



the **CALVIN** **Orum**

Professor Berkhof
A Tribute

The World Today
Educational Challenge

New Guinea Letters
Observations and Reflections

Personality Disorders
Religious Training

Letters

Books

Verse

VOL. X, NO. 3

**TWO DOLLARS
A YEAR**

OCTOBER, 1944

THE CALVIN FORUM

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EDITORIALS

Professor Berkhof Retires

“DO YOU think you are justified in retiring from your professor’s chair?” This question was addressed to Professor Louis Berkhof by a leading figure in the field of American theological education who was not acquainted with rules and regulations governing the appointment and retirement of professors at Calvin Seminary. Many others might ask the same question. For Professor Berkhof is still vigorous, both mentally and physically. You would not take him for seventy. But seventy he is, and retire he must—according to rules and regulations adopted many years ago.

It does seem strange, now that the September term has begun, not to see his familiar and stalwart figure in the halls of Calvin Seminary. He not only occupied the Chair of Reformed Dogmatics and related subjects but also headed the Seminary as its President since 1931, the year in which the European rectorate was abolished and the Seminary Presidency was called into existence. Now that he retires from these duties and responsibilities, one is aware of the large place which he occupied in the educational and ecclesiastical counsels of the Christian Reformed Church.

Professor Berkhof was ordained at the turn of the century, and after six years spent in the pastorate and in graduate theological study, was appointed to the Chair of Exegetical Theology in Calvin Seminary. Berkhof’s thinking, preaching, and writing has ever been marked by a fine exegetical sense. In 1914 he was relieved of the Old Testament field, which up to that time he had taught together with the New Testament. He now devoted his time exclusively to the latter field. In 1926, when the Systematics Chair at Calvin was expanded to include Apologetics and another course in Ethics, and the present writer, then its occupant, was given the choice between the two new chairs, Professor Berkhof was chosen to the Chair of Dogmatics and related subjects. Those who know him intimately know that this was an ideal to which he had aspired for some years. The field of Dogmatics had the love of his heart. And it is in this field that his theological memory will live on, not only after his retirement, but also when his familiar figure will no longer be with us. In his *Systematic Theology* he has produced a solid manual of Reformed Theology that will prove serviceable to the English-speaking student throughout the world for years to come.

Professor Berkhof’s influence has especially been strong and pervasive in the Christian Reformed Church. As so many other leaders in that communion he is the son of immigrant parents, who came from the Seceder Church of the Netherlands and carried with them a fusion of simple piety, a high theology, and unswerving devotion to the Reformed Faith. All this, which he himself owed to such a spiritual heritage, he returned enriched and deepened in the alembic of his capacious mind by way of pulpit and professor’s desk into the minds and hearts of the rising generation and the coming ministry of his Church. The Christian Reformed Church has gone through doctrinal controversies coupled with ecclesiastical upheavals, and in every case the quiet, steady hand and mind of Louis Berkhof was in the background. He was no “fighter.” He disliked controversy. He was no organizer of a group to fight a battle. But his pervasive influence and his careful, balanced, sober thinking on all issues was sure to be found controlling many a situation. His Church respected and still respects him. The recent tributes brought to him by students, colleagues, Board of Trustees, and Synod were well deserved.

There is in Louis Berkhof a remarkable combination of whole-souled loyalty and devotion to the Reformed Faith with a breadth of outlook and sympathy coupled with fairness of judgment also in dealing with opponents’ views that is refreshing. He had no sympathy with the extremism of certain recent Reformed writers who, though boasting of their superior soundness, in reality narrowed the great classic tradition of the Reformed Faith as represented in the writings of Bavinck and Kuyper, of Warfield and Vos. His *Systematic Theology* is the crystallization, condensation, and reproduction in his own original way of the best he had imbibed from such master minds in Reformed Theology as these. The vagaries of Premillennialism had no fascination for him. Thoroughly committed to the particularism of the Reformed Faith, he had a no less deep appreciation of the significance of God’s common grace. He has been a lifelong champion of the cause of Christian education, primary, secondary, and higher. He has raised his voice to plead for Christian social action in the industrial sphere. In standpoint, outlook, and vision he is a true spiritual son of John Calvin.

May his wholesome influence continue and may his years of retirement be productive of much fruit for the Reformed Faith. Meanwhile the commencement address, originally scheduled to be delivered at the 1944 graduation exercises of Calvin College

and Seminary, and run in this and the previous issues of THE CALVIN FORUM, may well stand as an appropriate academic swan song from his virile mind and facile pen.

C. B.

A Forward Move for Christian Schools

THE cause of free, parent-owned and parent-controlled Christian schools is going forward. Many people confuse these schools with parochial schools. Parochial schools are church-owned and church-controlled schools. Such schools the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans have. The Christian School movement, as it is usually called, though it draws its inspiration and moral support largely from people of Reformed and Christian Reformed church affiliations, is an independent movement. Parents band together voluntarily and organize themselves into an association, which in turn elects the Board of the school. This movement has a national office in Chicago, the office of the National Union of Christian Schools. Although the momentum and enthusiasm for the movement comes chiefly from Christian Reformed and Reformed homes, churches, and groups, there are Christian people of the most varied denominational affiliation sending their children to these schools. The desire for a positive Christian training, based upon the Word of God, is growing in the mind of many Christian parents, especially in the cities, where the public school system is becoming increasingly secularized. Christian grade and high schools of this type are springing up in various parts of the country.

One of the real problems of such an independent Christian school system is, of course, finances. Teaching is a white collar job, and everyone knows that the white collar jobs are underpaid. However, teachers in these Christian schools do not first of all look at financial returns. They know they are molding lives, building immortal souls for eternity. Their compensations are not first of all financial but spiritual. Nevertheless they are entitled to a decent salary. And, to the credit of the promoters and supporters of the cause of Christian Schools it must be said that a real effort is made to bring these salaries up to par. There is one other urgent need, a need that must be supplied in the near future if the cause of Christian schools is to be placed on a firmer footing. That is the need for a moderate pension for retired and disabled teachers. It is tragic to have these workers in the Kingdom—for that is precisely what they are—put in their whole life and then to let them spend their old age in penury and want. This must not be. Their salaries already are too modest to allow for heavy insurance. They are entitled to a pension. Social security makes provision for such pensions in practically every trade, industry, and profession. The Christian School movement must take the next

step. Plans are being made, we understand, by which a contingency fund of \$25,000 is to be created in the near future, this amount to serve as the basis and beginning of a Christian School Pension Trust Fund. All this is done under the auspices of the National Union of Christian Schools, but the actual campaign is undertaken as a labor of love by a few business men. THE CALVIN FORUM, which is very sparing in making financial appeals to its readers, feels thoroughly justified in presenting this noble cause to the attention of all lovers of a genuinely Christian, God-centered, and Bible-based education for the rising generation.

We will not let down our Christian school teachers in this matter.

A generous response when the appeal comes to you will do much to strengthen the morale of those engaged in this noble cause of Christian education.

Money is still the acid test of our convictions.

C. B.

Blossom Time in California

In spite of a schedule of summer teaching in response to the call of the government to accelerate our course at Calvin Seminary, we had the unusual privilege and pleasure of spending some four weeks this summer in California. California is the state of luxurious vegetation. What will not grow in California! Crack-pot economic schemes, fanatic religious sects and cults—these flourish in California as nowhere else. But it is also blossom time for the Gospel and for the Reformed Faith in California.

We found it so.

It was our privilege to speak in various churches and at no less than three distinct Youth and Bible Conferences.

We found it blossom time for the Reformed Faith.

Churches and Christian schools are flourishing.

In one place both a Christian grammar and a Christian high school came into existence in less than ten years.

If it be true that there is much fanaticism and sectarianism in this great state, there is also a remarkable enthusiasm and exuberent faith in the hearts of those who are really Christ's.

The Bible Conferences serve a fine purpose of binding the Christian people of the churches together in a bond of unique fellowship. In Northern California, at Mount Hermon, the families of four churches enjoy a week of vacation in the mountains in which every day is hallowed with Christian song and Gospel messages. It is a wonderful way of practicing the communion of saints. As a fine by-product there is the social intercourse in which young people may find their temporary and permanent friendships among those of the same faith.

In Southern California the number of Calvinists is larger and even greater things can be undertaken.

And they are. In addition to the usual young people's Bible Conference, this year an entirely new venture was made in the organizing of a four-day conference in a large tent on the spacious grounds of the Christian school. There was deep interest. The people responded to the messages.

The Calvinistic people in California have ideals and ambitions.

They are looking forward to doing great things with and for God.

May churches, schools, and Bible conferences flourish among them.

It is blossom time in California.

C. B.

The Dawning Liberation of the Netherlands

FINALLY the Allies are on Dutch soil. The day for which this sorely pressed but courageous people have been longing ever since that tragic day of May 10, 1940, has finally dawned. How many prayers have been sent up in their behalf throughout the world. How their own souls have agonized in struggle, prayer, and persecution looking to the Lord for deliverance. Finally, after four years and four months the light is beginning to break through. To be sure, the fighting is still bitter. At the present writing reports of the British airborne troops near Arnhem are far from rosy. But, with the help of God, the Allies have made Holland and from there they will push on, however hard and tough the going to Berlin may be. Holland still may have to pass through deep shadows. Her losses will become even greater than they are today. But there is a great underground army of determined and righteously indignant men and women who know the day of their complete deliverance cannot be far off.

After all the suffering and bloodshed, after all the cruelty and inhumanity of the enemy, after all the treachery and deceit, after all the heartaches and the losses, the Lord God, the Almighty, who reigneth, brings forth light out of darkness, gain out of loss, life out of death! With deep gratitude to all those of Dutch blood, wherever they may find themselves in this distraught age and war-racked world, will greet the day of the complete liberation of brave little Holland. Even the socialists will shout themselves hoarse when the Queen again sets foot upon the soil of the Fatherland.

Holland has again shown itself a great people. With a loyalty and tenacity which has not seen its equal possibly even in Norway, this people stood its ground when the enemy would destroy its soul. We—many of us of Dutch blood—who have lived these years beneath the shelter and security of the Stars and Stripes, have often marveled at the courage, the indomitable perseverance, the heroism of Holland's people. We have thanked God for the faith of the Christian people of Holland. Our hearts

have rejoiced to hear of the deepening of the faith of these people of God when cast into the crucible of suffering and anguish. We firmly believe that out of this welter of misery and pain God in his good providence will bring forth a purified people, deepened in their devotion to Him, to their church, and to their land.

What has filled us repeatedly these trying years with wonder and silent amazement when listening to voices from Holland is the supremacy of the spiritual note. The Dutch clergy have shown a glorious faith. They knew what was at stake. They wrestled for the soul of the people. In the midst of physical suffering and impoverishment they agonized over the spiritual treasures: freedom to worship God, loyalty to the Gospel of Christ, the need for humiliation, the call not to self-pity but to self-examination and penitence. The voice of the Church has not been silenced—could not be silenced by the Nazi invader. Even when Hitler's swastika was unfurled over Holland, not Hitler or his henchmen, but the Lord Jesus Christ was King of His Church and ruled in the hearts of His people in Holland.

May God, who kept Holland, make her great again in all that makes a nation great when once her liberation has been completed!

C. B.

Dispensationalism and Premillennialism

AN ECCLESIASTICAL deliverance of a Presbyterian or Reformed Church in the matter of Dispensationalism and Premillennialism is not an everyday occurrence. In May of this year such a deliverance was handed down by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S., better known as the Southern Presbyterian Church. The question which had been raised assumed the following precise form: "Is the type of Bible interpretation known as Dispensationalism in harmony with the Confession of Faith?"

The Ad Interim Committee on Changes in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms rendered its report, which, with a slight amendment was adopted. Here is the position of the Report, which has now become the official interpretative statement of the General Assembly on the issue in question. "It is the unanimous opinion of your Committee that Dispensationalism as defined and set forth above is out of accord with the system of doctrine set forth in the Confession of Faith, not primarily or simply in the field of eschatology, but because it attacks the very heart of the theology of our Church, which is unquestionably a theology of the Covenant of Grace. As Dr. Chafer clearly recognizes, there are two schools of interpretation represented here, which he rightly designates as "Covenantism" as over against "Dispensationalism."

(*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 100, No. 399, p. 338). In fact, the divergence of Dispensationalism from the Covenant Theology of our Church is so obvious to Dr. Chafer that he suggests a revision of the standards of the Church so as to make room for those who no longer hold to the Reformed tradition of a Covenant Theology. (*Ibid.*, p. 345)."

After explaining that this Report, if adopted by the General Assembly (as it subsequently was), is not to be taken as a substitute for or amendment to the Constitution nor as an amendment to the ordination vows of office bearers, the Committee adds the following statement of clarification: "Most, if not all, adherents of the type of Dispensationalism dealt with in this report hold the Premillennial view of our Lord's return; but not all Premillennialists accept this form of Dispensationalism. Therefore, the Committee wishes to make it clear that it has endeavored solely to consider the particular type of biblical interpretation defined above, and known as Dispensationalism and that it understood the assignment of the Assembly to limit it to this task. In view of this fact, this report should not be considered as in any sense a criticism of Premillennialism as such."

We may possibly be permitted to make a few observations suggested by this decision of the Southern Presbyterian General Assembly.

1. It is gratifying to note in this deliverance the emphasis on the significance and value of a theology that shall be grounded in the Covenant of Grace. May the consciousness of this covenantal theology be deepened and enriched in American Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.

2. The distinction between Dispensationalism and Premillennialism, the former of which alone is declared to be in conflict with the (Westminster) Confession of Faith, will undoubtedly play a greater role in forthcoming discussions on this subject. In this connection it may not be amiss to state how unfounded is the judgment sometimes heard in Premillennial circles that the Christian Reformed Church by its doctrinal deliverances in the *Bultema-Maranatha* case at its 1918 Synod condemned anyone believing in the premillennial coming of our Lord. The fact is that the position repudiated was the denial of the present Kingship of Christ over His Church and the denial of the continuity of the Old and the New Testament dispensations of the Church.

3. Possibly the best exposition of the difference between the biblical interpretation of Dispensationalism on the one hand and of the Reformed Faith on the other is found in Dr. Oswald T. Allis' address on "Present-Day Interpretations of the Word of God" delivered at the Second American Calvinistic Conference and published in *The Word of God and the Reformed Faith* (Baker's Book Store, Grand Rapids, Mich. \$1.)

4. Recognizing the validity of the distinction on this score between Dispensationalism and Premillennialism, we submit that the question where the line between the two is to be drawn, and the further question whether the latter fits in with the genius of the Reformed Theology, can (and probably will) serve as a basis for fruitful further discussion.

C. B.

Let Us Have More Calvinistic Conferences

THE need for the deepening and clarification of our God-centered Faith is a constant one. We rejoice that the glory and the power of Calvinism is increasingly being recognized and enjoyed by many. We must become enthusiastic proponents of our Faith. Those who are babes in Christ should grow in the knowledge, experience, and daily practice of this Faith. We must preach and live a full-orbed, God-centered, all-inclusive Christianity. This calls for diligent study, constant enthusiastic propaganda, and a prayerful devotion.

As a direct result of the recently held Jackson Regional Calvinistic Conference, the Presbytery of Central Mississippi requested the Program Committee of the Mountain Retreat Association to arrange a series of programs on the subject of Calvinism during the Summer Conferences. Another direct result of the inspiration of the Jackson Conference, we are told, has been the appointment of one of the ministers of the Southern Presbyterian Synod of Mississippi to speak on "The Reformed Principles of Worship."

Recently we have also received word of a representative Calvinistic Conference held in Bloemfontein, South Africa. This conference (which the Afrikaanders call a "Kongres") was a merger of two existing organizations, the one known as the Calvinistic Alliance ("Bond"), and the other the Calvinistic Study Group ("Studiekring"). This merger is an indication of the desire of all Calvinistic groups in South Africa to stand shoulder to shoulder in order to accomplish greater things by united effort. The united organization plans to hold conferences and to publish Calvinistic literature. It is heartening to notice a deep and growing interest in Calvinism in more than one of the Reformed groups in South Africa. The membership in the new association is from various church groups.

The latest interest in a possible regional Calvinistic Conference has become manifest in California. Inspired by the report of the Jackson Conference and the enthusiastic response on the part of the Mississippi Calvinists to this undertaking, a number of friends in California called a preliminary meeting of men representative of various church groups who would be interested in such a Conference. The response has been fine so far and plans

for the Conference will be going forward. It was the editor's privilege to be present as adviser at one such committee meeting this summer. It is encouraging to note that also in this case various denominational groups are banding together in this venture.

In these days, when every group makes propaganda for that in which it believes, shall we not speak forth of the great things of God to a world that needs Him more sorely than anything else?

May every obstacle be overcome and our testimony be heard to the glory of God!

C. B.

Roosevelt and Dewey

WE FIND it difficult to get excited about this presidential campaign. The usual bla-bla to which we are wont to be treated every four years sounds more inane this year than ever before. I presume it is rank heresy, but the present writer sees absolutely no sense in the current political campaign and could wish we had something comparable to the British system, under which all national elections are dispensed with for the duration of the war. But under the American system we will have to go through this useless ordeal even in these critical and trying days.

The greatest danger to which we are exposed by this coming campaign is that we shall take our eye off the ball and forget that we are still in the midst of a gigantic undertaking of war-and-peace-making in which the highest interests of ourselves and of the liberty-loving nations of the world are at

stake. The greatest danger to which we expose ourselves by calling into action passions of animosity and bitterness in our own fold is the danger of defacing ourselves. Quentin Reynolds in his *The Curtain Rises* makes the pertinent observation: "You read the most senseless, absurd speeches by some of our duly elected members of Congress, and you shudder and wonder why they don't inform themselves about conditions before they spout at great length and always within the framework of their preconceived political convictions. When you return you are laboring under the apparently absurd delusion that we are at war with Japan and Germany. Reading some newspapers, you might be pardoned for thinking that we are at war with Britain and with the President of the United States."

The personal hatred of some people for the present incumbent of the White House borders on the psychopathic. But in these days of Nazi ideology and Nazi technique we not only become familiar with the psychopathic but also realize perhaps better than ever before how tenuous the line of demarcation really is between the psychopathic and the demonic. And let us not forget that also the great Lincoln knew what it meant to be hated by the very people to whom he dedicated the best that he had.

To me it seems consummate folly to give ourselves a blow in the face and boost the morale of a cunning and diabolical enemy who is far from defeated (whether in war or peace) by repudiating the leadership of a wise and masterful pilot who has guided the ship of state through the turbulent waters of world war and international upheaval and commit the rudder to the pathetically inexperienced hands of his opponent.

C. B.



Calvinistic Training in a Disillusioned World

Louis Berkhof

President Emeritus Calvin Seminary

[This is the second and concluding instalment of Professor Berkhof's Commencement Address. The first part appeared in the August-September issue.—EDITOR.]

THERE is another line of thought that found considerable favor during the last hundred years, which is also receiving a terrible jolt as a result of this global war, in which practically all the nations of the world are involved, and which threatens the whole civilization of the past. It is the line of thought suggested by the philosophy of evolution applied to the history of the progress of the human race, and then not only to its material, but also to its moral and spiritual development.

Advancement of the Human Race

Our interest at present centers particularly in the notion that by a perfectly natural process, that is, without the operation of any supernatural factor, mankind is slowly but surely scaling the heights of moral and spiritual perfection. This is not to be understood as a process in which man is purely passive, but one in which he is active, and in which the relative speed of the progress will depend on his activity. Bearing in mind that man descended from some now extinct species of the anthropoid apes, originally dwelt in the forests, moved about on all fours, and had arboreal habits, he has already come a long way, and has by a purely natural process made wonderful advancement. But this might have been greater if man, after reaching the stage of a self-conscious and responsible being, had made greater efforts to help the evolutionary process along. Rauschenbusch says that, if man had been more alert in that respect, he would even now be talking on a level with angels.

But even as it is, civilized man left the animal stage far behind him, and changed from a barbarian to a highly respectable human being, with great intellectual power, with a keen sense of moral responsibility, and even with deeply religious feelings and aspirations. And he is still on the upward march, improving as the years go by. Just now he is breaking away from the individualism that characterized him in the past, and is developing into a truly social being. He is now gaining a greater consciousness of mutual duties and responsibilities, and an ardent longing for the establishment of a

universal brotherhood, which might be called the Kingdom of God. The new community of his hopes is a brotherhood knit together by the bonds of love and motivated by love in all its activities, a kingdom founded on righteousness and enjoying the blessings of a permanent peace. The development of this kingdom on earth is the grand ideal, at once the solemn duty and the high privilege of man. According to many it is the only salvation in store for the children of men. We are told repeatedly that we must get away from the other-worldly religion of the past, and should make it entirely a matter of the present world. The opinion is widely prevalent that it is not only possible for men to establish such a kingdom on earth, but that the plans for it are already being perfected, and that the ideal is practically within the grasp of man and will soon be realized. John Addington Symonds sings of that glorious future in these inspiring words:

"These things shall be! A loftier race
Then e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls,
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire, and sea, and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould
And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song
When all the earth is paradise.

These things—they are no dreams—shall be
For happier men when we are gone;
These golden days for them shall dawn,
Transcending ought we gaze upon."

Vain Optimism

Can men keep these optimistic hopes alive in these trying days? Have they not vanished like a mirage in the desert? Do not many questions such as these arise in the hearts of disillusioned men: Is it true that modern man has left barbarism far

behind? Does the history of the human race really warrant the notion that men in general have grown better morally, and even religiously? Are the men of this generation more righteous, more charitable, and more brotherly than those of previous generations; and are all their actions controlled by the motive of love? Does not this war give evidence of something quite different from the approaching brotherhood of men and nations? And if the only salvation men can expect is that enjoyed in a kingdom of God established on earth by the hand of man, is not this salvation still far distant, and can the present generation ever hope to enjoy it? Does the history of the past really justify the expectation that man will ever be able to realize these fond hopes?

All such questions as these testify to a disappointment and a disillusionment which the Calvinist does not share. He does not regard man as a creature that is gradually rising to ever higher moral and spiritual levels by a perfectly natural process, but as a fallen being that can be raised from the depths of sin only by the supernatural and saving grace of God. He knows that apart from this grace there may be ever increasing prosperity, great intellectual achievements, much external culture and respectability, and even an imposing manifestation of normal religion and will-worship; but he is also painfully aware of the fact that, in spite of all this, the internal corruption of the human heart remains, and that there is a gradually developing kingdom of evil, controlled by the spirit of Antichrist. This kingdom, he feels, is bound to reveal itself in every domain of life in an ever increasing measure, and in occasional outbursts of tremendous wickedness; and will at last come to a head in the appearance of the man of sin. He does not look for a universal brotherhood of men on this earth, nor does he expect man to establish the Kingdom of God, since this is the prerogative of God. For him that Kingdom is on the one hand a present spiritual reality, of which he is even now a citizen, and in which he is already sure of ultimate perfect salvation; but on the other hand also, a future hope to be realized only at the return of Jesus Christ, when heaven and earth will pass away, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth, the habitat of a kingdom of righteousness and peace. According to Isaiah the much wished-for change in the life of men can only result from the operation of the poured-out Spirit of God. When that Spirit works, "then justice shall dwell in the wilderness; and righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever." Isa. 32: 16, 17.

Disappointed with the Social Gospel

Finally, I would briefly call your attention to one more doctrine, which has become very popular dur-

ing the last fifty years, and which is apt to lead to many embarrassing questions and to engender a feeling of frustration in many a heart. I refer to the doctrine of the social gospel as the one gospel that points out the real way for the speedy and effective establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The underlying supposition of it is that man has it in his power to establish the Kingdom, especially under the inspiring example of the one perfect man, Jesus Christ. Its fundamental position is that the preachers should not spend their precious time in trying to snatch a few firebrands from the burning, but should bend all their efforts to extinguish the fire. The individual gospel may have some value, but is too slow in its workings and does not have any appreciable effect on the social organism. Hence the ministers of the gospel should use all the means at their command to change the social organism, the environment in which men live and move from day to day. Men cannot be good in an evil environment, nor can they be evil in a good environment. If just social relations are established in the various spheres of the social organism, men will naturally turn to the right like ducks take to the water. All this means that society must be changed before the individuals constituting it can be changed.

And which are the means suggested by the social gospel for the reformation of society and the renewal of the world? Not the gospel of redemption through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. This is entirely antiquated. Not the gospel of the renewing grace of God through the operation of the Holy Spirit, for man does not really stand in need of supernatural renewal, but only of better instruction, proper guidance, and helpful suggestions. Man must be taught to love his fellow-men, to value right relations in every domain of life, and to appreciate the good life. He must be made to share the blessings of education in a greater measure, and should be trained especially for good citizenship. His living conditions must be improved by social reforms, and he must be given ample time for recreation. In short, education, civilization, the promulgation of good laws, and all kinds of social improvements, are the recommended means for the betterment of society and the salvation of man.

This social gospel, including the means it employed, was lauded as the most speedy and the most effective remedy for the ills of the world, and was enthusiastically preached both in the home churches and on the mission fields. One of its ardent advocates once said that, when he visited the East Side in New York, and saw the houses in which the people lived, the filthy surroundings in which they moved from day to day, the ragged clothes of the children, and the dirty streets in which they played,—he then realized that to change these people required something stronger than John Calvin's irresistible grace. That stronger remedy he found in the social gospel.

That gospel has now been preached for over half a century, and its votaries already claimed for it on more than one occasion wonderful results in the re-making of the world. But now the disturbing thing is that in those same fifty years, and in fact within the life-time of a single generation, the world has been afflicted with two such terrible wars as it has never known before, the second one of these being far worse than the first. Is it any wonder that many of those who pinned their hopes on the social gospel, are disappointed and troubled and confused? Need it surprise any one that they are now asking: Was not the boasted improvement of the world purely illusory? Did the social gospel and the cures it recommended really go down to the root of the trouble? Did it not merely cover the imperfections and evils of the social structure with a thin veneer of respectability, barely covering the festering sores, and leaving the inner putrefaction untouched? Has it given a correct and complete diagnosis of the diseases of the social organism? Can the ills of life really be cured by patent medicines and external applications, or does this call for something far more penetrating and specific? And if no perceptible headway has yet been made in the improvement of the world, but things seem to be getting worse, and this is the only way in which the lives of individuals can be renewed, how long will it be before men are really raised to higher levels of moral and spiritual life?

Calvinistic Realism

And here again we say that the Calvinist need not be troubled by such questions, since his conception of the ills of the world and of their cure is far more profound. He knows that sin is at the bottom of all the misery of life, that not man, but

only God, can provide a cure for this, and that He offers this cure to individual sinners in the gospel of redeeming grace, in an individual redemption through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing operation of the Holy Spirit. He stands strong in the conviction that God does not seek to change the world, in order to effect the redemption of individuals; but that He calls individual sinners out of the world, in order that they may serve Him in extending their beneficent influence to the environment in which they live. He does not believe that God intends to change the world completely into a Kingdom of God in this dispensation, but rather expects that wickedness will increase and will reach its highest development at the end of the present age. Moreover, he is firmly convinced that in the work of redemption God does not work from the periphery to the center, but from the center to the periphery. The heart of man must be changed, and it is only in the measure in which this is effected that the world will be changed. Thank God, some Modernists are even now calling for a return to the individual gospel, a gospel which also has social implications.

Clad in the armour of Calvinism, our graduates will be kept from the major disillusionments of life, which are now disturbing so many. They will not be tempted to say that Christianity failed, just because it did not do what it was never intended to do. They will have abundant reasons to thank God for their blessed heritage, if they but cling to it with all their hearts. May they as true soldiers of Jesus Christ, and in obedience to Him who is the captain of their salvation, fight the battles of the Lord. And may they follow the banner of the cross wherever it leads, praise God for His wonderful work of redemption, and testify with grateful hearts to His redeeming grace in Jesus Christ.

October Afternoon

The haymaker is hiding . . .

Millions of little streams are falling,
Streams of melting gray we call rain,
Dancing on tin roofs like fairies,
Then, as wedded together,
Away they dance hurriedly
Down the eavestrough.

The trees stand naked,
Stripped of all their beauty,
Save for two lone leaves
Of which one is now losing
Its hold and swirls slowly downward.
Hanging helplessly on its withered finger,
The last leaf too yields to the October wind.

Those trees . . .

Which a week or three ago
Wore gold stitched with ruby.
The rude autumn-winds
Tore their garments to shreds . . .
Once mellow-green,
Then golden-red . . .
And here they stand, stripped, shivering!
Fearing the cold new-comer . . .
Mourning the death of summer.

* * * * *

From a chimney blue clouds slowly wander
And my thoughts too wander
And ponder
On my approaching October.

—ALBERT PIERSMA

Letters from New Guinea

Henry Zylstra

May 4, 1944

How vividly and intensely you are present to my mind during these days at sea . . . I have a kind of heightened sensation, a ferment of thought and feeling. Two things bring it on: the magnitude of this big affair, and the vagueness and indefiniteness of it. I want to be spared for time and opportunity to make it all articulate. This is not the time or place to write well of it. The days are long. I wish some old friend were with me. It would ease the weight of the significance. Your realistic imagination can guess what this life is. Like we anticipated. But living it is nevertheless a crisis. It brings me face to face with the elemental realities. I am confident in my spirit of God's leading, that He has command of me. I would like to know the purpose clearly (not that I doubt) but because the vagueness hurts my poise. They are His appointed trials, though, and I will take them on His own terms . . .

May 9, 1944

I do not have that sense of a scattered personality usual to travel. The old steady interests and values continue. The bigness impresses me. The bigness of the physical and moral worlds. That and the puerility of the Army, the pettiness of the average man. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." The important things about this trip are satisfactory. There is great discomfort. God bless you.

May 22, 1944

I am in New Guinea. There has been no opportunity to write before this. We have had a long hard time and will have more. By the grace of God our ship came safely to port, and by His grace I still have plenty of heart for the job. This is no place for a frail body or a dainty stomach. Nor for the soft-hearted. Our circumstances are at the moment elementally makeshift. Living is very uncomfortable; quite possible, though. Nothing is clear in the confusion of these first days. I shall fight for health and life all day, almost full time work. I was going to write frankly. This is certainly the hour of sacrifice. Tell my colleagues, living in comfort, and my weak contemporaries that this is so. That they can never pay for it. Good will be born from this, if I am individually spared . . .

May 23, 1944

I am sorry that I could not write daily on the vessel, for my life then stimulated an excitement

of mind which made me want to write. However, writing even for myself was physically awkward. Excitement of mind I have had—enough to leave me almost tired . . . The days have been significant, full of fecundating stimuli, pleasant and often unpleasant. O for a desk and privacy rather than my knee by candlelight! I could make some speaking thing out of this new matter. I am glad my mind has been active. It is because of mental inactivity, the deliberately cultivated emptiness of mind which the army breeds, that military men fall on cards and dice and use the language of affected Dead End kids . . . I am gradually making myself more comfortable and look for substantial improvement. My natural milieu is not unlike *Green Mansions*, but there is a realistic as well as a romantic side to tropical life and jungle areas. The coconut tree is picturesque, the cassowary has a crude call, the lizard is a slithery thing . . .

May 24, 1944

I have finally found a place where I can write you a longer letter . . . This day, that is, the weather, was uncommonly pleasant compared with all previous ones. There was sunshine instead of rain. A man next to me is reading "to-day's" *Detroit Times* avidly. It is dated March 17. It got here quick at that, he says . . . It is pleasant to see that a group of men can be admirably resourceful in making a spot livable against bad odds. The more clever and industrious soon appear. My own tent-mates are of the middle kind. I wish they were eight go-getters. Living at such close intimacy is a delicate matter and needs tact . . . The common man thinks he is realistic and he is always skirting around the truth of his extremely evasive moral self. How kiddish many of these men are, even the older ones. With tattooed chests, their manliness is skin deep. They punctuate their silly childish outbursts, their raw elemental expressiveness with a "hell of a this" and a "damn that" to show that they are "he-men." Most of them have an ethical religion, with a very broad notion of ethics. There is no grace in it, no notion of ingenerate quiet, no sense of a right or wrong juridical relationship with God, no need for worship: hence all very sentimental . . .

May 25, 1944

Except for setting and a general primitiveness my life these days is not unlike at my last two stations. It is as I had anticipated and is only a prelude to the real purpose which is I know not how

far in the offing . . . I shall have to educate you and Tukie to a life in the rough, to wood and water and makeshift comforts. Burroughs and Grayson and Thoreau will have nothing on me. I really weather these slings and arrows of an outrageous nature unusually well. For this I am grateful to rugged origins. Existence is almost full time work here. I want most now slightly better conditions. Keep for me a clean towel, sheet, shorts, and socks, a clean basin, and I will love you hard and deep forever. Do not be anxious . . .

May 26, 1944

. . . Do not jeopardize my life with fears, anxieties, and bootless cries, desiring this man's scope and that man's place. Character only dignifies us, and the rest is only instrumental to it. Failure in ourselves commits us to another war, as past failure commits us to this. Wars are chastisements and must beget remorse and amendment. That is the good they can do. Let's not lose that good . . .

May 27, 1944

I have rigged up a kind of table here in my tent and it makes writing easier. I begin this before supper, having just completed a disagreeable fatigue detail. I have shaved and washed. We are having white grapes tonight. I nibble at coconut during the day. I had a chance to dry some things this afternoon . . . I long to graduate from the vagueness of the replacement status. I want to do a job. I cannot at my age and with my equipment merely exist. I will feel demoralization setting in if this goes on . . .

May 28, 1944

By some ironic contrast, I was thinking just now, after supper, of our Harvard experience . . . This writing by candlelight at an improvised desk near my own cot is pleasant. The group has gone to see a picture: I appreciate this solitude. I continue to wish that I could be alone more. I do not believe that under these circumstances introspection, and even introversion, is unwholesome . . . Sometime I shall explore: for coral figures, the chambered nautilus and other shells. And I mean to see what we foreigners call natives. There too the squalor and privation will probably outweigh the tourist-folder charm. But they probably will be more fully human than the soldiers. Have I ever told you how a routine job is done in the Army? Something needs doing: an area cleaned of rubbish, a latrine dug, a supply tent put up. Such work is called a "fatigue detail." Some twenty men are haphazardly designated at this detail, put "in charge" of a non-com. You take off for the job. By the time you get there, four or five of them have "goofed off." Others glide away in process. A few are urbanites, used to pavements and ledgers. They try, complain about the tools, the place, the weather, and move no dirt. Two or three, rough bred, unobtru-

sive, have the steady swing, the long stroke. They do the work. These three might better have been selected in the first place. The other seventeen might better have been left at home. An old Army man is useless. The oldest I know—he knows all the modes of evasion—arrived late today. Tugged a moment at a rope. Goofed off. Came back, and grabbed a tarpaulin. The rotten thing tore. He got disgusted and left in a huff. I hear his dice now striking a crap board. He is the typical Army product. Only those men are any good in the military who were lately civilians, and they are good only in so far as they have resisted the military way; if something of the old go-getter is still there, the old love of thorough work, the old enthusiasm and resourcefulness. They do the work. I know now that I shall, if I can, oppose all propaganda for a large standing Army. A good Army is a citizen Army; a bad one is a military one. But there will, of course, be much maneuvering after the war, for there are a lot of merely physical bodies, dull heads, who want the front, the dress uniform, the balls, and the power of force which peace time army men have. Such boys must all be taken care of, and will be. And all their puppets, the G.I. Joes, who "bitch" now, will then "gold brick" in their factories, argue wages and hours, figure everybody owes them a living because of what they "went through," live mechanically as they were taught in the Army, and play at cards and dice. How puerile, how downright childish men are. Always at cross purposes with their loose and meaningless selves, they still flare up when at some unguessable sensitive point, they decide to be tough. They are very naive, very amusing, and very petty. There must be exceptions, but they are not the evident ones, they are not typical . . .

May 29, 1944

It may be that I shall learn to go to bed earlier from my Army life. Our candles are limited, there are mosquitoes, and under cover on my cot is a good place to be after dark. I'm so used to leggings that I shall want them to trudge to school with after the war. They are an excellent all around protection against rain, mud, and creeping things with legs . . . I was to have done some postal work today but it seems to have fallen through. Well, I can always boil fatigues by the stream's edge . . .

May 30, 1944

There has been some routine work around here lately. Evenings have been mine, but I have not yet been able to get to books or magazines, and candle rationing has set in. I save the wax, melt it with a piece of rope in a peanut can and use it again. The bags of mail reported waiting have not yet reached us. It is well over a month now that I have heard from you. I get no war news, have heard nothing of actions since I reached this place . . . My shipboard tan is giving way to the ugly

atabrine yellow. The men know the new currency values now and play dice without hesitancy again . . .

June 1, 1944

If my handwriting is a bit irregular this morning it is because I am back to my knee again. I changed location slightly, having just made the last one habitable. Here, though, I have a better floor, better lavatory, and expect today to get it into line with the last . . . My main peeve here is the mud, the rain, the mud, and the incessant need for washing clothes. It's always bricks without straw. One must find the nails and knock them in with a stone . . . I see enough for volumes of gall, but have the lucky detachment called humor. This means there is still pride in me. There should be. I'm very probably the most highly educated man in New Guinea.

June 2, 1944

June 1 was for me a vexatious day because of a local tussle with an authority: he had the Nazi mind that loves "duty by directive" and regimentation, and I thought what hope against such typical obtuseness. Then at 6 P.M. it became a gala day: your many dear letters from 26 April through 16 May, sent to the old address, came. This note is simply an acknowledgment; I shall read and re-read, try soon to give you a long one in return . . . Your letters are all I have, for the old stupidity goes on.

June 3, 1944

I am at a Red Cross institution, rough-hewn but comfortable. Your many fine letters inspired me to make a writing desk, my second—the other stayed behind. But I wanted even better than that tonight, and here I have chair, table, and light. You wrote of a change in me, of experiences you are not sharing and are never to fathom. Yes, there will be disturbing changes. But love is not love which alters when it alteration finds . . . At bottom I am not different here. A bay is a bay anywhere, and trees are trees, and roughing it is something I can endure. I am educated, you know, and although I am often wrought up, and anxious, and much shaken, I regain the poise. Yes, in this there is a religious element. Especially on shipboard you know full well that precaution, and many men are not enough, and I was able sometimes then simply to relax in a kind of surrender to God's leading. Providence is not a fiction. Here I want to be careful not to boast of an unreal serenity—for I have had Gethsemane's then and again. I have hard times. And certainly His people must acknowledge Him and give Him way or there is no praise, no worship, no glorification . . . Milton's sonnet on his blindness struck me with force on the sea and since. So passionate and self-denying in his endeavor to have God's will done "on earth" as well as in heaven, he is so sure in that sonnet that overagainst

the grandeur of the Divine sovereign his own role should be one of relaxation. His understandable arrogance here wholly gives way to the Christian humility. It is a beautiful thing. I sometimes have an overweening, illegitimate anxiety to be greatly useful. Now that I simply cannot in these days, weeks, months perhaps, I should not fret too much. For this uselessness in view of the sacrifice of the situation chafes me most and wears me down at times. My attempts to escape it are almost pathetic. I must wait with calm and indifference, with something of the fat apathy of the typical soldier . . .

June 4, 1944

There has been some activity about my function; it is favorable, definitely, and appropriate. Its importance I do not yet know and its nature I cannot state . . . Among the officers I have met there are some gentlemen who know the inequality of sacrifice among the military men, and are not so bar-conscious or directive-ridden as to ignore the qualifications of the enlisted man. There are some who go the extra mile, trudge about in the rain with you, because they are interested. And there are others who already have the regimentation, the artificiality of a tradition-laden military convention in their marrow . . .

June 6, 1944

Sunday evening, at the Red Cross retreat, I began a letter to you and then became interested in negro spirituals. These colored men proved better than their white audience; I was affected by their modesty and feeling. A disagreeable detail had extended well into Sunday and I did not finish the letter. Yesterday was my most interesting day yet, going about in the matter of my function. I do not know what it is to be: I am satisfied, definitely, by the trend . . . I have met the intelligentsia of this spot: Russ, an editor and teacher of social science; his assistant, John, probably continental refugee, author of books, on social labor problems; another John, Ph.D. Columbia, teacher of social sciences; author of a successful textbook in government. Good fellows, working clerically, without stripes even. Doing a job, though, and making a life of it because they must . . . Tell Tuke there is here at my tent a little black kitten, and near it a dog who fetches coconuts out of the water, one ageless old rooster, a baby kangaroo with forepaws soft as her fingers, and a resplendent ring-necked parrot.

June 7, 1944

I am not doing anything today and I have a good place to do it in. I imagine that Americans generally are excited today. I have seen a bulletin announcing the fall of Rome and the invasion of France. There was no detail. It is a big event. I long for swift aggressive prosecution of the war, I together with the other eleven million. And hope

earnestly for success in the huge European war. Coming here does make the implications of war vivid. The overwhelming distances are something only travel among them can bring home . . . How the little taken-for-granted things back home seem all important: a decent cup of coffee, an egg, a bit of butter, sunshine, paved walks, opportunity to buy, a glass of water, a hot shower. Little things, aren't they, and yet, if you do not have them, they are worth fighting wars for . . .

June 8, 1944

I am useful today. Strange news, is it not, from me in the Army? I am grateful for respite from shovel and broom, and hence do not mind lingering on. It is uncommonly wet today, and saying that here can make you guess why I mentioned sunshine among the things to return to, worth fighting for . . . Circumstances are dead against anything like creative reading or writing just now. I am terribly jealous of time. All the old scholars, the Chaucer's, Sydney's, Milton's, were soldiers somewhere along their career, but o how grandly, compared with these innumerable multitudes of men and technical buncombe. I observe there is no dearth of good men. I see many excellent men doing lamentably picayune work. Often there is no other kind of thing that needs doing. There are so many imponderables that the Army must reckon with. It is when you see inferior men in a responsible seat that you grieve to your soul . . .

June 11, 1944

I used to write you that Army activities reminded me of a game at which boys play, and in the best Latin sense of the word, I called it puerile. This impression continues here. The sham-work, I mean, and much more I do not care just now to particularize . . . I see some Aussies, swank and carefree in their English-bred worldly-wisdom. They are hard, weather-stripped, nobody's fools, rakish in their jaunty big hats and pyjama-like pants. I think the Americans amuse them, for the Americans are not modest . . . Metropolitan men dominate the temper of Army groups, not the country boys. The city is brash, the country timid . . . We are starved for invasion news—distribution of bulletins is very poor.

June 13, 1944

There is no constructive challenge in work here at the moment. I hope this will change, but the more I see of the job, the organization, and the

men, the more I feel that my hardest task will be to keep peace with myself. This will change if I become serviceably useful, but most men have not that feeling; the situation is greatly against it. Many men simply serve an availability role most of the time: thence the psychological problem . . . A chance to contribute may come; it may not. Even Army "big-shots" often get no chance to score. They can move only in a well-grooved curricula; such is the conduct of Army business . . .

June 15, 1944

There are men enough of caliber enough in the place I am working to teach a full-fledged college . . . I have learned a lot about the Army in the past week, regret the necessity for such a blunting, dulling routine as its work comes to, and try to "adjust." What a wealth of fiction and drama this war is going to evoke. New local color, new psychological experiences. And every man of the myriads reacting differently. Although the uniformity the Army prizes saturates mind and soul at last and the men, if they respond ideally, become as like as well-oiled ball bearings in a wheel . . . Though I go through the motions of assent, I shall resist all regimentation of the spirit—this requires constant alertness and prodigious effort. I shall ask you for reading and study materials when I am better settled . . . I wish you would counsel me to patience for I strain at the reins, and am driven, and cannot go. Like dream phobias and you cannot escape . . . If only all these millions could gird up their loins tonight and all simultaneously assault and press the attack and so have done with it! Invasion news comes through thinly, slowly: it sounds good . . . God bless you, my dear, and give you courage, and patience, and peace. My prayers are always for you.

[EDITORIAL FOOTNOTE: We know that our readers will feel favored, as did we, when Mrs. Zylstra consented to submit excerpts from the letters of her talented husband for publication to THE CALVIN FORUM. From the nature of the case, only the less personal elements of these letters have been selected. We have read these excerpts with deep respect and admiration. What an observant mind! What a delicately sensitive soul! What beauty of Christian character forged by the Heavenly Father out of the mud, filth, and heat of New Guinea! And all of this heightened in spiritual value for us as readers by reason of the fact that these excerpts were not written by him with a view to publication. For the benefit of those who are not personally acquainted with the Zylstras, we may say that the writer of these penetrating observations is in civilian life Associate Professor of English at Calvin College. And to the numerous personal friends of Dr. Zylstra among our readers we would say: Why not cheer him with a personal note? His address is: Pvt. Henry Zylstra, 36874303, G-2, 6th Army Hdqs. Co., APO 442, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California. Nothing is appreciated more deeply by our "boys" than a letter from "back home".—C. B.]



Personality Disorders and Religious Training

Wendell H. Rooks, M.D.

Superintendent Goffe Hill Sanatorium

[EDITORIAL NOTE: This article concludes a discussion begun in the previous issue. In that article Dr. Rooks concluded with a discussion of the bearing of wholesome home life upon mental illness. The present article continues with a presentation of the influence of the school.]

OF COURSE, the triumvirate in training is generally regarded as the church, the home, and the school, and I have mentioned the home. I should say a little about the school.

The School

Though much criticism has been heaped upon our public schools, colleges, and universities, and no doubt with justification, we must never fail to realize that the principle of education for all, out of which our public schools developed, is thoroughly Calvinistic and that the electorate, the parents might have done much to prevent the inroads of Atheism. Further, many have benefitted by the newer methods of pedagogy. But it seems to me that our present methods of education have emphasized to a fault the matter of equality and have, because of natural differences in personal needs and ability, lowered standards of education so that the twelfth grade diploma of today has hardly as much worth as the eighth grade diploma of a generation ago, and education as we know it today has hardly brought about a better appreciation of fundamental values. Whereas education once seemingly was concerned with mental discipline, it has become more and more a means of undisciplined self-expression, and our schools a place of crowning any sort of achievement even though it has little fundamental or comparative worth. I do believe there is already an appreciation among educators that the school cannot replace the home and church and that it must cooperate with the home and church if a properly balanced individual is to be produced. Of course, many of us of the Reformed persuasion are Christian-school minded. Though I believe there was a time when our Christian schools were provincial to an unfortunate degree, they have profited by some of the better advances in pedagogy and by better trained teachers and by a growing appreciation on the part of parents of the need for Christian instruction, instruction in which there is not only an integration between scientific fact and Christianity, but also positive combative approaches to anti-Christian influences rather than a separatist's form of escape. I will say later that there is room for even more of

the positive approach to the anti-Christian "isms" and a confident assertion of our Calvinistic viewpoint. Personally I am glad to hear the children come home with songs as "I will sing of my Redeemer" and "A 'hundred' Christian soldiers" rather than "Would you like to take a walk" or "Did you ever see a dream walking." The children grow up with a positive religion of faith and confidence instilled in their subconsciousness and automatic conduct which makes them live a "pray without ceasing life." Religion—faith and morals—becomes an integral part of the personality rather than an addition to it that can be removed or worn through as one might remove or wear out a cloak.

The Church

And then the church and formally organized religion. I believe the mistakes of organized religion have been of at least three varieties. I'm thinking first of all of the over-emphasis of moral living as a means of arriving at perfection or developing a Utopian social order, and the under-emphasis or denial of man's depravity and the constant stressing of the inherent goodness of man. And with such wrong emphasis, we hear constantly of the merciful God but little of the just God. I know of several instances in which the stressing of works as a personal accomplishment has made the individual self-centered, self-pitying, and yet self-accusatory, whereas a recognition of our inherent depravity common to all mankind and our universal responsibility to God and our need for pardon for even the least of our transgressions would have prevented a feeling of separation and a desire for annihilation.

In contrast to the above is the over-emphasis of hell and damnation which instills a very unwholesome amount of fear of God's wrath, so that one lives in constant dread rather than in a confidence derived of faith. I can think of many instances of children, growing boys and girls, who had heard only of hell and damnation, of constant condemning by prudish, inconsiderate, self-righteous parents and teachers who themselves were trying to live over their own secretly faulty lives by over-correcting their children. Such children grow up in fear and with an unwholesome feeling of specific and peculiar inferiority. They live not with faith in the merciful side of an understanding, sin-conscious God, but in constant dread of a wrathful

And next, the constant over-emphasis of the salvation side of religion by those who create a hysteria of conversion in which our responsibility to God, to a moral code, to our fellow men, is put aside by a self-centered demand for salvation. Again, not fundamentally wrong perhaps, but rather a matter of tubular vision.

Human Depravity Recognized

Though psychiatry and psychology are in many respects atheistic or agnostic and regard much of religion as anthropomorphic and instilled with primitive superstition and mysticism, they have expressed certain viewpoints that are very familiar to the ears of a Calvinist. They recognize that all of us harbor the most perverse tendencies "that buried beneath the building blocks of education and social adjustment many 'normal' people harbor socially unforgivable impulses even to the point of murder." "One of Freud's great discoveries was that mental illness often arises from a patient's refusal to admit, even to himself, the presence of such impulses." "The role of the psychiatrist is to help the patient switch on a light, so he can see that the enemy he had previously been fighting in the dark is usually only a pygmy after all." "As psychiatrists gained experience it became increasingly clear to them that beneath its highly polished veneer of social surface all human wood is pretty much alike in its knots and worm holes—that knots and worm holes are natural—that they belong there, that their absence would even be highly abnormal." (Richard M. Brickner, M.D., *Is Germany Incurable?*)

Certainly the above would indicate that recent psychiatric and psychological thought admits what we as Calvinists choose to call total depravity and that they also would "turn on the light" in the individual life—which, after all, is one of the purposes, if not the fundamental purpose of religion. (I am not unaware of the fact that strictly speaking we believe that God turns on the light through regeneration.)

Challenging Voices

And were the above not enough to call attention to the need for a change in our attitude toward religion and a revision of our social premises, I might just cite the increasing number of good editorials and articles on the matter in newspapers and current popular magazines. I wish to quote from two editorials of the *Paterson Morning Call* of February 25, 1944—"While praying for victory and a successful peace, we shall also pray that the parents of the youth of today be properly guided in the God who is overly anxious to mark every act of sin and iniquity or transgression of a reactionary parental dictum.

bringing up of their sons and daughters so that they will avoid the temptations of evil which have brought about a tremendous growth in juvenile delinquency. In doing this we should also pray for the proper guidance of our churches and our schools in helping toward this end . . . Prayer should not be left to special occasions such as the World Day of Prayer, but should become a daily and nightly duty that we owe to ourselves and to God and the future of the World. It is by constant desire for these things as exemplified by our prayer that we can show God that the things we pray for are not a thing of the moment but for all time." And a second editorial, incidentally also very appropriately read from one of our eastern Christian Reformed pulpits recently, pointing to the duties of the church. The editorial referred to a previous editorial on "Our Children at War" which was followed by a cry of alarmist when it said that "we are no longer a Christian nation as in the days of our forefathers, no longer a Godly nation as in the day of our grandfathers." To prove the point, the following was written, "At the Adventist Convention in Paterson last week, Rev. Lester Bond of Washington, D.C., said: '10,000 villages in America with no churches, 30,000 villages without a pastor, 13,400,000 children under twelve who are receiving no religious instruction at all, while more than half of the population of the nation is not connected with any institution representing organized religion. Over 60% make no profession of religion whatsoever.' It has now become the fashion for social, political, and religious institutions to blame the parents for the mounting crime wave of American youth."

"In so doing the church must share in that blame through its failure to view with adequate alarm the drifting away of its communicants . . . The church must now awaken to the challenge of national atheism with almost two-thirds of our people deserters of the House of God. We must bring them back to the fold or surrender our beloved nation to the curse of atheism. Now is the hallowed time to begin."

It seems to me that when such men as Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation call for a renewed interest in religious discipline, social service calls for return to the discipline of the home, editorials in daily newspapers make a plea for daily divine supplications and guidance and a revival of church interest and godly worship, and even the Personality Sciences have grown to recognize the use for some old-fashioned fundamentals of human character as once taught by religion, then we as Calvinists should consider ourselves as faced with a challenge.

I heard a remark only recently by a faithful member of one of our churches, "Why doesn't the American church do something about the delinquency?" I believe this remark illustrates two faulty tendencies in our own churches—first, the feeling even in our own circles that the problem

rests as much, if no more, with the church and schools as with the home and the parents, and secondly, the failure to realize that much of the American church has been very much more active in trying to counteract atheism and delinquency through vacation schools, camps, and community work than have we. I believe that we have remained separatists from the world to such an extent that we have failed to be a wholesome leaven. We have remained quite active within our group, but have not become sufficiently cosmopolitan in our influence. As an example, not long ago at a Sunday School teachers' meeting the question arose as to whether we could consistently send *The Banner* to those members of the Sunday School in the Armed forces whose parents were not of the Covenant. I was shocked to think that we could argue as to whether we could justify sending *The Banner* to a soldier whose covenant relationship was two generations removed when 60% of our American population professes no religious creed, when 13,400,000 children under twelve receive absolutely no religious instruction, who if taught anything are taught along lines established on atheistic or at least Christless premises.

I heard only two days ago of a twelve year old Jewish girl who having attempted to analyze life, and having concluded that there could be no God, no soul, no spirit, also concluded that life was futile and therefore made an attempt at suicide.

Learning from the Personality Sciences

We have indeed learned something from psychologists and psychiatrists and sociologists, even though based on atheistic and evolutionary premises. We have learned of the significance of heredity, the importance of environment, the need for social reform, the significance of biological urges, and the need for healthy parental influence, the importance of the family unit. We have learned perhaps something about the evolution of personality. Shall we cast it aside or shall we assimilate the good and incorporate it into our Calvinistic Christian approach?

I'm sure that it makes little difference to me who discovers that the earth is part of a tremendous universe; that there are almost ultra telescopic worlds and ultra microscopic worlds awaiting human investigation; and seemingly unlimited forces in the world awaiting our intelligent use. I do know that for a Christian it makes his God that much greater and his responsibility to that God even greater because of his command to subdue the earth. I also believe that similarly we should make use of the scientific principles brought out in our social and personal development and relationships and establish or instill our God-centered viewpoint.

As an illustration, I can see how human love is an imperfect example of God's love for his chil-

dren. "As a father pitieth his children" (Ps. 103). How God also uses nature to illustrate His love, "So far as east from west is distant, so far has God removed our transgressions from us" God has also created man in His own image with certain attributes which, though now imperfect and altered by sin, nevertheless help us to understand the personality of God, that we may also better glorify Him. I would go a step further and remain safely Calvinistic and say that the ties of love between a man and his wife are an imperfect example of God's love for His church. Then could we not conceivably admit certain strong biological or sexual urges as created in man by God as illustrative of the undeniable urge of God toward those whom He would draw unto Him? Just as biological forces and urges demand gratification and satisfaction, so also will God satisfy His urge to have a church for His own glorification, for His own Name's sake. If we interpret these human attributes as God implanted and evaluate them as such, there should be greater respect for chastity, a better appreciation of heterosexual living, a respect for God's symbols, and less of purely human indulgence and self gratification. God's attributes in man have been altered by sin. Just as God does not want a prostitution of the relationship between Him and His church by the introduction of all sorts of foreign and pagan "isms," so also He does not want a prostitution of our originally good divinely implanted attributes. Some of the above may seem fantastically idealistic, many would say it sounds anthropomorphic, but either our religion is man made or it is God revealed, and we believe it is revealed by God Himself in His word and exemplified in Christ and in nature—and nature includes certainly man as a personality.

I believe it is for us as Calvinists to make use of what has been learned in the personality sciences in further developing our Calvinistic approach to the problems of personality. A psychoanalyst asks us—directs us—to undress our innermost thoughts before him; he demands that we confess to him as to a God every thought, word, and deed, to bare our conflicts, to discuss our basic urges; that we may also in turn resynthesize our personalities in an orderly fashion so that he may, as mentioned above, turn on the light to provide better insight and guidance. To me this is a lesson for us as Christians. Should we not every day literally undress our thoughts, words, and deeds before God and learn from the psychoanalyst the need for and the art of self-examination—the importance of complete and total confession? Just as a psychoanalyst insists on a "transference" to him, so we must develop in our personalities the habit of complete transference to God.

The Challenge

The above few paragraphs are only meant to be an example of how we may attempt to integrate

modern concepts of personality into our Calvinistic viewpoint.

I would only call to your attention that the atheistic viewpoint is going to attempt to assert itself in the future as it has already done in the past. This has been warned of even in our own church paper and spoken of in such books as "Is Germany Incurable." The "Union of the Jews and the modern 'Christian' churches" may present to some a new hope, but the effort can only fail, if for no other reason than that the two, if true to themselves, must be opponents rather than team mates. Therefore, it would seem to me that we as Calvinists are now being challenged in our position. If we were not too convincing in our position as separatists before, we are now having our position strengthened by the recognition of certain needs by outsiders. We have something to contribute. Some of our groups have already made a start, as for instance the popular articles by Prof. Schultze of Calvin

College in *The Banner*; and I cannot refrain from commenting on the wider application of Calvinistic Christianity in its all-inclusiveness from the pulpits of some of our churches and the expansion of our Christian school system. I am hoping that we can extend our Calvinistic approach even further to include problems of personality, specifically in the problems of individuals, in families, and growing children—to assist through intelligent analysis and guidance on the part of teachers, social workers, pastors, and physicians in the prevention of mental illness and social maladjustment; and more generally by exerting an influence on social, economic and political problems by asserting in conversation, lecture books, political pressure and cooperation, our Calvinistic Christian point of view. It must assert itself using the older facts of history and of our religion, and the new facts—religion and its relation to personality and the allied sciences—ready to intelligently combat the falsehoods perpetrated on society and our future generation.

Our Trust is in Thee

by GEORGE W. BLOEMENDAL

Merciful Father, reigning above,
Thou hast bestowed an infinite love:
Great was the gift of Thine only Son,
Jesus, the Christ, the crucified One.
O Holy Spirit, show us the Way,
That we may follow our Master each day.
Ransomed for all eternity,
Father, we anchor our trust in Thee;
Heavenly Father, our trust is in Thee.

Glorified Savior, by waters still
Lead and refresh us content in Thy will.
Thou art the Shepherd—nought shall we fear;
In somber valleys Thy presence is near.
Trials beset us; teardrops may flow;
Father, in sorrow Thy peace we shall know.
Always Thou wilt our refuge be—
Rock of Salvation, we trust in Thee;
Heavenly Father, our trust is in Thee.

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(This hymn was written for the melody of
"Beautiful Dreamer" by Stephen C. Foster)

From Our Correspondents

LETTER FROM SOUTH INDIA

Telugu Village Mission,
Adoni, Bellary Dist., So. India,
June 29, 1944.
[Rec'd Sept. 21, 1944.]

The Editor,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich., U.S.A.
Dear Dr. Bouma:

"IT IS an ill wind . . ." may be a platitudinous copy book maxim, hackneyed and often misused, but it is true in respect to certain implications of the global war in which the greater part of humanity now finds itself involved. Take, for instance, the giant strides made in transportation as a direct result of war needs.

Without offending against "security" regulations, one can say that it is a commonplace fact today to read of your big bombers making the transit between one of your Atlantic airports and Western India in the amazingly short time of 72 hours! And if one is to believe the news-hawks and other knowledgeable people who make it their business to collect such facts, a full 12 hours of this time is taken up at the halts for refuelling and servicing, giving an actual flying time of 60 hours between the U. S. and India.

Turning back the pages of memory I find that 60 hours was the time it took my wife and me only eight years ago to cover the distance between Seattle and Chicago. But our conveyance was not an airborne "Liberator", but a comfortable Pullman, of the long 1000-ton transcontinental Olympian.

This speed-up, one must admit, represents not only mechanical progress and a definite conquest of space and time, but also the bringing together of the United States and India and our two peoples. And it is as well, for Hitler and Tojo and their ilk have done their best, or worst, for several years to divide the nations of Europe and East Asia, to sow the seeds of discord among them and to, eventually, destroy the peace and harmony of the world. Any tendency, therefore, to bring nations together and to help them understand one another is to be welcomed and encouraged. I, for one, rejoice that, even if World War Number Two has done nothing else, it has placed India and the U. S. on the same side and has given our peoples many opportunities of getting to know one another's viewpoints, promoting, one hopes, a systematic tolerance in respect to our several domestic and international problems.

Since it has become customary for our spokesmen representing the Government, commerce, and the Indian Army to tour your great country, and the American Goodwill and Technical Missions to visit India at the behest of your President, I am encouraged to hope that when peace returns there will continue to be a steady and increasing flow not only of politicians and administrations between our countries, but also of students, teachers, and churchmen. I shall always regard it as a great personal privilege to have gone to America as a humble ambassador of Christian India and to have sojourned among you for a whole year. We hope and pray that a return visit may be possible very soon after the war is over and the sealanes and sky-ways are once more reasonably safe for civilian traffic. And when that happens, I fully expect to find my church, college and club audiences very much better informed on matters affecting India and the Far East, and my task of interpreting India to my American friends made correspondingly easier.

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi is once again free, having been recently released owing to his state of health. It may be recalled that the little septuagenarian leader and his principal lieutenants of the Indian National Congress party attempted to raise the standard of rebellion in August 1942, the infamous "Quit India" resolution being their battle cry. Noted for nearly forty years for the spartan simplicity of his life, Gandhi's 22 months' detention in the Aga Khan's luxurious palace at Poona made an involuntary sybarite of him—a fact about which he has been complaining bitterly in his recent correspondence with the Viceroy, Lord Wavell. "India is a vast prison," he writes, "where 400 millions of my fellow subjects are without liberty, but you have been pleased to incarcerate me in another prison within the larger one and have seen to it that every creature comfort of mine has been supplied without my having earned it. This while millions of Indians have been starving." It is difficult to follow the trend of the Mahatma's latest complaint against the authorities, but it would be unlike him to have nothing to say against the Anglo-Indian administration he has been fighting "on a matter of principle" for four decades!

In the recent correspondence which I have referred to, Lord Wavell has accused Mr. Gandhi and his henchmen of hindering the war effort by following a policy of non-coöperation and active sabotage. Mr. Gandhi hotly denies that his Congress party has had anything to do with subversive activity, and so the old political *impasse* survives with little hope of an early settlement.

The War and India's Future

Meanwhile, the war is being carried on with ever growing tempo and our northeasternmost province, Assam, has been cleared of the enemy who, it is believed, will soon be driven out of his fox-holes and "bunkers" in Manipur, a semi-independent feudatory state bordering on Burma. There is to be heard on every hand a note of satisfaction, that the United Nations High Command is at last getting on with the job of winning the war, and the fact of India forming one of the principal spring-boards of attack against the Japs is accepted with almost stoical calm by the public—that is, the section who read their newspapers and listen to the radio.

For the rest, the political situation has not materially changed in the past six months and can be summarized in a few sentences for the benefit of your readers.

The Congress party, embracing most of the extreme nationalistic and anti-British elements in the country, insist that the British quit India and the country be handed over to them (the Congress party). The Muslim League, under M. A. Jinnah, wants to secede and form an autonomous Pakistan. The minorities are practically all on the side of the present administration, and do not want a change just now. Then, the British Parliament continues to promise India, as indeed it has done for some years, through Premier Churchill, Secretary of State Amery, and the Viceroy, full dominion status (as in the case of Australia and Canada) very soon after the war. This offer, obviously, cannot be implemented until and unless there is, in the meantime, a practical measure of agreement among the various political parties in India, and some responsible central party or a coalition to whom full powers could be handed over and who, in the opinion of experienced statesmen in India and Britain, would be capable of carrying on the gov-

ernment without undue jeopardy to the country's safety and wellbeing. That, in a nutshell, is the position today, but I would like to add just this: India is a small continent, about one-half the size of the U. S. A., but far more diversified as regards race, language, religion, and culture than is the case even in cosmopolitan North America. Then also, further complexity is produced by the fact of the existence of a large number of feudatory states which make up about one-third of the area of India and which have longstanding treaties with the British Parliament.

The problem of India's future constitution is thus a most baffling one, the solution of which can only be attempted if there be genuine goodwill on both sides. But there are a great many sober-minded Indian patriots today who agree that it would be a flagrant dereliction of duty on the part of Britain were she to walk out of India at this juncture. The immediate consequence of such a step, they assert, would be a general breakdown of the machinery of government followed by chaos and internecine strife on a gigantic scale—and who can be bold enough to say that these men are wrong?

Union of Christian Groups

As I have mentioned more than once in these columns during the past year or two, India is unique among the world's belligerent nations in not resorting to conscription for military purposes. And while I personally do not consider there is any particular virtue in this negation, it is nevertheless a matter of pride to many of us that India now possesses a sizeable army of two million voluntarily enlisted men. But the point I wish to emphasize is the fact that the small Christian minority of 8 millions has furnished for its size by far the largest number of recruits. This is due, first, to the high proportion of literates among the community, and, next, to the higher sense of duty usually existing among Christians than is the case in the other communities in the country. This readiness on the part of Christian Indians to help win the war, in my opinion, bears eloquent testimony, not only to the good wrought by 150 years of British rule, but equally to the uplifting, refining influence of Christian Missions on the people of India.

Leaders of the Christian community in this country have been getting together of recent months in an effort to envisage the status of their community in the India of the future. Few can, I fear, view the distant prospect with much optimism since, whatever the composition of the ruling party or parties in a completely self-governing India may be, and however important a minority the Christian Indians may form, the community cannot, in the nature of things, expect a square deal at the hands of Hindus or Muslims. For these are at heart hostile to the spread of Christianity and to the emancipation of the so-called "Untouchables" who, incidentally, form the great bulk of the Christian group in this country.

There emerges, therefore, urgent need for some measure of unity at any rate among the various sects and denominations that go to make up the Protestant Church in India; for it is realized by their rank and file as well as the leaders that unless Christians stand shoulder to shoulder and present a united front to the non-Christian majority, the community stands to lose its identity in the course of a few decades under the new regime. Indeed, despite the addition of about a quarter of a million converts to the community each year, signs are not wanting of the insidious but nonetheless actively disintegrating forces that are at work within the community—forces that may ultimately do as much harm to the stability of the Indian Church as would active persecution or repression.

Thus, while the need for some form of church union is admitted on every hand, and in spite of the progress made in this direction by a number of denominations of the Protestant Church, there are a few genuine difficulties standing in the way of corporate union as between the honest doubts that come to the minds of orthodox churchmen who cannot with equanimity contemplate Christian fellowship and inter-communion with denominations whose ranks contain a varying proportion of so-

called "Liberals"—people who either deny or question the deity of our Lord, His virgin birth, and the authenticity of Holy Writ as the inspired Word of God and the sole revelation of His sovereign will. These may be small matters to the humanist or the universalist, but I think many of your readers would agree that these *are* issues of great moment to the true believer.

With greetings to the FORUM family,

Fraternally yours,

ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

July 19th, 1944.

My dear Bouma:

Since writing my "South India Letter" three weeks ago Rajagopalachariar, the Madras political leader, has been able to induce Mahatma Gandhi to agree to the principle of the Muslim right to secede if such be the will of the majority of Muhamedans and the political horizon is clearer to that small extent. But M. A. Jinnah, the Muslim leader is still adamant and will not agree to putting the Rajagopalachariar-Gandhi offer before his constituency with a view to a plebescite on the vexed question. So we continue as before with a benevolent autocratic Anglo-Indian administration in the saddle. Well, looking at the situation dispassionately, I suppose we could be much worse off!

I have appreciated getting my FORUMS much more regularly of late, the latest number in being that of May 1944. It is always a pleasure to turn from the pressure of many duties to the scholarly editorials and articles of the FORUM. May God bless and prosper you and your editorial staff in your good work.

Cordially yours,

ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

CORRECTION

September 13, 1944.

Dr. Clarence Bouma,
Editor THE CALVIN FORUM,
Franklin at Benjamin, S.E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

IN the Eastern Church News Letter printed over my name in the Aug.-Sept. issue of THE CALVIN FORUM is a sentence that is quite unintelligible as printed. Since the matter discussed at that point is rather important to many concerned, I feel the sentence ought to be corrected.

Will you, therefore, be so kind as to note the following correction in the next issue of THE FORUM. In the third paragraph from the end of the *Letter*, the second sentence from the end of the paragraph now reads: "This correspondent cannot fail to express his admiration for the faculty of Westminster Seminary in its unflinching allegiance to truth, even when that allegiance demands action by one who has been its friend." According to my carbon copy this sentence ought to read as follows: "...even when that allegiance demands action that is not desired by one who has been its friend."

Cordially yours,

EDWARD HEEREMA.

CALVINISTIC ACTIVITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Potchefstroom,
South Africa,
June 6, 1944.

[Rec'd Sept. 5, 1944.]

Dear Dr. Bouma:

AS Thomas Hardy in his *Far From the Madding Crowd*, we in South Africa may thank the Lord that we are so far removed from the scene of the present world struggle. We have just heard over the wireless that this war has entered its last phase. May the Lord in His mercy shorten His visitations on this depraved world! This indeed is a time as foreseen by the old prophets: wars and rumours of wars.

Amidst all this heartrending death and destruction, we in South Africa may still carry on very much as usual. In April last a very important Conference was held at Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State by Calvinists from all over the Union of South Africa. The aim of this Conference was to arrive at some unity of action amongst South African Calvinists. As usual, this Conference was attended only by Afrikaans-speaking representatives. Our English-speaking population does not seem to take any interest in Calvinistic thought and action.

There existed prior to this Conference two organizations amongst Calvinists over here: the Calvinistic Association with the Rev. C. R. Kotzé as chairman and Prof. L. J. du Plessis as secretary, and the Calvinistic Study Circle with Prof. S. du Toit as chairman and Dr. H. J. Strauss as secretary.

The Rev. Kotzé took the chair at the first combined meeting. He addressed the Conference on the question: "What is the present position of Calvinism in South Africa?" In the past Calvinists gave the lead here in all vital national problems. The Afrikaans-speaking nation suffers from one seemingly ineradicable disease: discord and strife amongst ourselves. We have been torn asunder by foreign imported systems and orders which have foolishly enough been embraced by the sons and daughters of "Geus" (Dutch Protestant), Huguenot and "Voor-trekker". We have paid for this in blood and tears; and yet we have not learned our lesson: we continue along this nationally destructive road. The present generation has embraced some of the most destructive systems and orders, like National Socialism and even Communism, systems diametrically opposed to our own Calvinism, and even amongst those who confess Calvinism there is an ever-widening breach of opinion and action. The aim of the present Conference is twofold: to bring all Calvinists once again into one organization and to take active steps against the dangers of the new, anti-Calvinistic systems and orders. We must once again as a nation return to the Word of God and the Voice of God in our history. Then Calvinism will once more become a power and guide to Afrikaans-speaking people in leading us back to a life "for God and the Fatherland". With these words Prof. du Toit expressed himself in full agreement.

Two very valuable lectures were delivered at the Conference. The first by the Rev. Prof. Dr. J. D. du Toit—the translator of the Bible in Afrikaans—on "What Calvinism can and must be and do at the present time of world crisis", and the second by Rev. D. F. Erasmus on "Our Own Calvinism". Both these lectures were highly appreciated and interesting discussions followed on each of them.

On the problem of Calvinistic unified thought and action, this Conference unanimously came to the following declaration: "This Conference is convinced that Calvinism is the most harmonious and consistent expression of Christianity, that it is essentially of an international nature but reveals itself differently in the different Calvinistic countries, that South Africa needs its own Afrikaans Calvinism expressing our particular national character, history and needs. To achieve this aim there is an absolute necessity of coöperating with all Calvinists in South Africa (and overseas), irrespective of nationality, and this again only for the furtherance of the glory of our sovereign Lord and in the particular service of our own Afrikaans nation. Therefore this Conference appeals to all South African Calvinists to unite firmly in one solid organization. The Calvinistic Study Circle will continue to examine the principles of Calvinism in accordance with Holy Writ and the history of Christianity and to propagate these principles amongst South Africans by written and spoken word. In this connection two considerations must be observed as guiding principles, viz., on the one hand, the avoidance of any form of adulteration of the national Calvinistic ideal by foreign systems, and on the other the avoidance of any form of conservatism which is contrary to the providential guidance of God in history. Calvinism must remain organic in order to activate

any necessary social-economic reforms. The Calvinistic Study Circle will furthermore take over the program of work of the Calvinistic Organization (Bond) and invite all Calvinists to join hands in an Organization of Calvinistic Study Circles in order especially to make our nation Calvinistically conscious."

After this combined Conference, the existing Calvinistic Study Circle held its own conference and agreed in principle with the declaration of the combined Conference. It accepted in particular the suggestion that the two separate organizations should unite and cease to exist separately. The new organization amongst Calvinists will in the future be called "The Organization (Bond) of Calvinistic Study Circles". The idea is to institute Study Circles throughout South Africa in order to give an opportunity for all who are still Calvinists at heart to join up and participate in the study and propagation of Calvinistic principles.

It was further decided to issue at regular times short studies in the form of brochures for distribution amongst the members and for public sale. Dr. F. J. M. Potgieter also undertook to prepare an abridged edition of Calvin's *Institutes* in Afrikaans.

Finally, it was decided to appoint a Central Executive for two years, on which were elected Prof. Dr. S. du Toit, chairman; the Rev. C. R. Kotzé, vice-chairman; Drs. H. J. Strauss, secretary-treasurer; Dr. F. J. M. Potgieter, the Revs. D. F. Erasmus, J. J. Engelbrecht, and P. A. Verhoef. The address of the secretary is P. O. De Bloem, Bloemfontein, O. F. S., South Africa, in case overseas organizations would like to communicate with us over here.

With kind regards,
J. CHR. COETZEE.

CALVINISTIC STUDY CLUB

On September 15, the Calvinistic Study Club met in regular Fall session at the home of Professor D. H. Kromminga. Professor Kromminga and his gracious wife have developed the art of entertaining-hospitality to an unusually high degree. All the members but one were present and shared in the friendly atmosphere of the Kromminga home.

The work of the Club centered this time upon a paper delivered by our host. The title of it was "The Canonical Significance of the Apocalypse of John". Its contents were spread over seventeen closely written, single-spaced, typewritten pages.

Part I of the paper dealt with "A Critical Survey of Views". In it the author revealed his keen ability in analyzing current approaches to Revelation. Dismissing the Literary approach as being unworthy of serious consideration, he enumerated the Spiritual, the Preterist, the Continuous-Historical, and the Futurist methods. The Progressive-Parallelist method the author considered a cross between the Spiritual and the Continuous-Historical method.

Incidentally Professor Kromminga gave a searching review of Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Premillennialism. This review led the speaker to enlarge upon the conception of the Church, since one's view of the Millennium and his conception of the Church go together.

The second part of the paper dealt with "Reflections on the Apocalypse". Examples: the continuity of the revelation found in the book of Daniel and the last book of the Bible. Also: Through seven of its twenty-two chapters the beast and the false prophet are not out of sight. Another: 1900 years of history have passed since Revelation. This is a valuable fact, in our interpretation of the book. Many considerations compelled the speaker to lean to the Continuous-Historical approach to the book. These considerations he stated clearly and convincingly. Although, it must be said in justice to Professor Kromminga that he did not claim to have an answer to every part of Revelation. He is still searching out the matter of interpreting the Revelation of John. But his method gives the greatest amount of satisfaction.

As was to be expected, an animated discussion followed the professor's discourse. The problem of Imperialism in connection with the Beast of Revelation was under constant discussion.

However, when the time to adjourn arrived, we were 'just under way' so to speak. Hence it was decided to spend our next scheduled meeting in carrying on the discussion where we left off. This meeting is to be held December 15, 1944, at the home of the Reverend J. Griffioen.

Professor Clarence Bouma of Calvin Seminary was in charge of the meeting.

JOHN G. VAN DYKE, Secretary.

FROM A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

218 N. Division,
Ann Arbor, Michigan,
September 25, 1944.

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

Dear Dr. Bouma:

NOT many things happen here in Ann Arbor that constitute news in the sight of Calvinists the world over; nor can we who adorn ourselves with that name descend to 'creative writing'—hence the fewness of these lines.

First of all I must tell you about the latest version of the Servetus legend. It was in a course in Anthropology recently that the instructor, a vitriolic unbeliever, told his class the old, old story that seems new each time they tell it. This time it ran thus. A really very excellent man by the name of Michael Servetus contended in John Calvin's presence that Palestine was an arid, bleak, and dreary country-side. With his customary intolerant vigor the great Genevan rebuked him for such insolence. But Servetus persisted in his contentions. As a result he lost his head (in no figurative sense) and was burned at the stake—for he had sinned against the Holy Ghost who declares very unequivocally that Palestine is a land flowing with milk and honey, and who was this Spaniard that dared to lie against the Holy Ghost!

I also learned for the first time why ministers are called divines. It was in connection with the institution of divining in the ethnic cultures. Divining is a procedure whereby men think to wrest from the deity its hidden secrets concerning the future, something whereby men are brought 'en rapport' with the prescient powers in the universe. And since the gentlemen of the cloth also presume to gaze into the world of things which is known only to the gods they were very early called divines! Oh, mighty Liberalism, how great and wonderful are thy thoughts! But hush, more deep wisdom is being distilled from these lips of oracle. And, since men have resorted to dice shaking in their thirst for information from the unknown beyond, these clergymen, especially the Calvinistic ones who laid greatest claim to speaking the mind of God, resented the competition offered by the "bones"! What mighty prophets there are among us these days. It is very much too bad that the Christian Reformed Church didn't know this deeper, deepest reason for the traditional Calvinistic scruples in regard to 'hazard'! It could have built up so much better argument if it had!

Not all liberals stoop to such irresponsible toying with historic facts. Happily not! Some of them say some very sensible things at times! For example, the army officer who made no religious profession whatsoever. He declared that when the fathers of this country laid down the pattern for this government they proceeded upon the assumption that right and wrong are what they are in spite of us, that there is some eternal and absolute reference to which we can go to determine justice and its opposite. Hence, said he, they wanted a Constitution. For in it something of this objectively valid truth was captured and laid down for all time. Hence, too, they wanted a strong and robust Supreme Court with its assignment to interpret the decision of the moment in the light of that which was not

dependent upon the moment. Finally, said he, they wanted a wholesome respect for minorities, for they felt that there is always the possibility that not the majority but the minority reflects more accurately that which is in harmony with right as it exists in itself. All this sounded quite Calvinistic to me. Then the man went a step farther and said that since our culture has, in John Dewey fashion, transferred the locus of right and wrong from the objective to the subjective, it must of logical necessity repudiate any Constitution, violate every Supreme Court, and trample upon all minorities! That, I submit, was a very Calvinistic construction even if it came from the brain of a man not inclined to label himself thus. We do well to ponder whether with this shift in the locus of justice there can still be room for such a thing as a minority? If truth and justice are momentary and determined by majority vote then minorities are out of order. And some have begun to say exactly that of late. Or one might ask it thus: Is not theism prerequisite to democracy? And with theism repudiated are we not obliged to choose between democracy in its John Dewey perversion (which is usurpation by the mass) and outright 'Fuehrer-ism' (which is usurpation by an individual)?

Long live Calvinism, the only alternative to all this which is dreadful even to contemplate!

Cordially,

LEONARD VERDUIN.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Religion in Moscow.

"Council for Religious Affairs" is the name for the Soviet department which from now on handles all matters pertaining to Religion in Russia. It is housed in the former Moscow home of Isadora Duncan. The official agent of the government in matters relative the Russian Orthodox Church is Georgi Gregorievitch Karpov. Agent anent all other Churches (Roman Catholic, Baptists, Lutherans, Moslems, and Jews) is Ivan Vassilivitch Polianski.

The Council handles all petitions for the building of new churches. It seldom turns down a request. Plans for Theological Schools and Seminaries are also cleared through the Council. Russia intends to make Religious Freedom something real. The Council therefore grants release from military services to priests. It does many other things including granting of permission to buy printing presses for Church papers, etc.

This is Russian freedom of religion. It is freedom by the grace of ex-Choir singer Joseph Stalin. Russia can well afford this measure of freedom. For one thing, the Government is final arbiter. Again, Russia has emerged as a great world-power. With the defeat of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis, Russian influence and power is established throughout Europe and Asia. Finally, a benevolent attitude on the part of the Government towards all Religions is good government-life-insurance.

German Prayers.

"Woe to us and to our nation, if, instead of giving honor to God, we exalt human ideas above God, and extol the powers of this world as though they were all-powerful. Woe to us and our nation if we revile the Holy Scriptures as a Jewish book.

"Woe to us and our nation when it is considered right to take life because human beings are considered as of no value, or because they belong to another race; when hatred and cruelty are the order of the day".

This prayer was read (according to travelers coming from Germany to Sweden) from the pulpits of the German Confessional Church. "Amen" is the right word with which to close this German prayer.

"Salvation for \$40.00".

This is the title of an editorial in the *Protestant Voice* (III: 37) and was occasioned by a letter sent by the Archbishop of

Winnipeg to the parishioners in the entire archdiocese. It contained a paragraph which was roundly criticized. The letter urges parents of men overseas to enroll their sons as "Perpetual Members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith". Cost to the parents? \$40.00! The letter further stated this: "What better guarantee for any boy exposed to the hazards of war. A guarantee, should he be killed, that he will go at once to his Maker, to be with him for all eternity. A guarantee, should it be God's will, that he will return to his dear mother and to those who love him".

Cheap at that! Only \$40.00. Still, it is considerably above ceiling prices of today. According to the Modernists the fact that a man dies for his country is guarantee that he is with God for all eternity. And there is no special price to be paid by parents. But . . . when you think it all over, there is a price paid, . . . a terrible price, too.

Says John Edgar Hoover of the F.B.I.

"The prevention of crime can never be achieved by the mere enforcement of law; by treating the symptoms rather than the cause".

"During 1943, age 18 predominated among all persons arrested, according to fingerprint records received by the F.B.I. Arrests of 17-year-old boys increased 27.7 per cent, of 16-year-old boys 61 per cent during that period. For the past two years arrests of girls under 21 increased 130.4 per cent."

Crime prevention? "The answer lies in religious education. Religion is the recognition of man's dependence upon a superior Being and his obligation to observe a higher law".

Is the nation waking up? It seems so. In time? We do hope it. But it is later than we think. Christless education and Christless religion in unholy wedlock have produced a generation which is far, very far from the God of our fathers.

Bible-reading in the Bank?

The Greenwich Savings Bank of New York foreclosed a first and a second mortgage, totaling nine hundred thousand dollars, which it held against the "Church of the Strangers" of New York. The pastor, Dr. P. M. Spencer, offered the pulpit Bible to the Greenwich Savings Bank, suggesting that it be read in the Bank. So!

J. G. VAN DYKE.

Of Books and Reading

THE CHRIST OF STANLEY JONES

THE CHRIST OF THE AMERICAN ROAD. By E. Stanley Jones. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1944. Price, \$1.00.

IT IS not easy to write a review of this book. It contains so much that is inspiring and true that one is disappointed because he cannot recommend it whole-heartedly. But this at least may be said and must be said: Dr. Jones has a message for America, and specifically for Christian America, that must be heeded.

That message is this: if America is to survive, she must become genuinely Christian. Christianity is the secret of her origin, and should be of her continuance. But today we stand at the cross-road. Christian principles are being repudiated on all sides. Our national heritage will be drowned by the surging tides of history unless we get back to the Christ of the American Road. If we do, we shall give to the world a fresh, unique, American interpretation of Christ, thus fulfilling our divinely-ordained destiny.

"America is God's experimental ground, his demonstration center, where he has brought representatives of all the world to try out, on a small scale, corporate living" (p. 64). If Americans can live together in peaceful fellowship, the nations of the world can do so. But there are great hesitations in American democracy and American Christianity. We have not given women sufficient voice in national affairs; we have weighted the scales against labor; we have failed to extend equality to the colored races and to those of Asiatic origin; we have offered to subject peoples beyond our borders sponges of benefit on the spearpoint of domination. Christians have failed to be Christian in the matter of race; have allowed the political life of America to get into ungodly hands, and have failed to coöperate with each other, wasting their energies in interdenominational bickerings. The Christian church in America is a salt that has lost its savor; American Christians may have their loins girt, but their lamps are not lit. The American church must return to Christ, provide a luminous example of harmonious living, and bring together estranged groups and emphases into a new unity. Thus shall the great central truth of the Gospel, the Kingdom of God, once again come into its own.

There is so much that is fine and uplifting about this book that one hesitates to find fault. The Gospel does have inescapable social obligations; the Church needs to be constantly warned against neglecting them in the interests of a myopic individualism. No theologian was more insistent on applying Christian principles to social and political problems than John Calvin; and no merely human voice ever urged the Church more strongly to be the light of the world than the voice of Jesus Christ. The church which fails to be concerned with the Kingdom is apostate; for faith without works is dead.

And yet, the way Dr. Jones presents the social challenge is not true to the Scriptures. He finds the central Gospel message to be the new order centering in the new Person. "The fact of the order and the person coinciding in Christ is perhaps the most important thing in the Gospels—and the most overlooked" (p. 30). Now, to begin with, the doctrine of the Kingdom of God has not been so utterly overlooked as the author would have us believe. The early church, the medieval church, the church of Calvin, of John Knox, of the Puritans, and of Abraham Kuyper were all supremely concerned with applying Christianity to social issues, with actualizing the Kingdom of God. But as we read through Dr. Jones's book, we discover that he has mistaken conceptions both of the new order and of the Person. He virtually identifies the Kingdom with the new social order, as did the early, optimistic social-gospel theologians; and on this point is therefore even more liberal than Henry Sloan Coffin, who admits that "any social order of man's devising will bear the marks of his ignorance and sin; it cannot be the kingdom of God" (*Religion Yesterday and Today*, p. 146). (Jones does, it is true, speak of the Kingdom as an apocalyptic reality; yet the emphasis in his book is overwhelmingly on the Kingdom as a present reality, to be attained here and now in a Christianized social order.) As far as the Person is concerned, though Dr. Jones has a high view of Christ, though he even speaks of his redemption being upon our sins and weaknesses, the conception of Christ which motivates the book is that of the Supreme Example, who came to establish the Kingdom, and to show men God's way of life. I cannot escape the conviction that the view of Christ and of religion which animates this book is fundamentally Ritschlian.

The unavoidable result is that you get Christianity with redemption left out. The stress is on Christ as our example

and not as our Redeemer; on man's response to God and not on God's saving love for man. Christianity, in the end, is watered down to an ethics without a gospel, which must be held up to all men as the great American ideal. We agree that the ideal is there. But if Christianity is nothing more than, an ideal, its heart has been cut out.

ANTHONY HOEKEMA.

OCCASIONAL SERMONS

THIS YEAR OF OUR LORD (*Sermons for Special Occasions*). By Andrew W. Blackwood. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943. Price, \$1.00.

AS the sub-title suggests, this is a series of sermons for special occasions. Not only are there sermons for the usual holidays of the Christian year, but also for such occasions as Mother's Day, Children's Day, National Holiday, Labor Sunday, Bible Sunday. The purpose of the volume is "to show the will of God for busy folk in a world that has been at war".

There is much in these sermons that appeals. The style is clear; the sentences are usually short and well constructed. The diction is vivid and concrete. The titles are well chosen: "The Christ of the Flint Face"; "The Cross in Terms of Healing"; "The Secret of Christian Radiance". The divisions of the sermons are chosen usually not for their logical import, but for their suggestiveness and memory value. Unforgettable is the treatment of Psalm 121 under four headings: "The God of the Waiting Hills", "The God of the Sleepless Watch", "The God of the Friendly Shade", and "The God of the Winding Road".

These sermons are interesting throughout. They abound in illustrations, allusions to contemporary life, bits of poetry, and apt quotations. There is a constant effort to relate the message to contemporary problems and present-day needs. The tone of these sermons is predominantly positive and uplifting; they breathe a helpful, optimistic spirit. They are suggestive, not exhaustive.

Yet there is a dearth of exegesis. These sermons are chiefly topical in method; though the text gives unity, it does not provide the structural basis of the message. This is, of course, more true of some sermons than of others. But, on the whole, these sermons fail to explore the rich depths of the text, fail to wrestle with the text, fail to reveal the precise message God brings through these particular words. Instead, the usual method is to draw out the implications of the topic suggested by the text. It is not denied that this method demands great skill, nor that it may not at times be used with profit. However, the topical method constantly tends to lose itself in generalities, and to weaken the note of divine authority.

In spite of this drawback, however, these sermons can be read with much profit. They are evangelical, sound, appealing, practical. The writer of this review had the privilege of serving Dr. Blackwood as assistant in homiletics at Princeton during the past school year, and learned a very great deal from him. Many of the principles which he taught, both in the classroom and in his books, may be seen exemplified in this volume of sermons. Dr. Blackwood has the gift of preaching imaginatively, of making a text luminous with meaning.

ANTHONY HOEKEMA.

