

the **CALVIN**
ORUM

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A YEAR

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EDITORIALS

Catholics, Protestants and Divorce

IN a recent issue of *Life* the editor writes one of his trenchant editorials on the family and divorce. He presents facts and statistics which prove the disintegration of the institution of marriage in our day, especially in our country. After having established his thesis which he writes as a sub-title over the article, viz., that in Western civilization the family is seriously threatened and needs material and moral help, he writes a few paragraphs on what he conceives to be the remedy. It is gratifying to see him turn to Christianity. He then speaks in praise of Roman Catholicism; says that to the Catholic the endurance of the family depends upon a thousand-year-old body of canon law; and that that law is "inflexibly fixed on just 11 words of Jesus Christ: 'What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.'" Then turning to the Protestants he informs his readers that the Protestant case was most simply stated by John Milton, who reasoned that marriage is a contract, and "if it is a contract it can be broken." In this way the permanence of marriage is left to the moral sense of the individual. The Catholics being "supported in their position by their ancient orthodoxy," are in this way in a much more favorable position than the Protestants. The editorial closes with the hope that "the strong neo-orthodox movement among the Protestant faiths" may give thoughtful study "toward formulating a modern doctrine to fortify the institution of the family at this time and in this crisis."

One appreciates in this article the frank acknowledgement of the seriousness of the problem of marriage and the evil of divorce. One also is gratified to see the editor of a "secular" magazine turn not only to religion, but to the Christian religion, for a basic solution. We must also recognize that Roman Catholics have a much better record on the score of divorce than do Protestants. Yet we must keep the picture straight.

1. For the true Protestant, just as well as for the true Catholic, the 11 words of Jesus Christ, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" are inflexibly fixed as the basis for the permanence of marriage. Many people are called "Protestants" merely because they do not happen to be Roman Catholics, but in reality such people are not Christians in any real sense of the word. But for the true Protestant the solemn words of Christ as to the sacredness and permanence of

the marriage relation hold as truly as they are said to hold by the editor of *Life* for the Catholics.

2. To quote John Milton as typical of the Protestant attitude toward the permanence of the marriage relation is hardly fair. John Milton, to be sure, was a Protestant. But his view on divorce and remarriage was far from typical of Protestantism. Moreover, it must be observed that historically this position of Milton has had practically no influence upon Protestant ethical thought or moral practice. Here is the statement of an authority on this particular point. "Probably no Christian writer has ever gone so far as Milton in advocating the utmost liberty for Christian men . . . in this matter . . . Marriage is indissoluble only when there is complete and perfect unity of heart and soul between the partners. It may be safely said that the absurdities to which Milton's doctrines would lead if pushed to their logical conclusions are a sufficient refutation, nor does this work of his seem to have had much effect on English thought in his own or any succeeding age." (W. M. Foley in Hastings *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 440.)

3. If one means to laud the Catholic position which holds that no marriage can ever be broken (in theory the Catholics do not allow for any divorce at all) and backs it up with the words of Christ, "What God hath joined together," it should be observed that our Lord also spoke those other words which contain an exceptive clause, viz., "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." This word is spoken at the same time and on the same occasion as the other. See Matthew 19:3-9. Apparently *absolute* unbreakability of the marriage tie, such as the Roman Catholic claims to believe in, was not held by our Lord.

4. Although it is true that Roman Catholics have a better record on the score of divorce than do Protestants, it is not true that the actual evil of divorce is not found among them, even though they call it by a different name. Roman Catholics allow annulment of a marriage and there are a large number of grounds for such annulment. By simply declaring that a marriage, which may have been a going concern for many years, was not a marriage from the beginning because it failed to meet one of the prerequisites which Roman Catholic ethics sets for its validity, the Roman Church can dissolve a marriage as effectively as does divorce, even though it goes by another name. The only difference is that it takes persons in favored positions to obtain such annulment. This is a great evil in the Roman Church, of which the champions

of Catholicism hardly ever speak. Foley, quoted above, says in the same context: "The Reformers . . . pointed out that the strict enforcement of the canon law forbidding divorce had not succeeded in putting an end to the evil; that in the later period the multiplication of grounds on which marriage might be declared null and void *ab initio* (i.e., from the beginning), implying the consequent dissolution of perfectly honorable unions, had really made divorce easier and more common than before, and had become a grave scandal and the source of much immorality."

5. To say that the Protestant position leaves the problem of the permanence of marriage squarely "up to the individual sense of morality, ethics and justice" is very misleading, to say the least. For the true Protestant the ultimate authority before which he bows also on the score of the permanence of marriage is the Word of God—not his individual conscience. Those who in the name of Protestantism claim the right of individual judgment in the modern sense of the autonomy of man, repudiating as they do the authority of the Word of God, are not Protestants in any real sense of the word. They are simply neo-pagans.

What we need for the cure of the evil of divorce is a return to the Word of God and its exalted teaching concerning the marriage relation. Despite differences, we can join hands with all Christians in promoting a return to respect for the ordinances of God for human life. Reverence for God and His Word is the basic remedy.

C. B.

Three Reformed Pillars

IN THIS centennial year of the founding of many Holland-American colonies of Reformed groups throughout the land, we may well pause to reflect upon the whence, the what, and the whither of it all. Americanized in attitude and spirit, these groups still have an identity and character of their own which is inspired by their religious convictions and ecclesiastical loyalties. The spiritual heritage which the present generation has received from the fathers is focussed in their religion, their faith, their ecclesiastical life, their God-centered conception of truth and life and culture. What made our fathers spiritually great was their faith in God and their eagerness to make all of life subservient to the doing of His will. As long as this ideal remains dominant, the Reformed groups of Dutch antecedents will have a task and destiny in this country. As soon as they have lost this heritage, their identity will disappear, and their spiritual destiny will have been liquidated. It is not difficult to see that a virile, sound, wholesome church life will be of determinative influence for the realization of the spiritual task which these Reformed groups have been assigned in the providence of God.

What factors must be stressed to cultivate such a strong church life? What specific task shall we set ourselves to realize this ideal? What policies should be followed, what agencies set in motion to reach this end?

As we view the situation which has developed in these Reformed groups of Dutch antecedents, we believe the history of recent decades has something to teach us. We witness the operation of two trends, two attitudes, two different policies. On the one hand there is the desire to place as little emphasis as possible on the distinctively Reformed teachings, practices, agencies, and institutions. This group is motivated by the desire to conform to the larger denominational groups of our land, such as the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Episcopalians, and the like. Doctrinally this group will readily succumb to Arminianism and a superficial, man-centered religious activism, a road on which Modernism and Humanism are the ultimate stations of arrival. This group is fast losing its spiritual heritage, though it may outwardly still belong to an organized Reformed group. On the other hand, there are those who realize that a genuine Reformed church life can be built only on the solid foundations of intelligent biblical-doctrinal preaching, of faithful church discipline, and of a comprehensive program of consistent Christian education for the youth of the church.

These are the three pillars upon which a strong Reformed Church can be built. The foundation, of course, is the Word of God. Everyone of these three pillars, and consequently the entire structure, rests upon this solid foundation laid by God Himself. But we may truly say that these three pillars are absolutely essential for the raising of a strong Reformed Church.

Pillar number one is a strong pulpit. No church can be strong without strong preaching. That preaching must be biblical, solid, doctrinal. There should be no catering to the superficial tastes of those who want a little moralistic, sentimental talk of 15 minutes. The people of God should be grounded in Scripture, in the truths of the Christian Year, in the great doctrines of the Reformed Faith. There is no excuse for abstract, heavy, uninteresting preaching, but there is even less excuse for superficial preaching that does not deal with the deeper needs of the human soul and the solid food of the Scripture for that soul. The institution of catechetical preaching—whatever improvements it may be capable of—is a sound institution. Those churches who believe and practice this with all their heart are reaping the blessed fruits.

Pillar number two is a comprehensive program of Christian education in home and church and day school. The rising generation should be nurtured in the truths of Reformed doctrine and Reformed ethics every day of the week. Such training should have its foundation in the home, even though that home training is, from the nature of the case, less

systematic and less organized than that given in the church and in the school. Sound catechetical instruction by the church is of the greatest value, both with a view to training youth for spiritual maturity and responsibility and for laying a good foundation for the appreciation of doctrinal preaching from the pulpit. But such Christian training in the home and the church (yes, also including the Sunday School) will be of little benefit unless it is reinforced by a consistently Christian education in the school room throughout the week. A Christian home and a Christian church require as their counterpart a Christian school. The blessed fruits of this conviction and practice have become apparent in recent years wherever this program has been put into operation. The public school cannot be the agency for the training of the youth from Christian homes, and a church which is not deeply convinced of this fact or compromises on this score is only undermining its own foundations.

And pillar number three is church discipline. The church is the fellowship of believers. It is also the temple of God. Through preaching, pastoral care, and personal work each member should be built up in the faith. The Spirit of God will use

these means to initiate and to nurture the spiritual life in the individual members. But when members of the church fail to honor God and His Word and trample upon His commandments, they should be admonished. This admonition must be marked by love, by sympathy, by a deep sense of weakness of the human flesh but also of the all-sufficiency of the grace of God to heal, to save, to redeem. However, when those who have made profession of their faith fail to walk in the ways of God's commandments and will not heed the admonition of the shepherd and office bearers, they must be disciplined and, if necessary, ultimately placed outside of the pale of the organized church. Only a church that believes in and practices discipline maintains the sanctity of the body of Christ. A church in decay is a church without discipline. Lodges have enough self-respect to apply excommunication to dead or discreditable members, and the church of Christ should show that respect for its honored Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Without these three pillars no Reformed Church can flourish or maintain itself in the welter of modern life.

C. B.

Literary Inspiration

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BY ALMOST universal consent inspiration is recognized as a major factor in the creative activity that produces art and literature. I can confine myself to my most recent reading to find confirmation of this statement. In his little lyric "Invita Minerva," Oliver Wendell Holmes tells us that it is useless to woo the muse inasmuch as she steals upon a poet unawares or comes not at all. Such a confession is remarkable when it comes from Dr. Holmes, who, having much of the eighteenth century rationalist in him, would not seem to be moved by the mystical influences that issue in poetical effusions. Hilaire Belloc, a British author of the Roman Catholic faith, in his endeavor to distinguish between John Milton the man and the poet, goes so far as to say that in a measure the poet is independent of the man because he accepts "the mysterious influence" that takes possession of the man and works through him. "The Seed of Poetry," says he, comes not primarily from within but from elsewhere. He actually speaks of the poet as being an incarnation who because of this fact is worthy of awe. Let us add to these two testimonies of recent times that of Shakespeare in his *Midsummer Night's Dream* when he makes Theseus speak of the poet's eye as glancing from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven in a "fine frenzy,"

and that of Shelley when he asserts that no man can write poetry at will and speaks of the creating mind as being like an ember which is fanned into a blaze by an invisible force.

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What do we mean by inspiration? The Latin origin of the word is suggestive; it conveys to us the thought of breathing or blowing anything into another. The dictionary meaning is also very helpful. According to Webster, inspiration denotes "the awakening, quickening, or creative impulse, especially as manifested in high artistic achievement." According to the *Standard Dictionary* the word signifies "the inbreathing or imparting of an idea, emotion, or mental or spiritual influence; the elevating, creative influence of genius." From etymology and lexicon, therefore, there comes to us the idea that by inspiration is meant that specific influence or impulse which stirs up creative activity of an artistic character. Such creative activity constitutes a high moment in the life of an artist or poet and is recognized by those who have been seized by it as a rich and an intense experience which is markedly different from the quality of ordinary experience. As to the cause or the nature of this high moment

or frenzy there may be difference of opinion, but there is unanimity in holding that without it there would be no creative ability.

At this point it may be helpful to differentiate between inspiration and phenomena which seem a good deal like it. When we think of inspiration as a high moment in life, we instinctively invest it with the element of rapture, and we may hazard the conclusion that it is the same as the trance experience of the mystic or at least a phenomenon belonging to the same category. To do so would, I think, be erroneous. According to William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* the mystic trance is, among other things, an indescribable emotional state in which the subject loses his power of initiative and becomes wholly passive so that he drifts on his feelings entirely. And according to the poet Wordsworth the rapture of a mystic, as he describes it in his *Tintern Abbey*, is so overwhelmingly emotional and subjective as to result in the cancellation of the consciousness that the material world is real. Now the poet in the moment of inspiration does have his feelings stirred to an unwonted degree, but neither does he become wholly passive, nor does he lose the sense of the reality of physical being. He remains normal. Wordsworth traces his conviction of being a "dedicated soul" to a trance experience which suddenly seized him early one morning as he returned all alone from a social gathering, but he never identified the rapture with poetic inspiration. Again, we should distinguish between inspiration and vision or intuition. By the former is meant the influence that gives the initial impulse to the making of an "imaginative synthesis"; by the latter, what happens in the soul when its more than normally delicate powers have been aroused and quickened by that impulse.

The descriptions given of the experience of inspiration by poets are sufficiently striking to be interesting. So, for example, Emily Dickinson, noted for her originality and piquancy of utterance, tells us that, if the reading of a book made her body so cold that no fire could ever warm her, or, if it made her feel as if the top of her head were taken off, she knew it to be poetry. Admittedly, she was portraying the effects which the reading of real poetry made upon her; but, if the reading of poetry is accompanied by the unusual bodily phenomena she describes, surely the creative energy which issues in poetry is likely to be marked by still stronger disturbances. Lord Byron speaks of poetry as being the "lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake." The very vividness of these and many other portrayals points to the uniqueness of the experience in which poetry has its origin.

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Our thesis is that the impetus to the act of creation is not human or cosmic, but supernatural in its nature. It is true that in a secondary sense a kind

of inspiration can come from the threefold source of subject matter, man, and circumstance. Truth in its majesty is such that to have it burst upon the mind and to grasp its true character moves the soul as scarcely anything else can move it. Sometimes it is a truly thrilling experience. Again, it requires a soul of more than ordinary delicacy to be susceptible to the true, the good, and the beautiful, all of which is but another way of saying that some are born poets while others are not. Circumstances, too, can be favorable or unfavorable to inspirational influence. No one would deny that the age of Shakespeare, when the Renaissance was at its peak in England, was more conducive to the writing of great poetry than is the present technological age. It is possible that each of these forces operates with an intensity of its own in different poets, one being more sensitive to occasion than to truth, and another with his delicate and alert soul triumphing easily over external obstacles and seeing beauty and meaning where others do not see them. However, by allowing these three forces all the poetic potentiality they deserve one has by no means explained the secret of poetical activity. They are no more than secondary or minor factors in the process. Something still higher and subtler and profounder must be invoked to do justice to the whole phenomenon.

One's view of inspiration depends upon one's view of the universe and in particular upon what one conceives man to be in his relation to God. If one repudiates the supernatural, one is likely to stress the human and the cosmic factors in the process. Inspiration has, for example, been compared to the sudden mustering of all the psychological resources resident in the individual. It has been conceived as being similar to the experience of a boy, who, caught in the act of stealing his neighbor's watermelons, in the moment of peril musters every ounce of energy and agility to effect his escape and runs much faster than he ordinarily does. In other words, a writer must learn to make use of all the latent powers slumbering within him and learn instantly to exercise them at the height of their possibilities. All this suggests a rather brusque way of wooing the muse.

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To account for the mysterious element in the experience of inspiration some have resorted to insanity. They try to explain spiritual exaltation in terms of disease. John Dryden, the English poet, broached this interpretation when he wrote his famous couplet,

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

And was it not Lombroso who regarded genius as a form of insanity? Those who have had an eye for the oddities often displayed by men of genius have not been slow to dub poets "neurotic," "men-

tally unbalanced," "degenerate," and have spoken of poetic excitement as a sort of madness and of poets as madmen. Materialists, of course, can never rise higher than the physical and must interpret the divine afflatus of the artist in terms of bodily sensations.

But literature abounds in explanations of a more idealistic nature. To one who adopts the idealistic philosophy of Hegel, inspiration is the manifestation of the Absolute in the realm of the finite, an aspect of the All differentiating itself into the many, or something like it. To the pantheistic Emerson, it consisted in the sudden influx of the over-soul or deity into the soul of an artist or poet. It was from "Thought's interior sphere" that all the wonders of human genius "rose to upper air," and it was "out from the heart of nature" that there rolled "the burdens of the Bible old." So he sang. The ancient Greeks occupied still higher ground and were far more objective in their conception of the creative impulse. This conception finds classic expression in the well-known line "Est deus in nobis, illo agitante, calescimus." There is a god in us, and, when he stirs us, we glow. The ancients could not escape the conviction that the rapture of inspiration is wrought by a power outside man over which he has no control. Hence, in their imagination they not only created muses, but invoked them as well. In so doing Greek thinkers gave striking evidence of far surpassing our modern pagans, who cannot transcend the human and the cosmic, and some of whom have not shrunk from identifying the deepest within them with deity.

The Christian theist does agree with the Greeks in so far that more than cosmic or human forces and even divine power outside man must be relied on, but he differs from them in going beyond them and in positing the need of the workings of the Holy Spirit. Milton did so when in the opening lines of his *Paradise Lost* he besought the Holy Spirit to instruct him and to illumine him. In this matter he may have imitated his classic models, the epics of Homer and Virgil, but his invocation is more than mere imitation; it is the conviction of a profound reality. To do justice to his sublime theme, the struggle between God and Satan as manifested in the fall of man and its consequences, he felt the need of qualifying grace such as only the Holy Spirit can give. He knew that he could not rise to the "highth of this great argument" and that he could not "justify the ways of God to man" without the Spirit's aid. To make of his epic, so loftily conceived, a theodicy as well as a great poem was more than he could do with his own unaided powers.

To ascribe the impulse to poetic creativity to the Holy Spirit has Biblical sanction. The Holy Spirit is not, as many serious Christians seem to think, merely the spirit of regeneration and of sanctification; He does not confine His gracious operations to the realm of salvation; He also works in the sphere of the natural. He is also the Spirit who,

moving on the face of the deep in the dawn of creation, brought forth cosmos out of chaos; the Spirit who by giving Saul a new heart qualified him for the kingship; the Spirit who gave to Aholiab and Bazaliel the skill to construct the tabernacle; the Spirit who, as we read in Job, garnishes the heavens. With so much Scriptural evidence available we need not hesitate to conclude that it is the Spirit of God who chooses certain mortals for the high task of enriching their fellowmen with their love of beauty and artistic workmanship and who puts into their hearts the wisdom and the skill to qualify them for their high calling.

Here some one might perhaps interpose the objection that according to this explanation the Holy Spirit is responsible for the glorification of vice and untruth in poetry. Such a conclusion is unwarrantable. No one can be held accountable for the evil use man makes of his God-given powers but man himself. The murderer gets his life, his brawn from God, but not his murderous purposes. If a novelist for whatever reason portrays the sensual and the obscene, he does so with the artistic instinct implanted in his soul by the Spirit and maintained by Him, but he as author is answerable for the use he makes of it. Being holy, God never prompts any man to do evil. He may create a genius, but He never suggests sinful interpretations. Moreover, to account for the flouting of morality in literature and the glorification of the bestial and the diabolical we should not forget that Satan is an imitator of God and that by virtue of this fact there is what may be called satanic inspiration.

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Inspiration, even if it is thus loftily conceived, cannot lay claim to infallibility anymore than can the ordinary processes of the mind. The powers of soul with which a poet has been endowed are none other than those of the non-poet. They may differ in degree of alertness, sensitivity, and intensity, but not in kind, and all of them, even when they are fanned into a "fine frenzy" and dash off products of genius, are tainted and weakened by sin. Inspiration is neither regeneration nor sanctification. It does not purge the potencies of the soul from the taint of sin, not even in those moments when they are refined into utmost delicacy, are given deepest insight into the meaning of life, and are stirred into rapture at the sight of the beautiful.

The high virtue of infallibility can be affirmed only of the authors of the books of the Bible. In sacred inspiration it is possible to distinguish four moments or parts: the impulse to write, the suggestion what to write, illumination, and direction. The authors of the sacred books enjoyed the advantage of inspiration in all its parts. The Holy Spirit gave them the impetus to compose, suggested the subject matter, furnished enlightenment or insight into their material, and infallibly directed them in visioning and expressing the truth. Moreover, by

means of the special guidance of the Holy Spirit the authors of Scripture had access to a domain of truth that was hidden from the view of man, was not to be found in nature or general revelation, and could never be discovered by the most ingenious human thinking. This truth had to be supernaturally revealed. The writers of non-sacred literature, on the other hand, shared the first, the second, and possibly to an extent the third element of inspiration, but certainly not the fourth. Theirs is not the guidance that makes their intuition of the truth infallible, nor are they organs of revealed truth. Towering figures like Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, and Goethe, were not inspired in the same way that Moses, Isaiah, John, and Paul were, so that their sublimest utterances cannot be equaled with those of the latter.

Lovers of literature have a way of nourishing a disposition to allow in the name of beauty a good deal of license in the field of morals. In what they are fond of reading they are often ready to condone much that in actual life they condemn. They seem to have a feeling that the inspired writer is in some way exempt from observing the rigors of the moral law. Such a feeling must be condemned. No writer is ever absolved, no, not for a moment, from the duty of obeying the law of God. The fact of his being inspired does not remove him from the ranks of his fellowmen and put him in a special category of supermen over whom the moral precepts have no sway. By being a poet he does not cease to be morally accountable. Rather, his very

distinction increases his responsibility. *Noblesse oblige*. To whom much is given, from him much will be asked. To claim for a literary genius, however great, as the followers of Croce and Spingarn do in the name of self-expression, and as the devotees of the art for art's sake cult and extreme Romantics do, some kind of special dispensation can never gain the assent of one whose artistic instincts have been dedicated to the service of a Holy God and are therefore conditioned by a Christian outlook on life.

Inspiration is not recognized as essential by all schools of literature in an equal degree. The ancient Greeks, in spite of their emphasis on an orderly construction of the universe on the basis of imitation, recognized its need. They saw no conflict between spontaneity and restraint. Rather did their ideal of the beautiful call for a balancing of these opposing forces. Romanticists, on the other hand, are prone to overstress freedom from restraint by virtue of their tendency to make genius and spontaneity the only basic realities in art. Because they insisted that, as Goethe said, feeling is everything, *Das Gefühl ist alles*, they were in danger of making inspiration synonymous with lawlessness. The modern offshoots of Romanticism, whose number is legion, make altogether too much of the principle of spontaneity. Inspiration does not set aside the rules of selection, restraint, and symmetry. The Christian view demands that harmony be maintained between the expansive and the restrictive forces of artistic creation.

Naturalism in Public Education*

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ALTHOUGH many good books advocating the return of the colleges to a traditional general education have appeared since shortly before the late war, Norman Foerster's *The Humanities and the Common Man* deserves attention. It deserves attention, if for no other reason, because Foerster is a writer who did not wait until the totalitarian revolt drove modern man to reconsider the ends of his living, but insisted, well before the spiritual crisis of the late decades came to a head in World War II, that such reconsideration was necessary.

For it was during and after World War I that such American humanists as Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, Norman Foerster, and a considerable number of others, became energetically expressive in their criticism of the prevailing naturalistic bent

of American life and letters. For this criticism they were called The School of New Humanists. This name they resented, first, because they made it a point that there is nothing new about humanism, and, second, because they supposed they were only being intelligent, and could not understand why being intelligent, in an Aristotelian sense, implied the limitations of a *school* of thought. What they stood for and could find no better name for than humanism was only the duty of seeing life steadily and whole, a duty taught, as they saw it, by experience past and present as proper to man.

Preoccupation with nature seemed to them the modern error, preoccupation with God the medieval error. A concern for man, that is, for the rational and moral in man, not with the natural and peculiarly spiritual in him, seemed to them the glory of civilizations at their best, of Periclean Greece, classical France, Elizabethan England, and certain vigorous manifestations of the Confucian Orient,

* *The Humanities and the Common Man*. The Democratic Role of the State Universities. By Norman Foerster. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946. Preface and 60 pages. \$1.50.

among others. They appreciated that the Christian religion was with them in fixing a gulf between the natural and moral in man but observed that historical Christianity had repeatedly gone to extremes, culturally considered, when it lacked the moderating corrective of a critical humanistic philosophy.

Their way of life was mundane, Sophoclean, this-worldly, although they knew that this life is ringed round with mystery, with a something beyond, which perhaps even Sophocles desired greatly to see. Their primary concern was with ethics, an ethics definitive only in so far as it was descriptive of human conduct, morality deriving its sanctions, as they supposed Aristotle saw it, only from the nature or constitution of man. They stood for dualism as opposed to monism in conduct, worked towards standards in the prevailing anarchies of relativism, but hesitated as a matter of humanistic principle to move to the formulation or acceptance of creeds and doctrines.

In their criticism of society they were democratic in maintaining that authority is internal not external to man, but were resolutely opposed to egalitarianism. They were not socialists, for socialism seemed to them an easier principle of community than the human tradition warranted; over against atomistic individualism, however, they kept holding up the classical ideal according to which it distinguishes man that he is social. They opposed humanitarianism, for they considered it born of the Rousseauistic and generally romantic attempt to find man's common humanity in the natural heart rather than in the human mind, as though feelings were a better basis for concord than reason.

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In education, the natural sciences were to them a rewarding area of inquiry but secondary in importance to *litterae humaniores*. These, they held, ought to be the principal formative influence in an education, for they contain in vital form what is close to the center of human significance, and avoid, as Matthew Arnold had argued in effect, the specialized, the abstract, and the humanly unassimilated materials of scientific discovery. But it was humane letters, not *belles lettres*, they thus wanted to dignify, aestheticism being quite as good an instance of being too thoroughgoing in a part at the expense of the whole as those other extremes in modern letters, historicism, scientism, and proletarianism. In the arts they preferred design to color, although they made no fetish of this, sculpture, or plastic art, to music—the Parthenon being, they supposed, a better monument to human poise than a Wagnerian opera—and the drama, concerned as it is or ought to be with man in action, to the novel or lyric poem, concerned as it had come to be with man musing or man dreaming.

Their interest in education, and their interest in literature, art and science as a means to it, was, in

other words, not a specialized interest, not an aesthetic, an historical, a psychological, a social interest: it was a human interest in a human matter. They stood for the middle way, practised moderation, and counteracted extremes. Hence they called for self-discipline in a time of self-expression, and pointed to responsibilities and duties while others spoke of privileges and rights. Moreover, they counselled the use of tradition in a period when experience romantically conceived and science naturalistically conceived seemed adequate substitutes,

As though the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known . . .

Such, though only by and large, for so general description of a movement must do some injustice to the individual differences among its leaders, were the assumptions, such was the dogma, underlying the criticism of modern life and literature by the New Humanists.

The school, if ever it was that, no longer keeps. The energetic Irving Babbitt, whose *Rousseau and Romanticism*, and other books, drew the angry retorts of the aestheticists, expressionists, impressionists, and philologists, died more than a decade ago. Paul Elmer More, whose many volumes of *Shelburne Essays* brought a moral judgment to bear on the evaluation of literature at a time when such a judgment was considered too Puritan to suit most critics, has also died. Only he who in those days appeared in the discussions as the "younger Professor Foerster" carries on in the middle way.

Naturally the assumptions of humanism underlie Foerster's *The Humanities and the Common Man*. In this latest of his several penetrating books on education he is concerned with the responsibility of the State University to everyone who attends it. He shows that the dogma which is dominant at the State Universities is the naturalistic one. This dogma regards man as a part of nature and not distinct from it. It holds that what is good in man is natural, not moral, goodness, and that what is bad in him is owing to natural, not to human, causes. It implies that living the good life is largely a matter of material things, of the machinery of life, of the instruments for obtaining convenience and comfort. It feigns objectivity and neutrality of mind but is in fact obtusely dogmatic. It makes a fetish of research. Moreover, this naturalistic dogma makes for a context of affairs at the Universities in which what is not scientific, naturalistically defined, is merely aesthetic. So the culture which is sometimes named as the end of a general education becomes increasingly contentless and thin. In addition, the dogma fosters vocational utilitarianism, causes the Universities to follow the people instead of leading them, makes common knowledge impossible, substitutes techniques for principles, and in practice lets the administration-wise "educationists" become the controlling influence.

For this naturalistic dogma Foerster would substitute the humanistic one. Such a change would

imply for him that the humanities, broadly conceived, but taught, of course, not as branches of natural science, be made the dominant, though not the only, element in the curriculum for everyone attending the University. It would imply further—and this for Foerster is even more important—that most of the teachers have the humanistic disposition towards man and his world. That is the change he champions. And he lays the responsibility for effecting this change where it belongs: at the door of the legislatures, the regents, the presidents, the deans, and the department heads. These, he shows, if only they could be made to want to, would have it in their power to shift the emphasis from the naturalistic to the humanistic, and so to give the common man who comes to the University for his general education his democratic right to an inheritance of common humanity.

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What is one to say of this, particularly one who thinks that humanism is not enough because the Christian religion is something more, and who thinks that humanism which lacks the religious dimension is not only inadequate but partly false?

He can say, first, of course, that he greatly wishes the naturalistic view of life prevalent at the State Universities could be supplanted as a unifying philosophy and over-ruling idea by the Christian view. Such a change is, however, impracticable, at least for the present and the foreseeable future. The Christian view of life is not available to the State University. To be confirmed in this conclusion one has only to recall the recent *Harvard Report*. The authors of that report, casting about for a suitable unifying philosophy in American school and college education, acknowledged that they could not find one, and explained:

Sectarian, particularly Roman Catholic, colleges have of course their solution, which was generally shared by

American colleges until less than a century ago: namely, the conviction that Christianity gives meaning and ultimate unity to all parts of the curriculum, indeed to the whole life of the college. Yet this solution is out of the question in publicly supported colleges and is practically, if not legally, impossible in most others.

That is, presumably, the fact in the matter. One can say therefore that because Christianity as a system of thought and way of life is *out of the question in publicly supported colleges*, a practicable shift in emphasis from naturalism to Professor Foerster's kind of humanism can be welcomed as an important change for the better. The humanistic is plainly a truer view of life and the world, and corresponds more nearly, therefore, to the Christian view, than the naturalistic. One hopes, consequently, that the persons to whom Professor Foerster directs his clear case will set about effecting the change he proposes in his book.

As for what the *Harvard Report* calls "Sectarian colleges," it is clear that those responsible for the curriculum and faculty of these ought also not to overlook Foerster's argument. For who can deny that there is sometimes a considerable if unintentional disparity between the view of man professed in the catalogues of these colleges as proper to the Christian view and the one actually expressed in the content and organization of the curricula and active in the minds of the teaching staffs? Surely, Foerster is in this respect right in saying that curriculum content and organization, although very important, are less important than the disposition of mind that is dominant in the faculty. In a secular and practical world it is very easy for Christian colleges to oppose naturalism in principle even more vigorously than Professor Foerster, but somehow in practice to substitute the whole post-Baconian welter of interests and occupations for the Aristotelian view of man. Where and whenever that threatens, humanism as discovered in *The Humanities and the Common Man* can serve as a useful critical philosophy.



Albertus C. Van Raalte

1811-1876

John H. Kromminga
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IN THIS centennial year, 1947, our thoughts are drawn irresistibly to the hardy men whose spiritual sons and daughters most of us are. Dr. A. C. Van Raalte was one of a small group of men who loom as prominently in our heritage as the Pilgrim Fathers do in that of the nation as a whole. It is only fitting that our memories should be refreshed and our minds enlightened as to who these men were and what they meant to us. It is our purpose in this article to give a brief sketch of the significance of Dr. Van Raalte for us, and in a following article to take up in greater detail one of the more perplexing questions concerning that significance.

To give a comprehensive biographical sketch of Van Raalte's life is out of the question. We shall content ourselves with glimpses into his life in this country. We can gain a fair understanding of the man and his significance by considering him first as a pioneer, then as a patriot, and finally as an adherent and teacher of the Reformed faith.

Van Raalte the Pioneer

We spiritual descendants of the immigration of 1847 are inclined to look on our religious organizations in this country as comparative upstarts. Perhaps it seems strange to us to speak of any one of our number as a pioneer. This attitude, however, is becoming less correct with each successive year. Just double the number of years between 1847 and the present; go back two hundred years in the history of this nation, and you will find yourself at a stage in history when the Constitution had not yet been written and the War for Independence was still no more than a wild idea in the minds of some undisciplined radicals. The year 1847 itself antedates the Civil War, which some of us are inclined to think of as ancient history. Van Raalte was a pioneer.

His distinction as a pioneer lies not in his prodigious feats of physical strength, but in wise planning and courageous execution of those plans. He had definite ideas as to how a colony ought to be planned and run. He greatly preferred colonization on a large scale—large enough to provide schools, build towns, and establish churches—to individual emigration. It was during a severe illness that he decided to lead a group of people to America. He planned carefully to build a self-sufficient community, where Reformed principles could be given full

expression in life. Viewing the field from a distance, he planned to settle in Illinois or Wisconsin. When he arrived in this country, however, he heard the praises of Michigan sung, and, having investigated its possibilities, decided to locate the settlement there. In choosing the area of Holland for a settlement, he chose deliberately to set up the colony where it might have an independent existence, and yet not be completely isolated from contact and fellowship with American neighbors. In other words, he sought no speedy dissipation of the Dutch heritage, but desired just as little to establish a little Netherlands in America.

Van Raalte the pioneer was of the stuff of which pioneers are made. He braved the rigors of the winter to make a thorough survey of the territory where the settlement was to be. He accompanied the earliest arrivals in their struggles to get some sort of shelter set up. His loyal wife was a great help in this respect, choosing to be with her husband, sharing hardships for which she was ill-equipped, rather than to enjoy the comfort of a settled home and leave her husband to struggle on alone. The trials to which Van Raalte was subjected were neither light nor of short duration. The colony depended to an almost unbelievable degree on his own determination and planning. In his position as spiritual leader and inspiration of the colonists, he witnessed an epidemic of sickness which took a tragic toll; a devastating fire in 1871, which nearly wiped out the growing "city" of Holland; a schism in the church which deeply grieved his soul; the death of his beloved wife; and continuing criticism which left him little peace of mind.

In this situation he made some concessions to wilderness conditions which he might not have made under less constraint. A notable example of this is that, contrary to the Church Order of Dordt, the elders in the church retained their office year after year, not retiring after "two or three years." This situation must have been fostered partly through necessity; but it inevitably led to a degree of dictatorship which, while perhaps necessary, was an evil. The character of Van Raalte, dimly seen through the years, seems to have included some tendencies in the direction of such dictatorial authority. We are told that on one occasion he scolded the congregation for leaving the cemetery in unkempt condition. He declared that if it were not improved within the space of two months, he would improve it himself; but that then the con-

gregation would no longer be permitted to claim ownership of it.

But let us not forget that a strong hand was necessary here in the wilderness. The group of Hollanders who settled in Holland, Michigan, was more heterogeneous than any of the others which came over at that time. To bring harmony out of such potential chaos required a man of strong will and resolute adherence to purpose. Anyone who knows something of the differences between the various provinces of Holland, and the tenacity with which a Dutchman clings to his own methods and convictions, will testify to that fact.

To make a long story as short as possible, the pioneering accomplishments of Van Raalte are witnessed on the occasion of his death, or before that time, by such diverse parties as the authorities of Hope College, the Holland City Council, and the home mission committees of the Reformed Church in America. If we cannot enter fully into the experiences of those times, let us at least concur in these evaluations.

Van Raalte the Patriot

If in later years men would appear who thought lightly of their adopted country, who sought only to milk it of its material riches, who found a refuge in America but left their loyalties in Holland, they were not walking in the path which Van Raalte chose. He was an American. We ought to understand and appreciate the kind of patriotism which he manifested. If the Netherlands government had given him any encouragement along that line, he would have led his party to Java instead of America, and remained a Dutch subject. But once the die was cast in favor of settlement in America, he made up his mind to be as good an American as possible, and strove to lead his people in the same direction.

Perhaps in no respect can this be seen more clearly than in his earnest and diligent efforts to speed his personal Americanization, and particularly to learn the language of the land. He showed ability to get along with the American neighbors with whom he came into contact. He shared the ideal cherished by the noblest spirits among the immigrants; to remain thoroughly Reformed, while at the same time becoming real American citizens. Something of this aim is seen in his choice of a location for the colony; the settlers were to be by themselves, but not so far from others as to preclude fellowship with them.

One of the most stringent tests of the loyalty and vision of any church or churchman is the test of behavior in time of war. Van Raalte passed this test with flying colors. During the Civil War he opposed the institution of slavery and defended the Union from the beginning. His utterances on this subject were so outspoken as to call forth some

sharp criticism from the members of the colony. Two of his sons served in the United States Volunteers. John Van Vleck, writing to Van Raalte in 1863, asks, "Are Benjamin and Dirck still in the army?" When one of these sons left for the army in Kalamazoo, his father spoke words of farewell which indicated that he would rather see him die a hero's death than have him return home a coward. That son lost an arm in battle.

Perhaps if we are to understand his type of patriotism properly, it is only fair to mention that at one time the bitter attacks which he underwent almost drove him to leave Michigan for South Africa. This would seem to indicate that he held no special brief for America. Perhaps we had better evaluate his patriotism as simply a matter of being as loyal as possible to whatever country gave him a home. But what else is patriotism than just that?

For evidence of the success of his pioneering and patriotic labors, we may turn to the tributes paid to him on the occasion of his death, as gleaned from the "Holland City News" of November 11, 1876, and "De Hope" of November 15, 1876. Van Raalte is called, "the founder of our city and colony," just as elsewhere he is given the title, "the father of Classes Holland and Wisconsin" (of the Reformed Church in America). Because of his death, political celebrations were banned in the city of Holland from Tuesday, the day of his death, to Friday, the day of his burial; and this in spite of the fact that an election was just completed. The city council passed resolutions of sympathy and appreciation. The flag at the town hall was flown at half staff during the period of mourning. By order of the city council all business in the town of Holland was suspended on the afternoon of the funeral. The funeral procession was the largest which the city of Holland had ever witnessed up to that time. There were seventy-six vehicles included, besides great numbers of people on foot. The dignitaries who joined in the procession included Hon. T. W. Ferry, Vice-President *pro tem* of the United States.

Thus the city of Holland paid tribute to its founder upon his death. In spite of the criticism levelled against him during his life, he was a man honored and respected by his contemporaries. In their opinion he was the most important man in the early history of the colony of Holland; a notable leader and a real American.

Van Raalte as Exponent of Reformed Truth

Our greatest interest in Van Raalte centers about his character as an adherent and exponent of the Reformed system of truth. For some of us, this is our only point of contact with him, since there are no lineal or strictly ecclesiastical ties which bind us together. Furthermore, this was the distinctive element in the Holland colony, the one feature which sets it apart for us as of special interest. And, to add a final element to our interest in this subject,

his adversaries cast frequent aspersions on his Reformed principles. His connection with the Reformed system merits our closer attention.

Let us examine some of the evidence which we have before us, in the form of documents from Van Raalte's own hand.* In the first of those articles, Van Raalte discusses the Covenant of Grace. He shows a clear understanding and warm appreciation of this characteristically Reformed doctrine. He dwells on the fact that man can bring nothing to this Covenant. Yet, on the other hand, man's assent is essential, in the form of a "willingness to be saved by grace." He enters into a sort of dialectic treatment of this problem, reflecting the difficulty experienced by the Reformed view in harmonizing the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. But of special interest to us is the combination of doctrinal soundness and fervent piety in this article. Having proceeded logically and calmly through eight points of the treatment, he suddenly bursts out in point IX, "O God in Christ, see, here I am! I say, Amen, Amen! On this Covenant, here is where I belong! Yes, Father, I need, I desire, I await grace for grace! Yes, grace for grace, else I will remain forever a child of hellish darkness." One could hardly ask a more satisfying treatment of the Covenant doctrine than this.

The study of the second article is equally rewarding. It concerns doctrinal soundness and creedal loyalty. It manifests a respect for antiquity, but at the same time a willingness to give up everything else for the sake of the truth. Van Raalte looks with horror and aversion on the spirit of sectarianism and schism which he observes. It does grave injustice to the respect which we ought to feel for the historic churches. But at the same time he states emphatically that if the historic churches have become churches without the truth, they are worth nothing. He deplors the watering down of the old truths which he observes here in this country. He finds evidence of a dual standpoint. The same pulpit presents the Bible both as the Word of God, coming with divine authority, and as the Word of God in the sense that all noble literature is divine. He hears Jesus represented on the one hand as the eternal Son of God, paying with His sacrificial death for the guilt of sin, His work of salvation considered as a wonderful new creation. But on the other hand, the same pulpits resound with the

* Graciously loaned to the author by Dr. Albert Hyma.

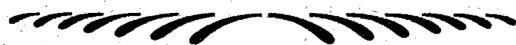
presentation of the shedding of Jesus' blood as a mere example of self-sacrifice, and His salvation of mankind as nothing more than an influence through word and example. In spite of all traditional and antiquarian values, there must be no toleration whatsoever for such a church as this!

We cannot avoid thinking of the Secession of 1857. If these are Van Raalte's principles, there is no essential difference between him and the seceders. He is as much afraid of a wrong kind of "Americanization" as they. The difference then is one of interpretation. He and the seceders differ on the question whether the Reformed Church in America is faithful to the truth or not. The reasons for this difference we will consider in another article. Our only comment here is that this position itself is soundly Reformed.

There is further evidence of his doctrinal position into which we cannot go in detail. There is an article on prayer days in which Van Raalte shows a sound appreciation of the consequences of the separation of Church and State. He warmly champions the idea of prayer offered in company with others. To see a whole congregation, a whole classis, a whole synod praying together is an inspiring and encouraging thing. And by all means the children must attend those prayer meetings, rather than be left behind to go to school. God has intended that they be with us when we worship.

Reformed utterances such as those which we have considered befit such a man as Van Raalte. They reflect his having been born in a parsonage and led toward the ministry from early youth by his father. They are in keeping with the depth of conviction which led him to join hands with those who had seceded from the Hervormde Kerk in 1834. And they enabled him to build well in the land of his adoption; for his concern for church, school, and people was based on principle rather than expediency.

Such a man is the one whose memory we honor. It is time that we appreciate him for what he really was. He was a man of like passions with ourselves. He was capable of making mistakes. To say that his character was wholly lovable would be an unwarranted exaggeration. But he was also very plainly a man who loved God and sought to serve Him. And the past hundred years give ample witness to the fact that the Lord has established the work of his hands.



"Twilight and Evening Bell"

Harold Dekker

Address at Dedication of Carillonic Bells presented by the Calvin Alumni (ae) Association in Memory of Calvin Men who gave their Lives in World War II, by Harold Dekker, Chaplain USNR, Instructor in Speech at Calvin College.

IT HAS been said, "This world is the land of the dying; the next is the land of the living." Surely it is well that we perform these sacred exercises on Easter Day, when this truth is gloriously vouchsafed unto us. For "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." He the firstfruits, and others there shall be! Our departed comrades too shall arise! Their spirits are in the land of the living! There can be no more fitting time than Easter for these things to which we have here set our hands and our hearts.

It seems but a day since those whom we honor walked these halls with ready smile and step so light. They went not eagerly. Their stern task was one unsought. And as they left us their smile was restrained, and their step a bit the heavier. Yet they went willingly, knowing that an inscrutable Providence was both wise and good. They went each to his own Gethsemane of loneliness, each to his own Gethsemane of fear. They have come to know not only the power of Christ's resurrection, but also the fellowship of His sufferings.

Let us pay them our tribute in the words of the divine oracle at Patmos, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." And of such works the holy apostle Paul speaks when concerning the resurrection he says, "Ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Their works do follow them, and not in vain!

These our honored dead served their country in many ways. Six were in the air, piloting fierce eagles of the sky. Three sailed the perils of the deep in many waters. Eleven trod wearily the rock and mud of strange lands. It is noteworthy that three were doctors of medicine, ministering to wound and sickness in the highest tradition of Christian mercy.

At many battlefronts they fought. Through the dreary ravines of Italy and into the bleak and bitter Bulge they marched, and they fell. One fell in the steaming jungle of New Guinea, one on the rain swept plains of Leyte, and another on the sodden ash that was Iwo Jima. Into a smothering cushion of flak and into the uncoffined blue of the sea they sank, and died. "Yea and their works do follow them."

But let us not now recount their exploits or speak of their battle honors, even though that were possible. Surely the best of their deeds must remain unheralded and untold. The finest of their devotion—that to the souls of their comrades—is recorded only in the book of heaven. The medical officer who also served as chaplain aboard his destroyer is only typical of many who freely testified by word and deed of the faith that was in them. The Word which they had received was not only a lamp to their own feet, but also a light to the path of others. Someday shall be fully revealed the shepherding love of those who themselves knew the Good Shepherd, and tenderly laid the faltering hands of their fellows upon the staff that could comfort in the shadow of death.

We have lost much! Among our departed comrades there may be one who would have discovered the cure for cancer; one to write a symphony of grace in the movements of sin, deliverance, and gratitude; or one to preach in the manner of Chrysostom and Spurgeon. At the least we have lost the fellowship and service of God's children on life's pedestrian way: the diligent hands of an artisan, the fruits of a steward in business, the patient voice of a teacher, the healing touch of a physician, and the sacred word of a minister. We have lost much!

And yet our loss is small compared to that of those who are here our honored guests, the families of the deceased. Who can calculate their loss? There is the missing son who would have been a support to his widowed mother or a stay to his lonely father, always a joy to brothers and sisters. There is the empty place of a husband and father, tender and only beloved to wife and children. What shall we say to these things? Words permit us only to proffer our deepest sympathies and commit them to the infinite mercies of our loving Heavenly Father.

But we must not dwell on our loss as we think of those who have passed from us. Our loss is their gain! Hear the Easter message in this sacred and solemn hour: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." We are in the land of the dying; these our brethren are in the land of the living! Let the bells which we here dedicate speak of these things. What more appropriate memorial might there be than this carillon? These men knew no bells in their passing as most men do. Where funeral bells were unheard there sounded in their interment only the grim tribute of volleyed rifles.

Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar* gives us a fitting sentiment:

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark."

"Twilight and evening bell . . . and may there be no sadness . . ." May there be no sadness! Let these bells sound no dirge, but peal with restrained joy for those who have passed to the land of the living!

It remains for us in the land of the dying to heed the solemn injunction of these things. The words of Lincoln at Gettysburg speak fittingly, "It is for us here to be dedicated to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Let us rekindle the altars of noble purpose from these living coals of memory. Let us who served under arms seek to recapture the grim inspirations of crouching in a fox hole, of seeing a hospital ship unload, of speaking to a dying man, or of walking in a cross-studded cemetery. Let those who tended lonely home fires think of vigils and prayers and tears, and of high resolve then formed. Within the portal of these sacred things let us call reverently

to mind the vows we uttered unto the Lord when we were in distress. Those whom we now remember cannot pay their vows. Is not our responsibility thus the heavier?

Let us rededicate ourselves to the cause of peace. Let us live peaceably with men and nations, knowing that this is the will of our God. Let us love all peoples of the world with a love that ministers to the hungry, the naked, and the homeless. Let us pray for peace in our time. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Let us preach the gospel for peace, yes the Easter message, for the only true hope for one world is one Lord!

But at the same time let us not look away from the stern realities of our troubled world. A farmer once compelled his horse to pull him across a creek when the stream was swollen. Returning, the water had subsided, but old Dobbin didn't want to cross again. Said the farmer thoughtfully, "Dobbin, your memory is better than your judgment." God forbid that if freedom should again be violently challenged in our time, our memory would be found better than our judgment!

Friends of God and country, we are challenged by the Word of God concerning heroes of faith, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

From Our Correspondents

ANOTHER CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

SOMEWHERE I have read, but where I forget, that the last service in the Dutch language held by the descendants of the emigrants who came from the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, occurred about the year 1835. That means that at least in some corner of the State of New York men clung to the use of the language of the fathers for nearly two hundred years after emigration came to a standstill. The experience of the past twenty-five years shows conclusively that history is not likely to repeat itself on that score. The number of churches in which the Gospel is still proclaimed in the Holland language is small, and the audience is composed almost exclusively of the older generation.

This being the situation, the Centennial Committee, which has arranged for a number of meetings to be held at Holland, Michigan, in commemoration of the coming of Van Raalte and his followers in 1847, no doubt wondered what response there might be to the invitation to attend the Dutch service scheduled for the 9th of March. The brethren must have been gratified, for the commodious Hope Memorial Chapel was virtually filled with worshippers.

The service was in charge of Dominee Bastiaan Kruithof, pastor of the First Reformed Church. The "Voorzinger", Wm. Brouwer, led us in the singing of several Psalms during the course of the service, the accompaniment being provided by Mrs. W. C. Snow. The two veteran editors of the *Heidenwereld*, Drs. S. Vander Werf and H. Beets, also took part in the pre-

liminaries. A choir had been provided which sang three stanzas of Psalm 66. The sermon, or address—a combination of both—was delivered in very precise and beautiful Dutch by the editor of THE CALVIN FORUM, the theme being: "After One Hundred Years—Our History and Our Calling".

It drew its inspiration from Deuteronomy 8:2, 10, in which Israel is challenged by Moses to remember how Jehovah had blessed and to beware lest there should be a departure from the safe path upon which it had been set.

The distinguished speaker spoke of the past first of all, and called upon us as grateful children of the pioneers to consider particularly: the character of the pioneers, the leaders whom they followed, the suffering they experienced, and the growth of their colony.

Our History

The pioneers who originated the many settlements in Western Michigan were, very largely, Christians who knew God as their highest good. They were, specifically, Reformed people who had separated themselves from the State Church for conscience sake only a few years before. They were considered outcasts by many of their fellow-citizens who did not understand their loyalty to the truth and ridiculed them. Economic as well as religious motives contributed to their decision to break away from the fatherland to seek a home in the new world.

Outstanding among the leaders was the Rev. A. C. Van Raalte, short of stature but powerful in word and deed. A born

leader was he, as is evident from all the information that has come down to us. He was the heart and soul of the colony, understanding, patient, willing to suffer, courageous, broadminded—an unusual man and a great leader.

The suffering which the pioneers experienced in those early years were recounted. Transplanting cultured people to a wilderness of forest and swamp was bound to bring grave problems. Death stalked about and soon garnered a rich harvest, while those still living looked on aghast, scarcely having the strength to bury the dead. In despair they cried to God Who heard their prayer, sending relief.

Phenomenal have been His blessings upon that little colony. The colonists founded towns and villages, and covered the countryside with beautiful farms. They lived carefully, frugally, and were blessed abundantly in a material way. Today the emigrants and their children constitute a group of close to a third of a million scattered throughout the country. Last year, in so far as they are found in the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches, they contributed over two million dollars for "outside" causes, such as missions, philanthropy, and higher education, in addition to providing for their local ecclesiastical and educational needs.

Of other matters the speaker spoke, all of them indicating the great advances made since Van Raalte and his followers knelt near the shore of Lake Macatawa to give thanks to God for having led them to their new home. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.

Our Calling

The tenth verse of the above-mentioned chapter was used to point us to the glorious task to which God's guidance, experienced in the past, urges us. What is this task? It is none other than to preserve the spiritual heritage that is ours. We were challenged to be true to the faith of our fathers not only, but having enriched it by means of our own consecrated living and thinking, to pass it on to the generations following.

Our material prosperity is to be placed upon the altar of thanksgiving and must be employed in the interests of God's Kingdom. We stand in danger of becoming so engrossed in the matter of making a living that we forget the deeper needs of the soul. Many indeed have become worshippers of Mammon, and have drifted along with the stream of materialism. Let us recognize that danger and do all in our power to keep proper balance. We have made rapid progress materially, are we doing the same spiritually? We have beautiful homes and churches, but in matters religious we tend to traditionalism and superficiality. Beware! Remember that God must have the place of preëminence in our lives.

Our second task is to maintain our Reformed Confession fully and to apply it everywhere. Van Raalte's desire was not only that his people should make advances materially, but especially that they should propagate the Reformed world-and-life-view. Spiritual development as well as freedom of worship were ideals that impelled the pioneers to leave their fatherland. Are we, their descendants, faithful to this program? Do we preach with enthusiasm the distinctive Reformed point of view on such important doctrines as sin and atonement? Let us beware lest we store the faith of our fathers away in a chest to take it out for purposes of display once in a century.

The Christian training of youth was referred to as an absolute essential for the maintenance of our distinctiveness. Van Raalte was eager to have the colonists live together in villages, having their farms round about, so that the children might be able to attend the Christian schools that would be established in the center of each settlement. This ideal was not at once realized. Circumstances retarded the founding of independent Christian Schools. The situation has changed. To be true to the high ideals of the pioneers we now, if ever, need schools which provide a specifically Christian training. There can be no doubt where Van Raalte would stand on this issue if he were with us today.

In higher education everything must be viewed in the light of God's revelation. Much depends upon our colleges whether this

insistence shall be maintained. We must develop a Christian culture. All must be made subservient to our King. Humanism is a strong force, and only by a very specific Christian training can we counteract its pernicious influence.

The speaker warned against coöperation with groups that have no use for our Reformed principles. In every realm of activity let us seek to enthrone Christ as King. Not only in the sphere of education but also in that of government and labor relations this must be realized. To that end let us labor and we shall be true to the highest ideals of Van Raalte and his followers.

What sort of picture will our people present when another hundred years has passed? We do not know. We do know that God has His promises for the faithful, but also His threat for the unfaithful. Let us heed the lesson of history.

"As long as heaven stands on pillars firm and sure,
So long shall David's seed through endless years endure.
But if his children e'er forsake My law appointed,
And walk not in the ways decreed by Mine Anointed,
Then truly will I come in holy indignation
And chastise them with rods for all their provocation."

CORNELIUS WITT.

Holland, Mich.

FROM THE BRITISH ISLES

15 College Square, East,
Belfast,
Northern Ireland,
March 12th, 1947.

Dr. C. Bouma,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

THE people of the British Isles are passing through a period of hardship and uncertainty. Of course, this is not the first time in history that the British have been faced with an economic crisis, yet we feel that the present position of our islands is very serious. Socialism is now having an opportunity to show us what it can do—and so far we are not impressed. The Calvinists of Britain and Ireland are very perturbed as they view the career of this "Labor" Government. We readily admit that the present Government stepped into an extremely difficult situation, and that great skill and foresight was needed, and we heartily deplore the unfair criticisms which have been hurled upon the Socialists by those who seem to forget we have been at war for six years. Yet, having noted these points, we feel very strongly that the Socialists have made some inexcusable blunders, and displayed a sad deficiency in foresight. The Editor of *The Monthly Record* of the Free Church of Scotland in his "Current Topics" this month writes: "Our rulers' handling of the food situation seems quite unintelligible to the ordinary mind, and the normal laws of reason do not seem to apply. It will be within memory that this country received credit of a little under 1000 million pounds from the United States presumably for—in the main—the purchase of food supplies. What we seem to be getting—in the main—are tobacco and films!"

The Editor of the *Irish Evangelical* gives front-page prominence to the present crisis, under the caption, "Hear Ye the Rod." He produces statistics from a recent Government White Paper, which shows "we are spending £27,000,000 a month more than we earn." During the latter half of 1946 "we spent in U. S. A. £39,000,000 on tobacco and £9,000,000 on films, but only £5,500,000 on machinery." This means that "32% of the American loan is being spent on tobacco, 7% on films, while only 24% is spent on food and 5% on machinery." The Editor points out that God is forgotten by the people. Part of our harvest was destroyed by prolonged rain, bread rationing came, and yet people have not bowed the knee. He concludes "God has made the voice of His rod to be heard again. And He has plenty of arrows in His quiver still. 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled.' 'It is time to seek the Lord.'"

"Why Be An Ape"

That is the title of a book written by "A London Journalist", Mr. Newman Watts. This little book (124 pp.) was first printed in 1938, and has now been reprinted and revised. It is published by Uplift Books, Ltd., Croydon. Admiral Sir George F. King-Hall in a short preface writes: "This book will do much to convince the mass of the people who accept the theory of evolution, because they read only one side of the subject, that the dogmatic statements made by the supporters of this popular scientific doctrine are built on a series of hypotheses which, when honestly investigated, prove to be but a foundation of sand."

The book is written for the masses, and can be enjoyed by all. The "London Journalist" does not mince his words, and employs his humor throughout. Six cartoons add "pep" to the book. On the Ethics of Evolution the author has some splendid statements. Here are two samples:

"What does Godless evolution hold for the future? Nothing but spiritual blindness and moral corruption; nothing but the madness of material forces, wielded by unthinking minds crammed with evolutionary ideas; nothing but cynicism and despair, a struggle for existence, and annihilation at the end!" (p. 108.)

"Evolution is an easy way to the land of nowhere. Its pathway is strewn with attractive hypotheses, but its end is a desert mirage. Christianity, on the other hand, may involve a hill difficulty, but it does lead to the Celestial City. The evolutionist is bound by the chains of material things; he is a helpless pawn in the hands of an impersonal, mechanical force. The magic carpet of 'progress' takes him he knows not whither, and the only pleasure he gets out of the process is the delight of drifting aimlessly towards the future dream castle of oblivion." (p. 123.)

We trust that God will use this book to counteract the evolutionary "drive" of the B.B.C. and many school-teachers who are scientifically "out-of-date."

Greetings from Calvinists this side of the Atlantic,

Yours in His Service,

FRED. S. LEAHY.

THE SITUATION IN INDIA

The Editor-in-Chief,
THE CALVIN FORUM.

Dear Sir:

AS I sojourn in this busy progressive land of America and let my thoughts turn from time to time to my native India, some words a college professor of revered memory uttered over thirty years ago come back to me with astonishing clarity. He said, in effect, that a distant perspective is invariably the truest view one gets of a scene or object. This would appear to be true also of mental images based on factual evidence. For as I study newspapers and letters from kinsfolk and friends in India, the picture formed in my mind of the current situation over there seems to be more comprehensive and possibly less fogged than was the case when we lived on the mission field at Adoni a year ago.

The British Premier's recent announcement in the Commons and the substitution of Mountbatten, King George's cousin, for Wavell as Viceroy can, I believe, be taken as an earnest of Britain's firm intention to commence evacuating India at once. And it is also fairly obvious that the Nehru-Jinnah combine at New Delhi, despite their mutual disagreements and religious differences, is set on a complete severance of connection with England. India thus seems committed to a future in which she will be wholly independent and, probably, severely isolationist in policy—for the next decade or two, at any rate. In this connection, those of us who are realists as well as patriotic sons of *Bharata-Matha* (Mother India) hope fervently that the new national government, whatever its composition, will be strong enough and wise enough to take care of internal troubles.

As we go about lecturing on India and the missionary effort there, a great many questions are put to us, indicating the

Christian public's evident interest in the general subject. As a humble ambassador from Christian India, I naturally appreciate my American friends' interest in matters concerning my country and would like to take the opportunity of commenting on two of the most salient points raised.

Firstly, as to the likelihood of civil war breaking out after the British have withdrawn, I would hesitate to say that such a contingency was impossible. Any form of internecine strife would technically be possible when a weak and untried administration is substituted for a strong and experienced one which for over a century and a half kept a sub-continent reasonably peaceful and secure from foreign aggression. The probability, however, is that there will be no civil war in India for the simple reason that the British are actually on the way out, thus removing the main cause for any general uprising on the part of the people against "foreign domination." There would be little sense in even the most violently anti-British elements instigating a rebellion against the British when these erstwhile rulers are actually in the process of dropping the reins. Local disturbances in the large industrial cities are, however, likely to continue for some years to come. And it would be pertinent to mention that most of the rioting of recent months has been proved to have had its origin in the deep-rooted religious differences which exist between Hindus and Muslims. Even when these intercommunal disturbances are unimportant to begin with, they are frequently fanned to a white-heat by interested parties, (e.g. by communists and political extremists) and a comparatively small fracas often grows into a civil disturbance of great proportions.

Secondly, regarding the effect of the new set-up in India on Christian work, I shall deal with the question separately as it falls naturally into two parts.

1. I do not believe that there will be any general persecution of Christians or confiscation of church or mission property except perhaps that British missionaries and educators who are openly unfriendly to the new regime may be forced to sell out their holdings in real estate. The work of the churches will probably continue substantially as heretofore, but in the case of Christian education it is likely that the teaching of the Scriptures may be confined to Christian students who usually form only 25% of the enrolment in Mission high schools and colleges. It is also possible that, in time, foreigners may not be permitted to preside over Christian institutions, but it is most unlikely that their participation in Christian work will be prohibited so long as they do not interfere in politics.

2. In the realm of work among pagans, some curtailment in the scope and thrust of Gospel preaching may be expected. Preaching in public places, for instance, may not be permitted, nor the distribution of the Word of God to non-Christians. Christian propaganda by doctors and nurses in Christian hospitals may be frowned on, but otherwise, as Mahatma Gandhi himself has repeatedly declared, American teachers, doctors, nurses and other categories of Christian missionaries will continue to be admitted to India on their verbal promise not to interfere in matters of state.

The foregoing should reassure all those who have at heart the great work of extending Christ's Kingdom all over the world and I for one do not fear interruption of any consequence in this task which was begun three centuries ago in South India.

It is good to be back in America with its civilization and its ordered way of life and to be able to tell of our missionary labors to Christian audiences. The numerous contacts made have helped to make the strain and tedium of the long journey from India worth while. And, on the less serious side, the renewing of old friendships has been a joy, while to hear the Calvin choir and orchestra render "The Elijah" so beautifully a few nights ago was a veritable feast to the soul. But most of all, I appreciate the unfailing kindness and goodwill shown me by my fellow Calvinists in and around Grand Rapids, and

look forward to a continuance of these happy relations for at least another five months.

Please accept my sincere good wishes for yourself and the Forum staff in your selfless labors.

Fraternally yours,

ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

611 Evans St., S.E.
Grand Rapids 6, Mich.

REFORMED THEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND

Presbyterian Maori Mission,
Te Teko,
Bay of Plenty,
New Zealand,
15/1/47.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

SOMEHOW or other the regular arrival of THE CALVIN FORUM pricks my conscience and I am made aware of the fact that another issue has gone by and I have neglected to send you any word of activities in this far-off country. It is not that nothing ever happens in the Church life of this Dominion, but simply my own neglect. On the contrary there are so many things of importance to the Church that it is difficult to make a selection which will be of interest to CALVIN FORUM readers.

Let me tell you of a most worth-while Retreat for ministers which was held at Rotorua last year. Those who are conversant with the Tourist Companies' literature may be aware of the fact that Rotorua is the center of New Zealand's thermal wonders. There in the midst of winter's cold we were made very comfortable in centrally heated rooms. Professor John Henderson, Ph.D., Professor of Theology and Church History in the Presbyterian Theological Hall, Knox College, Dunedin, was the lecturer and he gave us ample proof of the reason of his popularity among the students for the ministry. Dr. Henderson came to the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand a little less than two years ago but already he is leaving the stamp of his personality and zeal for sound scholarship upon the lives of the young men under him. Let it not be thought that because of the popularity he is winning for his own subject, Theology, that the Professor provides a light meal for those dining at his table. Far from it; but he has the genius of being able to present some of the most profound truths of our Faith in a form that can be readily grasped. It is this gift, together with that of his own gracious, approachable personality, which mark him out as the teacher par excellence.

In all, he delivered four lectures to us, after each of which there was a period for questions and discussions. In view of the proposed conference on "Faith and Order," sponsored by the National Council of Churches, which is to be held in 1947, Dr. Henderson decided to give us three lectures on (1) The Church, (2) The Ministry, (3) The Sacraments. Of course it was impossible for him to do more than give an outline of each subject but he gave us sufficient to make us feel that we should be more sure of our own Reformed position than we had been. Answering the question, "What is the nature of the Church?" he elaborated under three sub-headings (a) The New Israel, the inheritor of the promises of God. (b) The Church is created by the Word. The creative agent, he said, in the upbuilding of the Church of Christ is the Word. (c) The Church is constituted by its relation to Christ. Then followed an able lecture on "The Ministry." It could be summed up in Dr. Henderson's own words: "The Word, The Holy Spirit, The Church, these determine the nature of the Ministry; all other things are subservient to these. Our Church (The Presbyterian

Church of New Zealand) holds two essentials (a) The Call of Christ. (b) The Commission of the Church. When Dr. Henderson passed on to give us his last lecture in this series he began by quoting to us Calvin's classic definition of a sacrament. Then followed a most enlightening elucidation of many of the points mentioned by Calvin in *The Institutes* concerning the Sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

Professor Henderson stated that he considered Calvin's writings in Book IV, Chapter 17, as the best treatise ever written on The Lord's Supper. Incidentally, the Professor, when urging the ministers to read, learn, and inwardly digest the contents of *The Institutes*, said, "I know of no other book on Christian doctrine which repays careful and conscientious study." Without a doubt our learned and distinguished Professor has brought Calvin and his works right into the center of ministerial study. In his concluding address Dr. Henderson gave a most interesting resumé of many of the recent books now reaching our country. He said he had begun to realize why New Zealand ministers could not buy many of the books under review as the price in New Zealand was so prohibitive. It may be interesting to American readers to know that a book costing 2 dollars in America would cost a New Zealand minister approximately 16/6d. There is certainly some disadvantage in living so far away from the center of publication. Well now, to sum up Professor Henderson's series of lectures, I would say that it is a long time since New Zealand ministers have had the privilege of listening to such educative and stimulating lectures on sound Reformed principles. To hear them only whetted one's appetite for more.

The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand met in November last. There were many important decisions arrived at but none more important than the appointment of the Rev. George A. F. Knight, M.A. (Hons), B.D., minister of Ruchill Church, Glasgow, as the new Professor of Old Testament Studies in the Theological Hall, Knox College. On reading the testimonials submitted by the various applicants for the chair, one could not help but feel that excellent as were the qualifications of many of the men, Mr. Knight seemed to be the man for our New Zealand Church. Incidentally, I understand that Professor Henderson considers the appointment first class. From 1935-1941 the new Professor was in charge of the Budapest Mission of the Church of Scotland and with three ministerial colleagues was responsible for some 20 Bible Classes weekly; instruction of enquirers amounting to some scores at times; organization of conferences for ministers throughout the Balkans on the Jewish question; responsible for all non-Aryan refugees from Germany in Hungary; agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland in Hungary and Jugoslavia; minister to the British colony and Legation; delegate of the Reformed Church of Hungary to Slovakia and Ruthenia in a series of missions to investigate the complaints of the Hungarian Reformed Church of Slovakia to the Czechoslovakia Government. This is quite a formidable list of recommendations for a young man of thirty-seven. His testimonials include those of three ex-Moderators of the Church of Scotland, and seven University Professors or lecturers. Many of us are confident that in G.A.F. Knight we will be as richly rewarded in Reformed scholarship as we have been in Professor Henderson. God grant that so it may be!

I trust that what I have written may provide a little enlightenment for your readers on the movement within this Church of ours in N. Z.

With warmest Christian greetings,

Yours sincerely,

JOHN N. SMITH

The Voice of our Readers

ON TEACHING DOCTRINE

Editor, THE CALVIN FORUM.

Dear Sir:

I READ Professor Henry Van Til's article, "On Teaching Doctrine," with interest, partly because I myself am a student at Calvin, but also because the article deals with the subject of the student's apathy toward courses in Reformed Doctrine. The article was open and frank. It has much merit. However, as a college student I would like to supplement Professor Van Til's observations with a few reflections of my own.

There should indeed be concern about the indifference of students toward technically formulated church doctrine. However, should not the instructor be more concerned when he finds the students are lukewarm about vital, self-explicit biblical doctrines? I may be permitted to use a comparison. A physician would understand why the average person might be uninterested if that physician should try to explain the anatomy of the human body. However, this same physician should become very much concerned if a person would be indifferent toward his advice on hygiene and health precautions. I am inclined to believe the trouble exists at the point of indifference toward vital biblical doctrines.

Perhaps Professor Van Til has indicated the cause of this condition when he asks: "Have we perhaps separated these doctrines from the Living Word and presented them as the dry-as-dust intellectual constructions of a dead past?" If this is the case, then he has in this connection wisely suggested a solution. He writes: "Thus instead of dealing with every doctrine in detail and emphasizing them all, one can well afford to pick certain crucial ones and make them live in the minds of the students, e.g., the Incarnation, the Atonement, in Christology."

In stating that students appeared more interested in subjects other than Reformed Doctrine, Professor Van Til may have overlooked another reason why this is the case. Most students at Calvin College come from Christian Reformed homes, which means that they have received instruction in Reformed doctrines at least for eight or nine years in catechism, in school, and in the church. Certain truths are like the ABC, as Henry Ward Beecher observed, which should not be taught and retaught. Such truths, like the ABC, should rather find their end in a profitable application in a Christian's life. Also the Apostle Paul stressed the difference in talents in various individuals. Realizing this, the Apostle labored to make these individual differences find their profitable use in the circle of Christian society and conduct.

And so the mere fact that a student is more interested in medicine than in church doctrine is no cause for alarm. One's Christianity should not be determined by one's attitude toward technically formulated theology. The Apostle Paul wrote: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23.)

Professor Van Til observed that we should first master the interpretations of scientific ecclesiastical thinkers before we turn to our private interpretations. On the surface, one would agree. But further reflection on this raises questions in one's mind. Should not the statement be qualified? True, we should accept the labors of ecclesiastical thinkers provided they arrive at a common body of theology. But is it the sum of their common intellectual efforts that educed this common ground, or is it that they, each individually, felt the need by faith to accept this common body of truth which is self-explicit in the Bible, especially in John 14:6? The latter, it seems to me, approximates the truth, all of which means that I am duty-

bound to have as my starting point not the amassed formulations of subsequent Bible theologians, but rather the Bible itself.

This is not to be interpreted as the negation of the place of Christian thinkers and writers in our study. Not at all. Yet, we must be cautioned not to limit ourselves to a certain group of religious thinkers, as if they have a monopoly on divine truth. This erroneous assumption has led to frictional relationships toward other Christians in actual life. Emerson wrote correctly: "Our life is an apprenticeship to truth."

Interest in courses of doctrine could undoubtedly be stimulated by introducing comparative study, as this is unavoidably present in other courses. True appreciation arises rather from comparative evaluation than from insisting on unexamined assumptions.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

JOHN H. SIETSEMA.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE O. P. C. CONTROVERSY

1505 Race St.,
Philadelphia 2, Pa.,
April 7, 1947.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

THE letter from the Rev. Edward Heerema in the April, 1947, issue of THE CALVIN FORUM, entitled "The Controversy in the O. P. C.", brings out into the open certain aspects of the controversy that are important for Calvinists in other churches. It is to be expected that Mr. Heerema would present the issues as he sees them since he has consistently supported the position of the erstwhile complainants in the "Clark Case". In fairness to the majority group in the O. P. C. who vindicated the position of Dr. Clark when the case was finally decided in the 1946 General Assembly, our attitude on fundamental issues ought to be presented to the Christian world.

Mr. Heerema's argument in a nutshell is that he and the Westminster Seminary group, who were the complainants in the "Clark Case", are the defenders of "institutions that are committed to the vigorous propagation of" the Reformed Faith, while those of us who defended Dr. Clark against the "complaint" were actuated by ulterior motives of trying to secure his ordination as a part of a "program of action" which included the aim of securing the control of Westminster Seminary and the *Presbyterian Guardian*, and were led by a group of men, two of whom take a "faulty and weak attitude toward the autonomous will of man that lies at the heart of Arminianism."

Throughout the article is an irritating implied assumption that they are the true defenders of the Reformed Faith while we, their opponents, are not really Reformed either in belief or practice. To be sure, he states that he "would not be understood as questioning the sincerity of the above-mentioned men in their profession of the Reformed Faith," but he then goes on to say, "But that their views on the important matter in question are erroneous appears to the undersigned to admit of no serious doubt." The "erroneous" views in question are their "faulty and weak attitude toward the autonomous will of man," and Dr. Clark's alleged "notion of the autonomous intellect of man." Both of these views are said to be "quite out of harmony with Reformed theology's unqualified attitude on this fundamental and cardinal point" of making any "concession to the autonomy of man." In other words, they are "Reformed" while we are not.

This attitude which Mr. Heerema holds is quite typical and no doubt sincere. For many years any disagreement with the

"party line" has been considered as "not truly Reformed." The idea that any theological position which differs from the theological position which they hold might conceivably be "Reformed" never seems to be considered as a possibility by these gentlemen.

Before stating our views of the controversy in the O. P. C. it is necessary to reply to some of the statements made by Mr. Heerema.

In the first place, we wish to assert our complete agreement with the doctrinal system of the Westminster Standards in the plain and obvious meaning. We disagree, however, with some of the inferences which the erstwhile complainants in the Clark Case made from certain parts of those standards. We accept the absolute authority of the Word of God and follow the grammatico-historical method of exegesis of the Bible. We disagree, however, with some of the exegeses made by these gentlemen, because we think that they are forced and unnatural interpretations of certain passages.

In the second place, we deny any belief in "the autonomous will of man" and deny that either we or Dr. Clark hold or have held to any "notion of the autonomous intellect of man." Dr. Clark never "freely admitted . . . that he gets his definition of truth, not from exegetical considerations, but from 'common sense'" as Mr. Heerema asserted (p. 198). The passage in the "Transcript" to which Mr. Heerema doubtless referred was not discussing the Biblical teaching or Biblical definition of truth, but discussing the English meaning of the word "truth", an entirely different matter. Dr. Clark has repeatedly stated that he accepts the authority of the Scripture over all intellectual activities of man. He never has set up the human intellect as the judge of the doctrines clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

The "Program of Action"

In the third place we deny that the "program of action" to which Mr. Heerema refers (p. 196) was antecedent to the Clark Case, and that its promoters set out to secure Dr. Clark's ordination in order to further that program. That program of action was never secret nor underhand. So much has been made of it in the letters of Mr. Heerema that it is time it was published. It consisted of the following points, and was circulated among many ministers of the church in mimeographed form: "1. Preservation of the ideals that characterized our Church when it was formed in 1936,—namely, to be a spiritual succession to the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., actively to combat Modernism, and to engage in a program of aggressive evangelism; opposition to efforts working against these ideals, for example, agitation for exclusive use of Psalms, for use of fermented wine in the Communion, for restricted or "closed" Communion, for subscription to the whole Confession of Faith by the laity as a condition of Church membership.

2. Appreciation of other Christian groups which stand for the Word of God, and readiness to cooperate with them in things of coinciding interest and concern.

3. A keeping alive of the Scriptural principles affirmed by the Rochester General Assembly (1942) in its statement on the expedient use of Christian liberty.

4. Recognition of the principle that the Church is of first consideration, and that organizations and agencies vitally and directly contributing to its life and work should be subordinated to it and supervised by it.

Our Church in instance after instance has been led away from these objectives, and it is high time the Church reset her course.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

(In timely application of the above:)

1. The ordination of Dr. Gordon H. Clark.
2. Affiliation with the American Council of Christian Churches.
3. An official effort or deliverance against the Liquor Traffic today.
4. Seek for Church supervision over Westminster Seminary and the Presbyterian Guardian. (Notice that this was not an attempt by a group to control them.)

As to Dr. Clark

In considering this program the chronology is important. Dr. Clark applied for licensure and ordination in the early part of 1943. He was examined by the committee on candidates of the Philadelphia Presbytery that spring, and rejected by that committee. He was examined before the whole presbytery in an all-day meeting that lasted until late at night, and *passed for licensure* on March 20, 1944. He could not be licensed then because one-fourth of the members present protested his examination in theology, thus automatically holding up further action until his examination at a subsequent meeting, when only a majority vote would be needed to pass him in theology.

Now this "program of action" was first conceived by four ministers in consultation on April 18th, a month after Clark had been *passed for licensure* by a large majority of presbytery. After sending out the first section in mimeographed form to a number of other ministers, suggestions were received, and it was put into final form, as quoted above, with the Specific Objectives added, on May 12th, 1944. Dr. Clark was licensed on July 7, 1944, and it was voted to ordain him, at that meeting. He was ordained shortly afterward.

Mr. Heerema has put the cart before the horse in this matter. One of the factors that led to the formulation of the "program for action" was the determined opposition to Dr. Clark of the men who afterwards became the Complainants, at the March 20th, 1944, presbytery meeting.

As the man who first challenged the decision of the committee on candidates in the Philadelphia Presbytery to refuse licensure to Dr. Clark in the spring of 1943, I know what I am talking about when I say that neither I nor anyone else had any other motive in urging the licensure and ordination of Dr. Clark than that of seeing justice done to Dr. Clark. He had been one of the founders of our church. He had just been dismissed from a certain chair of philosophy in a Christian college because of his uncompromising advocacy of Calvinism in that institution. He had applied for licensure and ordination because he had an opportunity to become a pastor of an influential church if he were ordained. Having no doubt of his orthodoxy myself, I raised the matter in presbytery after the report of the committee on candidates had turned him down. It is an interesting fact that none of the issues afterwards raised in the "Complaint" was offered as a reason for his being turned down by the committee on candidates. As point after point regarding his beliefs was satisfactorily cleared up, and other questions raised, some of us began to wonder whether Dr. Clark would ever be satisfactory to the minority, many of whom afterwards became the "Complainants", no matter what his answers to questions might be.

The Real Issues Today

But what are now the *real* issues that are at the present time disturbing the peace of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church? As I see them they are the following:

1. There is now a real doctrinal issue. But that issue is *not* regarding the plain interpretation of the Westminster Standards. It concerns the *inferences* from those standards, raised in the Clark Case. Both parties to the dispute accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God, the *only* rule of faith and practice. Extra-Confessional questions of epistemology are also in dispute.

2. There is a difference regarding the attitude that should be taken to others whose *inferences* from the doctrines taught in the Westminster Standards do not agree with ours. The group opposed by Mr. Heerema believes that the Westminster Standards themselves in their plain interpretation are to mark the bounds within which there must be doctrinal agreement, but that there can be disagreement over inferences from the standards and over points not covered specifically in the Standards.

3. In the third place there is a difference regarding the attitude to be taken towards fellow ministers within the church and toward other evangelical denominations. The group Mr. Heerema opposes believes that there must be mutual trust and

acceptance of fellow ministers in good standing in the church without feeling that there are some who cannot be trusted in responsible positions because they do not belong to some inner group of superior orthodoxy, and do not follow the "party line" in every vote. They also believe that there should be appreciation of other Christian groups which stand for the Word of God and readiness to cooperate with them in things of common interest and concern.

4. Then there is a difference in their attitude toward the church. The group opposed by Mr. Heerema believes that warm evangelical zeal should characterize our ministry, and that instead of fighting each other over extra-Confessional points of doctrine, their energies should be spent fighting Modernism and unbelief in the world at large. Because of this attitude they are charged with doctrinal indifference, a false charge. They are not doctrinally indifferent regarding the doctrinal system of the Reformed Faith, but they feel that there must be bounds of tolerance concerning inferences from those doctrines. For instance, I am convinced that there is a strong skeptical strain and a basic inconsistency in the doctrine of incomprehensibility set forth in the "Complaint". Nevertheless the erstwhile complainants deny that they hold to skepticism or meant to teach it in the "Complaint." That being the case I hold that they have a right to stay in the church until either their implied skepticism becomes explicit or until they eliminate this skeptical strain from their thinking and writing. I am also convinced that the logic of their position regarding God desiring the salvation of the reprobate whom He desires not to save, is either irrational or Arminian, but they deny the charge of Arminianism so I am content not to bring charges against them.

5. The group opposed to Mr. Heerema believes that The Orthodox Presbyterian Church should follow the American tradition in Presbyterianism, rather than the traditions of churches holding to the Reformed Faith in other lands, unless the American tradition has clearly departed from the express teaching of the Word of God.

As I see it these are the main points of division in The

Orthodox Presbyterian Church today. To sum up the situation—a group not sympathetic to all these five points has controlled our church up to the present time. Because of this some excellent men have felt compelled to leave our church. Dissatisfaction with the policies of those who have largely influenced the decisions of the church in the past has grown until there is now wide-spread opposition to those policies. The group opposed by Mr. Heerema is willing to work in the church with those who oppose them, but the other gentlemen seem unwilling to tolerate us. That is the regrettable situation that exists before the 1947 General Assembly.

Sincerely,

FLOYD E. HAMILTON.

DR. CLARK DISSENTS

3429 Guilford Ave.,
Indianapolis, Ind.,
April 22, 1947.

Dr. Clarence Bouma, Editor
THE CALVIN FORUM,

Dear Sir:

IN the April 1947 issue of THE CALVIN FORUM on page 198, Mr. Edward Heerema says, "Men who take such a faulty and weak attitude toward the autonomous will of man that lies at the heart of Arminianism can be expected to have little trouble with Dr. Clark's notion of the autonomous intellect of man."

Who these men are who hold to the autonomy of the will, I do not know. None of my friends hold such a view. But let them speak for themselves.

What I wish particularly to make clear is that I do not and never have held to the autonomy of the intellect. Mr. Heerema's statement of my opinions is as far from the truth as it can possibly be.

The unfortunate controversy about which Mr. Heerema writes would lose one of its unfortunate characteristics, if Mr. Heerema would determine what the truth is before he publishes his opinions.

Very truly yours,

GORDON H. CLARK.

Book Reviews

EARTH CAN BE RAVISHED

THIS IS THE YEAR. By Feike Feikema. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1947. 623 pages. \$3.00.

IN *This Is the Year* Feike Feikema gives us his third and best novel. That this young author has considerable talent was already evident from *The Golden Bowl*, his first work, published in 1944, which gained for him a Fiction Grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. *Boy Almighty*, a partly autobiographical novel about life in a tuberculosis sanatorium, which followed in 1945, was of uneven quality, though its best passages indicated that the author was maturing. This latest work reveals Feikema as an achieving artist, with improved craftsmanship and widened horizons. It is a book which prompts Van Wyck Brooks to say, "I don't know when I have met a mind I feel more sure of, that strikes me as so big and full in every way."

In his new book the author returns to the theme of *The Golden Bowl*. Once again Feikema takes us to the Middle West, giving us this time a long and earthy novel about farm life on the prairies of northwest Iowa. The publishers call it "a novel of faith in the earth", but it is hardly that. The characterization would do very well for *The Golden Bowl*. This book, however, stresses the misuse of the earth and the tragic consequences to which such misuse leads.

Towering, redheaded Pier Frixen, the central figure in the story, is a son of Frisian immigrants, who came to the wide and fertile valley of the Big Sioux in 1869. He derives his name from the colorful Greate Pier, one of the Frisian heroes

whom Alde Romke, his father, venerates and often mentions. However, the son brings little of the expected joy to his parents, and in Alde Romke's estimation badly disgraces the name of the ancestral hero. At the time the story opens, Pier has grown up to be a proud, inconsiderate, pugnacious character. He rejects the Old World culture which gives a measure of color and style to Alde Romke's life, but at the same time, due to a willful illiteracy, he remains outside the stream of American culture. Against his father's will he marries nubile, green-eyed Nertha Andringa who, in spite of her Frisian name, is half Norwegian. On his wedding day Pier is allowed to take over the farm, but brooking no interference in the management of it, he soon drives his parents off the premises. Alde Romke prophesies dire things for his son, most of which come true before the close of the book.

In a certain sense, Pier is a good farmer. He has boundless energy and grim determination. Some years, when the elements are not too unfriendly, he raises bumper crops. But he is ignorant, independent, and self-indulgent. He is, in Feikema's own terms, always "bullin' it through." His ignorance, pride, and independence prevent him from cooperating with the government in the corn and hog program, and in the inspection of his cattle for bovine tuberculosis. These faults also lead him to ignore completely County Agent Pederson's advice on contour plowing. Pier works doggedly and faithfully, but without scientific guidance. Impatient, sanguine, and bull-headed, he rapes the soil to which he feels attached. In course

of time erosion eats away his fields and wind and rain rip gullies in his orchard.

Pier not only ravishes the earth but also his wife, Nertha. She suffers him and continues to work hard and drudgingly. Much to Pier's disappointment she is able to bear him only one son, and in the course of time she, like the earth, turns barren. Throughout the book there runs an underlying symbolism which compares the earth to a woman. Emphatically—a bit too emphatically, perhaps—we are made to understand that both earth and woman must be "treated right."

Pier's sins continue to find him out and in the end bring him to a tragic pass. His wife, after having given birth to a still-born child, dies; his son Teo, a progressive boy with a great interest in machines, runs away from home; his house, already lost in a mortgage sale and now fully undermined by a gaping gully, sags away beneath him. Alone and beaten, he takes to the dark autumn road. But Pier fails to make any self-appraisal and still cannot understand why he has not made good as a farmer, husband, and father. Untaught by the lessons of the past years, but steeled by a tragic defiance, born of stubbornness and pride, he prepares to face an uncertain future.

The long novel is written in a style which is original, vigorous, and above all graphic. It moves along leisurely, at the tempo of farm life itself. One soon senses that Feikema has a genuine feeling for the land. He is intimately acquainted with it and is alive to its physical beauty. He can describe it in passages of deep lyric quality. All in all, *This Is the Year* is a solid achievement. It is the product of an observant and fruitful mind. Besides giving us the story of Pier Frixen, it paints on an extended canvas Midwestern life over a generation. The painting is done carefully, minutely, with great fidelity to detail. Perhaps no other novel has pictured farm life with such painstaking completeness and lusty realism. Usually the realism serves the constructive theme of the book. At times, however, one meets what Norman Cousins in a recent editorial in *The Saturday Review of Literature* has called "extraneous realism," in which there is revealed an "undisciplined obsession unrelated to all reasonable purpose." Cousins aptly remarks in this connection, "What is offensive is not the use of a word, but the strained, artless, and unrelated nature of extraneous situations brought in to capture the snicker market. Realism of this type is about as appealing as an old goat emerging from a wet thicket."

The book is not strong in character delineation. The author gives us little or no insight into the inner life of his characters. Even Pier we learn to know almost wholly from the outside, through his overt acts. Alde Romke, Ma Lysbeth, Nertha—minor characters though they are—strike one as not too sharply individualized.

Feikema, who has taken pains to make clear to the reading public that he is of Frisian (and not Dutch) ancestry, in this novel makes grateful use of his ancestral heritage. In an attempt to give Frisian flavor and quality to the life of the old people (an attempt which is not always successful), he has them use a good deal of native speech, perhaps more than is necessary for local color. The foreign words and phrases are explained in an extended glossary, in which Feikema also takes occasion to elaborate enthusiastically on various aspects of Frisian language and history. In his fondness for Frisian words, Feikema has gone so far as to adopt some of them, in slightly modified form, into his English (*bults, slurked, snettering*). Such oddities as *the greening yard*, and *it had just begun to day* are reminiscent of *it grienjend hiem* and *it wie krekt bigoun to daegjen*.

One cannot say that Feikema, who was reared in the Reformed tradition, has made an equally grateful use of his religious heritage. Though it would of course be unfair to identify Pier's attitude toward profanity and blasphemy with the author's own—Feikema is definitely not sympathetic to Pier—it must nevertheless be said that there is little in the book which suggests religious reverence or spiritual sensitivity. At such times when Feikema considers it necessary to preach—as in the

"sermon" of Old Dreamer Pederson—he strikes a pagan rather than a Christian note. Furthermore, the caricature of the ministry in the creation of Old White Wings and the statement about minister-priests in the glossary, would seem to indicate a hostile rather than an open mind in religious matters. As for the crude sexualism and profuse profanity—these strike one as objectionable not only from a religious but also from an artistic point of view. Art, even realistic art, would seem to require greater selectivity and better proportion than one often meets in *This Is the Year*. B. FRIDSMA.

TOWARDS A RESPONSIBLE PRESS

A FREE AND RESPONSIBLE PRESS. *A General Report on Mass Communication: Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines, and Book. By the Commission on Freedom of the Press. With a Foreword by Robert M. Hutchins. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 1947. xii and 139 pages. \$2.00.*

"It must needs be," wrote Matthew Arnold in his *Culture and Anarchy*, "that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its own organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action; but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests, not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them."

Now it is such disinterested criticism in Arnold's sense which in this Report is being brought to bear upon the contemporary press. Indeed the importance and authority of the criticism springs precisely from its disinterestedness, from the fact that the members of this Commission have not lent themselves, in Arnold's phrase, "to those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them . . . but which criticism has really nothing to do with."

For it needs to be noted that the men whose names are subscribed to this Report got their *commission* neither from the government, nor from the communications industries, nor from a university, nor from any other "interested" agency. They got it from their consciences, from their sense of obligation as citizens. It is true that Henry Luce, owner-director of the *Time-Fortune-Life* publishing empire, concerned, apparently, for the prospects of freedom of the press, suggested that the study be made, and paid for it to the extent of 200,000 dollars. But that was precisely all that Editor Luce had to do with it. At that point Chancellor Hutchins of Chicago took it up, selected his hand-picked committee, secured an additional 15,000 dollars, this time from Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., and set to work.

It was a formidable committee. These are surely among the best heads in the country: Hocking, the elder Schlesinger, and Chafee of Harvard; besides Hutchins, Merriam, and Redfield of Chicago; Lasswell of Yale; John M. Clark of Columbia; Niebuhr of Union Seminary and Schuster of Hunter College; John Dickinson, General Counsel to the Pennsylvania Road; Beardsley Ruml of the Federal Reserve Bank; and Archibald MacLeish, statesman and man of letters. They appointed a staff of four and began work in 1943. They heard testimony from 58 members of the press, recorded interviews with more than 225 members of industry, government, and private agencies close to the press, held 17 two- and three-day meetings, and pored over 176 documents prepared by themselves or their assistants. And this is their general report. It is already being supplemented and will be further supplemented by separate published reports from individual members of the Commission and the Staff.

If nine members of the Commission are or have been professors, that fact only enhances the disinterestedness of their criticism. Unfortunately it also makes it the easier for owner-directors of the interested press who do not like the Report to condemn them by *argumentum ad hominem* and loaded words. Thus, as one gathers without benefit of deliberate research, the trade journal *Editor and Publisher* has already dismissed "the professors" as "incompetent". Wilbur Forrest of the New York

Herald Tribune talks in like idiom of "the erudite gentlemen" and doubts "if one in ten of these authorities could run a newspaper and stay out of bankruptcy over twelve months." Besides, Forrest brings in the usual bias: the members of the Commission bear "the imprint of having been influenced by a pattern of thought long designed to undermine confidence in the American press as an institution . . . possibly with a view to eventual Government regulation and control."

As a matter of fact, however, the Report, cautious, deliberate, fairminded, iterates and reiterates that what is wanted is less rather than more government control, but it leaves no doubt that there will be more if the press "does not incorporate into itself the right of the citizen and the public interest." The lesson of the Report is that the precious "first freedom," the freedom of expression and the press, is conditioned by moral responsibility, and is therefore a matter of ethics quite as much as of business.

For the press is big business. In a single recent year the people paid the communications industries two and half billions of dollars for their services. And the press is concentrated business. Thus there are now but three big press associations, four national radio networks, fifteen giants among magazine publishers, and some five to twenty-five big book houses. It is out of the big and concentrated character of the press that its inadequacies and unethical practices arise. Monopolistic practices take place. The sources and variety of news and comment are limited. Increasingly fewer people can express their thought in the mass media. Facts and ideas not hospitable to owner interests tend to be ignored. News and the interpretation of news take on an interested instead of a representative character. The business drive to an ever larger audience substitutes desiderata of recency, proximity, combat, human interest, and novelty for the desideratum of significance. So the citizen is deprived of his moral right to the facts and ideas he needs to live responsibly in this difficult time.

In its recommendations, the Commission looks "principally to the press and the people to remedy the ills." But it has some suggestions for the government also. It hesitates to recommend that the government break up the concentrations, for concentration is necessary to adequate service. But the benefit of the concentration must unmistakably accrue to the citizen. The Commission acknowledges that the carefully circumscribed areas of legal intervention in freedom of expression—libel, misbranding, obscenity, incitement to riot, and sedition—can be extended only as clear and demonstrable abuses of the citizen's rights and the public interest become apparent. It stresses that the moral responsibility of the press must go much further than the law can enforce. It believes the government should stop short of censorship, in radio and motion pictures as well as in newspaper service. It believes the libel laws need revision, certain clauses in the anti-sedition acts need repealing, and the anti-trust laws need enforcement. It holds that the government may and ought to make use of the mass media to clarify its policies at home and abroad, or, lacking access to these, establish mass media of its own.

The Commission maintains, however, that the press itself must accept the responsibility for providing everyone with adequate, true, complete, and representative facts and ideas, and so "to obviate government action." It should, like medicine and the law, look upon itself less as a business, more as performing a public service of a professional kind. It should develop the competence and the independence of its members, and encourage mutual criticism rather than mutual protection among them. It must do justice to facts, ideas, and opinions opposed to those of its business interest. And it must encourage and finance new experimental activities. As for the people, these must see to it that non-profit institutions supplement the mass communications in quantity, quality, and variety of service. They must create academic and professional centers of advanced study for members of the press. And they

ought to set up an independent agency, presumably somewhat after the model of this Commission, to appraise and report annually on the performance of the press.

Serious students of contemporary civilization will see in this Report some of the more deeply troubling manifestations of its gravest ills. Our precious freedoms, constitutionally guaranteed as we say, cannot, after all, perpetually live in a religious and philosophical vacuum. Admirable in the Report, therefore, is the thoroughgoing discussion of ethical principles in its first and last chapters. Freedom of the press must be grounded on something, as the Report has it—on truth. Superficial critics will not like this emphasis. They will say that it reminds them of dangerous absolutisms, and hasten to add that Henry Luce suggested the inquiry. They will prefer the less exacting imperatives of process, method, and business as usual. Admirable in the Report is this: morals and not business must supply the missing sense of duty and obligation.

It is a pity that so important a document from such able hands could not have had the further excellence of distinguished form. The Report is not likely to go down the generations with the *Areopagitica* and other classics of free expression. Had Archibald MacLeish had the writing of it, it may have had that chance. It is, of course, too much to expect style from a committee; style needs the individual stamp. The argument of the Report is almost choked in heavy, public words.

Democracy is not moribund when intelligence is thus operative, alert, and persuasive. Clearly responsible citizens may not let such a book go idly by, unread, unassimilated, and undiscussed.

PROFESSOR HYMA'S VAN RAALTE

ALBERTUS C. VAN RAALTE AND HIS DUTCH SETTLEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. By Albert Hyma. *Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1947. 277 pages. \$3.00.*

AN original document is a savory dish to an historian. And a collection of them is a sumptuous feast—a feast fit for an historical king. It was that to historian Hyma. It takes no discerning eye to see that the author of this book smacked his lips at the prospect of their perusal and devoured with relish the 3,000 documents dealing with the early Dutch settlements in Michigan which, until September last, were kept under lock and key in the garret of the Van Raalte homestead located on the outskirts of the colony he founded. By gracious dispensation of Van Raalte's descendants these valuable documents have now been made public. Those who held them in trust these many years deemed that the time was now ripe to bring them out and in view of the centennial celebration their release was most opportune. Folk of Dutch extraction owe a vote of thanks to those who made them available as well as to those who passed them on to the reading public and who will preserve them for posterity in a historical museum, the latter to be under the directorship of a board consisting of Christian Reformed and Reformed men.

As the title indicates, this work is biographical in character. It seeks to enrich our knowledge of the man who, under God, led a band of God-fearing pilgrims to the shores of Black Lake, where they felled the trees, broke the sod, and carved out a home for themselves and for their children. Other biographies, some written in Dutch and at least one of them in English, have dealt with the man but this one, by virtue of the happy discovery, casts new light on the man and his times. To be sure it reaffirms what was known and said before but it also augments that body of truth and reinterprets it. As such it is a worthwhile contribution.

What sort of picture does the thoughtful reader get from a perusal of this interesting work? What type of man was Van Raalte? From these pages comes the answer. He was a leader with the fear of God in his soul, interested not in making money but in making Christians and in rearing a Christian commonwealth in the wilds of Michigan; a generous soul, who

willingly expended a personal fortune of no small dimensions for the realization of his goal; a gentleman of parts, who moved with ease on the higher social and political level and who not only personally persuaded the Michigan legislature to donate 7,000 acres of land for the building of bridges and roads in the colony of Holland but also persuaded the U. S. government to spend over a million dollars in improving the Black Lake harbor; an indefatigable worker with indomitable energy, busy seven days a week and eighteen hours a day; a business man of integrity; an ecumenically-minded ecclesiastic, who fraternized with Reformed, Baptists, and Presbyterians; a man of vision and idealism, who fought for a full-fledged system of Christian education; a noble character, who rose above personal abuse and slander; and yet withal, a man with his quota of human frailty and who consequently leaned heavily upon his God.

It is to be hoped that this book receives cordial and extended reception. It should serve to promote the historical consciousness among us. It should deepen our appreciation of the rich spiritual heritage that is ours. Above all, it should induce us to work hard for the institutions founded by our godly ancestors and to strive to realize their ideals. In the measure that we do so this centennial of Van Raalte and the founding of the Dutch settlements in Michigan will be a significant one.

JOHN H. BRATT.

POPULAR SERMONS

BLUE PRINTS FOR GREAT LIVING, I. By Dallas C. Baer. Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1946. \$2.50.

DR. BAER is a truly prolific homileal publicist. One gets the impression that most of his sermons get into print. In so far he reminds us of Spurgeon and De Witt Talmage, to mention no others. The conclusion can hardly be escaped that his sermons are in demand. That in turn constitutes no small compliment. For this is not a sermon-reading age; it is not even a sermon-hearing age. If in an unspiritual and uneclesiastic era like ours Dr. Baer's "Sermon Books" are wanted and read, the fact reflects no small credit upon this pulpiteer of the Lutheran Church of Norwood, Pennsylvania.

In an announcement of these and other sermons of this preacher, we are told that "the *expository* method is used in all of these sermons," that is, twelve volumes of sermons. And in the volume announced above it is stated explicitly that the sermons therein contained are "*expository* sermons" (Italics are mine). Now the present reviewer is not greatly impressed with their expository character. If their characterization had been left to him, he would not have signalized them thus: at any rate, their expository character is not obtrusively obvious. They are, indeed, not typically topical sermons: they are a bit too expository for that. They are, as a matter of fact, somewhat of a blend of the two types of sermons specified. In respect of their thought-structure they might be styled essays on biblical subjects extracted from relevant texts.

But when all has been said, it remains to express one's satisfaction at finding the author think so highly of expository preaching that he calls his sermons expository, even though his conception of what constitutes expository preaching leaves room for a legitimate difference of opinion.

But apart from the necessary stricture passed on the alleged expository character of these "Blue-Prints for Great Living," the reader does not have to force himself to grant that they are, be it in varying measure, readable sermons. The title of these sermons reveals Dr. Baer's purpose to make his preachments serviceable to what he calls "great living," which doubtless is the author's way of saying "holy and

righteous" living. As one reads these sermons, he feels that their strength lies in their applicatory virtue. Of course, application ought to be geared to exposition. For the subject-matter of application must be the product of textual interpretation. For the rest, it is deserving of praise that a preacher relates the truth of God to Christian living such as is the bounden duty of God's people. We cannot help thinking of James 1:22 and Luke 6:46-49 in this connection of thought.

These sermons are rather brief; on the average they are slightly more than eight pages long. They are more than summaries, yet they are not full-fledged. Reading one of them at a moderate rate of speed requires about twenty minutes.

The volume is neatly printed on excellent paper; the binding is neat and strong. The proof-reading might have been done better. The diction leaves room for improvement. But the sermons are well worth thoughtful and prayerful reading.

S. VOLBEDA.

A REFERENCE WORK ON THE FAMILY

THE FAMILY AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. By Joseph Kirk Folsom. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1945. 753 pages. \$4.50.

PROFESSOR FOLSOM of Vassar College has reworked an earlier outstanding book on the family and this voluminous treatise is the result. It has no merit as entertaining reading and is not the type of book one picks up to read casually from cover to cover. It has value, however, as an extensive reference work containing information on all aspects of family life, authored by a man who has made his mark in this field, and who has drawn upon the latest research available on the family.

After a chapter devoted to definition of basic concepts in family analysis, Folsom presents a survey of family patterns found throughout the world, both in pre-literate societies and in great civilizations. Here the author advances significant findings of some of the more important research that has been carried on by both anthropologists and sociologists.

The chapters on the family in America include a description of its background, development, the influence of mechanical invention on the family, and current changes.

The discussion of family patterns and structure is followed by a consideration of personality factors, including love experiences in courtship, adjustment problems and the various aspects of divorce.

As the title indicates, Folsom is not only concerned with a description of the family in various cultures, its changing character in the American culture, and problems arising out of family relationships, but, going farther than most works in this field, stresses the responsibility of the family for Democracy. This unique feature emphasizes the family's socializing function in determining personality development. "If we believe in Democracy we shall seek to promote freedom in and through the family and to help parents build young personalities which will not sabotage Democracy in the larger world through their frustrations and pent-up hostilities," he advises.

Scattered throughout the work are references and reactions to scriptural implications for the family, obviously the product of partial and superficial knowledge of the Bible. But one expects this. Christianity is given credit for checking infanticide, abortion and divorce as well as for other contributions in the history of the family.

One of the most valuable features of this work is the excellent array of supplementary data in the appendices. An excellent bibliography, extensive and specific, includes both professional and fictional works. One appendix is devoted to nearly one hundred topics for research and discussion, many of which would be profitable for "after-recess programs" of society meetings.

DONALD H. BOUMA.