philosophers? or have they compromised at least as much as Aquinas did.

(p) Perfectly true. It does not drive me to accept VAD, however, since VAD is simply one of several Christian philosophies which starts out from this basic assumption. The question is whether it is as good as or better than or worse than previous attempts at working out a Christian philosophy based on this same starting-point, this “core,” this “prfound-conviction.” Failure to recognize this as the question is a real defect in Mekkes’ thinking, and Spier’s, and to some extent Dooyeweerd’s.

(q) Mekkes misstates the issue. All Calvinistic thinkers are agreed already that we must “begin with the living relation to our Creator born out of His Word to us.” The question which needs discussion is rather to what extent VAD (and Woltjer, and others) have been able to work out a philosophy based on or at least consistent with this starting-point. I agree completely with VAD’s Calvinistic starting-point, as I do with, say, Woltjer’s starting-point: that is not the point at issue at all. Until Mekkes realizes that it is not the point at issue, fruitful discussion will be difficult.

Holland’s Struggle Against the Sea

Peter Oppewall

“GOD created the whole world, except for Holland, which was made by the Dutch,” is an old French saying. It is easy to see why this saying is popular in the Netherlands, for one-half of the country, containing sixty percent of the population, lies below sea level. This land has been won and maintained by one of the most courageous and tenacious struggles in human history.

This struggle got the attention of the whole world in January, 1953, when high seas, lashed by hurricane winds, crumpled the dikes in the southern part of the land and flooded 8 percent of the whole country, bringing sudden death to 1500 people and leaving in its wake a quarter of a billion dollars damage. The storms and high water of January, 1955, served to remind Holland that she has not yet won the final victory, and that, meanwhile, she must be eternally vigilant.

A new and major chapter in the story of Holland’s struggle against the sea may soon be written. The government Delta Commission, a study group appointed to investigate means for preventing similar disasters, has recommended that the government undertake the closing of the mouths of the river estuaries in southern Holland. If this project is undertaken, it will be the most ambitious, the most costly, and possibly the most fruitful of Holland’s countermoves against its age-old enemy.

Holland’s warfare with the sea began some 2400 years ago. Originally the lowlands were a dumping ground for sand and mud brought down from the highlands of northern and central Europe by the melting glaciers. The Frisians, arriving about 400 B.C., were the first to settle in this soaking wilderness. They roamed over a frontier of 350 miles, but had their headquarters in what is now the province of Friesland. Here they built mounds of earth to protect themselves from the sea. Evidence of about 1500 of these mounds has been found. Their area ranged from five to forty acres, and they sometimes rose to a height of 30 feet above normal sea level. Pliny in 47 A.D. described the Frisians as groups of miserable shipwrecked sailors, marooned on the top of their self-made mounds in the midst of a waste of water: “They try to warm their frozen bowels by burning mud, dug with their hands out of the earth and dried to some extent in the wind more than in the sun, which one hardly ever sees.” But by their heroic struggles they proved that it was possible to wring an existence from the lands which at high tide lay below the sea. By moving a total amount of land greater than that which went into the pyramids, they set a precedent which has been followed by Hollanders ever since.

As the Dutch grew in numbers and in knowledge of the ways of the sea, they switched from the essentially defensive measures of the mounds to the offen-
sive use of dikes. The first dikes date back to 800, shortly after the Norman conquests. But spades and barrows were feeble weapons with which to hurl back the insistent seas. During the next 800 years more land was lost than was gained. Around 1300 there was a break-through in the north and the sea poured inland for hundreds of kilometers, making the Zuider Zee salt and flooding much of the surrounding countryside. Little more than a hundred years later a similar disaster in the south wiped out sixty-five villages and 10,000 lives.

The enemy was advancing on two fronts; it was reaching two long arms into the country, a move which if unopposed would have meant the end of the most populous and prosperous part of Holland. The two claws of the sea, around 1500, came within thirty-six miles of each other. Between Amsterdam in the north and Rotterdam in the south, there was nothing but lowland, most of it below high-tide level. A severe storm such as the one in 1953 would have caused the joining of the sea arms, and perhaps changed the whole history of the Netherlands.

This deadly embrace was fenced off with the aid of windmills. It is easy to see why this device, peculiarly suited to the needs of the country, has become a symbol and a trademark of Holland. Thanks to wide-scale application of the windmill and new willow-mattress techniques in building dikes, the tide was turned in favor of man, and the sea had to wait a long time for its next major victory.

The Dutch could now go on the offensive. Not only could they hold back the sea with bigger and better dikes, but they could pump the land dry which was left behind. They began the process of winning back not only what had been lost to the sea, but new areas as well. First came the draining of inland lakes. Some of these were natural but most of them had been caused by the generations that had burned the earth in their stoves. Peat was their only source of heat, and so the Dutch burned their way deeper and deeper into the ground. Huge lakes resulted which eventually overflowed and produced a threat from within nearly as great as the one from without. The windmill has turned these lake bottoms, lying as much as thirty feet below sea level, into some of the most fertile acres in all Holland.

Combined with this internal salvage job went a piecemeal attempt to push the ocean back, partly in the northern area (Groningen) and partly at the mouths of the Rhine and the Meuse in the south (Zeeland). Section by section, century by century, the land was laid dry and turned into productive farm land.

The most aggressive, imaginative, and profitable of Holland's counter-moves against the sea was the construction of the Afsluitdijk, which was completed in 1932. This twenty-mile-long dam, representing the greatest feat of hydraulic engineering of its time, closes off the Zuider Zee from the ocean. Its purpose was three-fold: to hasten and expand the winning of vast areas of land, to shorten the line of defense against the sea, and to provide a fresh-water reservoir in the heart of the country. Increases in population (the Netherlands is one of the most heavily populated countries in the world) had made the demand for new land and opportunity more urgent. There was always the threat that a bad storm would extend the gains made by the sea in the 15th century. And there was the threat of salt-water infiltration. Fields many miles inland were beginning to show the effect of the increasing salinity of the soil.

As a result of the constantly improving drainage, the land had in many places settled more and more below sea level, so that the sea water penetrated into the polders underneath the dikes and dunes, poisoning the crops. This menace has only recently been analyzed and understood. For centuries the farmers had assisted this infiltration by drawing marsh gas from the earth, and by digging deep wells to get cold water for cooling milk in the summertime.

All the purposes of this dam have been realized. 170,000 acres of land had been won from the sea by 1938. Work now in progress will produce another 380,000 acres by 1975. The threat from the sea from this direction has been eliminated as much as is humanly possible. The dike was made twenty to twenty-two feet above mean sea level, with a width of 600 feet at the bottom. And what is left of the former Zuider Zee (now the IJssel Meer) forms a basin of fresh water adequate for the needs of all the surrounding countryside.

But while the northern arm of the sea had been pushed back and neutralized, there was still danger in the south. Experts had long warned the country that the dikes in that section, built piecemeal and some of them centuries old, were inadequate. As if the land were not already low enough, the southern part of the country has been gradually sinking into the ocean. Coupled with the rising level of the ocean, caused by melting ice in the polar regions, this is enough to make a dike inadequate today which may have been safe a hundred years ago.

The night of January 31, 1953 came after a full moon, always a time of high water. A storm from the north bore down upon the dikes with winds of 100 miles-per-hour. The longer the wind blew, the more the water from the whole North Sea piled up at the mouth of the Thames in England, and around the islands of Zeeland in south Holland. Eventually water levels rose one-and-a-half to two feet higher than ever before recorded. During that night of storm the dikes gave way in hundreds of places. Whole villages were destroyed and half their population wiped out. So sudden and so fierce was the onslaught of the waters, that many were caught in their beds without even a chance to escape. 72,000 were evacuated, but for 1800 the rescue came too late. The Netherlands had experienced one of its greatest single tragedies since the Middle Ages.
But the Dutch were frightened even more by what could have happened than by what did happen. One of the largest and most important dikes in the country keeps the southern claw of the sea from piercing inland and going all the way to Amsterdam. This dam very nearly gave way; in fact a small break did appear, and was blocked with great difficulty just in time to save the dike. The engineers still shudder at the narrowness of the escape and at the horror which was averted. The whole of the industrial heart of Holland, and all of her most populous cities would have been taken back by the sea.

The lessons of January 31 will not soon be forgotten. The Dutch realize that they must build their dikes higher and stronger than ever. And they also realize that perhaps new tactics can be more effective than old in preventing similar disasters. The Government Delta Commission has come up with a proposal for carrying out an engineering feat even more dramatic and difficult than the closing of the Zuider Zee. The Commission has recommended that the three wide estuaries which let the sea between the Zeeland islands and which receive the waters of the Rhine and the Meuse rivers, be closed off with huge dikes comparable to the Afsluitdijk. The hazards and the expense of such an undertaking would be great. The tides in this area are much fiercer than in the north. The closing of the final gap would be even more difficult than that at Walcheren (flooded during the last war), where the tides scourred holes 100 yards deep in the bottom of the ocean. A whole fleet of ships was sunk in that gap before it was closed.

But the experts are convinced that the gains would be worth the half billion dollars cost. The greatest gain would be increased protection from the sea. Once again the line of defense could be shortened. Since 1840 the coast line has shrunk from 1150 to 88 miles, and this would reduce it still more. If these dams are not built, the existing dikes must be raised one-and-a-half to two yards for adequate protection, and they must be buttressed at many weak spots. This project would cost the same and take nearly as long as the construction of the proposed new dikes.

One of the biggest economic appeals of these dams is that in a very short time the salt basins would turn to fresh water because of the rivers which empty into them. Experience in the Zuider Zee area has shown the great benefits which can be reaped from an adequate supply of fresh water to flush the salt from the land. The whole Zeeland area has also been troubled with salinity of the soil. Germany and France have contributed to this problem by dumping the waste salt from their potassium and coal mines into the Rhine. The huge Rotterdam waterway, an artificial exit to the sea, has no locks, and so the salt water can force its way inland. The drinking water in Rotterdam has become so salty that it is barely potable. An adequate supply of fresh water would make it possible to force the salt-water boundary back.

The land-hungry Dutch are not content with past and proposed achievements in the Zuider Zee area. They look also to the Zeeland area for possible new land. Much of the water between the islands is fairly shallow, and continued silting from the rivers will eventually make possible large new polders.

Finally, these dams would bring the Zeeland islands out of their isolation. They are primarily agricultural, and have long been backward in relation to the rest of the country. Now it would be possible for this area to contribute its share in the increasing industrialization of the country.

One argument for the immediate undertaking of this project is little understood by the average person in Holland, but it carries a lot of weight with the experts. They believe that they have the necessary skill and experience for carrying out this task at the present time. The peculiar skills which were developed in the building of the Afsluitdijk, the reclaiming of the island Walcheren, and the restoring of the dikes after the recent flood are still fresh and recent. A few decades from now they might be lost, and there would be no way to regain them except through equally bitter and costly experience.

Though the benefits of this new project would be great, there would be a few who would suffer. The 2000 fishermen who make their living from the oyster and mussel beds will lose their livelihood as soon as the water becomes fresh, just as did the fishermen from the villages which ring the Zuider Zee. There the fresh water wiped out all the salt-water fish. As if to fulfill the gloomiest predictions of the fishermen, there came a plague of mosquitoes which thrived on the vast new breeding grounds. They became so numerous that trees, fields, and people were covered with a layer of sluggish mosquitoes. Driving an automobile became hazardous because they limited visibility. Boys gathered them up in handfuls and threw them like snowballs. The fly experts finally came up with the solution. They became aware that swarms of eels, having come all the way from the coast of Florida, were looking for fresh water food and were waiting hungrily outside the locks of the Afsluitdijk. Since the locks were used only in the day time and eels feed only at night, no eels were entering the Zuider Zee. The solution was simply to open the locks and let out the excess water (at low tide) during the night instead of during the daytime. Eels began to pass the locks by the millions, the mosquito plague disappeared, and the fishermen began to reap a harvest of larvae-fattened eels. The biological equilibrium and the livelihood of the fishermen had been restored at the same time.

When the decision is taken, as it almost surely will

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be, to close the sea arms in Zeeland, the whole country will cheerfully pay the taxes to make it possible. The fiercely individualistic and proudly democratic Dutch, sometimes intensely regional in their loyalties, nevertheless have learned through centuries of struggle with their powerful and resourceful enemy to submerge individual or regional interests in the good of the whole.

Will the completion of the Zeeland and the Zuider Zee projects bring a permanent truce in the struggle against the sea? Not if the Dutch have their way. They are already contemplating the vast tracts of potential land which lie between the Frisian islands and the mainland. Some day these islands may become part of the mainland. But this will be for a future generation, a generation which will be expected to carry on and extend Holland's increasingly successful conquest of its age-old enemy.

Some Comments on “The Christian and Philosophy”

Clifton J. Orlebeke

Mr. Wolterstorff’s paper is a good one, and I find myself agreeing with almost everything he says. My comments, such as they are, will turn upon a single point: the notion of a philosophical system.

Mr. Wolterstorff says that a philosophical system is “simply a conjunction of many philosophical statements, all of them held as true, all of them consistent with each other, and the whole group of them giving an adequate and comprehensive account of the universe.” He goes on to argue the unlikelihood of every such system’s being incompatible with Christianity, the equal unlikelihood that any system will be implied by Christianity, and finally his own theory, that many systems compatible with Christianity can be constructed. At every point his case rests upon an analysis of the logical relationship between some philosophical statement and some biblical statement.

The first thing to be noticed is that Mr. Wolterstorff admits the existence of logical relationship between statements in the Bible and in philosophy. This implies that at least some biblical statements are philosophical statements, for logic requires that the component terms of related statements must have identical meanings. But granted this, an interesting possibility arises. Suppose one were to collect and organize all the philosophical statements in the Bible; would this yield a philosophical system? Since neither Mr. Wolterstorff nor I would deny the internal consistency of the Bible, the only possible way to deny that it provides a system is to say that its statements, taken together, do not give a “comprehensive account of the universe.” That is, the Bible, neither explicitly nor by direct implication, answers all philosophical problems.

So far, then, Mr. Wolterstorff and I agree that Christianity does not provide a complete philosophical system. The only interesting question remaining is, how incomplete? I do not pretend to know. However, I am inclined to think that Mr. Wolterstorff has underestimated the importance that the Bible has for philosophy, and that for two reasons: (1) he tends to think of the Bible in terms of isolated statements, and (2) he underestimates the demand for consistency in a philosophical system.

(1) Mr. Wolterstorff’s usual approach to his problem is to take a philosophical statement, and then see what its logical relationship to some (relevant) biblical statement might be. Thus he ignores the possibility that a number of biblical statements might bear upon the same point, clarifying and sharpening the issue better than any single statement could. Hence he tends to overstate the Bible’s ambiguity. But more broadly, he does not consider the possibility of the “collecting” process I suggested earlier, which might yield a “Christian philosophy” considerably more comprehensive and explicit than either he or I may think likely. I do not know that anyone has ever attempted this careful exploitation of the biblical text for systematic philosophy (as opposed to theology), but I would like to see it tried. Mr. Wolterstorff’s definition of a philosophical statement—perhaps with some refinements—would serve as a useful selective criterion.

(2) Among his examples of biblical ambiguity or incompleteness, Mr. Wolterstorff cites the questions of universals, of space, and of the divine existence. Each, he says, may be answered in several mutually incompatible ways—but all compatible with any given biblical statement. I believe that this is true, but with a qualification. Take, for instance, the problem of universals. Philosophers have pointed out frequently that one’s theory of universals affects, in an important way, his metaphysics, his epistemology, his logic, and even, perhaps, his ethics. So it is, to varying degrees, with all particular philosophical
doctrines. They take their place in a systematic whole which, if it is any good, stands or falls pretty much as a unit. Therefore, by itself, a statement affirming nominalism (e.g.) may be compatible with every biblical statement, but I doubt that its implications are thus compatible. (Neither Mr. Wolterstorff nor I prove our differing positions on this point, so this will have to stand as a simple disagreement).

My qualification, then, is this: alternative answers to philosophical problems should be evaluated as parts of systems, not simply by themselves. Almost inevitably, these systems will incorporate, more or less heavily, "borrowings" from non-Christian philosophers. There may well be, indeed, "Christian platonists, Christian aristotelians, Christian existentialists, Christian phenomenalists, etc." But as systems, I do not believe that all of them, at least theoretically, have equal merits.

It needs hardly to be said that Christian philosophers do not work in an intellectual vacuum. The kinds of questions they ask and the kinds of categories they use to answer them are influenced by their philosophical climate almost as much as by their religious convictions. Therefore it is not surprising that they disagree among themselves—even that they become doctrinaire about the most subtle of questions. Mr. Wolterstorff's article is a useful warning to would-be dogmatists; if I have tempered his "skepticism," it was not to identify the Gospel of Christ with any philosophy, but to suggest that careful Christian philosophizing may accomplish more than he thinks. For philosophy is, after all, a quest; and what is a quest without the hope of attaining?

**Sins with a High Hand**

Martin J. Wyngaarden

MICAH, chapter six, is in a class by itself. It contains the famous verse, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8)

Now this is a favorite verse of the Modernists, and one must consider its place in the history of revelation before preaching on it.

In other words, Micah 6 does not allow for such a brief Commentary without playing into the hands of the Modernists.

Hence the entire chapter should have an extensive interpretation, for the sake of proportion.

But at least a few verses should receive not only a more elaborate interpretation, but a very specific interpretation to bring out the general Biblical thrust, which is here as elsewhere not the Modernistic view that denies the blood-theology.

It should be made clear that this chapter also involves the blood-theology, since it speaks of sacrifices.

But how does it speak of sacrifices? Now the Modernists would say that it speaks in a derogatory way of sacrifices, and that this chapter therefore supports the Modernistic view which rejects sacrifices, and all the rest of the blood-theology.

But does this chapter actually speak in such a derogatory way concerning sacrifices?

Well, the Modernists would soon seek to prove their point by quoting from this chapter, the verses 6 and 7: "Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?"

Or would it be well to come to Jehovah like the heathen, with human sacrifices? "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6:7, second part)

Now it can easily be proved from Scripture that human sacrifices were not acceptable unto Jehovah. Hence that part of Micah 6 can easily be handled by quoting such scriptural passages as prohibit human sacrifices.

But we should consider Micah 6:6 and the first part of Micah 6:7 with considerable care.

Interpreting Scripture with Scripture at this particular place, we should take into consideration especially Numbers, chapters fifteen, the verses twenty-seven to thirty-one, inclusive.

We read as follows in Numbers 15:27, "And if one person sin unwittingly, (or by error, which is a better translation) then he shall offer a she-goat a year old for a sin-offering."

Here the blood-theology is clearly in evidence, and a bloody sacrifice is prescribed.

Incidentally the word "unwittingly" is a poor translation, in Numbers 15:27, for intentional sins as well as unintentional sins are included here, to a certain extent. Reading up on "sins with a high hand," in such a work as A. B. Davidson's "Theology of the Old Testament," pages 315-324 will not fully clear this up, but it will help.

But it will help more to read up on the Hebrew word involved here in the Hebrew Lexicon of Brown Driver and Briggs. Even so, it will be well to study Keil and Delitzsch on Numbers 15:32-36, and various
commentaries on Psalm 51 verse 16 where we read, "Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering." Here the Lord has no pleasure in burnt offerings from a person that has committed a sin with a high hand, such as the "Blood-guiltiness" of which he speaks in verse 14 of Psalm 51.

For such sins with a high hand, there was no sacrifice possible, neither burnt-offering nor any other bloody sacrifice, according to Numbers 15:30-31.

These verses of Number 15:30-31 are all important for the understanding of Psalm 51:16 and for the understanding of Micah 6:6 and the first part of Micah 6:7.

Let us therefore quote Numbers 15:30-31: "But the soul that doeth aught with a high hand, whether he be born and in the midst of the congregation; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people."

This case is like that of people that are cut off from a church today by church discipline, though they can afterward be reaccepted into the church after sincere and proven repentance.

In other words, you have a kind of church discipline here already in Numbers 15:27-31, and the possibility of being cut off from the the old testament covenant people.

Under such circumstances a mere bloody-sacrifice would not satisfy the Lord, and it was practically excluded, unless and until one had first satisfied the Lord with sincere and proven repentance.

The same Biblical principles are in evidence in the Christian Reformed "Psalter Hymnal," in the supplement, page 95, "Form for Excommunication" and page 97, "Form for Readmission," (after excommunication).

These Biblical principles are also at the bottom of Psalm 51:16 and especially Psalm 51:19.

Now Psalm 51:16 reads as follows: "For thou delightest not in sacrifices; else would I bring it; Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering." David, had committed a sin of the class that is called a sin with a high hand, in Numbers 15:27-31, and for such sins sacrifices were not prescribed nor even acceptable.

The sin of David involved as such a sin with a high hand was his blood-guiltiness, hence he prays in Psalm 51:14, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness." David had also committed other sins that did not rate as sins with a high hand, and for these sacrifices would have been acceptable. But no sacrifices were acceptable for a carefully planned and coolly executed sin with a high hand, in cool and deliberate defiance of God, and with an abundance of time to think the matter over calmly. Such was his sin of blood guiltiness in the death of Uriah. That was a sin with a high hand, although ordinarily sins of passion did not rate as sins with a high hand but David's sin of cool "blood guiltiness" did, and that is precisely the one that David mentions in Psalm 51:14.

Seeing that this sin of "blood guiltiness" could not be met by a mere sacrifice, according to Numbers 15 the verses 30 and 31, David feels that the Lord had not ordained bloody sacrifices for his case, and David admits this in Psalm 51:16. In other words as long as David was a sinner with a high hand, Numbers 15:30, 31, he was virtually "cut off" from the covenant people, as we have it in Numbers 15:31, and as we have it when a person today is cut off from the church with a Form of Excommunication.

For such persons a mere bloody sacrifice is not sufficient, in Old Testament days and for such persons partaking of the Lord's supper is not sufficient in our New Testament days.

Under such circumstances the only thing that will help out is the following: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:17.

In other words there must be repentance of a convincing kind, manifested in one way or another.

If such repentance is found, there is again room for sacrifices. And so, after that expression of repentance, David says: "Then wilt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, in burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering; Then will they offer bullocks upon thine altar;"—and David will be the man to pay for them, or to supply the beasts and to be responsible for these bloody sacrifices.

Here the blood-theology is again in evidence, even with a person that had committed such a sin as is called a sin with a high hand, in Numbers 15:30, 31.

Now such a sin had also been committed in Micah 6, "A carefully planned and coolly executed sin, with a high hand, in cool and deliberate defiance of God, and with an abundance of time to think the matter over calmly."

What was this sin in Micah 6? It was evidenced by "treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and a scant measure that is abominable," according to Micah 6:10. It was also evidenced by "wicked balances, and a bag of deceitful weights," of which we read in Micah 6:11. It was also evidenced by "violence" and "lies", and a "tongue - - deceitful in their mouth," of which we read in Micah 6:12. It was also evidenced by adherence to the "statutes of Omri" and "the works of the house of Ahab", of which we read in Micah 6:16. All such sins were carefully planned and coolly executed sins, with the high hand, high-handed, in cool and deliberate defiance of God and planned and committed with an abundance of time to think the matters over calmly.

Hence at the beginning of Micah 6 we read of the seriousness of Jehovah's controversy with the Israel that was guilty of such sins on a big scale; thus in Micah 6:2 we read: "Hear, O ye mountains, Jehovah's controversy, and ye enduring foundations of the earth; for Jehovah hath a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel."
Under such circumstances Israel is guilty on a big scale of sins with a high hand, and sacrifices are out of the question until such sins with a high hand have been met with sincere and manifested repentance. How must that repentance be manifested? Only if they “do justly, and love kindness, and walk humbly with their God.” Micah 6:8.

Then all those sins with a high hand of which the rest of this chapter of Micah 6 speaks will disappear.

And then, as with David in Psalm 51, “then (and not until then) will God delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, in burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering; then will they offer bullocks upon God's altar.” Psalm 51:19.

But until then the situation is that sins with a high hand cannot be met like sins of error (Numbers 15:27) with a bloody sacrifice (Numbers 15:27).

Sins with a high hand cut one off from the privileges of the ordinary bloody ritual.

There must first be obvious and sincere and manifest obedience before sacrifices will again be in order as in Psalm 51:19.

That obvious and sincere repentance cannot be side-tracked by the bringing of bloody sacrifices. Under such circumstances bloody sacrifices are out of the question, as Micah makes plain in Micah 6:6, and the first part of verse 7.

The only thing that will help now is the soul-felt and thorough-going repentance of Micah 6:8, as a transition from the Lord's “controversy” of Micah 6:2 to a status within the covenant of grace again which will be far different than the wrongs described in Micah 6:10-12 and the religious wrongs described in Micah 6:16.

Only after such repentance will sacrifices be in order again as they were once more in Psalm 51:19. Without such repentance eternal death is the result, as it apparently would be for many in Israel in Micah's day.

In fact there came no such satisfactory repentance in the Israel of Micah's day as the repentance of David in Psalm 51, and so the final step of the restoration of sacrifices is not stressed in Micah 6 as it is in Psalm 51.

But for such as would repent truly the way of salvation as delineated in Psalm 51 was open for the Israelite of Micah's day.

Now Micah, like a good pedagogue, identifies himself with his audience, more or less, in chapter 6. Nevertheless this does not mean that he himself was also guilty of a sin with a high hand. But he has to feed the people “with thy rod,” Micah 7:14, under the circumstances.

Thus the blood-theology gets its due, and no Modernist could agree with the exegesis that interprets the Scripture of Micah 6 with the Scripture of Numbers 15 and of Psalm 51, giving due respect to the blood-theology of Scripture as a whole, including also Micah 6 itself.

With due abbreviation, something like this might be used in interpreting Micah 6 in such a way that a conservative preacher could then use Micah 6:8 without sounding pretty much like a Modernist.

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Opportunism, the Philosophy of Practical People

Eric Edwin Paulsen

A dictionary gives us the following definition of opportunism, "It is a taking advantage, as in politics, of opportunities or circumstances, with little regard for principles or ultimate consequences." We might define it further as "following a course of action not fully in accord with honesty and justice for the sake of gaining advantage for a cause, a group or for an individual." It may not involve overt falsification, but may consist of obscuring the truth of an issue through the skillful use of words, emphasis or gesture with a design to create an impression not in accord with the facts of the case in question. That this is the dominant practical philosophy of our age is undeniable. It is hardly necessary to affirm that, among diplomats dealing with international problems, there is a constant resort to opportunism. For anyone to pretend that any other form of procedure is in vogue in these circles would be to invite ridicule. Even though this practice has always led to misunderstanding, jealousy, animosity and war, still politicians persist in assuming that there can be no other method employed in settling questions between nations than Machiavellianism, the perennial breeder of war and chaos.

That opportunism is the constant practice of our local, state and national politicians is also taken for granted. As a result we have on hand as always a bumper crop of politicians with perhaps a greater dearth of statesmen than ever. Dr. Mark Dawber, on being asked what the difference was between a politician and a statesman, gave this terse and meaningful answer: "A politician is a man who thinks of the next election; a statesman is one who thinks of the next generation." Men who dare to place principles before policies in politics are generally subjected to attacks which too often lead to their elimination from the political scene. Consequently most men in public life succumb to the temptation to be successful rather than to aspire to true greatness as statesmen. That the same practices and points of view prevail in the business world goes without saying.

But what of the Church? Do we mean to infer that this virus of modern Herodianism has infected the bloodstream of ecclesiastical life? We need only to be reminded of the support and encouragement dictators, both living and dead, have received from Rome. But what of Protestantism? Surely the followers of Luther, Calvin and Wesley have not fallen prey to the malign influence of Herodianism? Ask any man who has had the temerity to take a stand at variance with Church leaders which he has understood to be contrary to the teachings of Scripture and the Confessions. The process of liquidation to which such a person is subjected may not deprive him of his life such as was the experience of those opposing military dictators, but such undue rashness has frequently deprived men of the means of livelihood as well as avenues for service.

But is it only in those areas of Church life where theological liberalism has cast its malign influence that the spirit of Herodianism seems to prevail? No, it is too true that even among those professing to believe the Scriptures from cover to cover there is evidence of the use of subterfuge and pretence, although assuredly for a good cause and in the name of tact. Take for example the deplorable and dishonest practice on the part of numerous educational institutions of bestowing honorary degrees upon ministers totally lacking in academic preparation, ability or achievement, mainly for the purpose of building up financial support for themselves. Does not this dubious practice savor of opportunism? Is it not strictly contrary both to the Word of God and common sense? Surely Christ has warned us of the danger of coveting worldly honors in these words, "But be not ye called Rabbi; neither be ye called Masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:8-10). Furthermore an institution cannot be said to be able to create a Doctor of Divinity. It can only recognize individuals as being worthy of such honor and proceed to designate them as men meriting such recognition. If the recipient does not possess the qualifications such a granting of a degree is plainly a dishonest act or else a gross mistake in judgment on the part of the faculty of an institution granting the degree.

But if the philosophy of Opportunism can be kept from permeating the life of the local congregation its corrupting influences may still be largely restricted. But that is far from being the case. We all know that both ministers and members of churches join fraternal organizations for the sake of business and social advantage. They compromise their alleged evangelical convictions by subscribing to principles wholly out of harmony with Gospel truth. They countenance religious practices and pretences clearly Unitarian and therefore dishonoring to the full Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Thus we see that Opportunism, both as a philosophy and a practice, has invaded every sphere of mod-

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ern life. The sweeping appeal it has made to men and the prevalence with which it seems to be spreading gives convincing proof of the truth of the Prophet's words, "The heart of man is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked; who can know it?" But what does the Lord Christ think about this subject? Let us consider who the individuals were whom He singled out as worthy of particular honor. There was Nathaniel, the guileless Israelite who always spoke the truth and would deceive no man. There was John the Baptist, who braved prison and death rather than remain silent in the face of sin and unrighteousness. Would the world or even the Church honor such men today? I fear not. Rather they would be spoken of as naive and simple-minded, boorish men, totally lacking in tact and good graces. Yet if we would be true to our profession we must follow the pattern set down by the Master and exemplified in the lives of those whom he so highly commended. If we do so we will reject Opportunism as a false and demonic philosophy and fight it with Apostolic zeal and prophetic courage.

Is Death the Only Punishment for Unbelievers?

J. R. Mantey

THE CLAIM is made by a few people, chiefly of one sect which contains less than 1% of Christendom, that there is no immortality for unbelievers, that their souls perish at the same time that their bodies die. This is a premise assumed and rigidly adhered to in spite of the fact that Scripture teaches punishment for the unsaved.

It is true that there are a few verses in the New Testament where death is used in a figurative sense. In these passages death connotes being without the favor and mercy of God, not an end of existence. John wrote that the believer passed from death into life at the time when he accepted Christ (John 5:24). He also stated that the one who does not practice love abides in death (I Jn. 3:14). And Paul, apparently, had a similar idea in mind when he wrote "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). At any rate, where the state of the lost is dealt with in detail in the New Testament, punishment after death is specifically mentioned.

Most of us shrink from readily accepting what is taught in the Bible as to the unchangeable destiny and fate of the unredeemed. Especially would we prefer that God's mercy should be extended to them some time in eternity. Since God is motivated by love will he withhold his forgiveness forever?

However, if the fate of the unsaved is not eternal, we have no statement in the Bible to that effect. But there are many statements to the contrary. Let us read a few of them:

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

"And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46).

In Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation (Mt. 25:46) the Greek word kolasis which is regularly defined punishment in Greek lexicons is translated "cutting off", in spite of the fact that there isn't a shred of lexical evidence anywhere for such a translation. We have found this word in first century Greek writings in 107 different contexts and in every one of them it has the meaning of punishment, and never "cutting-off." But since their premise is that there can be no eternal punishment, they have translated the Scripture to make it somewhat compatible with their theology. By that method one can easily pervert the biblical teachings and make them teach the opposite of what God intended. Evil can be made to appear good; and black, white.

Jesus' vivid, graphic picture of the rich man in torment after death (Luke 16:19-31), certainly teaches retribution for the unsaved, in which account he is informed that he can never escape such punishment since a great impossible gulf separates him in hell from Lazarus in heaven. Here Jesus has drawn back the curtain separating us from eternity and has allowed us to get a glimpse of a man suffering in hell. Here a selfish man is pictured before and after death. If this passage does not teach punishment after death for an unsaved person, what does it teach? Since Lazarus is named in the introduction to the passage it appears to be not a parable, but rather an account of the different fates of two men who had actually lived on earth. In no biblical parable is a person's name mentioned.

Hebrew 9:27 which, without any grounds for it in the Greek, is mistranslated in the New World Translations "And as it is reserved for men to die once for all time, but after this is a judgment." But this verse is correctly translated in the R.S.V. "And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment." Note that the phrase "for all time" was inserted in the former version without any basis in the original for it. No honest scholar would attempt to so pervert the Word of God! The...
writer of Hebrews evidently believed that judgment awaited the unredeemed after their death.

The apostle John affirmed the same idea in John 5:29. "The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment." Or in other words, death isn't the judgment, but rather, judgment comes after death. cf. also Heb. 10:27.

The apostle Peter was naive enough also to believe the same. "The Lord knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment" (2 Pet. 2:9).

Jesus is quoted to have said the following: "You brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell" (Matt 23:33). "It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched (Mk. 9:47, 48). cf. also Mk. 9:43 and Matt. 13:42, 50. If Jesus did not mean existence in hell after death, why did he say "where their worm does not die?"

Perhaps the chief reason why people do not want to believe in eternal punishment for the unredeemed is due to an inadequate conception of the fact that the New Testament, while teaching that this punishment is to be endless, also teaches that it is not the same for all. Each unbeliever is to suffer according to his misdeeds. In Luke 12:47-48 the statement occurs that some will be punished with few stripes, while others, who willfully disobeyed God will be beaten with many stripes. This same teaching of degrees of punishment is reiterated in Rom. 2:5,6: "But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will render to every man according to his works." God's justice demands that the wicked be requited according to their wickedness. He would not be just, if this were not so. The condition for many will be much more tolerable in hell than it will be for others.

Especially explicit and clear are both the idea of different degrees of punishment and also of its occurrence after death in Rev. 20:12-15: "And the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

Thus we see that the New Testament teaches that in addition to physical death there is also for the unsaved a spiritual death which is identified as the second death and constitutes the eternal penalty for having ignored God and the Lord Jesus Christ. "This is the second death, even the lake of fire."

Eternity cites two views toward such obeisance: "There are those who say that this act of homage constitutes worship to a demon god, while there are others who claim that the act is roughly similar to saluting the flag." The Bible Council is constrained to point out why paying homage at Ise Shrine is not to be compared to saluting the flag:

(1) Ise is called a Jingu (god-house); no one refers to the flag as a god.

(2) There are no religious priests attending the flag with religious ceremonies, but these are always present at Ise Shrine where priests regularly perform rites such as waving the holy saitaki tree to drive away evil spirits, making prayers and offering food and wine.

(3) No sacerdotal offerings of any kind are made to the flag, but these are regularly made to the enshrined "deity" of Ise.

(4) One is expected to wash hands and mouth in a ceremony symbolizing purification of mind and body at Ise; there is no such religious preface to a flag salute.

From Our Correspondents

Dear Editor:

EVANGELICAL missionaries in Japan have been greatly distressed by the pronouncement on Shinto Shrine obeisance in Eternity magazine (March, 1955). Concluding a report on the visit of the new Prime Minister to the shrine of the sun-goddess at Ise, the magazine makes this comment: "The matter seems to be an individual one, left squarely up to the conscience of each man."

The Japan Bible Christian Council holds that the commands of Scripture make it most plain that a Christian cannot bow before a heathen shrine. For Mr. Hatoyama as a professing Christian to pay homage to the gun-goddess is to make a serious distortion of Christianity which ought not to be condoned by the American Christian Press. We believe that, for the sake of the whole Christian cause in Japan, widespread publication of a correction of Eternity's classifying of shrine obeisance as a matter of which Christians can approve in good conscience ought to be given by Christian periodicals in the homeland.

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(5) At Ise worship is rendered the so-called sun-goddess, with prayers made to her. No such is rendered the flag.

(6) The sun-goddess receives a bow; the flag receives a salute. The Bible prohibits a bow to anything except God or living beings who can return the bow. Nothing is said about a salute.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego preferred death to the external act of bowing to an idol even though they did not believe any spirit or deity was in it. At Ise Shrine men, moved by their vain imaginations, have enshrined a mirror as the material representation of their invisible, mythological deity, who is as real to them as any visible being, and before her sacred house, abode of their mirror, they bow in reverent worship to pray for blessing.

It seems to us that these considerations should make it self-evident to Christians that Ise Shrine is a place of idolatrous demon worship (1 Cor. 10:20), and that none can go there to do obeisance without breaking the second commandment. Participation in any ceremony of polytheistic worship, even under the guise of culture or patriotism, can never be justified in the light of the commandments of God.

Acts of obeisance before polytheistic symbols or god-houses are in no way comparable to the American salute to the flag. We trust that Christians in neither America or Japan will be misled by the very erroneous concept contained in the Eternity editorial.

Sincerely yours in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ,

THE JAPAN BIBLE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL
John M. L. Young, President.

SISTER CHURCHES
Sydney, Australia.

With a strong appeal we commend ourselves into the prayers of all our Calvinistic sisterchurches for Sunday 24th April. Our small and weak Reformed denominations in Australia and New Zealand are standing by that time at the eve of a very important day.

On Monday, April 25th, an Australian holiday, will be the official opening of the gates of our own Reformed Theological College. Since many years by the small remnant of Biblebelieving Calvinists over here was prayed and ached for an awakening of positive Calvinistic action. And now, a.o. with help of a few thousands recently arrived Dutch protestants this seems to become a reality!

On April 25th “the gate will be opened.” That is only a metaphorical language, and even a far too stout one! Though we are very grateful for the accommodation provided in one of the localities of the small Reformed Presbyterian Church in Geelong (60 miles from Melbourne), that same fact brings us back to the reality of how poor and insignificant these beginnings have to be!

Nothing more than necessity that is laid upon us! We had to exempt partly one of our ministers, the Rev. Jan Schep, to assist some young friends for getting the due training for the ministry in Australia, because Holland or Grand Rapids are too remote and too expensive for them. That is all.

But then, under God’s wonderful providence we came into contact with the talented Rev. Alex Barkley, who was moved by the Rev. Pellican to give his most loyal cooperation. Whereas also e.g. the Rev. Arthur Allen, the well-known Calvin Forum correspondent, expresses his great joy in this courageous enterprise.

Indeed, we start in a very sober way with only two lecturers and five students. Presently we count this the most economic way to have our own ministers trained in an English speaking continent.

However, how small these beginnings be, who can forbid us standing at this open door to dream our dreams and to bring our prayers before the throne of our mighty King and Saviour, asking that this unsightly seed may grow a tree with fruits in the garden of God’s kingdom, amidst of a world wherein the old and tough modernism still seems to be all-powerful!

We got surprised with tokens of friendship and gifts of sympathy from overseas. That gives us the more confidence for asking now our big sisterchurches in four other continents to pray on the above mentioned Sunday for the Reformed cause in Australia.

We need the support of your intercession for us!

Jay Vanderbom.

(The Reformed Churches of Australia and of New Zealand have now 8 and 4 ministers; the Reformed Presbyterian Church 2, and the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (Free Church) 7. A conference with all these ministers has been planned on the day after the official opening.)

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE*

The official opening of this college in Geelong is to take place late in March, when the Rev. Alex Barkley and the Rev. Schep will be installed as tutors. An invitation has been extended to all the ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to attend the opening, and to take part in a Conference consisting of the ministers of the Reformed Churches, Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, to discuss the difference of opinion held by the above churches. There is no doubt that such a conference would be helpful in clearing away many of the problems that at present exist.

An agreement has been reached between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Churches (Dutch). These two churches are now in ecclesiastical correspondence, which means that each

* See Vanderbom letter, above.
accepts the other's ministers to preach in their pulpits, agreement to acknowledge the membership of persons belonging to each church, and intercommunion.

As we hold open communion, we already recognize their ministers and welcome their members to join with us in the sacrament; but both the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Church (Dutch) have a closed communion, and all who are eligible to partake of the sacrament must accept

"terms of communion" as drawn up by the above churches.

While we sincerely appreciate the invitation to attend such a conference as suggested, the time appointed for the conference falls in the same week as the Synod opens in Sydney. But, apart from that, the expense involved in travelling to and from Victoria, accommodation, etc., seem to the writer to make it almost impossible to accept the invitation.

(Since this Bulletin appeared the opening and conference were delayed until April 25-26) vdBom.

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**Book Reviews**

**Canon Marcus L. Loane, Masters of the English Reformation. (London: Church Book Room Press, Ltd.; 1954). 264 pages. 12s. 6d.**

It is a real pleasure to introduce a publication of the Church Society of England to our Reformed public.

This society exists for the sole purpose of being defenders of the Word of God and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. In this Reformed ecumenical era ours is the duty to become better acquainted, and to exchange literature so as to approach the ideal of unity of truth in love.

The book under review gives us five excellent biographies of martyred saints that have molded English Protestantism: Thomas Bilney (d. 1531), William Tyndale (d. 1533), Hugh Latimer (d. 1555), Nicholas Ridley (d. 1555), and Thomas Cranmer (d. 1556).

The clear, simple style; the happy choice of highspots; the condensation of facts without robbing the reader of essentials: the psychological and theological motivations; the theological growth and its importance for us today make these biographies outstanding. The author seems to take great pains to be honest in his analyses. His essay on Thomas Cranmer, for example, shows that he can do justice to this muddled character without Protestant over- indulgence or Roman over-denunciation. In the same essay one can find a few sentences on ecumenicity that contain big thoughts.

Both the scholar and the mythical man-on-the-street will benefit by reading this book. If Christian educators wish to combine biography, good English, history, and Protestantism, they can do no better than to assign this book for required reading.

Besides highlighting great men who defied at the thought of burning and staggered before the consequences of their new faith, but rose again when resurging conviction suppressed innate fears, this book is an exhibit of the thesis that the English Reformation is first of all a Cambridge University movement, born in the very environment of godly learning. These masters are guilty of making the Roman church say that the Greek New Testament was the heretic's Bible. They were men who cared not for learning for vain fineness and a gentleman's social ornamentation, but as the sword for truth. Through a direct and incisive preaching from flaming hearts Cambridge percolated down to the drowsy member of the church of that day.

This book is a Memorial of the 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of Latimer and Ridley, an appropriate time to include the three others. It is hoped that it will call to mind the great deeds of the men of faith to an age that seems to be totally oblivious of these heroes of Protestantism, who purchased freedom and the privilege to read the Bible with their own blood dripping literally in the flames at the stakes.

This book has value for Americans. It will acquaint us with the English Reformation, a good thing for us of Dutch ancestry to know. It challenges the entire English-speaking world to commemorate this event; to arouse ourselves out of our spiritual lethargy; to redefine ourselves to the prediction by the dying Latimer to his friend Ridley on the adjacent stake: "Be of good comfort Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out." (p. 132).

We do not know how we can participate in this 400th anniversary. It would be a pity not to commemorate. We can do this at least: with all true believers we can be inspired to pray for a stronger faith; for the breaking-through of the Bible through any wall—the ecclesiastical curtains of Spain and South America, for example. We believe this book will inspire you with the same ideal. Success to the Church Society of England.

Jacob T. Hoogstra


This book is a few years old, but deserves wide attention, also for orthodox believers, for it is written by an admirer of Kierkegaard, and shows, through numerous substantial quotations from Kierkegaard himself, and from his modern disciples, that the Danish philosopher was an outspoken liberal who denied the very foundations of Christianity, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement.

It reveals that Kierkegaard, though defending irrational faith as a fundamental requisite, had a rational system. He speaks of Nature and Grace, or of Primary and Secondary immediacy, as the two great steps in the development of the true believer. His idea was that the Church of his days

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had deteriorated into a formal institution with dead orthodoxy in the pulpit, and dead Christianity in the pews. In romantic fashion Kierkegaard calls back to nature and living truth. On the level of nature he distinguishes the two steps of dread and guilt, the result of the confrontation of the awakening soul with the holy and righteous God of our common human inborn “sense” or awareness. Real religion begins with the third step which he calls the Moment, in which the sinner leaps (p. 72) into the dark and meets this holy God. This leap is the real incarnation! The former “belief” was only imaginary. Now the soul must fight a Wager, a personal combat with the evil tendencies of the body (pp. 72, 76, 97) and imitate or repeat the suffering of Christ (pp. 57, 59, 97). Real living is not thinking, but existence, experience of ever-recurring anxiety and joy (pp. 60, 86, 96-98). The fight of the soul is followed by appropriation of Christ, the “God-Man” (p. 74). This leads to love for God and man, and out of this is born faith (p. 60). This faith reveals itself further in “hearing” and “doing” the words of Christ. And, finally, the tortured soul experiences joy (p. 86). Here is the new ladder of seven spiritual experiences. But this is not the old evangel. It is new modernism.

H. J. Van Andel


When a novelist attempts an anthropological study of a foreign culture the result may be good literature and bad anthropology, or conceivably the reverse of this. It might be bad from both standpoints, or even good anthropology and good literature, both. Clyde Kluckhohn’s Mirror for Man, Ruth Benedict’s Patterns of Culture, and Margaret Mead’s Coming of Age in Samoa illustrate this last possibility.

This latest book by Richard Wright, author of Native Son and Black Boy, is mediocre literature and ineffective anthropology. It relies heavily on the Dragnet approach to African society, (“Just give us the facts, Ma’am.” “At 3:30 on the 13th of August the big black sedan pulled up in front of my hotel”). It is true that this can be an effective literary device. John Bartlow Martin has done well with it in his articles in Harper’s and Atlantic Monthly, but it just does not come off for Wright. As a literary approach to African society, Black Power is not in the same league with Alan Paton’s novels on South Africa (Cry the Beloved Country and Too Late the Phalarope).

Wright spent several months as a guest of Kwame Nkrumah, colored prime minister of the African Gold Coast. The Gold Coast lies just west of Nigeria and east of Liberia on the underside of the bulge on Africa’s west coast. It is the ancestral home of millions of American Negroes since it was a prominent shipping port for slaves. Although most of his time was spent in Accra, the capital city, he did make a brief excursion into the jungle hinterlands.

In the main the book consists of a record of his observations—black business leaders operating alongside witch doctors, tribal chiefs clashing with British and American-trained black politicians, fufu magic in conflict with missionary teachings. He attempts to assess the Nkrumah-led drive for self-government, and the black elite and British opposition to it. This struggle, so familiar these days in other parts of Africa also, runs as a dominant theme throughout the book. He is fearful of the possibility that the Communists might step into this conflict-situation and steal the prize while the other groups are distracting each other.

Wright rejects the idea of continued British control of this land of fabled wealth, but he is fearful of the self-government movement unless considerable changes are made in the value systems of the natives. He presents his own ideas as to the nature of these changes and how they should be made.

It is Wright’s thesis that slavery was not put into practice because of racial theories, but that racial theories sprang up in the wake of slavery, to justify it. He notes that the first slaves in the New World were not Negroes, but the indigenous Indians. Then followed white indentured servants and convicts. When still more slave labor was needed for profitable operation of colonial sugar, cotton and tobacco plantations, Europe’s eyes turned to Africa where the supply of human beings seemed inexhaustible. Other research evidence also indicates that Negro prejudice and discrimination had its origin with the slave trade, and not vice versa.

The absence of footnoting will bother the scientific person. The author at times will present statistics (for example on the extent of the slave trade in 1793) without noting the source of his data. Obviously, he did not do the research himself. I suppose a novelist is apt to be little bothered by responsibilities of documentation and accrediting.

One significant theme that runs implicitly through the book is that race and culture are two different things. Wright, a Negro, visits a Negro society and neither understands it more easily nor feels at home there because he has a black skin. After observing Gold Coast culture for a time, Wright reflects, “I had understood nothing. I was black and they were black, but my blackness did not help me.” Neither of the sociological processes of identification and acceptance occurred. He could not identify with the foreign culture and it could not accept him.

This race-culture distinction is, of course one of the crucial considerations in understanding the problem of racial minorities. Failing to make this distinction results in stereotypes such as: Negroes like emotional religion; Negroes cannot march, they sway; Calvinism will not have appeal for Negroes, etc. This last is what many amongst us were saying while early follow-up work on the Back-to-God radio responses was leading us into one Negro sector after another.

Race is something we are born with, innate; culture is acquired after birth, learned. Black Power dramatizes what careful research has been demonstrating for years: Most of the things which have been traditionally attributed to race are actually cultural and hence learned. And hence capable of being changed. If Wright had been raised in the Gold Coast, the home of his ancestors, he would have understood and felt at home. Socialized in America, however, his black skin was no help. Color of skin, like color of hair, just is not that significant intrinsically.

This book could be read with profit by those who contemplate mission work in Africa; by those who are responsible for determining mission policy and practice there; and by those who would better understand the problems of culture chasm that missionaries face in Africa. It can be easily understood by the layman, which is more than can be said of most of the anthropologically-oriented works on Africa.

Donald H. Bouma.
When one wishes to evaluate the educational program of one's own country, it sometimes helps to "see ourselves as others see us," Education and Liberty begins with that role.

Dr. James Bryant Conant, lately President of Harvard University and now U.S. High Commissioner to Germany, is no stranger to the hustings of educational policy discussion. In the first of the three sections of his book he traces the pattern of development of education in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, using England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand for illustration. The second section traces the growth of the American college and its relationship to the American scene. As the two paths of development grow more diverse, the reader gains a clearer insight into the role of secondary and higher education as seen by two groups of English speaking peoples. In so doing, Dr. Conant renders distinct service.

It is the third section, "Looking Ahead," which will be most eagerly scrutinized by educators and laymen alike. Dr. Conant is concerned with the implementation of Thomas Jefferson's twofold objectives for free schools in the United States: (a) to provide that general diffusion of learning that liberty may be safe in the hands of the people, and (b) to cull the natural aristocracy of talents and virtues and prepare it "by education at the public expense for the care of the public concerns." Dr. Conant's recommendations to achieve this end are the crux of his program for the future. They are:

(1) We do not expand our four-year colleges either as to number or as to size.
(2) We do not expand the four-year programs in our universities; rather, we contract them.
(3) We attempt to make a two-year college course (following the regular high school course) fashionable; to this end we might award a bachelor's degree of general studies to the graduates of such colleges.
(4) We endeavor to create a climate of opinion in which the length of the education beyond eighteen is not considered the hallmark of its responsibility.
(5) We continue the expansion of our junior and senior high schools to meet the new bulge in the enrollments, but in so doing, recognize the need for remaking the curriculum in many schools.
(6) We adhere to the principle of a comprehensive high school with a common core of studies and differentiated special programs, but in so doing we make far more effort to identify the gifted youth and give him or her more rigorous academic training in languages and mathematics.
(7) We explore the success of some high schools in recent years with "work experience programs" and expand these programs, including particularly the thirteenth and fourteenth grades (the two year college).
(8) We provide by private and public action for more scholarships for high school graduates, but only for those who are potential professional men and women (advanced education for others should in general be offered locally by two-year terminal colleges).
(9) We endeavor to transform all the present four-year colleges into institutions with high academic standards and arrange the curricula with the thought that a majority of students in these colleges will go on to professional training after two, three, or four years, depending on the ability and drive of the individual.

(10) We continue to experiment with general education at every level for the future manual worker, the future salesman or executive, and the most highly specialized university graduate.

The author makes his points very concisely and soberly. Particularly critical in today's context are his statements in 6 and 9. Proponents of the Junior College or the Community College will be interested in 2 and its supporting arguments.

This thought provoking book is worthy of the attention of everyone who wishes to be informed concerning issues in American education.

Much ink has been spilled in the recent airing of differences between public and independent schools. Dr. Conant is alarmed at the prospect of the weakening of public education by the growth of private schools, both secular and religious. In voicing his alarm, he denies that the public school is godless and anti-religious. He subscribes to the statement in "Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools," Educational Policies Commission (Washington, D. C., 1951). This volume opens with the following statement:

"A great and continuing purpose of education has been the development of moral and spiritual values. To fulfill this purpose, society calls upon all its institutions. Special claims are made on the home and the school because of the central role of these two institutions in the nurture of the young.

"By moral and spiritual values we mean those values which, when applied in human behavior, exalt and refine life and bring it into accord with the standards of conduct that are approved in our democratic culture.

"The American people have rightly expected the schools of this country to teach moral and spiritual values. The schools have accepted this responsibility. . . !"

Now if the attainment of democratic living is the highest ideal of man, these are probably as good basic principles as any, and attendance at whatever school teaches them is a matter of indifference.

For parents, however, who believe that there are eternal absolutes which determine the purpose of man and the path of history, and who believe that the parent is primarily responsible for the direction of his child's learning, it will make a great deal of difference.

These parents believe in patterns of democratic living too, but with the framework of a higher pattern. For them, the definition of the Educational Policies Commission is not an adequate statement of moral and spiritual values. Therefore for them, only a school founded on the idea of a firm religious basis for moral and ethical values will satisfy their concept of their obligation. The right of religious liberty is boldly inscribed in the first amendment of the Constitution. The right to an education consonant with the religious beliefs thus guaranteed stems from the same charter of liberty, providing they too seek the general welfare. The independent, religiously oriented school has the right to stand proudly, independently and cooperatively beside the public school. Its presence provides expression for liberty of conscience. May its presence serve to challenge the public school to a re-examination of its stewardship, so that it may be not weakened but strengthened.

John L. De Beer

The Rev. Dr Harry R. Boer presented this book as a doctoral thesis to the faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam. It certainly establishes the point that the writer is eminently capable of carrying out a scholarly piece of work, and the fact that the author was promoted "cum laude" indicates that the faculty of the university also deemed the work worthy of high commendation. The title indicates that the thesis deals with the great world of missions and very specifically with the question of the significance of Pentecost upon the missionary witness of the church. It is the contention of Dr Boer that the relationship between Pentecost and missions has generally been misunderstood; much of the study and writing concerning it has essentially been irrelevant to the main issue; and the tragedy has been that the church has failed in large measure to live into the true meaning of Pentecost.

Dr Boer makes the observation that the "New Testament church manifested a powerful corporate and individual witness entirely out of proportion to the insignificant human means employed." As he reflects on this matter he is convinced that the reason for the failure of the later church to have such powerful influence lies in its neglect of the Holy Spirit. A great deal of attention has been given to the role of the Holy Spirit in personal salvation of the sinner, much curious interest has been shown in such items of revelation as "the speaking of tongues," but very little attention has been given, says Dr Boer, to the crucial significance of the Holy Spirit for the missionary witness of the church. He acknowledges that it has not been wholly ignored, but he believes that while it deserved to be central in missionary reflection, it has been allowed to remain at the periphery.

It is interesting to notice that a historical question has led to the study made by Dr Boer. In seeking to discover the secret of the great power of the early church and in studying this mighty movement in comparison to the missionary effort of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the fact seems to become clear that the early church was moved to its great spiritual effort, not because of the injunction given by Christ, commonly known as the great commission, but rather by the direct and wonderful impact of the Holy Spirit. A great deal of attention has been given to the role of the Holy Spirit in personal salvation of the sinner, much curious interest has been shown in such items of revelation as "the speaking of tongues," but very little attention has been given, says Dr Boer, to the crucial significance of the Holy Spirit for the missionary witness of the church. He acknowledges that it has not been wholly ignored, but he believes that while it deserved to be central in missionary reflection, it has been allowed to remain at the periphery.

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Dr Boer in no way speaks disparingly of the great commission, but he does believe that the great commission, though given by Christ and divinely authentic, is the instrument needed for the church in its day of spiritual weakness. When the church is alive to the Holy Spirit and is richly responsive to Him, the commission as a commandment is not really necessary. It is only when the church falls into something of a spiritual slumber that the command comes as a bugle call to arouse it again to action. With this line of thought Dr Boer proceeds to argue the point that the church must once again become alive to the realism of the Spirit's presence within herself, and he believes that such a vital awareness and profound appreciation of the Holy Spirit will bring on a powerful mission impetus and will result in a great demonstration of spiritual unity within the church.

The author marshals a good deal of historical and exegetical material to the fore to demonstrate that missions in the early church were not promoted in obedience to a specific command, and that the apostles were vitally moved by the Holy Spirit and the results of their work were unparalleled by later history. He also supplies abundant evidence to prove that the later missionary work of the church has been prompted by the command of Christ, and that it has not had the corresponding success of the early church. He deeply laments the fact that Christendom today is so dreadfully divided, since the fragmentated state of the church is a fearful handicap to Christian witnessing in the missionary world.

One cannot read the book through without a sense of admiration for the writer's sense of spiritual urgency, as well as a sense of high regard for his ability to exegete Scripture. It will not be read, however, without being provocative of many questions, and no doubt the author intends that such should be the case. He is deserving of honor for his courage to declare himself on matters which can well be calculated to raise questions.

This reviewer cannot forget the fact that the great commission as we now have it recorded for us in Holy Writ was not present in written form with the early church. The Holy Spirit was operative in a direct way with the disciples and that in a manner such as we cannot expect for our present day church. We possess the written Word as they did not have it. That written Word is, however, as binding on us as was the directly communicated word to the apostles. As I read Dr Boer's book the question arises within me whether such a position as Dr Boer presents is not essentially a mysticism which runs the hazard of undue subjectivism. The Holy Spirit is not to be minimized, but the Holy Spirit presents himself to us via the Word and apart from that Word he is not known. On the other hand, it is clear that the writer wants to retain an inseparable connection between the Word and the Spirit.

Quite obviously Dr Boer is driven with a passionate eagerness to escape a dead orthodoxy that yields formal allegiance to the Book but misses the vitality that should characterize the church.

Many specific matters might be brought forward in this review for special attention. Dr Boer demonstrates through his book the intrinsic unity of holy Writ by drawing parallels between Old and New Testament concepts. He offers specific guidance as to missionary theory and principles. He is particularly eager to demonstrate that the church at Pentecost was called to be a witnessing institute, and that that witness was universally presented and was especially a witness to the glory of Christ. If this is the case, so he believes, the ecclesiastical divisions of the church which the mission world finds so frustrating to its program must be rectified, and this leads him to his aggressive espousal of ecumenical thinking. The decision of some church bodies to remain separate from the World Council of Churches he calls into question. He pleads for an activated plan to deliver the church from isolation, and he calls for a realistic demonstration of loyalty to the confession "I believe in one holy Catholic church." It is of vital significance to Dr Boer's position that the prayer of Christ for the unity of his people means not just spiritual unity but a visible unity as well. The fact that this goal is
difficult of achievement is irrelevant to the question. The ideal must be kept and the effort to achieve it must be uninterrupted. This issue is, of course, one of vital concern to everyone in the church.

There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit’s coming on Pentecost certainly did give powerful impetus to the church, in fact was the life-giving agency. But the fact also remains that the Holy Spirit came very specifically to direct the minds and hearts of men to the Christ and the cross. In line with this Paul said he would glory in nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. The business of the church is to bring that Christ. The history of the church demonstrates that there has been constant need for a return to this basic position, and it seems to me it is far more important within the church body to be sure that we remain loyal to the witness of the Spirit by diligent attention to what He says about Christ and the cross than by endeavoring to fulfill the purpose of Christ in seeking to effect a unity which will not be a true unity centering on the cross.

This book does two things which I believe ought to be given very careful consideration. It presses home the living quality of the Holy Spirit within the church, and the reading of it ought certainly to arouse us to seek by all means a church life that is really dynamic. The second matter is the appeal for a thorough review of our position with reference to ecumenicity and a courageous approach to the issue. There is probably nothing easier to do than to develop a church which remains irrelevant to the world in which we live. Such isolation is, of course, contrary to Christ’s purpose and is stifling to the spirits of our members, and has at best only a dwarfed mission vision.

This book is eminently worth reading. No one will be left with doubt as to whether Dr. Boer is a writer with a thesis. He brings into focus with renewed force the role of the Holy Spirit in the church and in missions. By reading this book one ought certainly to realize that Pentecost is not one of the minor church holidays.

Henry J. Evenhuis


The first book of Professor Van der Kooy (of the Free University at Amsterdam), Economics and Religion as a Borderland, was soon followed by the second, because both books are series of essays which are now being bundled. The second is a continuation of the first, for the first discusses the religious dimension, and the second the human. The first was rather elementary and can be easily enjoyed by the general reader. The second, however, is of a more abstract and technical character. Moreover, many of these essays are reviews of recent scholarly works. The author knows how to digest the views of his opponents. He is strictly objective and accurate. And still, he does not hide his opinion in vague or dubious language. Thus this volume is like a course in contemporary economical theories, both from Christian ethical and the technical point of view. It is, again, a work which I would like to see translated into English, especially for the benefit of Christian teachers and students of political economy.

Though the author firmly holds on to his basic Christian principles and declares and proves that the theories of classical as well as historical economy are fundamentally wrong, he appreciates all that is “good, true, and beautiful” in them, and is very careful when it comes to suggesting Christian solutions. The purpose of the author is first of all to state the different problems correctly, then to produce his favorable and unfavorable criticisms, and finally to point in a general way to a solution which does justice to Scripture, but also to the ever-changing conditions of our times.

One of the most interesting of the eleven chapters is the author’s memorial address on his great teacher, Prof. P. A. Diepenhorst, who blazed a trail for a Calvinistic philosophy of economics. Though Diepenhorst did not speak of the basic, leading, and final (for religions) functions of all sciences, and did not arrive at a logical unity of all his views, he gathered, nevertheless, all the elements, and plainly saw all the ethical, cultural and psychological implications of economics. Prof. Van der Kooy seems to have the analytic and synthetic ability to create a magical palace by touching every stone with his wizard’s wand.

Dr. Dienst Aan de Kerkjeugd: Kort Werkplan Voor de Catechese. By Dr. K. Dijk: (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok; 1954).

To the many worthwhile volumes which Dr. K. Dyk, the well-known professor at the Kampen Theological School, has written during the course of years the present volume has recently been added. It deals with matters catechetical.

The first 60 pages give careful and mature consideration regarding the theoretical aspects of the subject. Questions such as these are discussed: What should we understand by catechesis? What are its proper divisions? Which subject matter should be taught? Which helps may be used? How can we promote good order?

The following 140 pages offer us a complete catechetical lesson plan, and specimen lessons. Ninety lessons are for the age group 12 to 15; ninety for the group 15 to 18; fifty-three for those 18 and older.

The series covers Bible History, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Belgic Confession.

I have found this to be a very excellent book. Those of our ministers who purchase this publication will certainly not make a mistake in so doing. The first part of the book alone merits its purchase. Its reading will act as a timely stimulant to every sympathetic reader, I am sure. And the lesson plan or curriculum which the author offers also deserves our consideration.

The author stresses the use of the Heidelberg Catechism as the catechetical textbook, and he does this in a way which may cause some of us to conclude that perhaps the old Heidelberger is not as outmoded and impossible for catechetical purposes as we thought it was. (I should add that Dr. Dyk suggests the use of the Compendium for the questions and answers on the doctrine of the sacraments.)

The author suggests that he might advise to begin catechetical instruction at the age of eight. But because the overload which this early start would create for most ministers he recommends twelve as the starting year.

On this side of the Atlantic we begin the catechetical training of our children at a much earlier age than that suggested by Dr. Dyk. We would be inclined to say: Brethren, if our children are susceptible to catechetical instruction at an earlier age—and of this neither we nor they can be in...
The Quest For Communion With God. By Matthew Henry: (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1954). 110 pages. $1.50

We are told by the publisher that the material included in this restoration edition was found in a rare old volume bearing the title, Works of Puritan Divines—Matthew Henry, published in 1712. It is a devotional book by the well-known English commentator, whose commentary is one of the best known in the English language, gracing the book shelves of thousands of homes. The material in this book was expanded to its present size from two sermons preached in 1712, the first dealing with the way in which we begin each day with God, and the second with the way we spend each day with God. The third section was added when the book was written, dealing with the manner in which we close each day with God.

The style is, of course, quaint, dignified, early eighteenth century. When one gets accustomed to this, the book reads easily. It is of genuine help to the soul desirous of strengthening the fellowship with God which is so essential for spiritual calm and poise in such a day as ours.

The main subdivisions of each chapter are clear, but from there on, it is difficult to follow the numbering system of the outline. This book is photolitho-printed, and I suppose there is no way to correct this defect when this printing method is employed. I would suggest that the reader ignore these numbers, lest the devotional aspect of the work which is so valuable be lost.

Arthur W. Hoogstrate.

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