



the **CALVIN** **orum**

Rudderless Rabbits
President Hutchins Speaks Out

The Protestant Reformation
Three Basic Principles

Our World Today
Paradoxes and Contradictions

Marriage
Its Restoration

There They Go!
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EDITORIALS

The Sovereignty of God — Its Wide Scope

IF the sovereignty of God is as glorious and as basic a truth as was claimed in last month's editorial, the question will not down: Why is it that this doctrine has been so frequently associated with narrowness, exclusivism, sectarianism, lack of vision and outlook? That this is the case, no one will deny. In the minds of many religious people, both of the scholarly and of the common type, mention of belief in divine sovereignty quite readily calls up the association of exclusiveness, narrowness, lack of outlook, and lack of a deep ethical interest. That this is to some extent due to the revolt against a truly God-centered way of thinking and living, is apparent on the face of it. But there is also another, contributory, cause. Too many groups who stress the sovereignty of God have only made it a narrow, exclusive, merely soteriological conception. The purely doctrinal and soteriological aspect of divine sovereignty has in many groups distorted the larger view.

In the case of some of these groups, the entire doctrine of God as advanced in Scripture and as set forth in the great classic creeds of the Reformed Faith, has become a caricature. The rich, full, throbbing life of this truth has ebbed away in such cases and dried up in the desert sands of logical abstractionism and scholastic subtlety. In some cases this distortion of the sovereignty of God has issued in a frigid rationalism, an aversion to personal work and to the presentation of the Gospel call to the sinner, in a deterministic view of God and a well-nigh fatalistic conception of man's eternal destiny, and in a virtual repudiation of the great ethical demands for the Christian life. Whoever is acquainted with the constituency and the spirit of many "Calvinistic" groups knows of the existence of such views. And the strange part of it is that precisely such groups often boast of their "Calvinism" and of their faith in the "sovereignty of God."

The fault lies largely with their restricted vision; with failure to see this truth in its interrelations and full implications. The corruption of the best produces the worst. When divine sovereignty is degraded to the level of an instrument used by Pharisees to whittle down the Almighty to the size and fashion of their own little—yes, even "theological"—idols, a glorious truth can turn into a terrible falsehood. Single-track theology is one way of burning incense to the idol of human reason rather than giving the honor to the sovereign God and his revelation.

We must see the Sovereignty of God in its full, beautiful, biblical meaning and implications. There is magnificent logic in the Scriptures, but no logical abstractionism. There is an impressive unity in the whole system of truth of the Bible, but it is no rationalistic or idealistic monism. The Bible is a Book of "one idea," one principle, to be sure, but the rational starting-point in the scholastic reasoning of someone who claims to believe in divine sovereignty and then proceeds to make his own inexorable logical deductions—that rational starting-point in a chain of human reasoning is not necessarily identical with the "one idea," the ultimate principle of the system of divine revelation, i. e., of Scripture truth. Oh the tragedy of reducing the full-orbed truth of the revelation of the sovereign God to the rule of thumb of our puny human logic and deducing our exclusive conclusions from premises that must be judged at best insufficient in the light of a full induction of Bible truth!

We must see the truth of the Sovereignty of God in its full biblical connotation and implications. One way of doing this is to realize that this basic truth has not only soteriological, doctrinal, but also cosmical and ethical implications. This is what a Calvinist like Abraham Kuyper saw. He devoted his life to the exposition of the great truth of divine sovereignty soteriologically, theologically, cosmically, and ethically. To believe in the sovereignty of God cosmically will keep us from falling into the pit of "Calvinistic" Anabaptism. And to believe in the ethical implications of divine sovereignty implies that we know the divine call to serve our God in every sphere of human life is before us. This opens up a great perspective. With this biblical principle, which the followers of John Calvin have grasped and appreciated especially, one can face the whole of life and view it as under the aspect of our all-comprehensive duty to glorify God. This delivers us from a mere "Sunday" Christianity. It calls for the consecration of all man's talents and powers to his God. It means a full-orbed Christian view of life and a comprehensive application of oneself to his God-given task in every realm of life.

C. B.

Rudderless Rabbits

THE metaphor is a bit mixed but it is a great phrase nevertheless. It came from the lips of none other than President Hutchins of the University of Chicago. He was addressing a group of scientists and educators on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Midway School. He deprecated the fact that many educators persist in

clinging to outmoded methods of education which belong to the nineteenth rather than to the twentieth century. He was aiming his shafts especially at the pragmatism and experimentalism of the devotees of John Dewey. He pointed out that with all the emphasis that had been placed on practicality in education, we are facing the appalling fact that thousands of young men so trained are not fit for the practical demands of life.

Then he pointed to the fundamental defect of this Deweyesque type of education. The reason, said he, that men are not really educated today is found in the fact that they do not really learn anything well and thoroughly. Our education is not fundamental. It does not believe in inculcating a world and life view. Students, said he, have been roaming the fields of education like "rudderless rabbits," nipping and sometimes chewing a bit of knowledge but seldom digesting it and still less making use of it. This is a beautiful bit of justified ridicule for our pragmatistic educational theory and practice. It has been said that the educated man is one who knows everything about something and something about everything, but in typically pragmatistic education only the second element seems to count. We have heard of an overworked elective system reaching down even to high school and the grades in some cases. Technique courses have been extolled to the skies. Oh these rudderless rabbits! A little nibble here, and another bite there, but no solid food. Nibbling at knowledge—that phrase characterizes much of recent education. An over-worked elective system often encourages the student's inclination to follow the line of least intellectual resistance. Science and experimentalism are going to show the way out of life's problems. Oh these rudderless rabbits, hopping, skipping, and jumping all over the field of knowledge but getting nowhere.

What we need is a definite aim and objective in education. We must stop drifting. How can the educational process be effective and fruitful if there is no worthy and clearcut goal set up, to the attainment of which the educator can direct his efforts? The student must understand that there are some real essentials that he must know and know well. Pragmatism notwithstanding, there are some ultimate realities and verities and it is on these and not on mere external technique that true education hinges. There is a God, who is wisdom supreme and without whom there is no light in man. President Hutchins does not carry his criticism far enough, as his desire to substitute a mere philosophy for scientific specialism may show, but he is at least a wholesome influence in modern American education. I hope he will continue to shoot his verbal barrage at "rudderless rabbits." That he is in earnest about the matter, also in reference to the "big" rabbits from whom the little ones learn their navigation and nibbling, is evident from the type of men whom he has drawn to the faculty of his erstwhile pragmatistic University.

C. B.

Let Us Have More Theological Discussion!

THE bark of a helpful theological debate is constantly in danger of suffering shipwreck. It has its own Scylla and Charybdis. Scylla in this case is the attitude of those who cannot carry on a discussion without acrimony, insinuation, personal invective, bitterness, animosity. This "rock" is to be avoided. Such discussion helps no one; only inflames unholy passions; diverts the attention from the truth; and destroys brotherly love and understanding. It is, however, equally serious to be saved from Scylla and to suffer shipwreck in Charybdis. Charybdis in this context is the attitude of indifference, apathy, confessional neutrality, compromise with error. It is no exaggeration to say that many an ecclesiastical bark in American waters has suffered shipwreck in this treacherous whirlpool of theological indifference. Out of sheer psychological revolt against the evils of Scylla, even those of whom better things might be expected often present a powerful argument in word and, especially, deed to throw over the rudder and head for the equally dangerous whirlpool on the other side.

We need discussion. We need it for intellectual growth and development. We need it because none of us knows it all. We need it, also and especially, to stir one another up lest we become foggy in our thinking on the great truths of God; lest we allow sentiment to get the better of clear biblical study and inference; lest the spirit of the age unconsciously create a new atmosphere that is hostile to the great verities of the Word of God. Happily it is possible to have such discussion without falling into the evils of acrimony, unbrotherliness, and intellectual conceit. There is a way of carrying on discussion on matters on which we honestly differ and on which we may aid one another to come to greater clarity and possibly unanimity. Why should not Christian courtesy go hand in hand with clear thinking and, if necessary, fearless statement of the truth in such debate? It is easy enough to sacrifice either truth to "love"—as is the common practice in "American" Christianity—or to kill all love by our alleged defense of the "truth," but the real thing is to speak the truth in love. It takes real Christians to do that.

We believe there is a crying need for just that sort of discussion in our day and age. Some religious periodicals are positively insipid. They lack all flavor and punch. They have gone "soft." They are mortally afraid of a real discussion, a difference in point of view, a placing of one view over against another. Often this is ultimately to be explained from doctrinal and confessional indifference. In many cases the leaders in certain communions have compromised with anti-Scriptural truth or practices, and now they fear a discussion lest exposure should follow.

How different the prophets, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Apostles! Fearless, clear-cut, placing the love of the truth above all desire for ease and the favor of man! And as long as we live in a world of imperfection, of error, of constant exposure to non-Christian and anti-Christian influences, we should set forth the truth, discuss it, listen to one another, and then go back to the Scriptures to see whether these things are so. Eternal vigilance is the price of much more than liberty. And if all this is done in the spirit of prayerful dependence and humility on the one hand, and of brotherly love and conderateness on the other, then it will be found there is a great blessing in virile debate and discussion. Oh for a mighty revival of clear thinking, of wholesome discussion, of fearless presentation of the truth of God to the church of today! C. B.

Holland's Heroic Resistance

HOLLAND is conquered, but it is not vanquished. The country has been overrun, but the Dutch did not run over to the side of the enemy. No nation appreciates its heritage, its great traditions, so much as when these are in jeopardy. Holland today—strange as it may sound—is more united than ever. The Germans as well as the Dutch Nazi traitors realize this. Said Rost van Tonningen, the Dutch Nazi head of the Netherland Bank, in a public address reported August 22 in the Amsterdam daily, *De Telegraaf*: "We Dutch Nazis are facing a struggle today that is more difficult than it was before the invasion!" Blokzijl, another traitorous Nazi stogy with a Dutch name, has made a similar discovery. On August 21, in a Nazi-sponsored broadcast, he called the Dutch who by passive resistance show that they hate the Germans, "hypocrites," adding that they "never were so patriotic before the German invasion!"

These would-be leaders in a new order neither know human nature nor the spirit of the Dutch. They share in the blindness of the Nazi leaders in Germany. The Germans are clever in military science and the strategy of war, but they are stupid in dealing with human nature. They still have a simple lesson to learn, viz., that you can lead a horse to the watering trough, but you cannot force him to drink. And, dealing with the Dutch, there is another lesson all Hitler sympathizers will have to learn. Holland has a soul, and no amount of military force can crush that soul. In a way that must stir the heart not only of every Dutch patriot but also of every liberty-loving mortal who has a grain of feeling for justice, the Dutch Queen in exile spoke these truthful and heroic words when addressing her subjects on the occasion of her recent birthday: "The arch-enemy of mankind, Adolf Hitler, wished to destroy us; not only has he subjugated the Netherlands and taken from it its freedom, whereupon his hordes looted our people and re-

duced it to starvation; but he has also tried to rob it of its highest goods. He has tried to crush its soul—but in this he has not succeeded. In fact, he has achieved the reverse; for after more than a year of suppression the Netherlands feels stronger and more invincible than ever."

Holland is not crushed. Not only are seven-eighths of the subjects of Queen Wilhelmina, the Dutch government in exile, and the whole of the Dutch East Indies with its fairly respectable navy actually still fighting against Europe's arch-tyrant, but by passive resistance the Dutch people in Holland are carrying forward the war against him and his occupation forces. The Nazis and their Dutch henchmen may issue orders that no Dutchman is permitted on penalty of death to listen to any British broadcast, but the stolid, phlegmatic Lowlanders will hear the broadcast from the lips of their exiled Queen, and much else that comes from "enemy" broadcasts besides. Many German soldiers disappear in Holland's canals, secretly, in the darkness of the blackout! Dutch patriots cheer British bombers when these appear overhead and secretly aid them in locating vulnerable points in the Dutch-Nazi armor. Holland is not crushed.

One of the most heartening phases of the sad spectacle of Holland under Nazi domination is the heroism and fearlessness of the really Christian element in the population. Those groups to whom the great Dutch heritage of religious and civil freedom means something because that heritage is so deeply interwoven with their deepest religious convictions, hopes and aspirations, will ever be—and today are—the most intransigent. You may torture them, but you will not cow them into submission. Among these, both the Roman Catholic and the Calvinist leaders stand out. On August 3 last a pastoral letter, signed by the Archbishop of Utrecht, denounced the Nazi ruination of the Catholic Workers' Union and declared that the sacraments should be refused to those who would affiliate themselves with Nazi organizations, industrial as well as political. "We protest," said the Archbishop—and his statement was also signed by four other high church dignitaries—"against the moral constraint and the attempt made to force upon them a conception of life conflicting with their religious convictions." Nor have the Calvinistic groups failed to give an account of themselves. Colijn's restrained but powerful address to the Dutch Christian Youth Association last spring was nothing less than an implied declaration of the independence of the soul of the Dutch Calvinist and a repudiation of the attempt on the part of the conscienceless tyrant of Berlin to prostitute that soul to bend it to his nefarious ends. It is now reported that this foremost Calvinistic statesman and leader has been imprisoned, but if the Nazis think they have thereby crushed the resistance of the Calvinistic Dutch, they are only giving another exhibition of their consummate stupidity.

The soul of Holland cannot be crushed. C. B.

The Protestant Reformation

Its Three Basic Principles

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OF Martin Luther, the trail-blazer of the Reformation, Professor Thomas M. Lindsay wrote:

Humanism had supplied a superfluity of teachers; the times needed a prophet. They received one; a man of the people; bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh; one who had himself lived that popular religious life with all the thoroughness of a strong, earnest nature, who had sounded all its depths and tested its capacities, and gained in the end no relief for his burdened conscience; who at last found his way into the presence of God, and who knew, by own personal experience, that the living God was accessible to every Christian (*A History of the Reformation*, pp. 190-191).

The three great principles which inspired the Reformation issued forth from the living, throbbing life experience of this great man—Martin Luther.

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483, at Eisleben, Germany. He came from a poor miner's family, and consequently experienced the pinch of poverty in his youth. After his early schooling successively at Mansfield, Magdeburg, and Eisenach, he ended up at the University of Erfurt, where he studied law and scholastic philosophy. Suddenly, at the age of 22 he entered the convent in Erfurt, an Augustinian Eremite monastery. He had surrendered himself to the popular belief, fostered by the whole penitential system of the Mediaeval Church, that man could and must make himself fit to receive the grace of God which procures salvation. The self-torturing cry, "Oh, when wilt thou finally become holy and fit to obtain the grace of God?" drove him into the convent. He believed, and the almost unanimous opinion of his age agreed with him, that there, if anywhere, he could find the peace he was seeking with such desperation.

Luther's Soul Struggle

The extreme earnestness of the man may be seen from the fact that he submitted eagerly to all the rigors of convent life, even going beyond the requirements. He fasted and scourged himself; he practised all the ordinary forms of maceration, and invented new ones; but all to no purpose. For when an awakened soul, as he said long afterwards, seeks to find rest in work-righteousness, it stands on a foundation of loose sand which it feels running and travelling beneath it; and it must go from one good work to another and to another, and so on without end. But before he made that discovery he became famous for his piety. It was spoken of everywhere. He even had to be reprimanded by his superiors for confessing trivial sins, and doing penance for them, and on one occasion he was told to wait to make

confession until he had committed some sin worth confessing. Nevertheless he persevered, in spite of the feeling of continual failure. He is reported to have said later:

"If a monk ever reached heaven by monkery, I would have found my way there also; all my convent comrades will bear witness to that" (Quoted by Lindsay, *Ibid.*, p. 427).

His feeling of the terrible gulf between his own sinful state and the holiness and righteousness of God only grew stronger as he practised this strictest asceticism. And scriptural consolation in this circumstance was out of the question, because John Nathin, one of his teachers of theology, commanded Luther on his canonical obedience to refrain from Bible study (*Ibid.*, p. 200). Finally John Staupitz, the Vicar-General of the Congregation, upon the occasion of a visit to the convent, after revoking Nathin's order, and after encouraging Luther to become a good "localis" and "textualis" in the Bible, went even further in the way of bringing him lasting assistance by helping him to clear up a great intellectual difficulty he had fallen into.

He showed Luther that he had been rightly enough contrasting man's sin and God's holiness, and measuring the depth of the one by the height of the other; that he had been following the truest instincts of the deepest piety when he had set over against each other the righteousness of God and the sin and helplessness of man; but that he had gone wrong when he kept these two thoughts in a permanent opposition. He then explained that, according to God's promise, the righteousness of God might become man's own possession in and through Christ Jesus (*Ibid.*, pp. 202-3).

It was while reading the Epistle to the Romans in his cell that the true light burst forth upon Luther as a veritable flood, and that he got true peace for his soul. The stupendous truth dawned upon him that the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:17) is not the righteousness by which a righteous God punishes the unrighteous and sinners, but that by which a merciful God justifies us through faith (not "justitia, qua deus justus est et peccatores injustosque punit," but that "qua nos deus misericors justificat per fidem") (*Ibid.*, p. 429). This insight into a cardinal Scriptural truth proved to be the instrument for making him a different and a new man. For now he knew himself to be a man saved by grace, and that not of himself; rather he recognized it all as a sovereign gift of God.

Justification by Faith

Out of this deep-souled experience of a man who had come into direct saving communion with God through Christ, came forth the first great and enduring principle of Protestantism, THE MATERIAL, or SUBJECTIVE, PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, apart from works.

To be sure, at this stage in his career he did not as yet disentangle himself from the meshes of the Catholic Church. He remained for several more years a loyal son of the Catholic Church.

The inward change altered nothing external. He still believed that the Church was the 'Pope house'; he accepted all its usages and institutions—its masses and its relics, its indulgences and its pilgrimages, its hierarchy and its monastic life. He was still a monk and believed in his vocation (*Ibid.*, p. 205).

He remained a loyal son of the Church all the while that he was in the University of Wittenberg, where he was first sent to teach the Dialectics and Physics of Aristotle ("the" philosopher of the Church), and where he also began to work toward his doctorate in Theology.

His career in Wittenberg was interrupted, however, by a mission to Rome (in the years 1511-12, when he was 28 and 29 years old). Though sent thither on official business of his convent, he journeyed to the eternal city in the spirit of a devout pilgrim. When he got to the end of his journey and first caught a glimpse of the city, he raised his hands in an ecstasy, exclaiming, "I greet thee, thou Holy Rome, thrice holy from the blood of the martyrs" (*Ibid.*, p. 207). When his official work was done, he set about seeing the Holy City with the devotion of a pilgrim. He listened reverently to all the accounts given of the relics which were exhibited to the pilgrim, and believed in all the tales told him. Only once, it is said, his soul showed revolt. He was slowly climbing on his knees the *scala santa* (really a mediæval staircase), said to have been the stone steps leading up to Pilate's house in Jerusalem, once trodden by the feet of our Lord; when half-way up the thought came into his mind, "The just shall live by faith"; he stood upright and walked slowly down. He saw, as thousands of pious German pilgrims had done before his time, the moral corruptions which disgraced the Holy City—infidel priests who scoffed at the sacred mysteries they performed, and princes of the Church who lived in open sin. He saw and loathed the moral degradation, and the scenes imprinted themselves on his memory.

The Ninety-Five Theses

Returning to Germany, he was sent to Erfurt to complete his training for the doctorate in Theology, and soon succeeded Staupitz as Professor of Theology in Wittenberg. From the start his lectures were experimental and practical, centering about the sense of sin and forgiveness in Christ, through faith. The material or subjective principle was working itself out in his experience. This meant a

break with the prevalent scholastic theology, which was highly speculative. This practical bent led to his power and popularity, both as a lecturer and as a preacher in the town church, where he took infinite pains to make himself understood by the "raw saxons." Crowds flocked to hear him.

His exegetical lectures seemed like a rediscovery of the Holy Scriptures. Grave burghers of Wittenberg matriculated as students in order to hear them. The fame of the lecturer spread, and students from all parts of Germany crowded to the small remote University, until the Elector became proud of his seat of learning and of the man who made it prosper (*Ibid.*, p. 212).

Such a man could not keep silent when he saw what he believed to be a grave source of moral evil approaching the people whose souls God had given him in charge; and this is how Luther came to be a Reformer. In the Roman Church of that day there was an outrageous abuse which went by the name "indulgence." An indulgence held out the promise, to the people, of remission of guilt for sins committed or contemplated in return for some money payment. This practice involved, to Luther's mind, a grave moral evil. His protest against this abuse made Luther a Reformer.

And so it was that on Oct. 31, 1517 (when he was 34 years old), Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg church, whither, on the next day (All Saints Day, Nov. 1) many people would come, for the purpose of taking advantage of a special indulgence which would be granted to all who came to attend the anniversary of the consecration of the building, and to look at its relics. Copies, in the vernacular, of the theses were soon broadcast throughout Germany.

The real assertion of the 95 theses was that an indulgence can only be the remission of a merely ecclesiastical penalty (*poena*), but can never remit guilt (*culpa*), or the divine punishment for sin. We will understand this better if we remember that in practice the Roman Church of Luther's day taught the people (or at least left the conception uncorrected in the popular mind) that indulgences were efficacious for the removal of the guilt of sin in the presence of God. In opposition to this, Luther's theses insisted that God, and only God can do this. This takes place when man repents, and when God forgives him. In all of this man does not need the mediation of a Priest.

The Priesthood of All Believers

It is evident that it was again *out of his experience* that there came forth this second fundamental principle of the Reformation, namely, THE UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS (the social or ecclesiastical principle, as it has sometimes been called). For had not Luther's experience, backed up by his discovery of the falsity of the papal claims to absolute authority, shown him that the man who fears God and trusts in Him need not fear the priests nor the Church?

Nowhere has Luther so strikingly stated the gist of this principle as he did in a little book, written in the year 1520, and entitled: *The Liberty of the Christian Man*. Here he declares that it is faith alone which gives liberty to a Christian man. His famous and paradoxical utterance in this book is: "The Christian man is the most free Lord of all and subject to none; the Christian is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone." And in his appeal, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, he taught that the vaunted spiritual estate which Romanists claimed for the clergy alone, is mere delusion.

The real *spiritual estate* is the whole body of believers in Jesus Christ, and they are spiritual because Jesus has made all His followers priests to God and to His Christ (*Ibid.*, p. 243).

A quaint but perfectly clear way in which Luther expressed this principle was in the assertion that "the work of the maid in the kitchen is as holy as the meditation of the monk in the monastery."

When we get into this conception, we come to realize that the entire education program of Protestantism has its roots deep down into this principle of the universal priesthood of all believers. For if every man is answerable to God, directly, he must know for himself who God is, and what He expects of him. And since the Bible enshrines for us the story of God's great plan of salvation for man, each individual, himself, must be able to read it and comprehend and appropriate the same for himself. He is not to be dependent upon the *ipse dixit* of anyone, not even of a priest. This calls for an educated, an instructed Christian. Hence, coincident with the rise of the Reformation movement there arose the great movement of education, which in its inception rooted itself in the felt need for education in the Bible and the spiritual life. The existence of the largest majority of Colleges in this country, is due to the fact that more than 400 years ago, in the soul of a Martin Luther, this principle was given birth—the priesthood of *all* believers.

Luther at the Diet of Worms

We must pass by certain intervening events in Luther's life, and come to a critical period in which the third principle came to stand out so sharply.

In the year 1521, when he was 38 years of age, Luther was commanded to appear before his youthful Imperial Majesty, Charles V, at the Diet of Worms. It does not suit our purpose to refer to the pageantry of the events here enacted, impressive as they are. But let us get on to the essential matter. There were two questions he was asked (by John Eck who conducted the audience): (1) if the books on the table were his own. He answered that they were. Then he was asked (2) whether he wished to retract and recall them and their contents. He asked permission to consider his answer to this question until the next day. His request was granted.

The next day Luther delivered his famous speech before the Diet. The general vein of it was that he was only a man and not God, and was liable to make

mistakes. He declared himself to be ready, if shown to be wrong, by evangelical or prophetic witnesses, to renounce his errors, and if he were convinced, he assured the Emperor and princes assembled that he would be the first to throw his books into the fire.

From now on it became increasingly clear that the Roman authorities could not come to an agreement with Luther, because he had taken his stand upon the "authority of Scripture" as the last word, whereas the Emperor and the Papacy insisted that the decision of Church councils, tradition, and papal pronouncements were equally binding, together with the Scriptures.

The Authority of the Scriptures

It was a matter of "the moral authority of the individual conscience" instructed by God's word, or "the legal authority of an ecclesiastical assembly." And Luther chose the former. And by doing so he laid down perhaps the most basic principle of the three which we have discussed, namely, THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES FOR DOCTRINE AND LIFE. This is called the formal, or objective principle of the Reformation, and also today constitutes an essential and characteristic difference between Protestant Christianity and Catholicism. Because, for a Catholic the Bible is not a sufficient rule for faith and practice. He adds "tradition" and the "ex cathedra pronouncements of Popes," and the decrees of the Church Councils as equally authoritative. He also contends that the average person cannot correctly understand God's plan of salvation as given in the Bible. It is so obscure, he believes, that he needs an infallible interpreter. The Protestant, on the contrary, believes in the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures, and that with a normal intelligence everyone can understand the story of salvation as plainly given to us in the Bible.

I have had a purpose in bringing this history to your attention. It is that we might all be reminded that we dare not forget the rock out of which we have been hewn, nor the ground out of which we have sprung. We ought to be proud of the rich heritage which is ours, and should cherish it more dearly than we do.

We may well ask ourselves whether we are still true to the faith of our fathers as expressed in these principles which came forth full-souled out of the throbbing heart-experience of a great man of God.

Steps and Stops

A good man's steps, the Psalmist says,
Are ordered by the Lord,
Both when he goes and when he stays
Are all in sweet accord.

For it's not alone the steps he takes
Which are part of God's own plan,
But quite as much the stops he makes
Which mark a godly man.

—LAURA ALICE BOYD.

A World of Contradictions

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IT is undoubtedly trite to say that the world in which we live is one of contradictions and of paradoxes. Since these contradictions vary from age to age, and therefore frequently go unnoticed and unheeded, it may be worthwhile considering some of those which in our moments of detachment we cannot help observing.

Unprecedented Production-Enormous Debt

Not so long ago we were being reminded of the great abundance that was or could be ours and of the startling, the abject poverty that existed everywhere in spite of plenty. Today we are producing much more than ever before in our history, so much in fact that within a year we may be able to produce in one year two or three times as much as we produced in 1929. We are producing enough to provide a standard of living higher than we ever enjoyed before, to carry on a defence program greater than that attempted in 1917 and 1918, and at the same time to help other nations to satisfy their needs. We are, with exceptions here and there, it is true, highly prosperous, many of us earning more than ever before in our history.

We are producing goods and services from resources that we have *now* and instead of going into debt to other countries for these goods and services other countries are becoming indebted to us. Yet we are concerned and becoming increasingly concerned about the terrible cost of defence and the rapidly mounting debt. We are enjoying more want satisfactions than ever before, many are accumulating more, nevertheless we owe more (to ourselves) than ever before. An observer from another world would be struck by this fact that though we co-operate to make each other better off for the moment, this co-operation can have within it the possibilities, not just for good but for such evil as this arrangement of indebtedness carries with it. This is at the moment a world of abundance, of common endeavor and satisfaction, but on the other hand, one of complicated individual and national indebtedness and of fear. How can this be? an observer would ask. How can it be avoided? those of us within this world would faintly echo.

Common Effort—Mutual Suspicion

This economic world of ours would impress an outsider as does a beehive, a wonder of individual and of concerted action. Nevertheless careful observation would reveal differences, dissension, work

stoppage such as one would never find in an insect hive that had access to all it needed. Workers are today insisting that they should be paid more than they are getting, they see that prices are rising, they are suspicious of their employers, and, as self-interested as those whom they envy, they try united action to "get their share." They distrust the employers' and the government's emphasis on the need of hard work and the patriotic duty to work. Employers fear the growing power of labor and the increasing cost of providing for them the various kinds of social security. More particularly they object to the ever rising taxes which today eat up more than one-half of their profits. They distrust a government in which the administration in power may use political power and public funds for the furthering of selfish ambitions. A world of abundance we live in, but each group eyes the other with suspicion and insists on getting all that it can while the getting is good. No wonder each fears for the morrow.

Individual Security — General Ruin

In the face of the general unemployment of a few years ago men generally recognized the need of greater security for the working classes. But with all that the laborers have received from the government their appetite seems but to have increased, at any rate thus it seems to the employer. The latter keeps reminding the laborer and the nation of the tremendous cost of all this security. He keeps reminding the laborer that the first and the greatest security is that which the individual provides for himself. He strives in season and out to strengthen the ethic of hard work and individual achievement, urging men to work for themselves and to be on their own. But to the worker such emphasis has a hollow ring, he knows that he heard that note long before social security became a reality and a problem, and he knows that something else is needed in addition to hard work.

Nevertheless the employer is correct,—over-emphasis by any one group, and certainly by every group, on its own security will mean nothing else than insecurity for all. This is as true of nations as of groups within it. Nations rushed from the terrible destruction of the last war to safeguard their individual interests. But intent upon protecting themselves they injured others and are now bringing rain upon all. This nation also sought to be secure and is still seeking that for itself. Its quest,

in the face of all human experience, should raise the question—Can one find security apart from or at the expense of others?

Saving Democracy — and Losing It

Our achievements in the line of production, and especially of defence, are fast approaching the remarkable. A visitor from another world would be amazed at the wonderful co-ordination manifested in our large manufacturing plants, amazed at the tenseness of the activity in industry everywhere. He might draw the conclusion that this great surge of activity was the result of friendly competition between men, to do as much as is possible for themselves and for their country. He might indeed be impelled to comment on the great things that can be done through co-operation, through the co-operative way of life, through the democratic way.

If he had not already noticed a strange or foreign element in the apparently fine human co-operation such a remark would soon bring it out. He would soon detect that what he was witnessing was not just a fine, spirited game, involving mutual service as well as individual hard work, but a drive of some sort, with considerable of its motivation coming not from the individuals themselves but from some other source. He would become aware of a cynical attitude on the part of many and of a surly attitude on the part of some. Questioning would elicit the reply from some men that they were simply "being used," that this intense striving was not something that they desired but something that was being forced upon them, and something that they, for patriotic reasons, could not very well shirk.

From others it would draw the rather acid remark that they were being "squeezed out," that they could not get what they needed (raw materials, e. g.) to continue their part of the "great effort," that this effort was in fact so changing the economic organization of the country that men whose part was such as theirs, that of small producers, would no longer be needed or considered. Here and there men would be heard replying, "This is not our effort, it is something we can't escape, and both this great activity and the planning of it are virtually forced upon us by others." Further questioning would reveal the fact that although most men were not opposed to this intense and united activity, they nevertheless considered it to be too much the desire of some one group, the existing government, or better those at the moment in control of that government. And their actions as well as their words would soon prove to the questioner that they feared that this drive was not really "theirs" and that this authority which did not come from within but from someone in power whose exercise of authority exceeded everything which they might properly be regarded as having given, might eventually take all of the "co-operative" element out of this common effort.

A visitor from some other world would soon discover that men feared that *pressure* from one source or another rather than common need or desire might

eventually determine what was to be done, and that this apparently noble and unselfish democratic effort might really be ushering in a dictatorship by one class or by a few, that democracy might in the process be swallowed up by Totalitarianism.

Defence — but of What?

We are preparing to defend ourselves, and our progress in this direction is truly remarkable when one considers that we are not so very certain what it is that we want to defend. Men in this country were not at all agreed until recently that a real attack upon the United States by a European or Asiatic power would be possible. Now that we have seen how most of a continent may be overrun by a strong power in a few months' time, we begin to wonder what may happen when a major part of the world's resources fall into the hands of a hostile power. We know that, unless we strengthen our defences, our outlying possessions might easily be taken, and also that, if one of our sister countries in this hemisphere were taken, defence might become a serious problem for the Americas. So we are now committed to the defence of America and to the task of making our defences impregnable, confident of our ability to take care of ourselves and the part of the world that we inhabit.

What is it, however, that we would be defending if we succeeded in keeping hostile forces away from our shores? We would be defending our territory to be sure. Would we be defending our right to trade with others, or the right of others to trade with us? Would we be defending our right and our duty to coöperate with the rest of the world? Would we be defending some of our most cherished institutions if we stood by and let the rest of the world be overrun by forces which would put to nought what these institutions are meant to express or to give to men? Can one save anything or defend anything by simply holding on to it for oneself, or by carefully protecting it from the rest of the world?

Had we co-operated years ago, the answer comes, we should not now have to be concerned about defence, or about the helping of other nations. And in a world as perverse as the one in which we live, in which one power is as guilty as another, this nation might best hold on to what it has in expectation of a better and a brighter day, than now to risk its wealth and its life blood in an attempt to shape the course of events. True, in this present world conflict, no one enters the conflict with clean hands or with a past of noble purpose. Does that mean however, that we must for the present be absorbed with our past failures and not now make known and effective our intention to work for what we believe is right? Is there an issue in the present strife that we should consider ours as well as the rest of the world's? If there is we cannot hope to hide, or protect our heads until the storm is over, then to pursue our course as if nothing had happened.

* * * * *

Contradictions this world offers a-plenty—life itself being one great contradiction. We cannot avoid such paradoxes nor ignore them, and in spite of our inability to remove them altogether we have no other choice than to face them, to deal with them positively. Realizing this we must seek to find some way of exploiting the earth and of increasing production without involving ourselves in a network of debts that stops us dead and prevents us from carrying on. We must seek a basis for common understanding, must seek to achieve singleness of purpose, and instead of seeking a narrow security for ourselves only, we must seek to realize it for others as well. We must indeed seek to save the demo-

cratic way of living, or better we must still seek to establish it. And we must learn that we cannot try to do that in one relationship of life, say the political without trying to make it effective in others, the economic for example, also. We must learn that we cannot expect to make Democracy effective at home unless we permit the democratic principle to guide us in our relations with other peoples. We cannot hope to defend ourselves long, even here at home, unless we defend not just our material possessions or our lives but those things or those ideals that really make life worth living. And the greatest defense of them is to live by them.

The Restoration of Marriage

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IN our previous article we observed that God, the Divine Artist, created man in His image and that He rejoiced in the beholding of this creature of His because man was indeed the reflection of the Creator's beauty and majesty. We also noticed that for the intensification and greater radiance of this reflection, the Lord created the institution of human marriage in which the image of God was to be activated and developed. It was also indicated that the image of God was lost and that marriage, therefore, became void of its original and chief purpose and hence degenerated and became corrupted.

The Escape View of Marriage

A great deal of orthodox Christian theology of today is merely escape theology. Its idea is that man must be saved from something awful and that its task is completed when it has shown the way to such one-sided salvation. This is true of Lutheranism, Methodism, Fundamentalism, etc. During the last decade and a half there was rejoicing among some orthodox groups because a disappointed and anemic Modernism was turning to Barthianism. This rejoicing was premature, however, because the latter movement, too, is, in last analysis, based upon an escape theology, and is, therefore, deprived of strength.

Now the conception that Christians have of human marriage is greatly influenced by their theology. A theology of mere escape will naturally engender the view that the purpose of marriage is escape. Generations of Christians have believed exactly that. In I Cor. 7:2 we read, "But because of fornication let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband." The meaning of these words has been horribly distorted by taking them out of their context and out of their historical set-

ting. They were interpreted to mean that one of the purposes, if not *the* purpose, of marriage was to escape from fornication. We have before us a "Marriage Form" in which escape from fornication is called the "third reason" why God instituted the same, i. e. marriage. This is a tragic conception indeed. Good textual and historical interpretation will show that this surely is not what Paul meant.

Calvinism comes to the world with a full-orbed gospel. Upon the basis of Scripture it recognizes on the one hand the necessity of the human soul to escape from its misery but, it also emphasizes the restoration of the things of the soul. The commencement of the latter is not deferred to some future cataclysmic day, but is here and now. The Calvinist, in his conception of the Christian life, sees all things in the light of restoration, temporal and eternal. That includes Christian marriage. Christian marriage is the restoration of paradisaical marriage.

Necessity of Restoring the Image of God

If marriage is to be restored to its former beauty and is to answer its former glorious purpose, it is necessary that the image of God, for the development of which it was created, be first restored. This is exactly what our Creator did. He did restore His image and with it restored marriage also.

Since we are considering only the restored and not the original image of God we need not discuss the distinction between the two, as so many writers do.

We do, however, wish to state here that man lost the image of God in the narrower and not in the wider sense of the word. The Reformed conception is that man was the image of God in both his essence and his nature. When man fell into sin he remained

the image of God in his essence, i. e., in the broader sense of the word. He remained man. But in his nature he lost the image of God, i. e., in the narrower sense of the word.

That man has retained the image of God in the wider or broader sense or significance made a modicum of marital happiness and satisfaction possible, because also in that sense the image of God must be activated and developed. Nevertheless, the essential purpose of marriage has been lost with the destruction of the image of God in the narrower sense. As such it must be restored.

The Image of God Restored in Christ

When Christ came into the world, He assumed our human nature. In Him the perfect image of God was once more found among men. Therefore He could say, "whosoever hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Uttering these words He was fully conscious that He was the human image of God and that in Him it was for the first time completely restored.

From whatever angle we approach the facts of the Kingdom of God, we must always consider them in the light of the law of development. So it is in regard to Christ on earth. Therefore it was said of Him that "He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." In Christ, too, the image of God had to be activated and developed.

As with man in Paradise so with Christ on earth this development depended upon obedience to God and so we read in Heb. 5:8, "Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered." Never was the exercise of love accompanied with as much pain as in the heart of Jesus. Never was righteousness activated and exercised at the cost of such excruciating anguish as in the soul of Christ. And never did the practice of holiness exact such self-denying devotion as in the life of the Savior. It was through suffering that he learned to be obedient to the Father in the activation and development of love, righteousness, and holiness, i. e., of the image of God.

In Paradise that activation and development was to be accomplished through joyful social intercourse in marriage with kindred souls and in communion with God. With Christ, to the contrary, it was accomplished through the intensest suffering of alone-ness.

With this suffering of alone-ness in the development of the image of God, Christ paid for the sins of His people, whose sin was the casting out of the image of God from their soul and the unfitting of themselves to develop that image in the social intercourse of marriage. Their sin was alone-ness. Their punishment was to be alone-ness. Christ in his intense and most horrible alone-ness took their sin and punishment upon Himself. In the midst of it and in spite of it He activated and developed the image of God—a seeming paradox, a profound mystery, food for deepest thought. Under these infinitely disadvantageous circumstances He did what

his people should have done in a most favorable situation. He commenced where they left off. As the Head of his Church He, the perfectly restored image of God, activated and developed that image in the suffering of alone-ness and with this suffering atoned for his people's neglect, and at the same time made it possible that they were once more made the image of God and could through faith in Him activate and develop that image in marital union.

The Restored Image in Regenerated Man

In Ephesians 4:23, 24 we read, "And that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And in Colossians 3:10, "And have put on the new man which is renewed after the image of him that created him."

These two passages indicate that the Christian is a renewed, that is, a regenerated, man.

What happens to him in regeneration? We have noticed in our previous article that when God had shaped the lump of clay into a human form, the Holy Spirit descended into it and made it the image of God. When man became a sinner the Holy Spirit departed from him and he ceased to be the image of God. At the moment of regeneration, however, the Holy Spirit returns to man's heart again and he becomes a new man, i. e., the restored image of God.

Here we touch upon the most fundamental differences between Christian and non-Christian, between the Church and the world. Regeneration of the Christian and the consequent restoration of the image of God in him is the decisive factor in the history of salvation. The social gospel of Modernism has a mighty and beautiful appeal for any Christian who is endowed with a sense for social justice and goodness, but its anemic condition, which led to its present fatal despair, is the result exactly of the fact that it has ignored the supernatural act of God by which man is regenerated and the image of God is restored. It is the strength of Calvinism to recognize and to confess that the regeneration of man and the concomitant restoration of the image of God are a present act of God through which man is enabled to know and to glorify Him. Indeed, with this act of God the Holy Spirit, true Christianity and also full-orbed marriage stands or falls.

From the quoted scriptural passages, Eph. 4:23, 24, and Col. 3:10, we infer that the new man, i. e., the regenerated man, has been created by God; that he was created after the image of God; that the regenerated man is being renewed; that he must put on the new man; and, finally, that the image of God consists in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

The interpretation is that God regenerates sinful man and in the process of regeneration renews, i. e., restores, the image of God in him. But the apostle urges the Ephesians that they put on the new man and praises the Colossians that they have done, and are doing, so. It is apparent that here, too, God and man are co-workers. God creates, restores, renews his image in man at the moment of regeneration

and regenerated man must activate and develop that image.

Knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness

The restored image of God consists in Knowledge, Righteousness, and Holiness. These ethical attributes of human nature must not be looked upon as mere dormant qualities, but as active characteristics.

"Knowledge" is not to be taken in a purely intellectual sense. The Semitic mind did not know of such knowledge. Its idea was that the knower stands in an intimate psychological relation to that which is known. Often it was looked upon as an emotional relation, especially if human beings were the objects of such knowledge. And so, to know a fellow man approached the idea of loving him. Even to the western mind such an idea is not altogether foreign. For this reason the present writer has often been tempted to substitute the term "love" for "knowledge" in this connection. It seems to us that in regard to the constitution of the image of God it would lead to a more correct understanding of what Paul means in the quoted passages.

Righteousness must be taken, not merely as a forensic position or a dormant ethical quality. This would do violence to the texts quoted. It must be looked upon also as an active quality of regenerated human nature.

Holiness should be taken in its fullest connotation, i. e., not only as abstinence from sin or as a dormant quality but also, and especially in this context, as absolute devotion to God and His will.

Our conclusion is that regenerated man is the renewed image of God. Therefore he can know God in love, can be righteous in all his dealings, and give himself in complete devotion. This makes him fit for true human marriage. It gives purpose to marriage, for in it the image of God, i. e., Love, Righteousness, and Holiness become activated and develop.

The Restoration of Marriage

We pointed out in our previous article that God instituted marriage as a means for the activation and development of the image of God. The original image of God in Paradise was in need of this institution. Eph. 4:23, 24 clearly indicates that the restored image of God in the regenerated also is in process of development. Because of the weakened condition of human nature in which the image dwells, or, perhaps better, of which it is composed, that restored image is weaker than the original. Therefore, if the original needed human marriage as a means for activation and development, the restored image surely does.

As the quoted texts show, the restored image of God is engaged in a deadly struggle with the old man of sin in the heart of the regenerated. In this struggle it is also confronted by a world that lies in sin and in which it is very difficult to be activated and developed. For this reason, too, the restored

image of God is in need of the assistance of the restored institution of true, full-orbed marriage.

Because of this need God has restored this institution, which is like a flower come down to us from Paradise to inspire the image of God to action, in which it develops into a greater and more glorious reflection of the beauty and majesty of God.

The restoration of marriage was, so to say, given with the restoration of the image of God. God Himself indicated that in the former the latter attained to completion. Therefore, it was inherent in the restored image of God that it should reach completion in restored marriage. The former consists of social virtues and qualities that can be activated and developed only in that most intimate social intercourse which is to be found only in marriage. Hence marriage was restored with the restoration of the image of God.

Serving God in Marriage

Marriage, being restored, has regained its purpose and content. The Christian may enter this state of life with the blessed assurance that in this institution, which he received from his Maker through Christ, he can serve the Lord.

During the Middle Ages marriage was looked upon as an inferior order of life. Sometimes it was considered as sinful or as a means of escape from adultery or a concession to the weaknesses of the flesh. The ascetics spurned it. Moderns with their exclusive emphasis upon its physical aspects degraded it. But the marriage of his children is pleasing in the sight of God for it means the increase of the brilliant beauty and majesty of His image and reflection and hence it is a source of constantly expanding joy for Him, the Creator. The Christian of today is keenly aware of it, or should be at least, that God has restored this source of paradisaical joy and happiness.

The Old Testament clearly testifies to this restoration of marriage. It uses the institution again for the purpose for which it was originally intended. When, for instance, the Lord wishes to give Israel a deep impression of his covenant love and faithfulness toward His people, He often uses marriage as a symbol. The New Testament, too, sees restored marriage as a symbol of the relation of Christ to His Church. This purpose can be served because of the restoration of the institution.

Because of this restoration Paul speaks of the marriage of Christians as "Marrying in the Lord." The same apostle in his epistles gives many instructions and admonitions in regard to marriage.

The purpose of the restored as well as of the original institution of marriage is the same. But there is a difference in the means by which it is attained.

In both the beauty of the image of God must be enhanced and intensified by the activation and development of love, justice, and devotion in the social intercourse of marriage. In Paradise the joy, happiness, bliss and well-being that the hearts and

souls of Adam and Eve possessed and experienced drew them together and established interaction between their hearts and souls, an interaction which evoked love for, justice toward, and devotion to, one another. It is different in the restored institution of marriage.

Marriage and Alone-ness

Regenerated man is, and on earth remains, a sinner. Sin and its consequences are in the last analysis alone-ness. And so suffering, pain, grief, death are in the last analysis alone-ness.

Immediately after sin God linked the punishment for man's sin up with married life, "in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This curse has for the Christian been changed into a chastisement; that means that the suffering of, and in, married life, which are a punishment for sin, will be turned into a benefit for marriage.

Christ, we found, restored the image of God and with it restored marriage. But he restored it in the profoundest personal alone-ness of his soul. In the struggle of alone-ness He restored communion with God for Himself. He restored with this communion with God also life, the image of God, and consequently marriage, for his people. The Christian must now by his own actual experience learn what price Christ paid for the believer's restoration and therefore the Christian must suffer in marriage. He must follow Christ and hence the image of God in him must be activated and developed through the tribulations of restored marriage.

In the economy of salvation the Lord uses divine irony. Satan introduced sin and all that it implies, namely, suffering, grief, death—in a word, alone-ness which, in many instances, are the immediate consequences of marriage, to destroy the image of God, but God uses them as a means in His own hand to activate and develop marital love, justice and devotion and that again for the activation and development of the image of God.

Marriage No Means of Escape

Marriage, therefore, is more than a means of escape. It is a means of restoration. How much more comfort and joy the institution would provide if this were definitely understood. And if suffering, grief, death, alone-ness is the means by which marital love, justice, and devotion are evoked, how utterly foolish divorce becomes. A Christian who, to escape suffering, divorces his life's partner to whom he solemnly promised marital love, justice, and devotion, says with that very act of divorce that he refuses to be activated and developed as the image of God through suffering and pain. But this is the only way in which he can develop and attain to the really supreme joy for which God has created him. The consequences of his refusal will, of course, be that he will never experience that joy. Divorce crushes the heart and soul and with it makes the

happiness and bliss for which they were created impossible.

Finally, restored marriage on earth is only of a passing nature. Jesus declared that in heaven there will be no marriage in the mundane sense of the word. Life on earth is the life of symbols. The earthly symbol of marriage falls away when the heavenly reality is achieved. That reality is the marriage of Christ with His Church. In that marriage there will be constant social intercourse between Christ Jesus, the God-man, and His Church. Through and in Him, the Mediator, God and man shall live in closest communion. Man shall be eternally linked up with the infinite source of life, of joy, and be the image of God. In social intercourse between God and His image the latter will be constantly activated and developed to the joy of both, God and man. Until that heavenly and eternal marriage has been completely established, the restored marriage on earth will have to function as a means for the growth and development of the crown of creation, man, the image of God.

Columbus

Another Columbus is this world's need;
A man of noble mien
And high resolve;
The nobleness of purpose firm
And resolve that knows no fear!

Lands anew await the touch
Of one who, God-inspired,
Seeks to gain once more
A hold on lands laid waste
By tyranny's destructive heel.

New worlds await discovery;
Tomorrow's worlds where yester-year
Old worlds preened in splendor—
And fell—like Rome of old;
Consumed by hate and wrathful lust,
By love of self and greed for gold.
Smoldering ruins of recent days
Bespeak an age gone wrong!
An age when men are enemies
Speaking with thundering tongues of flame
Wreaking devastation.

A "New World" we would see.
New worlds where old existed.
A new Columbus to bring anew
A brotherhood of man,
Working in heaven-blest harmony,
And desirous of peace.

Baneful ire stilled for aye;
A new world in a blessed new day!

—BESS DE VRIES.

There Go The Ships . .

Psalm 104:26

SOLOMON, overlooking the busy wharves of King Hiram of Tyre, his pastoral Israelite soul thrilled at the romance of the sea and its busy ships, may well have been the author of this ecstatic exclamation. We share somewhat that sense of glamor when we recall that four hundred and forty-nine years ago this month, the keels of three Spanish ships first touched American sand. We seem to see many and various ships sailing over the horizon of history bearing to us the priceless gems that have gone into the making of the crown of liberty.

The soul of all human freedom lies hidden in a religion—a religion born in the Orient but destined to come to maturity in Europe.

We stand at the site of an ancient city. It is the city of Helen, whose face launched a thousand ships. It is the city of poetry and legend; Achilles, Ulysses, Aeneas, Homer, even a rude wooden horse flit through our minds. But as we stand at that harbor, that Troy has long since retreated into the mists of antiquity. We have not come to witness the launching of a battle fleet with tiers of flashing oars, bright sails and fluttering banners. We stand with a handful of humble folk in the harbor of Troas watching a tiny craft set forth, bearing in its bosom a pitiful little figure described by Chrysostom as "three cubits high and humped." But that little man bore in his bosom the world's most precious cargo.

"There goes the ship!" and Christianity was borne over to Europe.

Five centuries pass. Gregory sees blonde Angles in the slave markets of France and reflects sadly that these Angles are far from being Angels. But he seems to see far down the lanes of history to a time when the descendants of these fair-haired giants from Britain would control the world's greatest colonial empire, and resolves that they shall have more to give than brute strength.

We stand at the harbor of Calais, now with a greater throng—be-cassocked ecclesiastics amid gaping townpeople. "There goes the ship!" and on its deck a lonely figure, missionary Augustine, envoy of Gregory to bring life and immortality to light among the island dwellers of England.

A millennium passes. European Christianity is locked in the squirrel-cage of medievalism, its physical eye-range limited to the seemingly flat disc of the horizon.

We stand amid curious but pessimistic Spaniards at the harbor of Palos. "There go the ships!" The *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and foremost the *Santa Maria*, bearing on its prow a man with a piece of driftwood in his hand, picked up in the surf of Genoa, but bearing the tokens of Oriental tropical forests, and with boundless faith in his heart. Two months and ten days later, European civilization rested on the beach at San Salvador.

A generation later a new Christianity was born in Europe, protestant against a corrupted ecclesiasticism. A new Christianity but with the old ideals for freedom that sailed out of Troas treasured in the heart of Paul—born in Europe but destined to come to freest expression in the New World.

A century passed. A pitiful little group knelt for prayer on the wharf at Delftshaven. "There go the ships!" and the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell* sailed into the West bearing, in the words of Carlyle, "The most precious cargo in history." In the *Mayflower* cabin a Compact was drawn that Daniel Webster called "the seed-corn of the American Constitution." Militant protestantism and democracy had come to America.

Three centuries passed. "There go the ships!"—bearing soldiers to Europe to "make the world safe for Democracy." But can Democracy with her glorious heritage now begin to propagate herself by tear gas and grenade? Or has America forgotten that heritage? Soon, there go ships again, to peace conferences. But the ships are piloted by insincerity and their compasses are set for aggrandizement. And so, a generation later, there go ships again bearing material of war to stem the dark tide of frustrated ambition.

Who knows—may it be that someday another ship shall sail, be it ever so small, be they ever so few who see it off. If that ship sails to bear the precious cargo of truth and light as it is in the Christ of Calvary—"There goes the ship!" shall once more ring out the sound for which a lonely broken world is waiting!

ALA BANDON.

A Legend

The rabbis have a legend,
I read it long ago,
That the prayers which ascend to heaven
From this sad world below
Are gathered by an angel there
Who patiently watches and waits
And changes the earth-born prayers
Into flowers at the heavenly gates.

And the perfume from the blossoms
Is wafted far and wide
'Til the souls in the heavenly city
Are swept along on the tide
Of love and supplication, which
Rising from earth's unrest,
Brings a sweet smelling savor of incense
To the mansions of the blest.

—LAURA ALICE BOYD.

A Criticism of the New View of the Sabbath

D. H. Kromminga

Professor of Church History, Calvin Seminary

MY original contribution to the present discussion of the Sabbath was an attempt to defend the Heidelberg view. This last opportunity for being heard in it I shall use for briefly stating why I can not subscribe to the view of the Sabbath which Dr. Pieters propounds. Space limitations forbid reflections on any remarks which my former articles have elicited except such as lie directly in the path of my attack. My objections to Dr. Pieters' view reduce to these four: it is not sufficiently positive in construction; its discrimination against the Fourth Commandment is without scriptural warrant; its devaluation of the Decalogue unsettles our ethics; and its practical aims ignore others of equal importance.

I. It Is Not Sufficiently Positive in Construction.

All systematization of biblical material should be guided by that material and not be dominated by ulterior considerations. If these are not kept subordinate, the need of facing opponents on different fronts will leave us in the end with a system which will neither square with itself nor with Scripture as a whole. But on the face of it the view which Dr. Pieters offers on the Sabbath seeks too exclusively the overthrow of the basic argument of the Seventh Day Adventists. They make use of the Reformed appeal to the Fourth Commandment for the obligatoriness of Sunday observance and claim that, to have force, this appeal ought to recognize the obligatoriness of the entire Fourth Commandment as it stands and, therefore, of the observance of the seventh day of the week.

So, in order to *save our liberty* to worship on Sunday, we are invited to agree to the logic of the Sabbatarians, but to *eliminate our obligation* to do so by rejecting their premise of the continuing authority of the Fourth Commandment. This is essentially the position which Cocceius took in the seventeenth century disputes about the Sabbath to which Dr. Pieters calls our attention. Since we thus would be giving the Fourth Commandment an anomalous position in the Decalogue, we are urged to adopt the further position, that in the New Dispensation we have nothing whatever to do with the fundamental law of the Old, as though this could restore the parity between the Ten Commandments. In the seventeenth century, this was the position which the Voetians sensed and combated as lying behind the view of Cocceius and as destroying the traditional Christian idea, emphasized by Calvin, that the Decalogue furnishes us with a perfect rule of life. But we are once again encouraged to pay no heed to what we are losing, since the ethical instruction of Jesus and the apostles furnishes us with a complete set of moral norms which have universal and permanent validity.

Professor Murray tried to pin Dr. Pieters down to the alternative of either a denial of the equality of the Fourth Commandment with the other nine or a denial of all obligatoriness of the Decalogue in the Christian economy. But Dr. Pieters refuses to be thus pinned down, takes both alternatives for his responsibility, and sets them up as the two supports of his theory. That a theory thus based shuts off beforehand the possibility that some of the moral principles derived from the New Testament should coincide with the Fourth Commandment, is treated as purely incidental and needing no explanation, nor is the fact considered, that in the end we find ourselves also with a small residue of moral principles which are not coinciding with any one of the Ten Commandments. What this may imply for our view of the moral principles is a question which

naturally lies beyond the range of this new theory; but it is nevertheless suggestive of profound dislocations in the set-up of our fundamental Reformed conceptions. It is quite evident that the new theory of the Sabbath carries far-reaching implications which call for serious and minute scrutiny before its acceptance is warranted.

II. Its Discrimination Against the Fourth Commandment Is Without Scriptural Warrant.

A basic weakness in Dr. Pieters' argumentation from the apostolic silence on Sabbath keeping is his failure to distinguish, even after I suggested it, between the Sabbath of the Jews and the Lord's day of the Church, and to make plain about which of these it is important for his theory that the apostles were silent. In his third article he talks as if only the Lord's day is in the picture. As I pointed out, the apostles did speak of it. But, as regards the Jerusalem Council, it would have done no earthly good, nor would it have made any sense, if, in view of *Moses* being preached in every city, it had urged *Sunday* observance, even though its connection with the Fourth Commandment had been made ever so clear. And, as regards the observance of the Jewish *Sabbath*, it makes no difference whatever, whether the abrogation involved only the ceremonial element or the whole Fourth Commandment or the entire Decalogue: in no case could the Jerusalem Council or the apostles at any later time have exhorted to it. Their silence is as well explained on the assumptions of the Heidelberg view as on those of Dr. Pieters' view, and for that reason he loses his argument from it.

The material which I brought forward from the New Testament as bearing on the recognition of our Sunday Dr. Pieters declares to be irrelevant. He closes his discussion with the remark, that, even though all my observations were correct, I still would have to prove that the apostolic Church observed Sunday in obedience to the Fourth Commandment. Yet that material is there, and is sufficient to show that the apostolic Sunday observance *was* in obedience to the Fourth Commandment in the same sense in which the apostolic moral instructions recognize the other nine, to wit, *in obedience to the moral principle enunciated in the Fourth*. The New Testament references to the first day of the week should be read in full; they are found in *Matth.* 28:1; *Mark* 16:2; *Luke* 24:1 and 13; *John* 20:1, 19, and 26; *Acts* 2:1, and 20:7; *I Cor.* 16:2; and *Rev.* 1:10.

The number of instances in which the New Testament either expressly mentions or unmistakably indicates the first day of the week is by itself impressive when seen next to the scarcity of mention in the New Testament of other days of the week except, of course, the seventh. To all other days of the week the New Testament is indifferent; but it calls our attention to the first day of the week. With Christ's resurrection the first day suddenly springs into prominence, and from Christ's resurrection onward the seventh day gradually fades out. This is, of course, not due to the day itself but, just as in the case of the seventh day in *Gen.* 2:2, 3, is due to the *events* which occurred on that day; it is the *events* that make the day stand out from the succession of otherwise equal days.

Those events are by no means limited to the resurrection of Christ, which Dr. Pieters is now belatedly emphasizing in an attempt to neutralize the harm his theory might do to our Christian Sunday. The fact that He rose on the first day we

know only in connection with the appearances He granted His disciples on that day. And among these were two on that Easter Sunday, in which He expounded to them the Scriptures in explanation of His death and resurrection, thus bringing those meetings close to our ordinary Sunday services. The first day of the week was still further fixed in the minds of Christ's disciples by His return to them seven days after Easter, when He removed Thomas' doubt. The historical significance which thus accrued to the first day of the week for the nascent Christian Church was again immensely enriched by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the waiting disciples on the seventh Sunday after Easter. And with Pentecost it was as with Easter: the day brought not merely the central event of the coming of the Holy Spirit, but brought also beforehand that peculiar unanimity with which they were all together; it brought the direction of the public attention to what was happening to the Church, so that all Jerusalem became aware of it; it brought the miracles of sight and hearing and of speech to indicate and symbolize what was happening; it brought Peter's amazing public explanation of what was happening; and it brought as many as three thousand converts into the Church.

Let us for once contemplate the series of fundamental events, fundamental for the whole future life of the New Testament Church, with which God Himself distinguished the first day of the week, and let us realize, that we are abbreviating a full fifty percent when we connect Sunday merely with the resurrection of our Lord. For the Church, the coming of the Holy Spirit is not less constitutive than the resurrection of Jesus. When the course of events led to the separation of the Church from the temple and the synagogue, we can be certain, that in its Christian liberty the Church chose the first day of the week as its distinctive day for public worship not hesitatingly after much search for a possible first choice from among the days of the week, but as a matter of course; as a choice which no later generation of Christians would ever wish to revise; in brief, as *the only day* to choose. When, years later, the Holy Spirit chose to come upon John in Patmos on Sunday and Jesus chose to give His beloved disciple the visions of the Apocalypse on that day, that was a notable divine sanction of a Christian custom which by that time had grown strong;—so strong, that without a word of explanation and yet without the least fear of not being understood John could designate the first day of the week as *the Lord's day*.

It clearly is in the setting of all these doings of the Lord on His day, that the doings of His disciples must be viewed which are recorded for the first day of the week of the brethren at Troas and of the apostle to the gentiles. With respect to Acts 20: 7, the point which I expressly emphasized was this: the meeting of the disciples is not represented as having been held for the reason that they had Paul in their city and wanted to hear him preach. For that, there were other days. No, the connection was just the reverse: the disciples had a custom of meeting on the first day of the week for Holy Communion, and of that custom Paul availed himself for the purpose of preaching to them. Any one who wants to take this text away from me as evidence for Sunday observance should at least make an attempt to show that this text does not say exactly what I claim. And, if he succeeds in such an attempt, he still has to furnish some adequate explanation of the fact, that the day of the week on which the meeting and Paul's preaching and the miracle took place should be named at all. Not until I have received satisfaction on both these points shall I surrender this shred of New Testament evidence for Sunday observance.

With respect to I Cor. 16:2 the situation is similar. As long as the Heidelberg Catechism is my creed, Dr. Pieters will have to bear with me for holding that almsgiving is a constituent element in the worship which the Fourth Commandment requires of us in the New Dispensation. However, the real nut which I Cor. 16:2 gives him to crack, and which he will find a hard one, lies in the fact that Paul, the apostle who teaches that no day has any excellency above others in itself, here tells Christians, who are free with the liberty of the New Covenant, that they must do so and so in their private life on the first

day of the week. If that day had not somehow acquired from somewhere some special significance in the minds of both Paul and all his converts, in Achaia, Macedonia, and Galatia, their New Testament liberty certainly would have given them a perfect right to tell him to mind his own business and not to meddle in theirs. What was that significance of the first day of the week in the mind of Paul and in the minds of his converts in so many districts? As long as this question elicits no satisfactory answer which at the same time bars the explanation I am offering, I shall, of course, not surrender this bit of New Testament evidence for Sunday observance.

To this New Testament material we must still add as cognate its tremendously solemn insistence, in Heb. 10:19-31, on the duty of every believer to attend the Christian assemblies. Then it is clear, that the New Testament bars every possibility of degrading the Fourth Commandment to a rank lower than the other nine in the Decalogue as alone without a moral principle from which it originated and which remains permanently valid. To establish such a claim, one would have to disrupt the following group of plain scriptural facts:

1. That the Fourth Commandment declares for Israel the permanent validity of the Creation Sabbath;
2. That according to Christ the Sabbath was made not particularly for the Jews, but universally for man, Mark 2:27;
3. That, while the Sabbath is Jehovah's day, Jesus has lordship over it, Mark 2:28;
4. That in the exercise of this lordship it was Christ Himself, Who diverted the attention of His disciples from the seventh to the first day of the week by the great redemptive events of Easter and Pentecost;
5. That to this act of their Lord it was a proper response on the part of the disciples, when they formed the custom of worshipping on the first day of the week and of designating that day as the day of the Lord;
6. That in so doing the Church put the first day to essentially the same use for which the Creation Sabbath had originally been instituted;
7. That this change of day received the approval not merely of Paul and John, but of Jesus Himself, when He closed the New Testament revelation on the first day of the week;
8. That participation in the public worship of the Church is as much a moral obligation for every Christian as is any other duty.

I have not yet heard any of these facts challenged in the present discussion. As long as all these facts go unchallenged, it should be frankly acknowledged, that Jesus and the apostles have left us moral instruction corresponding to the Fourth Commandment as well as such instruction corresponding to the other nine.

Dr. Pieters again brings forward a quotation of his from Calvin's Commentary on Genesis, which perfectly illustrates the point which I am emphasizing. I may say, that this is the reason why I have passed this quotation over in silence, and that even now I fail to see the point of Dr. Pieters' appeal to it at all. He says of Calvin, that,

"having discussed the Creation Sabbath, and having assigned to this institution permanent and universal significance, he adds:

'Afterwards, in the Law, a new precept concerning the Sabbath was given, which should be peculiar to the Jews, and but for a season.'"

Does not Calvin here plainly teach, that in the Creation Sabbath we are face to face with a moral principle antedating the Decalogue and that out of this moral principle the Fourth Commandment arose as its Israelitish form? And must we not recognize the fact, that, when, together with the abrogation of this Israelitish form, the change came from the seventh to the first day of the week, even so in our Christian Sunday there is preserved the original conception of the hallowing of one day in seven for rest and worship?

III. Its Devaluation of the Decalogue Is Unsettling for Our Ethics.

The first of Dr. Pieters' two supports for his theory is unavailable; can the second bear the whole weight of our refuge from the Seventh Day Adventist gales alone? Before looking into this matter let us remind ourselves of the considerable amount of agreement which is still left us in spite of our differences. Whether we say, that only the seventh day was abrogated, or, that the whole Decalogue was abrogated, we all connect abrogation with the Decalogue; and, whether we find abiding moral principles only in the other nine Commandments or also in the Fourth, we all recognize the fact that such principles found expression in the Decalogue. And without question we are also all agreed in attaching greater importance to these moral principles than to anything else in the Decalogue. They were its very core and heart even for Israel, and the severe rebukes administered to that people by the prophets and Jesus show that Israel's great fault was precisely its failure to recognize these principles and to honor them in deed. To estimate the force of our differences correctly, we must view them in their connection with these points of agreement.

If we do this, the fact emerges, that to my mind the Decalogue is not the same thing which it is to the mind of Dr. Pieters. I can and do agree to what he says about the permanent duties enjoined in the Decalogue to the effect, that these were not originated by the Decalogue but were duties anterior to it and to Moses and for that very reason continue in authority. But I can not go along with him, when he calls these duties *parts* of the moral law. In view of the fact, that I find such a duty also in the Fourth Commandment, I must now declare, that, while when viewed singly those duties are indeed parts of the moral law, yet, when taken all together, they are the *whole* moral law in the sense, that one can not set up an eleventh focal point for the organization of the ethical instruction given by the Bible next to these ten. The ten cover the entire ground and leave us with no residue of duties for which one can not find more authoritative support than mere human considerations, such as, what would become of religion and the Church if we did not follow the Old Testament custom of having a weekly day of rest, and, since the Church has chosen the first day, I can not well do anything else but follow its custom.

And to this Decalogue the term 'abrogation' does not apply. What applies, is the distinction which the Synod of Dort drew in its declarations concerning the Fourth Commandment; to wit, the distinction between an abrogated ceremonial and an abiding moral element. The abiding moral principles of the Decalogue constitute by far its more important part, while what has lost its binding force is quite definitely its lesser element. On the basis of this no longer binding minor part and in the face of the other still binding major part to call the Decalogue *abrogated*, is certainly to use very infelicitous and very misleading language. Such language assuredly would stand in great need of scriptural undergirding. Dr. Pieters tries to supply such undergirding by his combination of II Cor. 3:14 with Exod. 34:28; Deut. 4:13, 9:11, 15; and I Kings 8:21. But this combination fails to furnish the undergirding, since the Old Testament passages do not specify that in them Jehovah is speaking of the Old Covenant in distinction from the New, as Paul avowedly is doing in II Cor. 3:14. And it will not do to assume, that, when the Bible speaks of Jehovah's Covenant with His people, it must always be either the Old or the New. For we all recognize an element which is *common to both Covenants* and which binds them together as two dispensations or economies of the same fundamental Covenant. In both Covenants we find the same God, the same people, the same fundamental promise, the same Christ, and evidently also the same moral principles. What was old, has also vanished away, as Heb. 8:13 teaches; but the moral principles have *not* vanished.

With good reason the Reformed have always laid great stress on the continuity which is found in the Covenants. This continuity plainly includes that of the moral principles; and in

this fact lies the explanation of quite a number of scriptural phenomena that bear on the point which we are here discussing. Such are the following facts: that Jehovah set the Ten Words off from the rest of the Sinaitic legislation by speaking them alone in the ears of all the people and inscribing them alone on stone tables; that at times the Covenant with Israel, not necessarily the Old, is identified outright with the Ten Words; that in Jeremiah Jehovah declares it to be of the excellency of the New Covenant, not, that a new law will then be given, but that His law will then be inscribed in the hearts instead of on tables of stone; that Jesus never as much as hints at an abrogation of the Decalogue but insists on its permanence in authority and fulfilment; and, that the apostles refer to and quote from the Decalogue as a whole as 'the Law'.

But in the formulation and exposition of the new theory of the Sabbath expressions have been used which encroach on these facts and their significance for the permanency of the moral principles in the Decalogue. To be sure, their abiding validity is asserted with great emphasis. But this assertion goes hand in hand with an insistence on the abrogation of the Decalogue in its entirety, for which the theory allows of no abatement, which flies in the face of the facts, and which can give to its language only a fictitious meaning to which nothing in reality corresponds. Moreover, the door is opened for the notion, that the moral principles were in abeyance for whatever time elapsed between the abrogation of the Decalogue and their own reaffirmation in the instruction of Jesus and the apostles, when the following guiding rule is laid down:

"Whatever in the Decalogue is binding upon us is so binding, not at all because it is there, but because it has been reaffirmed by Christ and the apostles."

Such a formulation is, of course, loose and faulty. No moral principle is binding, whether on us or on anybody else, *because* it is in the Decalogue; but neither is it binding *because* it has been reaffirmed by Christ or the apostles; it is binding anterior to all this, as it was binding on our first parents in paradise. From the instruction of Jesus and the apostles we merely *learn* what is binding and that it is binding. The question is, whether such faulty formulations can be corrected so as to square with the facts without upsetting the new theory of the Sabbath. I do not think so.

Why should we really insist on the rejection of Sunday observance in obedience to the Fourth Commandment as a dangerous apostasy from the Christian faith and on the preaching, instead, of Sunday observance merely as a voluntary custom learned from the ancient ordinance? I can imagine only two possible considerations which could lend to this change such immense importance as is attributed to it. Either, the moral law is binding when we meet it anterior to the Decalogue and is binding again when we learn it from Jesus and the apostles, but it is not binding when we behold it shining forth from its Israelitish formulation in God's own words on Mount Sinai; or, the divine authority of the *Moral Law*, although lying at the base of all other law, is somehow somewhat *less binding than Law*, at least for the New Testament people of God. But I can not bring myself to ascribe such reasons to Dr. Pieters.

IV. Its Practical Ends Ignore Others of Equal Importance.

Dr. Pieters assigns four practical reasons for the immense importance which he attaches to the distinction between Sunday observance in obedience to the Fourth Commandment, which he condemns, and Sunday observance as a voluntary custom learned from the ancient ordinance, which he commends. They do not impress me. Their weakness argues against the theory. As far as they contain legitimate elements, these can be attained without the aid of the new view of the Sabbath; in so far as these ends are formulated under the influence of the new view of the Sabbath, they stand in the way of other practical ends which must be sought without question. For instance: when Christians began to think that they must obey the Fourth Commandment, that thought contained a great element of truth, even though misconceptions regarding it have led to Judaistic legalism. Now our task undoubtedly is, to cast out the Judaistic legalism; but we may not do so at the expense of the truth.

As to having a satisfactory answer to the Seventh Day Adventist propaganda, the answer advocated by Dr. Pieters never will silence that propaganda but will merely give it a valid charge against us. And in the meanwhile it is bound to drain much strength from our own arm in our struggle against the increasing and appalling Sunday desecration and neglect of public worship with which the land is overflowing. As to relieving needlessly burdened consciences, relieve them we must, provided we are sure of the needlessness of their burdens; but even then we may not do so at the cost of abetting the far more numerous callous or uninformed consciences that do not inquire what the will of the Lord is but constantly veer toward using or, rather, abusing their Christian liberty for an occasion to the flesh. If the type of preaching which Dr. Pieters so severely censures but which I have hardly ever encountered, aims at counteracting such abuse, it ought at least to find recognition of its aims, however deplorable its method.

Finally, I fail to see, how the preaching of conscientious Sunday observance in obedience to the abiding ethical core of the Fourth Commandment can possibly obscure the connection of

our weekly day of rest with the resurrection of Christ. Is not this connection before our eyes at all times in virtue of the fact that Sunday is the first day of the week and not the seventh? The character of Sunday as our weekly commemoration of the resurrection of our Savior can receive all the emphasis it needs without dissociating its observance from the Fourth Commandment. Let our preachers use no restraint in setting forth this precious significance of the day. But why should the stress on this significance obscure the connection of our Sunday with the Fourth Commandment? Whence have we derived the very idea itself of a weekly day of rest for purposes of public worship, if not from the Fourth Commandment which rescued the Creation Sabbath from oblivion? Must we suppress part of the truth for the sake of playing up some other part of it? And must we incur the danger of losing what there is left of a sense of the obligatoriness, the duty, of publicly meeting the Lord with His people in a formal act of worship on His day? I can not see it. Our Christian liberty does not mean that we can in anything do as we please, but that in all things we are enabled voluntarily to meet our responsibilities.

From Our Correspondents

From Michigan's University Campus

1002 Forest Ave.,
Ann Arbor, Mich.,
Sept. 22, 1941.

Dr. Clarence Bouma,
Editor of THE CALVIN FORUM,
Franklin St. and Benjamin Ave.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

RIGHT gladly do I accept the invitation to write from Ann Arbor occasionally. If I may assist THE CALVIN FORUM in its task of contending for the faith I shall be very happy indeed.

Just now the campus is all astir. The new students are pouring in, the taxies are working overtime, and there are suitcases and trunks on every porch. Soon twelve thousand students with books, blue and otherwise, will be hurrying across the beautiful plant we call the campus. One feels like enrolling in something himself, so much of wealth, so much of learning, so much of opportunity!

And yet the Christian observer of a great university getting back into its stride does so with conflict in his soul. For all is not well here. Oh, it is true there is still much Christian tradition here: and Michigan's president wants to conserve that tradition we are sure. But can he? Is not a pagan culture offering to crowd out the earlier deposit, and succeeding too well?

Dr. Machen seems to have been profoundly right when he wrote that "until seventy years ago the western world was predominantly Christian in its thinking, today it is predominantly pagan." The past century has witnessed another Copernician revolution, as momentous a movement as the Reformation, although not in the same direction. Future historians will record as the most important change ushered in by the new century the return to power of pagan ideology.

The sun has set and hasted to the place from which it rose; the Christian Church finds itself once more in the place it occupied in apostolic times. For then, too, it found an ideology firmly entrenched, an ideology hostile to its own. And every page of the New Testament witnesses to a mighty struggle between the two.

Then, with the conversion of Constantine, the scene was changed. The opposing ideology backed down. And Christianity with its own peculiar ideology had the field to itself. Throughout the Middle Ages its system of thought had the right of way in men's minds. All men granted the validity of the Christian theses. (Although not all men acted accordingly, be it observed.)

Out of this long period of quiet and rest from its enemies round about the Church emerged, at the beginning of modern times, with some of its biggest muscles sadly and badly atrophied. It was ill prepared to sense the danger of the new set-up. It failed very signally to take the necessary safeguards and precautions. For so many centuries it had failed to emphasize that in its very first definition saving faith is a *heaven-wrought affinity for the ideology of Revelation*; for so many centuries it had ignored and minimized the immense value of assent to the divinely promulgated theses; for so long it had intimated that not assent but trust was the important thing; for so long a time it had held forth, foolishly, that *fides est fiducia*—that when a rival ideology entered the field it was hardly agitated over the sight.

Nor did the Church in modern times feel very deeply over the fact that men, its men, were going over to the rival ideology. And if in a more than worth-while moment it really took time out to examine its own health, it lulled itself back to complacency by decreeing that not doctrine but life is the thing that counts. Not on its life would it venture forth to contend for any faith in its objective sense; "the servant of God must not strive" was a convenient text.

All that is past by now. Only men already past middle age can still make themselves believe that one can adhere to an essentially pagan ideology with his *head*—and keep alive and vital the Christian processes of the *heart*. That brand of pseudo-Christianity has had its day; it is obsolete; it just won't sell anymore.

Shall we then forget the earlier ideology, accept the new and live it consistently? The majority in our day are doing just exactly that. (God have mercy on them, their country, the world!) Or shall we go back to the ideology of Scripture? And to the Scriptural teaching that affinity for the Bible's ideology is the first and foremost mark of the redeemed man? Which of these alternatives will it be? There is no third possibility.

This granted, it ought not to be hard to convince any thinking person that a Christian University (that is, a University

committed unequivocally to the ideology of Scripture and to the idea that ideology takes all of life into its orbit) is the prime need of the hour. Will the Church realize this before it is too late? Must we resign ourselves to the welter of woe that must follow this exchange of ideologies?

Until we have such a university the very least we can do is to offer a hand to steady the young people exposed to an ideology wholly foreign and hostile to all that we Christians hold dear. We covet your prayers also for our sector of the front.

And may God bless THE CALVIN FORUM at its sector!

Fraternally,
LEONARD VERDUIN.

From South India

Telugu Village Mission,
Adoni, Bellary Dist.,
South India.
June 28, 1941.

The Editor,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich., U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

ONE is sometimes confronted, in letters from America, with the query, "How is the war affecting present-day missionary work in India, and is the Indian Church having to alter its policy to meet the ever changing world situation?" Answers to these and similar enquiries can, I think, be found in the presidential address given recently by Bishop Stephen Neill at a session of the Tinnevely Episcopal synod. The speech contained so many illuminating pointers to current trends in Christian thought and methods in India, that some reference to, and a few extracts from, it may not be out of place in this letter.

Now the district of Tinnevely, far down in the south of the peninsula, contains the largest proportion of Christians of any area in India. Many of its churches are noted for their missionary zeal and general Christian vigour. And, appropriately enough, the spiritual head of the Anglican community, the most numerous denomination in this section, is one of the most outstanding Christians in all India today.

Coming out to India seventeen years ago, after a brilliant academic career at Oxford, Stephen Neill has served his Master faithfully and humbly as a missionary-educator and, more recently, as the Bishop of the Diocese of Tinnevely where there are over a million Christians, mostly Tamils.

Britain and the War

Dealing first with the British public's wonderful record of Christian giving, the Bishop said: "I do not know anything nobler in the whole of Church History than the spirit in which the people of England, at a time when their own churches are going down in ruin, and their own homes are being blown to pieces, have kept going, almost without diminution, their continual stream of gifts, in order that the Gospel may be preached to people whom they have never seen, and who are sheltered from the horrors which they themselves are daily enduring."

Touching next on the war's reactions on the Indian Church, the speaker went on: "The war has brought severe strains; but on the whole I think it has proved a blessing to our Church. It has roughly and sharply taught us that we must be prepared to stand on our own legs, that we must begin to train ourselves now, so that if disasters multiply and every form of help and support from the West is completely cut off, the Tinnevely Church may still stand where it stands today, and may continue undismayed its task of bearing witness to the living Christ."

A confirmed democrat, unlike so many of his British colleagues, Bishop Neill has never been afraid of championing a thoroughly democratic policy for the Church in South India. "I

have come very slowly to the conviction," declared the Bishop, speaking at Synod, "that democracy is the only form of government finally compatible with Christian principles. I have also come regretfully to the conclusion that political democracy without Christianity is bound to be a disastrous failure . . . Christian democracy can welcome change to suit the changing needs of men, but it is kept steady by its loyalty to the revelation of the unchanging Christ . . . We must be styled a pluto-democracy rather than a genuine democracy . . . When I came to India in 1924, practically all authority in the Diocese was concentrated in the hands of not more than six persons, all of whom were European missionaries. The authority then wielded by those six missionaries is today divided up between more than fifty persons, almost everyone of whom is an Indian Christian."

Christianity in India

Dealing with the criticism that is often made of the foreignness of the Indian Church, the speaker remarked: "It is not necessary for me to remind you at length that Christianity, being a religion of revelation, is necessarily to some extent intolerant and exclusive. It has a body of truth by which it stands or falls; it has certain points on which it may not compromise. Therefore, it can never be wholly adaptable to its environment. When Christianity has gone to the utmost limit in adjusting itself to the needs and standards of different times and peoples, it still remains entirely unlike anything else; and in the midst of non-Christian systems, it has to stand up uncompromisingly itself and nothing else."

"There is no reason at all," the speaker continued, "why Indian Christianity should not be recognisably and genuinely Indian. But adaptation does not mean syncretism. We shall not produce an Indian Christianity by taking a little Christianity here and a little Hinduism there, and making a nondescript article out of the two . . ."

Concluding on an optimistic, forward-looking note, Bishop Neill declared, "As Christian truth is worked out fresh in Indian minds, trained to independent thought,—as the great Christian experiences are lived through afresh in a multitude of Indian settings, the Indian Church will grow to find its natural expression of the great inheritance of the Christian faith . . . Christianity will draw unto itself from the soil of India that which it can use, and as it does so, will take on a form and beauty different from anything which has been seen in Western lands . . ."

Gandhi's Satyagraha

For many years a staunch protagonist of the Indian nationalist cause, Dr. George S. Arundale, the internationally known head of the Theosophical Society, has recently been lecturing and writing in support of a whole-hearted participation in Britain's war effort on the part of all Indians.

"The supreme moment is now due to arrive," writes Dr. Arundale in the *New India Survey*. "Hitler and his fellow evil-doers will know no restraint, especially so far as regards Britain which has stood in his way from the beginning and will stand in his way to the end . . . In their righteous scorn for the Nazis, Britain and her stalwart friends and brethren will ensure the triumph of good for the laying of the foundations of the new age of a new world . . . a new age had to come. New foundations had to come. But would these be foundations of tyranny and force and savagery, or would they be foundations of righteousness?"

Commenting scathingly on Mr. Gandhi's advocacy of "Non-violent non-coöperation", Dr. Arundale continues: "What will India do? Will she at last shake off the shackles of enslavement to pettiness and myopia, fastened upon her by Gandhijee? Will she at last see the ignobleness of the present forms of *Satyagraha* (passive civil resistance) and the moral ruin *Satyagraha* is bringing upon the Motherland? Will she rise into the greatness designed for her by her *rishis* (sages) and throw herself into the cause of good, be her rights and wrongs what they may be, thus making the victory soon as it is already

sure? Or will she continue upon her present pathway of ignominy, her treading of which is causing to so many Indians a sense of shame and desperation?

Britain and India

Knowing England as I do, I have always held the opinion that the average Briton has nothing but sympathy for the aspirations of the people of India in the matter of political self-determination.

Broadcasting from London, Mr. A. Duff Cooper, the British Minister for Information, appeared to voice the goodwill of a very representative cross-section of British public on this subject. "India is rapidly moving to take her place," said Mr. Duff Cooper, "as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth, as free as any Dominion or as this country itself, to choose her own destiny . . . We in Britain look on this march of India to full nationhood with pride as well as hope, for when it is completed it will have proved that the British Commonwealth holds the secret of peaceful coöperation not only among nations of like race, but also among nations of different races not yet come so close to full self-government."

Students and the War

By way of tail-piece and anti-climax, I would like to add another illustration of the great interest India's constitutional problems evoke in the minds of all classes of Englishmen.

Writing from Oxford, a correspondent tells of the constitution of a new group of undergraduates called the Indian Collaboration Committee. Numbering among its members men from Great Britain, the Dominions, India, and the U. S. A., the new group is an offshoot of the famous old "Argonauts" a non-party youth movement of the democracies. The Committee suggests that a National War Cabinet be formed at once, directly under the Viceroy of India. This body, composed of prominent Indians, is to be augmented within a year after the conclusion of peace by the inclusion of other Indians representing all strata and becoming an India Council.

Finally, our Oxford friends would have this India Council act in conjunction with an advisory body of British and American experts in order to devise a constitution for India incorporating the highest achievements of Indian culture and Western civilization.

Thus, and not for the first time, have the weightiest international issues been "solved" and disposed of in university common rooms!

While regretting the loss of a small amount of mails to and from America, I am glad to be able to report the safe receipt of all the issues of THE CALVIN FORUM up to and including the May, 1941 number which has just arrived. And to those of us who have perforce to admire "G. R." and her citizens from a distance, the new feature in your May number, "Grand Rapids Notes", is most welcome.

With fraternal greetings,

Sincerely yours,

ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

[Received at Grand Rapids September 23, 1941.]

Calvinistic Study Club

SEPTEMBER 12, the Calvinistic Study Club met at the home of its president, Professor C. Bouma. This meeting happened to be the twelfth one since the birth of the Club. In 1937, or to be exact, November 17, 1937, the Club was born. Hence we are about four years old. Strange though it may seem, we have no name. Not that it matters so much. The child, generally, is more important than the name. And so it happens that we are called "Study Club", or "Discussion Club", or "Calvinistic Philosophy Club", etc. This condition is a good deal like that obtaining in a home where a youngster is growing up. Father calls the boy "Bud", mother calls him "Sonny", and the old spinster-aunt calls him "Sweetheart". It

all depends upon one's relation to and opinion of the child,—in this case, our club.

At each meeting a paper is read by one of our members. The subjects deal with the general theme: "A Study in Christian-Augustinian-Calvinistic Ontology". Up to the present we have studied and discussed: The Nature and Unity of Reality; Christianity and Platonism; The "Christian Philosophy" of the Middle Ages; Modern German Idealism and the Reformed Faith; Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Theological Modernism; Recent Neo-Calvinistic Philosophy in Holland; The Significance of Creation for the Christian View of Reality; Personality and the Trinity in the Christian View of Reality. The last one mentioned was introduced by Dr. Leonard Greenway, at our most recent meeting.

Sometime ago *Die Gereformeerde Vaandel*, a Theological journal published in Stellenbosch, South Africa, under the able leadership of Dr. E. E. Van Rooyen and Dr. D. Lategan, gave our Club considerable space in its columns. The article was written in Afrikaans. Now Afrikaans is a language which has a flavor all its own. And the translation of the article would destroy that exquisite flavor. This peculiar quality makes you think of a home. It makes you think of an open fireplace in which the yellowish-red embers glow delightfully. You picture around the hearth a number of friends who in a most intimate fashion converse with one another about the thoughts that arise in the mind.

Well, here in brief is what our brethren in South Africa wrote about us: A wide-awake club, this club whose name is Calvinistic Discussion Club! From the list of subjects it appears that this club in its discussions aims for deep water. Such an aim is worth-while. A true Calvinist does not care to go fishing for minnows in shallow waters. No, he is attracted to the deep waters where he is apt to catch the big fish.

* * * *

The study of Dr. L. Greenway concerned itself with the subject, "Personality and the Trinity in the Christian View of Reality". The speaker pointed out that "Idealism and Materialism, on a priori grounds and from opposite points of view regard human nature as a simple unitary thing". And yet, as Dr. Hepp says: "You can not find a more Monistic view of the world than Calvinism".

Having shown where Idealism and Materialism are wrong, the speaker stated that "the Christian philosopher, however, recognizes plurality in Reality". "God is first. . . . He is the one absolute principle. Then comes duality: God and creation. In the lesser of these two there is another duality, and thence plurality".

Next, Mr. Greenway explained that "all knowledge presupposes an affinity between the knowing subject and the object known". That does not mean that in our knowledge God is "a magnified Man". Nor does it mean that God is personal "plus a super-personality". It may be "better simply to affirm that God is absolute personality". By this, the speaker meant that God is "that self-conscious Being whose intellectual and moral activity is dependent on nothing beyond or outside his own Being, and who does all things *on purpose*". As to the objection that purpose and absoluteness are contradictory, the Rev. Greenway stated that purpose "does not so much impose a limit on a person, but rather expands the scope of his power and efficiency".

The Trinitarian conception of God is derived from Scripture. Does the conception help the intellect? According to some philosophers it does. For Hegel it did. But the consciousness of the Trinity is only realized in individuals. Hence the Hegelian conception is defective and utterly unsatisfactory. "Religion craves a Father and Friend, a Providential Ruler, a Hearer of Prayer, a Redeemer from sin".

It was further stated that "the only kind of knowledge we are capable of conceiving is one in which the subject distinguishes himself from some object which is not himself, and through this distinction has knowledge of himself. It is only in this way that we can have understanding of the reality of God's selfconsciousness. . . . We must posit an immanent dis-

tion in the Godhead through which the Divine consciousness carries its object within itself".

A difficulty encountered is this: the subject-object argument "does not necessarily suggest a Third Person. It yields only a binitarian theology".

In the discussion which followed emphasis was laid upon the fact that though we know little about the ontological Trinity, in hodiernal life the *work* of the three Divine Persons is the channel through which we learn most about the Triune God. Another point in the discussion was this: The Christian thinker has a point of departure in his own personality, but in predicating anything of God he does not project his own thought forms and contents into infinitude but, rather, lets the archetypal mold his own thinking.

The writer of these lines can not help but call the primitive church blessed. In the centuries that have come and gone since the advent of the Lord, an enormous amount of doctrines and opinions have been accumulated. The non-Christian world has always been in competition with the Church. And the competing philosophies have often influenced Christian thinking. The notion of Evolution, for example, has greatly influenced the thinking of many Christians today. But the primitive Church was by force of necessity cast upon its own resources, namely, faith and Scripture. The primitive Christians reasoned far more from and with the Bible than we do. We should in this respect be like the primitive Church—feed upon the Word.

J. G. VAN DYKE, Secretary.

1023 Leonard, N.E., Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Presbyterian Church U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I HAVE been a reader of THE CALVIN FORUM since its inception and have received much instruction and encouragement from its pages. I count it a high honor to be included among its "Correspondents" charged with the task of writing from time to time concerning developments and activities within the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. of interest to Calvinists throughout the world. In this my initial contribution I shall attempt this task with some reference to its 1941 General Assembly held at St. Louis, Mo., the last week in May.

In judging the degree to which the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is a truly Reformed Church two measuring rods are available. The first of these is its official creed. The second is its activities, especially those sanctioned by its General Assemblies. Judged by the first measuring rod the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is not only the largest—it has approximately 2,000,000 members—it is one of the purest of the Reformed churches in America. Opinion may differ as to whether the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms constitute the best of the Reformed creeds but none, I suppose, will deny that they rank high among such creeds. Judged by the second measuring rod, however, if we confine ourselves to actions of the Assemblies held within recent years, it is not clear to what extent this great Church is to be regarded as a Reformed Church. At any rate it is hardly too much to say that something like twenty years have come and gone since the General Assembly of this Church has taken any action that indicates, in any pronounced way, that it is gravely concerned about witnessing to the Reformed Faith in its purity and integrity.

The Auburn Affirmation

A brief historical summary may be of interest to some of your readers. At the turn of the century there was an urgent demand on the part of many for a revision of the Westminster Standards which led to certain modifications in 1903. Whether it be thought that those changes improved or impaired the Westminster Standards it must be clear to all that they left them genuinely Reformed. That the Assembly as a whole as

late as 1923 was deeply concerned about doctrinal matters is evidenced by the fact that in that year it reaffirmed the deliverance first made by the 1910 Assembly (and repeated by the 1916 Assembly) declaring that belief in the full trustworthiness of the Scriptures, the virgin birth of our Lord, His death as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God, His bodily resurrection, and that His power to work miracles was manifested in the days of His flesh are among the essential doctrines of "the Word of God and our standards." The reaffirmation of these "Five Points" by the 1923 Assembly was made in the face of vigorous opposition of commissioners from Presbyteries which had licensed men who questioned these points of doctrine, and was the occasion of the publication, early in 1924, of "An Affirmation"—commonly called the Auburn Affirmation because issued from Auburn, N. Y. where Auburn Seminary was located—signed by 1274 ministers, which declared that none of these doctrines need be believed by ministers of the Church. The Presbytery of Cincinnati overtured the 1924 Assembly advising it of what these ministers had done and requesting that it take such action as was called for. That Assembly voted "no action" on that overture. It is somewhat difficult to explain that Assembly's ignoring of this overture—the writer did not attend its sessions—in view of the fact that it elected a conservative as Moderator, who in turn appointed a conservative as chairman of its committee on Bills and Overtures. Probably the explanation is to be found in the fact that a case involving the point at issue was then pending before the Permanent Judicial Commission. The decision in that case, handed down by the 1925 Assembly, was all that could be wished inasmuch as it reversed the action of the New York Presbytery in licensing men who would not affirm belief in the Virgin Birth. It is the established law of the Church, the decision asserted, that those licensed must have "clear and positive" views regarding this doctrine.

The liberals raised such a storm over the decision just referred to, going to the length of threatening to disrupt the Church, that the fearful among the conservatives joined with the liberals in requesting the Assembly to appoint a Special Commission of Fifteen to study the causes of unrest in the Church "to the end that the purity, peace, unity, and progress of the Church may be assured." The report of this Commission, as adopted by the 1926 and 1927 Assemblies, indicated more concern for the peace and unity of the Church than for its purity. It contained no express condemnation of the Auburn Affirmationists and its declaration of doctrine was at the most evangelical, not distinctly Reformed. The outcome was a virtual nullification of the 1925 Judicial Decision and the deliverance of the Auburn Affirmationists from any danger of prosecution before the courts of the Church.

The question has often been asked why the conservatives have never made any concerted effort to discipline the Auburn Affirmationists in the Church courts. Apart from the fact that the adoption of the report of the Commission of Fifteen indicated the hopelessness of such an attempt, it should be remembered that failure to initiate such action within a year after the matter had been brought to the attention of the 1924 Assembly had rendered them immune to prosecution according to the provision in the Book of Discipline which reads: "Prosecution for an alleged offense shall commence within one year from the time of its alleged commission or from the date when it is reported to the judicatory which has jurisdiction thereof." Apparently this fact was overlooked by the 1924 Assembly when it voted "no action" on the Cincinnati overture.

The Cedar Rapids Overture of 1941

Since 1927 the Auburn Affirmationists have not only been tolerated within the Church, they have increasingly been placed in positions of honor and influence. They are members of all, or nearly all of its Boards, Agencies, Committees, and Commissions; and in not a few instances they occupy the leading places. The President and General Secretary of the Board of National Missions, the President of the Board of Foreign Missions, the General Secretary of the Board of Christian Educa-

tion, and the Chairman of the Department of Church Coöperation and Union, not to mention others, are all Auburn Affirmationists. Last year (1940) an Auburn Affirmationist was elected Moderator. This year Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, President of Union Theological Seminary in New York City and the most widely known of all the Affirmationists, received 404 votes on the final ballot, while the successful candidate, Dr. H. B. Smith, received but 461.

Especial significance attaches to the action taken by this year's Assembly on the Cedar Rapids overture. The Presbytery of Cedar Rapids, in the interest of furthering the proposed union with the Southern Presbyterian Church, had overtured the Assembly "to declare that it regards the acceptance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Scriptures, and of Christ as very and eternal God, who became man by being born of a virgin, who offered Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God, who rose from the dead with the same body with which He suffered, and who will return again to judge the world, as being involved in the ordination vows to which we subscribe." The Assembly, on recommendation of its Standing Committee on Bills and Overtures, of which Dr. Coffin had been appointed Chairman by the Moderator, substituted for the declaration of doctrine requested by the Cedar Rapids Presbytery the following: "This General Assembly reaffirms the fidelity of the Church to its doctrinal standards, and declares itself convinced that its ministers and elders are loyal to their ordination vows"—thereby changing it from an implied condemnation to an implied justification of the Auburn Affirmationists. If this declaration by the Assembly is true—we do not think it is—there is, of course, no occasion for doctrinal controversy within the Church. Everybody is loyal and everybody is Reformed. If we mistake not, however, the doctrines specified in the Cedar Rapids overture are essential not only to the Reformed Faith, but to Christianity in general. "The plenary inspiration (and hence the inerrancy) of the Scriptures, the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Christ, His substitutionary atonement by which He rendered a satisfaction to divine justice, and His personal return", to quote the late Caspar Wistar Hodge, "are not only explicitly affirmed in the Westminster Confession, but are essential to that common Christianity adhered to by the Romish, Greek, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches, and essential to the Christianity of the New Testament."

There are other matters bearing on the attitude of our Assemblies toward the Reformed Faith, such as its expressed willingness to unite not only with Reformed Churches like the Southern and United Presbyterian, but with such Churches as the Episcopal and the Methodist, but lack of space forbids any consideration of them here.

The Outlook for the Reformed Faith

There are those who allege—notably the group that withdrew from the Church under the leadership of the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen and later divided into the Orthodox Presbyterian and the Presbyterian Bible Synod Churches—that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. has become by the actions of its General Assemblies apostate. Suffice it to say in this connection that this allegation seems to us to rest on a strained exegesis of these actions plus a failure to give adequate weight to the fact that the doctrine of *stare decisis* is not part of the law of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and hence, that while a judicial decision by the Assembly is final as regards a particular case, it does not establish a binding precedent even for cases of a similar kind. Their allegation that they were extruded from the Church solely because of their loyalty to the Word of God ignores the fact that it was held by most that the establishment of such an Independent Board for Foreign Missions as they set up was itself an unlawful act.

I must conclude lest I weary you with my prolixity. If there are other phases of this matter in which you and your readers are interested I shall be glad to attempt to deal with them in future issues. Obviously I regard the outlook for the Reformed Faith within the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

as rather discouraging. However, I am far from despairing. The Church has an essentially sound creed and in the long run this may prove more significant than the actions of passing Assemblies. I find much encouragement in the fact that the events of recent years has put Modernism on the defensive. It has been forsaken by many of its former adherents. Many of those who still support its flag do not possess their former confidence. Whatever the future of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., I believe with the late Benjamin B. Warfield that the Reformed Faith itself "can no more perish out of the earth than the sense of sin can pass out of the heart of sinful humanity; than the perception of God can fade out of the minds of dependent creatures; than God Himself can perish out of the Heavens." In this confidence let us go forward.

Cordially yours,
SAMUEL G. CRAIG.

Princeton, N. J.

From Blitzed Old Britain

HERE follow brief excerpts from letters written by Christian people in Britain, some of which have been addressed to us and others of which have come into our possession in other ways. They are all personal letters, whose originals are in our possession. From the daily papers and magazines we get reports of what has been going on in Britain, but these reports cannot give one an insight into the soul of God's people and their spiritual attitude and reactions in the midst of the stress of war and air raids. These letters give such glimpses. Just as the recent account of the sinking of the *Zamzam* as written for the *Sunday School Times* by the Christian missionaries who themselves passed through this harrowing experience differs widely in spirit and character from the accounts which the secular newspapers and magazines offered, so these excerpts from letters of God's people in Britain offer glimpses that may not readily come to the attention of our readers. The excerpts follow without further comment.—EDITOR.

* * * * *

"We still enjoy a 'strangely quiet spell' and my Home Guard vigils have been monotonously uneventful, though one acknowledges the preserving mercy of God.

"As you confirm, I sense there is still strong reluctance to break into the 'shooting war', but (humanly speaking) victory must be seriously delayed if not endangered, unless sentiment soon switches around. Hitler's refusal to court shooting war within the U. S. A. is the true measure of its advantage to the Allied cause. I think, however, (to paraphrase Churchill) the American river keeps rolling along with ever-increasing speed that must surely ere long break all barriers. Your President is guiding the ship of State with consummate skill and we cannot but believe that God has placed both our leaders where they are."

* * * * *

"The two books on John's Epistle were duly received, and it would be a joy to sit for an hour at leisure to read. How little do we realize the deep things of God, but what there is in store for all when 'my Father's House of many mansions' is through His grace reached! No raids there!!! Bristol City and its suburbs are a sorry spectacle. Through wondrous mercy our street has escaped, and our home also. We in the country shared in the 10-hour raid Thursday. It was indeed fierce. Bombs fell around us here, but 'it shall not come nigh thee'. 'He will not fail thee'. 'He shall give His angels charge concerning thee'. These truths are verified by our gracious God all the days, and all the nights, too. Oh to know Him! . . . One feels the Lord will soon arise for us as a nation. He will answer prayers that are besieging His throne. It is difficult here (spiritually, I mean). The dear relations with whom we are staying are good moral kind folk, but oh dead—good re-

ligiously, but strangers to grace. . . . My beloved mother is still suffering nervous shock (she is 91) and it is a miracle she has not collapsed. . . .

* * * * *

"You are often in our thoughts and prayers. We hope you have been given a renewal of strength and healing physically and mentally after the past months of such great trial. That you have experienced and continue to experience the love of God in caring for you there can be no doubt. . . . He remains ever the same.

"We down here are and have been most marvellously protected from near death and destruction. Now that the authorities are expecting more severe times, we are expecting that kind and gracious hand of our God stretched out for our defense, are we not? You in your arduous duties of 'Home Guard' will be assured of that unseen, yet ever present, Lord Jesus taking care of you. . . .

* * * * *

"It was very kind of you to send those magazines. We have enjoyed reading the several items, those marked being of special interest to us. How wonderfully has the Lord of the whole earth preserved you and many Londoners!! Our sympathies go out to you and many others who have suffered heavy financial loss. May the Lord Jesus be to you (and He is!) 'All in All' providing and more than making up for all suffering and loss. That you can carry on after all your experience is a tribute to His sustaining Grace, isn't it?

"One wonders what is the next immediate phase. I hear that we in Wrexham may have to evacuate, being open country, so favorable in many respects for airborne troops. Last night and early today there were casualties—one death and other injuries as the enemy dropped his death-dealing missiles. Our house shook and one naturally runs to the Lord in prayer for His mercy and protection. How lovely the morning light!! Mother is very weak—too weak to walk. We are now sitting in the orchard at the rear of the house, a perfect summer day. The reading of God's precious Word is often disturbed, yet the Lord is good to us and often our hearts are warmed. . . .

"Those magazines were passed on to my cousin, but she says she never reads religious articles, there being so many opinions. The article though on the Garden of Eden was read and enjoyed by her. Oh that the Lord would glorify Himself in our being here. Words are futile—we need His grace to testify. May He give unto us all to witness to His goodness and *reality* for His name's sake. How beautiful the trust displayed by the Lord's loved ones in London! To be able to rest in Jesus because so well known and so near to Him in conscious blessedness is indeed enviable, whilst I here when the enemy roars overhead (sometimes divebombing, they say) am so frightened and tremble. But He knows, and it is His faith, not mine, that counts. . . . That God is with us as a nation seems proved. He has granted us salvation from the enemy till now—that of twelve months ago and onward being the most marked. Oh may He give a revival of true godly piety for His Name's sake! Or is He about to return for us all? . . . "

The Reformed Church in America

October 2, 1941.

Dr. Clarence Bouma,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

UNDER the leadership of Dr. Simon Blocker, President of our General Synod and Professor of Practical Theology at Western Seminary in Holland, Michigan, the Reformed Church in America is entering a season of denominational activities that promises to be exceptionally eventful. The theme of our current church year is "The Pre-eminence of Christ" (Colossians 1:18). In an age when dictators receive front-page publicity the Kingship of Christ can hardly be over-stressed. Our denominational leaders are of the opinion that there is insufficient regard today for the implications of our Lord's headship in the Church.

Dr. Blocker's speaking schedule is a heavy one. Between September 26 and November 7 he is journeying through our denomination, conducting discussion groups and addressing public rallies. Several departmental leaders are accompanying him. Coincident to this denominational effort an inspirational conference for the Synod of Chicago area was held in the First Reformed Church of Roseland, Chicago, on September 22 and 23.

Western Seminary at Holland had its convocation exercises September 18. The President, Dr. Jacob Vander Meulen, gave an address on the subject: "A Study of the Divergent Readings 'Testament' and 'Covenant' in Hebrews 9:15-17". Dr. Vander Meulen is a devout New Testament scholar. In addition to serving as President of the seminary he holds a professorship in the department of New Testament Exegesis.

At present there are a few unpleasant disturbances in our denomination. In my previous letter (June 28) I mentioned Dr. E. F. Romig's views on Original Sin. Since that date Dr. Romig has written extensively on the matter in an effort to clear himself of any unfavorable charge. It is still a question whether he has succeeded.

Another point of denominational disturbance centers on the person of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, pastor of the Marble Collegiate Reformed Church in New York City. During the past summer Dr. Peale served as "technical adviser" in Hollywood for Warner Brothers' forthcoming production, *One Foot in Heaven*. Some of us are of the opinion that a minister in the Reformed Church in America has, to put it bluntly, no business in Hollywood. From the point of view of their psychological effects it is unfortunate that both of these controversies were occasioned by brethren in the eastern section of our church.

In my next letter I shall have something to say about the new science building being erected at Hope College.

Fraternally,

LEONARD GREENWAY.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

