Necrology: Dr. Charles Vincze

The "First Christian Philosophy" Examined: Part I.

New Views on Common Grace

Chapel Talk

Reviews
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THE CALVIN FORUM  *  *  *  APRIL, 1954
HUNGARIAN Protestants have not yet fully recovered from the tremendous shock and loss of Dr. Géza Sós, a modern disciple and apostle of the Lord and heroic leader of Hungarian youth movements, who died on the Labor Day weekend of last year.

In the new year at the time of congregational meetings individuals and communities alike weigh and place on a scale their past and present in order to make fresh resolutions and newly formulated plans for the future. It was on Sunday, January 31st, 1954, when the yearly congregational meeting of the Perth Amboy Church was held, that one servant of the Lord, The Rev. Dr. Charles Vincze, Archdean of The Free Magyar Reformed Church of America, in the prime of his life, after a heart attack, gave back his soul to his Creator.

On December 22nd, 1898, a bright shining star appeared on the sky of the great Hungarian Plain, when Dr. Vincze was born. From a humble beginning, where countless other heroic disciples of the Lord came before him, through the schools of his native village, Döge, in the county of Szabolcs, Hungary, up into the school of Kívárdás, he always distinguished himself as an eminent student. Entering the oldest Theological Seminary in Sárospatak, Hungary, as a student of the Word of God, he became superior to his schoolmates; thus his Alma Mater selected him, as one of her best students, for postgraduate work in Princeton Seminary, Princeton, N. J., U.S.A.

Prior to his coming to America he was prominent with his youthful colleagues in the foundation and work of such Hungarian Student Movements as Soli Deo Gloria. He excelled, with Zoltán Töltéssy, Aladár Szilassy and Béla Megyeresy at the time when the intellectual and spiritual revival of the Danubian nation was only a dream hoped and prayed for.

Completing his theological postgraduate course in Princeton in 1922-23 the degree of Master of Theology was conferred upon him. Due to the post war ministerial shortage in Hungarian American Churches, he was called to the pastorate of the Carteret congregation, where he served faithfully till 1928. In the same year he was called to the congregation of Perth Amboy, N. J., where office bearers and members, young and old, men and women alike loved him and appreciated the faithful service he rendered.

His administrative capacity and organizing ability was acknowledged when he was elected first Dean of the Eastern Classis, and later Archdean of the Free Magyar Reformed Church of America for three terms. The strength of his energy knew no limits; he was shepherd of a large congregation with many cares, as well as supervisor of other Churches.

The secret of the extraordinary power behind his life was hidden in his prayerful, deeply rooted evangelical faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who enabled him to perform wonders.

One of the most astonishing and ununderstandable miracles of Hungarian Reformed Church life was the formation of The Free Magyar Reformed Church of America in 1924, at Duquesne, Pa., in which Dr. Vincze was instrumental. The Reformed Church of Hungary was unable to help the congregations in America, aided by her previously, and when many Churches with their leaders of lesser faith sought union with great American denominations, Dr. Charles Vincze was one of the few adamant Christians in the belief that Hungarian Reformed Christians, too, as the Dutch, German, French and others, are equally capable to maintain their own Churches. Those who had faith and courage at that time that the Magyar Reformed Church in America came to be organized were often ridiculed, despised and neglected. But, by the grace of God and the help of our Saviour, this Church was established and stood the test of time. The Free Magyar Reformed Church of America, which Dr. Charles Vincze loved so much with all his heart and all his strength, entered its 30th anniversary year in 1954.

He could have been a most successful man in any other field, but he remained a loyal soldier of the cross, an "oarsman" of the Church. At the noon of his life, after so many dreams for the Free Magyar Reformed Church of America, when the gates of national and international recognition of the small but militant Church were opening and new avenues of blessings and possibilities were beginning, he finished his earthly pilgrimage. Hungarian people from New York to California, in Canada and in South America learned from him. He attended international conferences in the lands of the great reformers John Calvin and John Knox, Switzerland and Scotland, as well as in his native land, Hungary.

His sparkling eyes were ever ready to smile, and his bright countenance, his strong stand and determinate appearance won him countless friends. But the same strong calvinistic personality brought him
into unavoidable circumstances of conflict with defeatists, modernists and many others who found a staunch defender of the faith of our fathers in him.

Having fulfilled all the necessary requirements, he received the degree of Doctor of Theology from the University of Debreczen, Hungary. As one of the most promising theologians, a scholar of distinction with a promising future, he was called to the Seminary of Sárospatak to be the Professor of Dogmatics and Systematic Theology. But, he stayed in Perth Amboy, N. J., and worked in his beloved congregation, and received from his Alma Mater the citation of Honorary Professorship in 1947.

His interest and world-concept was made manifest in his writings. He was the most prolific writer of his Church, before whom problems of politics, education, economics, ecumenicity and ecclesiastical affairs were all open. *The Magyar Church*, our denominational monthly, found in him a powerful and steadfast stronghold as editor, business manager, representative and writer.

He approached all Hungarian Reformed Churches affiliated with other denominations with the same warm-hearted affectionate love and firm persuasion. He was obsessed with the undestructible hope that the time will come when all Hungarian Reformed Churches in America might be one, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who is the head and cornerstone of the Church. If the Dutch, German, French and other Churches have kept their faith and denominational loyalty, he hoped to see the dawn of the day when Hungarians, now affiliated with different Boards of National Missions, might be united in one body. He was never ashamed of his faith, Church and nationality, working ceaselessly toward the high aim that all others—through God’s mercy—may boast of the same true faith, Church and national adherence.

The influence of his Christian life was felt in the whole American-Hungarian life. He was twice president of the American Hungarian Ministerial Association, he was on the staff of directors of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America and the Hungarian Federation of America (the first is fraternal and the second is a civic organization), American Hungarian Relief, was one of the founders of the “World Federation of Free Hungarian Reformed Christians,” represented his denomination at the meetings and conferences of “The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System,” and also at the “International Council of Christian Churches.”

The sudden death of Dr. Vincze has thrown into an unmeasurable mourning not only those whom he loved, and his beloved congregation, but also the entire communion of his Church. The loss of Dr. Vincze is an unfathomable blow to all American Hungarians. In him we lament the loss of a great servant of the Lord, who loved his Church and his people with deep devotion. May the comfort and sustaining grace of our heavenly Father be with his communion, who grieve for the loss of a true friend.

His funeral, attended by thousands from far and near, was according to his will an example of a puritan-Calvinistic memorial service. Those who wished to express their sympathy in the form of withering flowers were asked to give donations to charitable good causes, such as the Mission Fund and the Magyar Egyház, the Hungarian Federation of America, our Orphanage, the Bethlen Home, and the like. “Flourishing institutions instead of withering flowers” were the words of his will. A handful of soil from his native land of Hungary and America was placed beneath his head. The requested psalms and hymns were sung, the Scripture of II Timothy 4:7-8 was read, and the 65 ministers from various denominations and everyone who gathered together to pay their last respect, said their farewell to Dr. Charles Vincze: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”
The Philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd

Part I. Its Claims and Its Reception

"The first Christian philosophical system has finally arisen..." — J. M. SPIER.

PROFESSORS D. H. Th. Vollenhoven and H. Dooyeweerd, of the Calvinist Free University of Amsterdam, have developed a philosophical system known as the Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee (Philosophy of the Law-Idea). Its adherents have hailed it as a new development of great importance. Therefore a preliminary examination of this philosophy may be of interest to Forum readers, and hence we propose to give such an examination in a series of three articles. As a space-saving device, we shall use "VAD" to stand for "Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd" in the material which follows.

Our emphasis will not fall on an extended philosophical analysis of the ideas of VAD, but rather on the claims made for it, its background in (non-Christian) German philosophy, and its indebtedness to other (and non-Christian) philosophers for many of its basic concepts. We shall conclude with an attempt at evaluation of VAD's contributions, and some general remarks on the situation facing Calvinistic philosophers.

Well, a good place to begin is probably with the recent translation of a book by J. M. Spier, which is a popularized summary of VAD's ideas. Spier is an ardent VAD disciple, and we can probably gain some insight into the new movement by examining his treatment of it. The average Forum reader, indeed, will doubtless begin his own reading on VAD's ideas with Spier, since it is one of the few treatments in English; most of the VAD corpus is in Dutch.

Spier begins his popular presentation of VAD with the flat statement that no previous philosophy has been Christian. "They are all alike, for they are all non-Christian. They do not stem from the root of divine revelation. They do not subject themselves to the Word of God. On the contrary, they all start out from the sovereignty of human reason, the self-sufficiency of human understanding, which fancies itself capable, apart from the light of revelation, of discovering the truth concerning created things and even of the Creator itself."

Astounding! There have been Christians who were philosophers for over 1900 years, but none of them has subjected himself to the Word of God! Can it be that Spier does not know of the early fathers of the Church, or of Augustine, or of Anselm, or Aquinas, or Bonaventura, or Scotus, or indeed of the Calvinists at the Calvinistic Dutch universities in the 1500's and 1600's, such as Voetius?

Spier indeed knows about them (or has heard of them), but their efforts can be disposed of in a single sentence. All of them were "synthesis-philosophers." The whole effort of medieval and Reformation philosophers can be ignored, for it simply resulted in "a synthesis between Biblical motifs and the classical form-matter theme." And not only that, but also Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, Woltjer, Geesink and the rest, are also "synthesis-philosophers," and such attempts at a Christian philosophy "can never satisfy anyone who is convinced... that Christ,
who is sovereign over all things, says also of the philosophic domain 'It is Mine!' 6 7

Well, this is an amazing discovery. But how about John Calvin? Of course, he admired Plato, who was not even a "synthesis-philosopher," since he was pre-Christian: but wouldn't Spier admit that Calvin did a good deal to develop a Christian philosophy? No, answers Spier, such a view rests on a fallacy. True, he was a fine theologian, but "theology, a particular science, can never take the place of a Christian philosophy which is the fundamental science." (Italics ours). That settles that and, since "the sons of the Reformation had returned to the fatal cultivation of synthesis philosophy," the Reformation was a wash-out so far as developing a Christian philosophy was concerned.

II

Things look black. Must we then despair? By no means, says Spier. After 1900 years of no Christian philosophy, the lack has been filled, by a "gift of divine grace." VAD have produced "the first Christian philosophical system ... [one] sprung from the root of Calvinism, from the basic theme of creation, fall, and redemption." 8 9 Is there the cause for rejoicing? Yes, indeed, for "this philosophy is one of the greatest blessings which God in His grace has given our Christian people in this age of confusion and world war." 10

Spier thus disposes of two milleniums of philosophy in two pages, surely the nearest trick of the year. Now, regardless of the validity of VAD—perhaps Spier, after all, misrepresents them—this kind of talk comes perilously close to ignorance. The idea that a man's thought can be answered simply by calling him names, that Voetius can be disposed of with the simple charge of "synthesis-philosophy," can only hinder the development of a Calvinist philosophy. And to the common man who reads the book it is but a step from Spier's "reasoning" to the conclusion that if all previous philosophy has been worthless, it is ridiculous to spend time reading it or thinking about it. VAD can easily appear as a kind of magical device which can dispose of any philosophic
cal question in the twinkling of an eye, without the need for thought. A good example of this appears even in Spier, when he disposes of Zeno's paradoxes in a sentence: Zeno confuses the physical and spatial aspects of motion. 12 The whole disregard and disrespect for past philosophical achievements which is so noticeable in Spier can hardly be said to be in the spirit of Calvin, who regarded past science and philosophy as valuable additions to human knowledge.

Well, Spier, then, makes some startling claims for the new VAD philosophy, and in a very emotional way. Is this a misrepresentation of VAD? Probably so; but the same kind of claims occur often enough with VAD, though in a context of scholarly style. 13 Thus, "the philosophy of the Wetsidee marks a break with all previous philosophy"; 14 "Bound by one and the same Christian faith, and together experiencing the electrifying spirit which the Christian root of life gives to the practice of wetenschap, a group of scholars has already attached itself to the Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee." And, most notable, Dooyeweerd's exultant boast: "From this cental Christian point of view I saw the need for a philosophical revolution of so far-reaching a nature that Kant's development of a new base for philosophy (Copernicusdaad) would be only peripheral in comparison with it." 15

Well, perhaps such expressions are justified; perhaps VAD do have something new and startling. To help answer this question, let us consider the reception which VAD's philosophy has received.

III

First, in Calvinistic circles. VAD have received a goodly amount of support in the Netherlands, especially from Schilderian circles, and some European Calvinists (notably Bohatec and P. Marcel) also regard it favorably. 16 The new philosophy has also been attacked bitterly by other Calvinists, notably by the theological faculty of the Free University. The at-

6 7 In view of Spier's words, it is interesting to note that one of the Free University Theological Faculty members who opposed VAD, H. H. Kuyper, regarded VAD's philosophy as too man-centered and not enough God-centered: see Masselink, p. 318. Masselink's simple dismissal of past Christian philosophers is noted by the Belgian Thomist philosopher, Robbers, who asks how two men in "een klein hoekje der wereld" can be so positive that they have succeeded where the Fathers of the Church, the medieval Catholics, the Reformation, and the Free University before 1925, have all failed so miserably: see Studia Cath­olicia 24 (1949), 166.

8 If pressed on the question whether theological doctrines can produce a technically worked-out philosophy, Spier can retreat to other statements, much milder in nature. Thus on p. 21 he says, "the Bible gives neither the material nor the content of any science ... neither can philosophy be drawn from the Bible." Some Forum readers may disagree with this. Spier goes on to say that philosophy must be derived from a study of general revelation, though the philosopher submits himself to special revelation (p. 22). This, whether Spier knows it or not, is simply the stand of Thomas Aquinas; and some medieval philosophers criticized this stand as placing too much reliance on reason.

9 Spier, p. 86.

10 VAD's style is tortuous and involved, even for philosophical writing. It is also often unclear. Thus H. L. Van Breda, in the course of a brief bibliographical notice of VAD for Bel­gian readers, complains of the frequent vagueness and obscur­ity: Revue Philosophique de Louvain 47 (1949), 279-283.

11 Dooyeweerd, op. cit., I, x. Yet after Hepp in his Drie­gande Deformatie attacked the VAD craving for novelty, Dooye­weerd replied that "the philosophy of the Wetsidee is not at all new in its starting point, but builds on the foundation of the ages." See Young, 100, 140. Cf. also footnote 7 above. For the quotations which follow, see Dooyeweerd, op. cit., I, x, xc.

12 For Schilder and VAD, cf. Masselink, p. 12, and Young, p. 136; also Ridderbos, op cit. Bohatec, a noted historian of the Reformation period, is one of the editors of Dooye­weerd's writings. Pierre Marcel is a French theologian. LeCerf, in France, was influenced more by Kuyper than by VAD. See Young, pp. 97, 145. Stoker of South Africa, to whom we will return later, has developed independently a philosophy which has many resemblances to VAD.
tacks center on two things: first, VAD’s call for a re-
vision of Calvinistic doctrine regarding the soul; and, second, VAD’s disagreement with the Kuyper-
Bavinck idea of common grace.13

In brief, the reaction to VAD has been mixed in 
European Calvinist circles and, if anything, mostly 
unfavorable. What about the reaction of profes-
sionals’ criticism is directed against V.’s method
philosophy de Runner.

In the rest of Europe, partially due to VAD having 
written in Dutch, there has been little reaction at all 
on the part of professional philosophers. VAD 
speeches at the 1948 International Congress in Am-
sterdam seem to have aroused neither interest nor 
comment.15

In America, VAD are little known to professional 
philosophers, and the only comment we were able to 
find was a storm of protest against Vollenhoven’s 
treatment of Greek philosophy (as used by his 
quondam pupil, E. Runner).16

Thus professional philosophers have generally re-
acted to VAD with indifference. This is partly due, 
as we said, to the fact that VAD have not written in 
one of the recognized learned languages. This will 
soon be remedied: the Presbyterian and Reformed 

13 V. Hepp, J. Waterink, H. H. Kyner. Cf. footnote 3 for 
references to this Dutch criticism. Masseink gives a convenient 
summary of most of it. There is really not much argument, 
since VAD denounce Kuyper’s emphasis on common grace, and 
view the traditional Reformed view of the soul as “heathenish”: 
D. H. Th. Vollenhoven, Het Calvinisme en de Reformatie der 
Wijsbegeerte (Amsterdam, 1938), pp. 44 and ff, cited by Mas-
seink, p. 304. Cf. Young, who admits (p. 109) that “it cannot 
be denied that the traditional conception of the activity of the 
‘immortal soul’ after its separation from the body is rejected by 
Dooyeweerd.” It is interesting to note that Spier has 
recently become alarmed on this point: see Spier, p. 44, fn. 1.
VAD’s standpoint is that both common grace a la Kuyper 
and the ‘immortal soul’ are rejected by the Reformed
philosophers are remnants of “synthesis philosophy.”

14 We understand that the reaction in Dutch philosophical 
circles to Vollenhoven’s Geschiedenis der Wijsbegeerte (Fra-
er, 1949) has been extremely unfavorable. In this volume 
V. applies his special categories of philosophical history to pre-
Socratic Greek philosophy, and pigmeholes even obscure philoso-
ophers from whom only a few lines survive. For Belgian no-
tices of VAD, see Studia Catholica 1949, in which Rubbers 
corrects VAD’s interpretation of Aquinas, and the brief note 
by Van Breda in Revue Philosophique de Louvain, 1949. Dutch 
readers may be gained partially by the fact that this is the 
third attempt in this last generation to found a philosophy on 
Scripture (though the previous two were not as orthodox as 
VAD); cf. A. E. Loen, Wijsbegeerte en Werkelijkheid (1927) 
and Ph. Kohnstamm, Scheper en Schepping (3 vol., 1928-1931),
as described by F. Sassen, Wijsgeerige Leven in Nederland in 
de 20e Eeuw (Amsterdam, 1947).

See the Library of the Xth International Congress of Phi-
losophy (Amsterdam, 1948), II:1-17, 70-83, for these speeches.

15 Runner applies V’s methods to Aristotle, and the review-
ers’ criticism is directed against V.’s method rather than 
Runner. See the Philosophical Quarterly (1922, p. 383): “ex-
tremely bad and misleading. The conclusions of the most complicated form . . . [in places] grotesquely im-
probable”; also Modern Schoolman (29, 1951-1952, pp. 334-341):
“one is surprised at the inaccuracies and presuppositions used most arbitrarily,” also Philosophy (57, 1928, p. 256), and the quotation 
which says: “There are absurd lengths . . . the faults of the work are not so much 
those of the writer as of the teacher whose jargon and distinc-
tions he has imposed.”

16 For example, VAD make much of their distinctions in 
the history of philosophy, which they divide into Greek, medieval-
Reformation, modern, and VAD, each with its own viewpoint 
and problems. Spier seems much impressed with this classifi-
cation. Actually, the first three divisions can be found in any 
freshman philosophy textbook, with the same viewpoint and 
problems (matter-form, nature-grace, etc.) described, but with 
the recognition that this is a superficial classification which can 
be used only roughly. Another classification used by V. is 
Greekg (ignorance of the Word), medieval-Reformation (syn-
exism between Christianity and Greek philosophy), and modern 
(loss of contact with the Word). Such superficial classifications 
are useful as generalities, but if used for more than that, they 
become misleading.

17 We might make a prediction here: namely, that the only 
favorable reviews this translation will receive outside our circles 
will be from various Neo-Orthodox theologians. The reasons for 
this prediction will become clearer in the articles which follow.

18 Dooyeweerd, op. cit., I, v. He was “strongly influenced 
first by Neo-Kantianism and then by Husserl’s phenomenology.”

IV

But even so, this indifference is somewhat puzz-
ing. VAD’s sometimes extravagant claims for the 
significance of the new philosophy would not be 
enough to make them shy away; other philosophers 
also indulge in that kind of thing sometimes. Nor 
are occasional philosophical lapses — though these 
there are in VAD14 —enough of an explanation. One 
possible explanation might be simply this: that 
VAD’s philosophy is not as new and unique as is 
claimed. Is this thought worth following up? Let us 
see.

VAD began their work in the World War I era, 
when the Netherlands was still under the influence 
of German philosophy, and when Neo-Kantianism 
and attempts to answer it were the main themes of 
philosophical effort. They were soaked in this post-
Neo-Kantian philosophy: indeed, D. himself, in the 
preface to his Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee, gives us a 
valuable clue as to where to look for influences. He 
states that Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology were 
the main attractions for him before he developed the 
new philosophy.18

Well, suppose we look for a post-Neo-Kantian Ger-
man phenomenologist who was popular in the Neth-
erlands in the World War I era. This would be, in 
picular, Nicolai Hartmann. 20 And since Hart-
mann was interested in ontology, he might be ex-
pected to have something on the same area of VAD’s 
main interest, the metaphysical levels (the “Fourteen 
Categories” of VAD). Let us then examine Hart-
mann, and see if there are any similarities to VAD. 
As an additional check, let us examine a contem-
porary American post-Neo-Kantian phenomenologist 
who is interested in ontology: James Feiblmann.

Will we find a possible source for many of VAD’s

17 Hartmann and Scheler were well-known and influential; 
see Sassen in the Library of the Xth International Congress of 
Philosophy (Amsterdam, 1948, II; x); also Sassen, Wijsgeerige 
Leven in Nederland in de 20e Eeuw (Amsterdam, 1947).
ideas in post-Neo-Kantian Phenomenology, in men like Husserl, Hartmann and the like?
If we do, it will not mean that VAD is not valuable; nor that they should not be read; but it will have some bearing on VAD’s oft-repeated statement that “synthesis between the Christian faith and current philosophy is impossible.”

Let us then go ahead with our study of VAD, Hartmann, and Feibleman.

21 See e.g. Vollenhoven, op. cit., p. 16; cited also by Masselink, p. 249. Cf. also Spier, pp. 1-20.

Note: This is the first of three articles by Dr. Jellum on the philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd.—(Editors.)

New Views Regarding Common Grace

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DURING the past few years we have experienced a renewed interest in the doctrine of Common Grace. Since the 1924 controversy this subject received little of our attention. A revival of emphasis on this doctrine followed a prolonged debate carried on in The Banner by Prof. K. Schilder and the Rev. D. Zwiers, in which Schilder voiced his disapproval regarding the declaration of our Christian Reformed synod on Common Grace, as expressed in the “Three Points.” In the final years of his life Schilder gradually became more positive in his denial of this truth, and more and more agreed with the views of Protestant Reformed theology. Schilder’s attack was directed mainly against Dr. Abraham Kuyper and the Reformed dogmatics.

This Schilderian teaching is closely related to a contemporaneous philosophy of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd, two professors of philosophy at the free University of Amsterdam. Of the two, Prof. Vollenhoven is by far the more radical in his agreement with Schilder. For some time the deviating views of Schilder and Vollenhoven remained unchallenged in the Netherlands. Objections against some of this teaching were voiced by men like Prof. Jn. Waterink (cf. Reformatie, series of articles in 1934), the late Prof. V. Hepp (cf. his Dreigende Deformatie, and Credo, passim), the late Prof. H. H. Kuyper (cf. Heraut, Feb. 18, 1943), and the Rev. Dr. Steen (cf. Philosophia Deformata). The sharpest opposition came from Hepp, who was then professor of Systematic Theology at the Free University—successor to Dr. Herman Bavinck. Dr. Steen, one of the ministers of the gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands, also made exceedingly sharp criticism. Both Hepp and Steen brought severe charges. They even asserted that Schilder and his associates were anti-confessional and unscriptural because of the denial of the Reformed doctrines of Common Grace and General Revelation. Against Vollenhoven’s philosophy they brought the following charges: the denial of the immortality of the soul, of the substantiality of the soul, the continued existence of the soul, the meaning of the Christian’s death, the One Person and Two Natures of the Mediator, the Theocentric conception of God and the Cosmos as well as of man’s unique place in the universe. It will be observed that these charges are severe.

This new system of thought was brought to our attention in America chiefly through the influence of Dr. C. Van Til, Professor of Apologetics at the Westminster Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. There is much resemblance between Van Til’s teachings and those of Schilder and Vollenhoven. Christian Reformed membership was made acquainted with this teaching through books, pamphlets, mimeographed class lectures, periodicals and especially through Van Til’s teaching at Calvin Seminary.

A global view of Van Til’s writing shows that he is basically Reformed in his theology. The apparent deviations from the historic Reformed dogmatics are quite well confined to three doctrines: Common Grace, General Revelation, and the Divine Image in natural man. Prof. Van Til has pedagogical ability and penetrating scholarship. Without fear of contradiction it can be said that this brother is highly respected in Reformed circles. It is therefore with hesitation and diffidence that I express disagreement with some of his views. I want to state very emphatically that my objections are not in the least directed against any person involved in this discussion, nor against the Westminster Seminary where Van Til teaches. My criticism is solely confined to teachings, and does not extend to persons or institutions. The proponents of this new system are brethren in Christ, and members with us of the same household of faith. I shall try to present my difficulties with their teachings as objectively and in as brotherly a spirit as I can.

II

If the advocates of this movement have anything worth-while to offer in the line of theological or philosophical development, it is to be accepted with humble gratitude. They certainly have a right to be heard and to present their views. On the other hand, we have the indisputable right and duty to analyze these teachings in the light of Scripture and Confession, and if teachings appear that seem to be
anti-Confessional and unscriptural, we have the God-given duty to correct them. After making some study of this new line of thought, I cannot suppress grave concern—a concern which I share with some of the leading Reformed theologians of the Netherlands. Many of these teachings appear disconcerting and shocking. I would hesitate to employ the strong language of the late Prof. Hepp, but on the other hand I too feel with him that the logical results of this whole new philosophy of thought may lead us far away from the goal which we are all seeking, and may even bring us in conflict with Scripture and our Confessions. Van Til and others with him love the Bible and our Confessions as well as we do, but apparently fail to realize the logical results to which their views may lead.

III

According to my judgment there are dissimilarities and similarities between Schilder and H. Hoeksema; between the new teaching and Protestant Reformed theology. In general there appears to be much basic agreement. However, they are not to be identified. There is a marked difference of emphasis and even of views observable between them. I shall now mention, by way of comparison, several apparent points of dissimilarity and similarity.

A. The following dissimilarity is observable:

1. The Protestant Reformed movement originated in America and consequently bears some American earmarks. The Schilderian teaching commenced in the Netherlands and contains some of its characteristics. The new movement is not an outgrowth of the Protestant Reformed theology: it appears to have had an independent beginning.

2. The Protestant Reformed thought is definitely theological in content, whereas this new thought is philosophical as well as theological. Vollenhoven, one of the leaders, is first of all a philosopher. Van Til too has a philosophical bent of mind, and even Schilder mixes much philosophy with his theology.

3. The Protestant Reformed movement was never so solidly established as this new system appears to be. The divisions among them which are experienced today have been there before. On the other hand, this new system seems unified. It is well established in the Liberated church in the Netherlands, and apparently is highly appreciated at Westminster Seminary. From these two centers of influence the leaders of this thought labor arduously to develop and propagate its teachings.

4. Protestant Reformed theology adheres strictly to the traditionally Reformed views regarding the immortality of the soul, the substantiality of the soul, the continued existence of the soul, the Reformed conception of the Christian's death, and the One Person and Two Nature doctrine of the Mediator. Prof. Hepp, the Rev. Steen, and others have declared that this new philosophy teaches anti-confessional and unscriptural views regarding these doctrines. The American representatives of this new thought have repeatedly expressed much admiration and agreement with Vollenhoven's unique conceptions, but, as far as I know, have never subscribed to the above-named deviations from our Reformed faith.

B. Some basic similarities appear to exist in their views concerning Common Grace and General Revelation. By this I do not at all mean to imply that they think precisely alike on matters of doctrine, because this is not so. Both Van Til and Schilder have criticized Hoeksema, and Van Til also criticized Schilder. However, it is my opinion that these disagreements concerned matters of peripheral importance, and had little to do with the distinguishing fundamentals of their theology. There appears to be some basic agreement between Protestant Reformed theology and this new system regarding two doctrines: Common Grace and General Revelation.

IV

The question constantly emerges: is this a new system or can it be considered as a development of the old Reformed system of theology? Much of course depends upon the answer to this question. Must the disagreements with historical Reformed theology be regarded as basic, or are they non-essential? I venture to answer this question in the affirmative. For this answer I offer two reasons. That this is a new system seems to be evident from the contents of its teachings. Basic departures from historic Reformed thought appear to be involved in their conception of the following truths: Common Grace, the Image of God in natural man, the Universal Fatherhood of God in the creative sense, Total Depravity, the antithesis between God and natural man, the Contact Point for mission work, and the Reformed conception of apologetics. New views regarding these doctrines are contained in their theology. Coming to the philosophy, we meet with difficulties in their conceptions of the soul and other truths especially related to Reformed psychology and eschatology. My second reason for believing that this is a basically New System of thought is grounded upon their own declarations. Vollenhoven himself considers his work as beginning a new era in Calvinistic philosophy. He condemnns the Reformed view of dichotomy as heathenish philosophy. The catechism, for example, states that "my soul and body" belong to my Savior. This distinction of 'soul and body' is of pagan origin, we are told. (cf. Het Calvinisme en de Reformatie van de Nieuwe Wijsbegeerte, p. 44). It will also be observed that this philosophy is called by them, "the Reformation of the New Philosophy." On page 33 of this same work Vollenhoven contends that anyone who distinguishes soul and body as two substances (a denial of the substantiality of the soul) must by that distinction
make of them “two pseudo-things.” In this section Vollenhoven even charges the dichotomists with heresy. More than that, he ascribes to them evil motives in putting forth their views.

Vollenhoven charges Abraham Kuyper with teaching an unscriptural anthropology (“Kuyper . . . wankelt in zijn anthropologie” — Kuyper . . . stumbles in his anthropology.) This refers to what Kuyper teaches regarding the soul. I quote Kuyper: “Body and soul are the two parts of our personality. We do not consist of three parts as the heathen philosophers and some heretics have taught: body, soul, and spirit; but of two substances, body and soul. The Reformed churches have always strictly rooted out by Special Grace, natural man must of necessity become as bad as he can be — like the devil. Since God bestows his curbing influence upon the degenerate heart, natural man still has “civil righteousness” and a small degree of morality. He still has some conception of “moral norms,” as Calvin states. Because of that, this antithesis between natural man and the Christian can never become “absolute” in this world. This Calvinistic conception certainly cannot encourage worldliness. By making such assertions we confuse the main issues.

2. It has been alleged against us that we believe in a “common ground between the believers and non-believers without qualification.” This too is an error. I do firmly believe that there are spheres of life in which the Christians and non-Christians can co-operate to a certain degree. For example, both Christians and non-Christians can be active in the sphere of government. The Christian may vote and hold office in the state as well as the non-Christian. There is however always this principal difference: a Christian participates in political and social functions through the strength of a renewed heart; whereas the non-Christian does this without any thought of glorifying his maker. The Christian always acts through faith. Therefore, there is no “common ground without distinction” between the two.

3. Repeatedly the charge is made that according to our opinion there is but a degree of difference between the knowledge of God and the world of the Christian, and that of the non-Christian. I do not believe that such a misconstruction of my views is ever found in anything I have written or said. Repeatedly the emphasis is placed upon the qualitative difference between the knowledge of the Christian and the non-Christian. This is so, because God’s General Revelation through which the ungodly receives knowledge comes to him in his unregenerate state, but this same General Revelation comes to the regenerate heart of the Christian. What is of even greater importance is the fact that the Christian views the media of General Revelation, creation and history, in the light of the Bible. To use Calvin’s terminology — “The Christian sees all things through the spectacles of God’s Word.”

From this we may however not conclude that the non-Christian has no knowledge whatsoever. We agree with Abraham Kuyper when he says that the “technique of reason” has not been destroyed by sin. Van Til calls this thinking of Kuyper “Kantian” and “Aristotelian.” He even speaks of the “drag of his (Kuyper — M.) semi-Kantian phenomenalism upon him” (i.e., Kuyper). In his recent publication, “A Letter on Common Grace,” Van Til says of reason in general, that “such a thing does not exist in practice.”

The issue between us and Van Til does not at all concern a “degree of difference in knowledge” between the Christian and the non-Christian, but rather whether we with Kuyper can say that the laws of logic in natural man have not been completely destroyed by sin.
4. With Van Til we believe that conscience is "revelational" of God. This therefore is not our difference. Our objection against Van Til's view of conscience is this: Van Til does not clearly differentiate between human conscience and God's General Revelation. In the book on Common Grace Van Til speaks of two books through which God reveals Himself— the "book of nature," and the "book of conscience." I believe this to be erroneous. Conscience may never be confused or identified with God's General Revelation. Conscience is subjective whereas General Revelation is objective. Conscience is fallible whereas General Revelation is infallible. Conscience is man's reaction to the Spirit's witness of the holiness and righteousness of God; but General Revelation is the Spirit's testimony to man through the media of nature and history. Therefore, to say as some do that the revelational nature of conscience is the point of disagreement between Van Til and myself, is not true to fact.

5. Some maintain that the objections against Van Til center on the question whether one may or may not disagree with men like Kuyper, Bavinck and Warfield. This also is not found in my writings. The question is certainly not whether one may disagree with Reformed dogmaticians or not, but rather: Do our disagreements with Reformed theology involve disagreements with Scripture and Confession. We readily admit that Reformed dogmatics is not infallible. If there be defects, they must be corrected. God gave His Scripture revelation not only to the church but also to Christian science. Dogmatics must continue to work at that. If one generation of dogmatics, however, breaks down what another generation has erected, it acts contrary to Scripture and dogmatics cannot make progress. Just as the church, so dogmatics too, has its fathers. They must be respected for their work's sake. We must acknowledge these authorities which God has given us, otherwise we quench the Spirit. We may of course not swear by them. We may not do that with the Dogma either. We would, however, be ungrateful to Him Who is also the Alpha and Omega of science, to push them aside, to reject their views, for example, because the Reformed theologians received some of their thoughts from the Scholastics. All of these thoughts were not of the Evil One. Let us therefore first assimilate what we have, acquaint ourselves with the rich historical heritage that has been handed down to us across the distant centuries; and then by diligent study and persevering effort seek to add to what is already accomplished. I sometimes fear that the proponents of this new system of thought have not observed this as much as they should.

VI

This Schilderian movement depreciates historic Reformed theology. The following quotations from Schilder's works are but a few samples of the constant undervaluation of Reformed dogmatics:

"(Kuyper) simply had no time, as may be assumed, to take cognizance of what the earlier Reformed theologians taught in regard to this point [Common Grace]." Let the objective reader judge whether it is true what Schilder said: "Kuyper simply had no time" to perform careful historic research.

"The Gemeene Gratie is one of Kuyper's least successful works when we look at it from the viewpoint of Scriptural proof." This I believe to be an exceedingly subjective appraisal of Kuyper's contribution.

"I would not at all have it appear as though I had not departed very far from the definite opinions of Dr. Kuyper." To this I may add: Very far indeed! (Cf. Reformatie, jaargang 16, p. 259 ff.)

Van Til depreciates the following Reformed theologians: Kuyper: "Kuyper has a sort of 'ding an sich' very similar to Kant...[a] counterpart to the semi-platonic notion of complete comprehension." (Van Til, Common Grace, p. 39). Kuyper's method of thinking is often called "Aristotelian," "Roman Catholic," and "Scholastic."

Bavinck: Bavinck's view of the incomprehensibility of God resembles "Pagan philosophy." Bavinck's view of the "Theistic proofs" for God's existence shows "that Bavinck has not altogether cut himself loose from non-Christian forms of thinking." (Ibid., p. 56)

Hepp: He "... cannot effectively oppose the natural theology of Rome if he argues against it with the methods of a scholastic type, making concessions to a Roman type of natural theology." (Ibid., p. 60ff.)

From these and many other quotations it is evident that they all depreciate Historic Reformed theology. Reformed theology must constantly keep vigilance against two dreaded diseases: the originality disease and the parrot disease. The former breaks away from the past line of thinking. The latter repeats without assimilation. Of the two diseases the former is perhaps the worse, for it appeals to the unthinking mass. The "new" always attracts. Besides, it is in the air. In the national realm we have "new deals" and "fair deals," and in the church we have "Fundamentalism" and the "new Schofield Bible." In Theology we have Barth and Brunner. As with a disease, destructive work is often done before the germ is detected. So it may also be in our theology. The great Kuyper says of himself: "But in addition, I am not original. I do nothing but copy. What I do in the theological, ecclesiastical and civic realm is nothing but copy what Calvin and his school had." By being nothing but "copyist!" Kuyper brought the development of Reformed theology further than anyone else of his time. Bavinck says: "An original opinion is not the result of especially much but of especially little study. The difference between no wisdom and little wisdom is not very great."

Radical biblicism completely neglects the Holy Spirit's leading into truth. In its explanation of the
truth it places itself before a new beginning. The moderate biblicism which is present in this new movement does not deny the leading of the Spirit into the truth. The representatives of this new system have such a high evaluation of it that it almost appears as if the leading of the Spirit during the past nineteen centuries is about equal to the leading of the Spirit as it was concentrated in the past two decades. Christ, however, did not promise the church that the Spirit would especially lead us in our age, more than in the past centuries. The promise of the Spirit’s leading covers the whole period from Pentecost to the Second Coming. We ourselves are the poorest judges of our time and of our work. Maybe what is now characterized as especially “new” and “fresh” may soon be discarded. Later generations who live by faith will be better judges of us than we are. At any rate we must believe that the present results of the leadings of God’s Spirit into the truth are small when compared to the leadings of the past centuries. The new system is turning the clock backward many degrees in its break with historic theology.

When the new movement claims that the publication of Vollenhoven’s book, Calvinism and the Reformation of New Philosophy marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Calvinistic philosophy, it errs. When it calls Vollenhoven the “Father of Calvinistic Philosophy” it suffers from self-delusion. It would have us believe that up to their time nothing of much value was accomplished in the field of philosophy. By such pretentious assumptions a grave injustice is done to: Calvin, Kuyper, Bavinck, Hepp, Waterink and others. By saying this, I do not mean to leave the impression that this new movement is entirely without merit. Undoubtedly it contains much that is good. But often the good is so mixed with error that it loses some of its value.

It would almost appear that some of leaders of this new system of theology are not entirely free from absolutism. They regard Vollenhoven to be the father of Calvinistic philosophy. The teachings of Kuyper, Bavinck, Warfield and Machen and Hepp are undervalued by them. The following quotation from Van Til’s recent publication, “A Letter on Common Grace,” brings out what I have in mind:

“Now if we develop a doctrine of common grace in line with the teachings of Hepp with respect to the general testimony of the Spirit then we are incorporating into our scientific edifice the very forces of destruction against which that testimony is bound to go forth. Then ‘we might as well blow up the science building with an atom bomb.’ I have apologized for that statement. But to the meaning intended then I subscribe today.”

Hepp teaches a twofold testimony of the Holy Spirit in General Revelation: external testimony and internal testimony. Prof. Waterink teaches the identical thing. In his Pedagogy as Science Waterink uses the identical terminology that Hepp uses (cf p. 50).

I judge that a frank mutual exchange of the difference of opinion has now become necessary. The matter is no longer “inter-nos,” or something confined to the academic halls of learning. It has been introduced to the general public. Exchange of thought need not lead to bitterness and hard feelings. If our discussions remain on a high Christian level, they may bind us closer together in unity and brotherly love. An atmosphere of hush, hush will certainly not be helpful to the church. No church may be adverse to advancement.

The progress in theology and philosophy must, however, be sought on the basis of the existing Dogma and dogmatics. We may not disregard this historic heritage. This I feel is too much done by the brethren of the new system. They set out to reconstruct Kuyper, but may end in destruction. Instead of pruning the Kuyper tree of some unhealthy twigs, to use Schilder’s terminology, they seem to have severed some of the roots upon which the very life of that tree depends. Instead of removing a few loose shingles from the roof of the Calvinistic structure, they dislodge some of the foundation stones upon which the whole structure rests.

We may not be non-progressive in our theology. A high regard must be cherished for the traditional, yet without slavish following of the past merely for the sake that it belongs to the past. There is a grave danger at present to view the past and the traditional as a norm for the present and the future. We as Reformed Christians have a past to be proud of. That is why we are prone to look upon it as our norm and view the whole structure of theology as already completed, as though there is no more constructive work for us to accomplish. In this way original work is discouraged and we are in danger of satisfying ourselves with the compilation of the thoughts of our forefathers without observing that upon the foundation already laid we must continue to raise our theological structure. We must have a due regard for the traditional. We must also strive to move forward.

Much, indeed much has already been contributed for the construction of a thoroughly Calvinistic system of theology and philosophy by Calvin himself, and in later years by Kuyper, Bavinck, Warfield, Hodge, Vos, Hepp and Waterink. The material for this construction is quite well gathered together. Even the foundation and general framework has been completed. Now it is left for us and future generations to consummate this cathedral of Calvinistic science. If that is to be done we must desist from endangering the very foundation that providentially has been laid.

It is my firm conviction that this new system of thought will ultimately lead us in the wrong direction. In a subsequent article I hope to enlarge upon.
the grounds for my concern. The following basic Reformed doctrines are involved: Common Grace, General Revelation, Total Depravity, Antithesis be-

Calvin College Chapel Talk (November, 1953)

G. HARPER

* MAY seem to you strange to hear this selec-
tion* so early in the season. You might think,
he could at least wait until December. But here
is a consideration: the merchants have already
begun their festivities—the Santa Claus parade is
two weeks into antiquity. Merchandise buyers be-
gan their preparations for Christmas away back in
August. The advertising industry has been in its
yearly frenzy for some time now; last week's mail
included several multi-coloured, multi-paged Christ-
mas-toy catalogues aimed at the children (those that
came to our house went awry, and fell into the
wastebasket). Plywood mangers were dusted off
weeks ago, and now rest in store windows, where
they are gazed on by robed manikins whose last duty
was in the back-to-school clothing line, whose ex-
pressions of sophisticated boredom have not
changed, and wear poorly in their present situation.
All the technical skill, the dedication, the talent for
persuasive rhetoric, and the vast iconography of the
advertising industry are, and have been for some
time, harnessed to the task of making this another
great commercial season; all the supply lines have
been prepared, all the warehouses restocked, clerks
hired and professional Santa Clauses engaged; the
land groans under the burden of saleable goods, and
every item down to the last plastic reindeer stands
stout and ready to close the breach in the
stocks, when the time comes. The entertainment industry,
meanwhile, has not been idle: troops of crooners,
funny-men, and mellow-voiced announcers are al-
ready at work, and the repertory of really nervous
variations on Jingle-Bells, Santa-stuck-in-the-
chimney gags, and new ways of introducing old
heathen into the vast listening market is even now
being tried out: what survives of it will be expended
in one final, long, tasteless television orgy on Christ-
mas day itself. So our otherwise laudable mercan-
tile civilization has long been at welcoming the
Word made flesh, in their way: why then should we
wait? Why not begin now to consider the manifold
riches of the several Gospel narratives about the
birth of Christ; why not begin now to match the
floods of meaningless words with even a few words
about The Word; why not begin now to proclaim, in
this season of million-candlepower displays, the
Word whose life is the light of men, a light shining
in a darkness (perhaps in our time in a synthetic
brightness) that comprehends Him not? I think it
is seasonal enough for us to begin to learn again of
that great and incomprehensible mystery, the In-
carnation, which we celebrate on Christmas day,
celebrate perhaps with too much of the induced false
bonhomie that we pick up in the pre-Christmas
season, and too little of the loving wonder that pos-
sessed the shepherds and the Magi and, we may be-
lieve, Mary, who had known of its coming for long-
er than they.

S. John's Gospel is, for me at least, particularly
rich in its announcement of the birth of Christ, for
it speaks of it as the Incarnation, the Word made
flesh. And because John speaks of the Word made
flesh, I think that this Gospel can be of particular
interest to students, for we are all busy learning
about the “All things . . . that were . . . made by
Him.” This Gospel speaks, then, about the Word
of God, Who called all things into existence, coming
to dwell among men whom He had made, and as-
suming their form and living their life, their sin ex-
cepted, among all the things made by Him. “In the
beginning. . . .” He Who was in the beginning the
Word, Who was with God, who was God, dwelt
among us; He who has the disposition of all that was
made, Who is the substantive Word of God, which
returneth not void, disposed of Himself in that way,
by making himself void for our sakes, by dying for
us. And there is your Christmas season: there is
your reason for rejoicing, for giving gifts. This it is
that is lost in the two-months scramble with its syn-
thetic glory: we are about to be blinded once again,
as every year, by tinsel and lights and convoys of
delivery trucks, so that once again we’ll be hard put
to it to behold that glory that S. John speaks of, that
glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of
grace and truth. This is that Mystery to which the
childish fiction of Santa Claus is such a ludicrous
shadow. This is the season in which that Word be-
came flesh, that Word that made all things that were
made. Do you wonder at the amount and variety of
things made and sold in this season? Quench that
wonder in a scholarly consideration of the amount
and variety of not only things but worlds which the
Word called into being—even in this season that is
our acceptable task as students.

* John 1.

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ONE gathers that there is widespread disparagement of instruction in the contents of the Bible especially on the college level. This may be partially due to the consideration that it is difficult to avoid the impression of superficiality in dealing with that which is generally familiar. Another factor may be that such instruction is thought to smack of the biblicism of the approach of Bible Schools generally. It is true indeed that such knowledge does not carry one very far toward solutions of the profound problems of theology or discovery of the precise application of Scripture to the issues of the day. Nevertheless, experience shows that, pre-college education being what it commonly is today, it is just as bad policy to assume a competent knowledge of the English Bible at the college level as a command of the English language. All too often, moreover, seminary students disclose an astonishing ignorance with regard to elementary features of the Bible. General knowledge will not suffice, but surely the seminary student who supposes that he can develop into a theologian without building upon a specific knowledge of the Bible is on a dangerous road. History is replete with distressing examples of theologies and theological constructions developed by learned thinkers which have been found wanting as their lack of responsible grounding in Scripture has become evident. In short, while survey courses do not fully meet the student's needs, it is hazardous to discount the study of the contents of the Bible at any stage of education.

The solid and well written volume under review here, perhaps as ambitious a work as has been undertaken in survey of the New Testament, is from the pen of the Dean of the Graduate School of Wheaton College. He has taught there for more than ten years, and prior to that was for many years a member of the Faculty of Gordon College in Boston. Among his previous books mention may be made especially of his John: The Gospel of Belief and Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty. The author, a conservative Baptist, honors the Scriptures as the Word of God, as might be expected from the office he holds. Although his position may be generally characterized as fundamentalist, he is certainly not obscurantist, nor cocksure in his judgments, nor severe in his criticisms of those with whom he differs.

Designed especially for college use it will be widely recognized as achieving its purpose, and will give considerable satisfaction to instructor and student alike. A favorable initial impact is made by its attractive binding and typography. The materials are thoughtfully and helpfully organized; the language and style are pleasing. A high standard of scholarship is maintained but the work is not burdened with technical materials which might lay a heavy burden upon the student.

A notable feature of the book is the substantial section on "The World of the New Testament," which precedes the actual survey of Scripture. This division presents a veritable, though compact, "History of N. T. Times," including treatment of the political, social, economic and religious backgrounds. Particularly if the study of these matters is accompanied by class room lectures and collateral reading, as the author suggests, which he encourages by the inclusion of a helpful bibliography, this section may be very rewarding. The review of Roman and Jewish history and the survey of Judaism (including its theology, the temple, the synagogue, the feasts, the literature and sects) is especially helpful.

The survey of the New Testament itself proceed under three principal divisions: (1) the life of Christ (6 BC to AD 29), with separate chapters on the individual gospels, the synoptic problem and the life of Christ; (2) the expansion of the early church (AD 29-60); and (3) the period of consolidation (AD 60-100). A final section deals with the Canon of the N. T. and includes various useful charts and tables.

In view of its comprehensive contents and effective arrangement and exposition the volume may perhaps be best characterized as a popular introduction to the New Testament. Questions of introduction are not dealt with at length in view of the primary interest in contents rather than origins. Nevertheless, at many points an awareness of the problems raised in the modern literature is reflected, and occasionally at least particular questions are treated in a pointed and effective manner. Favorable mention of the discussion of Goodspeed's theory concerning the origin of Ephesians may be made in this connection. In dealing with the contents of the several writings the author is at his best, as he seeks by tentative outlines, broad surveys and the underscoring of passages of exceptional religious and ethical significance to focus attention upon the general and specific substance of the sacred text.

If the book has a general weakness, it would appear to lie in the very feature that affords it so much strength: the comprehensiveness of its subject matter. Some subjects are inherently so intricate, or so enmeshed in controversy, that even the mention of them requires considerable explication. Such a subject is the N. T. Canon, which cannot be expounded advantageously within the compass of a few pages. Another is the Synoptic Problem, especially since, in spite of the minute verbal similarities, the author appears to hold that it is not necessary to hold to actual literary dependence in one direction or another.

There are several points at which readers are likely to dissent. Is Romans 11 aptly characterized as "The Failure of Israel"? Is the Christo-centric evaluation of Revelation entirely satisfactory? Is there evidence that the ministry in Athens was a disappointment to Paul? Is the criticism of current philosophies adequate as expressed in the words that "they were unsatisfactory because they were too abstract for the ordinary man to grasp in their entirety.
DUTCH LOVE FOR LIBERTY

THIS book is a history of the Dutch nation by the well-known Calvinist historian, Algra. It is a series of 53 lectures given to a mixed prison camp population in North Brabant during the second World War. Professor H. Brugmans of Leyden, one of the audience, says that the interest and enthusiasm of the listeners was just as vigorous at the end as it was at the beginning. The lectures emphasize the Dutch love for liberty, political, social and religious, among all groups and great national leaders almost without exception, but they do not hesitate to point out that from the time of the Reformation the Calvinists were in the front ranks, and that the national culture, i.e., the Sciences and Arts, also show the great influence of Calvin and Beza. It is encouraging to read such a volume on Dutch History after all the books that have been published in the United States in the last decade, for the latter sing the praises of Erasmus and his fellow Humanists in such a way that the reader wonders whether Calvinism means anything else in Holland but narrow-mindedness and aversion to progress. Of course, history is a subject in which the religious background of a lecturer or author is bound to appear in every chapter, since the church is the most important institution in human life, but we may expect of every historian at least that he be fair and impartial in his estimates of characters and influences. And such a historian is Algra.

The author has been a teacher of history in Christian junior colleges, but also made himself a reputation in politics and in social life through his oratorical and philosophical abilities. He is a member of the Dutch Parliament, a director of the Free University, and the president of the League of Reformed Young Men's Societies. He has written another three volume work on Dutch history for the last group, and is now busy publishing a work of about ten volumes on the same subject, with the help of one of his relatives, A. Algra. As an author, Mr. H. Algra reveals himself as a man who is well-read and well-informed not only about interesting details, but also about principles and movements. The present work is of such a scope that it should be on the shelves of any Calvinist who can read Dutch, and it should even be welcome to historians of other convictions to give them an opportunity to regain their balance.

Algra begins his journey through Dutch history by making plain that even from the earliest days the Dutch tribes were liberty loving. It is true that they belonged to the buffer states of the Roman Empire for several centuries, and that after that they were "satellites" of Charlemagne, and of the German Emperors and French kings. But from the beginning the coastlands of Frisia, Holland, Zeeland and Flanders turned their faces away from their rulers and towards the liberating North Sea for fisheries and trade. The name Low Countries to designate the present Benelux organization (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg) was invented during the High Middle Ages shortly after Charlemagne had disappeared from the scene. In the feudal age the Frisians refused to have a statholder and constantly fought the vassals of the German Emperors. The Counts of Holland founded Dordrecht, long the biggest city in the North, at the crossroads of the big rivers, and chased the German armies back. The Flemish rulers freed themselves from the French kings, and the Duke of Brabant defeated his Eastern neighbors who had become allies of the Emperors. During and already before the Crusades the main Dutch and Belgian cities, under the leadership of their local governors, were mastering the Western European transit trade, and they became famous for their democratic councils. The Italian cities fell into the hands of autocrats who reduced the influence of the common people to nothing, but the cities and counties in the Low Countries, notwithstanding the romanizing policies of the Burgundian and Habsburg rulers, maintained their graded democracy and their local privileges. When the Reformation arrived in the Netherlands the Flemish and Christian Renaissances had already created an independent art and an independent system of education with an independent way of religious thinking, which made good soil for Dutch Calvinism and culture, and for a Dutch War for Independence.

Algra points out that during the beginning of this war for religious and civil liberty there were the present Calvinists William of Orange and Marnix of Saint Aldegonde, who fought for liberty of conscience and for liberty of worship. The first statesman in Europe who defended the former was William the Silent. At that time he was still nominally a Catholic, but after his conversion to the Reformed religion he sent Marnix to Dordrecht in 1572 to found the Dutch Republic. The Pact of Dordrecht is the first document in European history which maintains equal rights for Protestants and Catholics in one and the same country. Even if the Dutch Reformed Church became later a State Church, there was always during the time of the Republc liberty of worship for the Mennonites, the Lutherans, the Catholics, and even for the Arminians shortly after the Synod of Dordrecht.

The Stadholders of the House of Orange in the seventeenth century made common cause with the common people to maintain their right to serve God according to the dictates of their conscience, when first the Arminians, and later the Arminians and the Rationalists tried to make the state church a tool of the merchants-regent who often sympathized with Grotius and Cartesian. Repeatedly the city councils had to be changed by Maurice, William II, and William III, not only for political, but also for religious reasons. In these days in which the so-called State party had leaders who wanted absolutism for the merchants-regent, and latitude in doctrine for the ministers and the professors of theology, the descendants of William of Orange stood on the side of those who wanted liberty for all, in addition to a church true to its creeds.

In the eighteenth century religious, political, social and economical affairs went from bad to worse, and the stadholders were unable to hold the stream of unbelief and capitalism. The so-called French Period did not bring about
any relief. Influenced by French institutions and political documents, the new government took refuge in centralization. Individual enterprise also went by the board. And the church saw no revival till 1820.

It was during the New Kingdom that the renewal came. King William I did not understand the religious movements, but tried to restore commerce and trade, and social affairs. Under William II the “Separatists” received partial freedom of worship, but not enough to curb the Emigration to America in 1847. Under William III the Christian Schools received liberty, and many reforms were brought about under the leadership of two great statesmen, the Calvinist Groen Van Prinsterer and the progressive Liberal Thorbecke. During the reign of Queen Wilhelmina liberty was advanced by four other leaders: Kuyper and Lohman (Calvinists); Schoepman (Catholic); and Troelstra (Socialist). The Christian and Catholic schools received state subsidy already in 1889, and more in 1905, and in 1917 complete equalization as to financial help from the government. During the last 70 years the Dutch nation has more and more developed the principle of liberty and decentralization in political and economical affairs. State absolutism and nationalization of industry, commerce and agriculture have been vigorously opposed.

We might add, however, this does not mean a return to the old theory of the Manchester School, which wanted the government only to protect life and property. Social legislation and economic guidance of some kind are advocated by all parties but one. This balanced view which makes for the peaceful cooperation of almost all groups, and for a decrease in strikes, is not only due to historical forces, but also to the revival of Calvinism as an all-embracing world view.

The author of this book had to stop short of the last World War, of course, and does not give us the latest information, but, though in a camp for war prisoners and surrounded by the Hitlerites, he was full of hope that liberty would return soon, and that his fatherland would resume an honorable place among the nations, and do justice to all religious and social groups. His rare optimism has not been disappointed. The Netherlands is getting on top economically and politically. And Dutch Calvinism is being respected far and wide for its thoroughness, its breadth of vision, and its progressive spirit in every line of activity. Here is a comforting book for Calvinists all over the world.

Henry J. Van Andel

DIVINE ADOPTION


This work is a dissertation as part of the requirement for obtaining the doctor’s degree in theology at the Free University of Amsterdam. It deals specifically with one doctrine of Roman Catholic theology, i.e., divine adoption, as developed by one of its professors, Matthias Joseph Scheeben. After a very careful and penetrative analysis of the view of adoption advanced by Scheeben, which was on the one hand true to consistent Roman Catholic tradition, yet on the other, as developed by Scheeben, led him to add a second formal cause of adoption, which was novel and which occasioned a most profound controversy among R. C. theologians, Dr. Palmer gives us his appraisal and critique of Scheeben’s view over against the backdrop of the Reformed position. This critique led Dr. Palmer to a careful, biblical and creedal investigation as to the nature of adoption, a theme concerning which there is no unanimity of opinion among Reformed theologians. His study and investigation of the matter constrained him to part ways with the usual presentation of this matter as advanced by Turretin, Dabney, C. Hodge, and more lately by Professor Honig of Kampen and Professor Berkhof of Calvin.

Without hesitation the reviewer can assert that this is a splendid piece of academic work. It proves conclusively that though there is a shifting of problem-accentuation in the conflict between R. C. and the best of Reformation theology, Calvinism, that after all, fundamentally the controversy centers on the same basic points singled out by the Reformers, and against which they did valiant battle. In this instance, since grace, the gratia sanctificans, or gratia infusa or gratia creativa is the first and basic formal ground for adoption in R. C. theology, the question revolves about the definition, the nature of grace. The R. C. definition of this concept involves a devaluation of the biblical concept of sin; of man’s depravity; and worse still, though consistent and logically related to their basic assumption, it devalues the adequacy and all-sufficiency and even the necessity of Christ’s atonement. In this context we can understand and appreciate the Reformed motto: sola fide, sola gratia. In a sense one can say that the definition of grace, its nature, content and issue is the very rub of the whole of R. C. theology. Personally, I have felt that the heart of their theology is determined by their view of man as the image of God. The R. C. doctrine of grace is tailored to fit their view of the image of God in man, and for a thousand years R. C. theologians were hammering into shape their doctrine of grace. Though they disclaim grace to be a substance, yet even so it is in reality for the Roman Catholic a refined substance which allows of vehicular communication through the sacraments.

M. J. Scheeben was a German Roman Catholic theologian born in 1835, who became professor of dogmatics at a seminary for priests at Cologne when but 25 years of age, remaining there until his death in 1888. Though dying at an early age of 53, he left a rich legacy of literary and systematic works. The problem that intrigued him was that of grace. At the age of 27 he published a work on Die Herrlichkeiten der göttlichen Gnade. He expressed amazement that in all literature there is no popular study of this doctrine. Much had been written about gratia sanans, but little about gratia elevans. Augustine, according to Scheeben, developed the negative side of grace, viz., as opposed to sin, but the positive side was left a desideratum, viz., as opposed to nature. It was to this problem that Scheeben addressed himself. He wrote three volumes of a 1000 pages each, setting forth R. C. systematic theology. Though this work suffered neglect and was comparatively untouched for 30 years after his death, today it is in high honor among Roman Catholics. A parallel phenomenon appears in the Post-Reformation period for both Protestant and R. C. theology. Both suffered by the onslaughts of the Enlightenment. Subtle, scholastic, philosophic refinements supplanted the virile, biblically orientated Protestant faith; and R. C. theology did not escape a similar fate. But after this epoch of deterioration a revival was witnessed for both Protestant and R. C. theology. Scheeben played a prominent role in the
revival of R. C. theology. He is appraised as “ein durch und durch origineller und schöpferischer Geist : ein Theologe von genialer spekulatoriver Begabung.” He was doubtless genial and most certainly speculative, as is evidenced by his “original ideas in relation to grace, his theory of the inner life of the Trinity, his new emphasis in the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and his capable defense of a twofold formal cause of adoption.” (p. 9) Palmer points to one cause among others, which signals the revival of interest in Scheeben’s theology, and that is the “increased interest in the liturgical movement. There is an intrinsic connection between theology and liturgy.” (p. 10) This observation is worthy of some earnest reflection.

The concern of this dissertation is Scheeben’s view of adoption. By grace a man becomes a son of God. By nature man is in subjection and servitude, and true to the R. C. position this subjection and servitude of natural man is not because of sin, but due to his createdness. “It is natural.” This confirms what I said above, that the determining thrust of R. C. theology is its conception of man, its definition of man as the image of God. For the view of grace in R. C. theology is geared to fit the view of man. The antithesis is not sin and grace, but nature and grace. But from this state of servitude and subjection it is possible to be adopted as a son of God. This fact is “greater than the act of creation and more amazing than Christ’s incarnation.” And if we ask, what is the very heart of the nature of adoption for Scheeben, the answer is that it is “grounded on the intrinsic worth of the individual and is not just a legal transaction.” (pp. 14-15) Scheeben claims that the Protestants do not have sanctifying grace in their theology. All they have, according to Scheeben, is imputed grace; no real, inward grace; only outer, juridical fiction. (p. 105) This is intended as a direct attack on the Reformed view of adoption and of justification. Scheeben is severe in his criticism of the Protestant position, for it conceives of adoption by grace as being analogous to human adoption. “Adoption is not just a remission of sins, nor a naked external adoption, nor just an outward designation, nor something purely putative. Human adoption is nothing more than a moral act by which someone is called a son, but is not really made a son. It is a fictio juris.” “It has no intrinsic value. Its only worth is an imputed one. In human adoption an outward and not an inward right to an inheritance is given, i. e., it is based on an outward, legal transaction and not on certain intrinsic characteristics which belong to the person adopted. It is an empty name . . . Because of man’s impotency . . . , the adopter can not made the adopted one intrinsically worthy of the title.” (p. 16) The word intrinsically is the key word in this quotation, and with this viewpoint Scheeben attacked not only the Protestant view of adoption, but also that of Bonaventura and of Scotus and all Nominalistic tendencies. The problem then resolves to this: What constitutes this intrinsic worth of the person adopted, so that he is not only called a son, but is really a son of God? Most Catholic divines claim that this intrinsic worth comes when a man is given the gratia infusa, or the gratia sanctificans, or gratia creat. Natural man can do good indeed, he can know and love and hope, but it is a goodness, knowledge, love and hope of a lower order. These works are a meritis de congruo. But if man is a participant of the gratia sanctificans, his works have intrinsic value, they are a meritis de condigno. The intrinsic value, the superior excellence arises as a result of the intrinsic worthiness of the gratia infusa. In order to assure the faithful that such were real sons, or children of God, Scheeben examined the nature of this gratia sanctificans and gave it minute, explicit definition. This signals his contribution on the subject of grace. But not satisfied with this one formal cause as the ground for adoption, he sought a second formal cause for a “filler,” a more complete and adequate adoption, viz., the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the gratia increata. If R. C. generally regard the gratia infusa, creat, sanctificans to be the unica formalis causa of adoption, Scheeben advanced a step farther, and made an able defense for a second formal cause, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the perfecting cause of adoption. This can only be appreciated when one considers that the norm for adoption according to Scheeben is sonship, and if one is to be a real son (or child) of God in distinction from a legal, fictitious son, two conditions must be fulfilled, viz., a unity by similarity and a unity by organic union, a partaking of the divine nature, a sharing substantially of the Father. A son is a participant of the semem divinum. The novelty of the second formal cause for adoption involved Scheeben in a bitter controversy. He obviously laid himself open to the charge of pantheism, but this charge Scheeben most emphatically denied. However, interpreting language in its common usage and connotation, it is difficult to see how he could evade the charge. Palmer demonstrates that in actual fact Scheeben has a less real and a less full sonship than have the Calvinists, whose view of sonship Scheeben dubs as legal, fictitious, paper-money, imputative. In actual fact Scheeben’s adoption rests on the flimsy ground of speculation and lacks all biblical foundation; it is but a house built on sand.

Perhaps it would serve a good purpose to describe briefly what Scheeben and R. C. divines designate by “formal cause.” The term is wedded to the Aristotelian form-matter scheme, taken over by Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastics. Theoretically, matter is formless, but as a matter of fact, it is never separate from form. Form gives matter its outer shape and no less its inner form, so that a substance is formed whose essence, nature or being is determined by the form. Form is that by which something is what it is. The chief point is that grace clings to the soul in the same, organic fashion as form clings to matter. Thus, gratia sanctificans as a quality, a formal cause of adoption is not like a causa efficientis, but a causa formalis. We shall see that Scheeben not only makes gratia infusa, or creat, or sanctificans such a formal cause, but no less, the Holy Spirit in His indwelling in man, is such a formal cause. (Cf. pp. 92, 93)

What then is this gratia infusa, the first and foundational formal cause of adoption, which, according to Scheeben, is more amazing than the act of creation, the incarnation, the miracles or even the resurrection? He says that Protestants mistakenly charge that the R. C. make this grace a refined substance. But, says Scheeben, grace is not a substance, it is “selbst keine neue und eigene Substanz.” “It is a quality that springs from the being of a thing, it acts like a substance, in that it determines and is the foundation of the nature of the supernatural powers of the person in whom it is, but it is only a quality. It is the ground for a whole new complex of acts and a whole new life, just as the soul is the Naturprinzip of the natural life. But unlike the soul, it is not a substance. This quality comes from God.
and is natural to God.” (p. 20). This quality Scheeben calls spirituality (Geistigkeit). But now there are two sorts of spirituality, a lower and a higher, a created and an uncreated one. This distinction is wedded to and based on the Aristotelian-Thomistic form-matter theory. While God has the attribute of simplicitas, there are however two sorts of compositum, a physical and a metaphysical; correspondingly, there are two sorts of simplicity and two kinds of spirituality. A physical compositum is one made up of materia and forma substantialis. A substance that is free from this physical compositum of materia and forma substantialis is physically simple. So, for instance, the soul of man is physically simple. It is not a substance combined of materia and forma substantialis, it is free from materia. In unity with the body it is the forma substantialis corporis; but the soul itself is a substance, physically simple; it is not combined with matter. Physical simplicity makes for immateriality, supersensuality, lack of everything that is Krasse, und Schwere, substabilität, Feinheit, no hindering, impeding matter, all of which is the definition of spirituality. This is the lower spirituality. (p. 21) But there is also a higher simplicity, a divine type, so much better, as the sun is better than darkness. Even though man may do good, think, love and have hope with the lower type of spirituality, this spiritual nature must be transformed by this second type of spirituality, and this is what grace is and gives. This second type of spirituality can be understood against the background of the second sort of compositum, viz., metaphysical. This is a compositum that is found in all created substances, the two composing elements being: potentiality and actuality, which correspond to materia and forma. And now metaphysical simplicity is to be had when one of these elements, viz., potentiality, is done away with. This can occur only in God, who is actus purus, pure actuality, all potentiality having become in Him actuality. All creatures are the actualizing of a potentiality. But God is free from this conflict, he is physically and metaphysically simple or spiritual; he is only spirit, pure spirit, absolute spirit. (pp. 22-23) And now gratia infusa, sanctificans, creatas is in its essence this second type of spirituality. Man can participate in God’s nature, and become like Him through grace, i.e., spirituality as defined above. Scheeben is quick to add that this does not mean that man thus partakes of God’s aseity.

The means whereby man receives this grace is the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament of regeneration, whereby not the faculties, but the very substance of the soul is reborn. This grace, Geistigkeit, immateriality, pure actuality, metaphysical simplicity from which potentiality has been removed is a productive something. The Grundkrafte of grace is faith, hope and love, but the most characteristic and elementary activity that stems forth from it is thinking. Grace, however, must not be defined by what it produces, but rather it is the forma immaterialis, metaphysical simplicity, pure actuality, a condition in which potentiality has been actualized. Man does not receive this all at once but by degrees; he will never attain to the measure that God possesses it, yet the purer the being is, the more of this metaphysical simplicity, immateriality, spirituality that man receives, the purer will his thinking be. Potentiality impedes the highest type of thinking, viz., the visio Dei per essentiam. In God this is perfect: He sees, knows, and loves Himself immediately. Gratia sanctificans enables man to attain to the visio dei per essentiam, for that grace, that spirituality removes the thought-hindering potentiality; it makes the eye and the object metaphysically homogeneous; it causes the object to be immediately present to the eye. (p. 33) On this side of glory we must be satisfied with faith; on the other side it will be visio. The most basic activity of grace, i.e., spirituality, is thinking; its highest activity is love. But grace does not of itself produce thought, or love or hope. To this end the gratia infusa is needed, only the gratia infusa does not bring something really new; it is but a gratia elevans, sanans, for the supernatural virtues really have their root in the natural faculties of the soul. Grace only perfects these virtues. (p. 40) Grace is a quality that comes to the soul, transforming, elevating it. Since grace is not a substance, but rather a quality, man does not receive it in its fulness all at once, nor is it ever perfect on earth. Virtually, then, the R. C. can speak of an increasing justification and an increasing adoption. The highest activity of grace is love. Since that is true, some, for instance D. Scotus, identified grace and love. To this Scheeben objects, for that makes grace a Tätigkeitssubstitut and not a Seinshabitut. Grace would then affect only the activities of the soul, but not its being. Grace would then be only a participation in God’s life: knowledge, love, hope, but not a participation in his being, and this latter is the very nub of Scheeben’s doctrine of grace. Grace is a participatio divinae naturae physica. Scheeben teaches an ontological and not a mere ethical grace. Grace is not a single act like thinking or loving, but is the übernaturliche Lebensprinzip that underlies these acts. (p. 42) For that reason Scheeben objects to all rationalistic moralism, which is only an improvement of the natural powers of the soul within its sphere. Grace does not merely enable one to do but it is not a matter of degree of perfection; but, rather, acts themselves are essentially, substantially and different. (p. 45) One would suppose that such a one of Scheeben’s would class him in the category of those who teach the antithesis, but this is far from the truth. For the new powers given man in the gratia sanctificans are not against nature. The supernatural virtues have their root, according to him, in the natural faculties of the soul, and not in grace. Grace is not a new substance, but it is a quality, transforming the soul, perfecting it. Grace therefore does not deal chiefly with sin, nor even with the improvement of the natural virtues; it deals with the life of a higher order. It is not a question of sin, but of a higher type of acts. This leaves Scheeben with a dualism, a twofold type of life, one of the natural order and one of the supernatural order. Correspondingly there is a twofold type of spirituality, ontology, knowledge, ethics and goals; one is Natur and the other is Ubervinatüre. When gratia infusa, sanctificans, or creatas is given man, i.e., spirituality, immateriality, actuality, metaphysical simplicity, man participates of the divine nature, and this lifts him from the natural to the supernatural realm, working in him a change in the ontological sphere; a new Lebensprinzip is given, a new Prinzip der Tätigkeit. By grace there is a participation divinae naturae physica; it is a participation, in the narrow sense, of God’s immateriality. (pp. 40-52) Dr. Palmer summarizes it in these words: “Scheeben is pleading for a Gnadephysizismus as over against a Gnadennematizismus; for a grace that is a Seinshabitus and not a Tätigkeitshabitus; for a participatio divinae naturae physica in contrast to a participatio divinae naturae moralis; for a change first of all in man’s soul, and not, first of all, in his faculties; and
for a physical, constitutional, ontological effect as opposed to only an ethical effect. He defends an ethics and a grace that are based on ontology. In short, his is an ontological grace.” (p. 53) Dr. Palmer shows that while we do not share Scheeben’s construction of these distinctions, that nevertheless these distinctions have a biblical and creedal validity. Grace, saving grace in distinction of common grace, affects not merely my acts but more fundamentally and basically my being; not merely the agere but the esse. It is a point of real significance and provocative of many questions! Dr. Palmer asserts that it is exegetically expe-

This he claims is the perfecting cause of adoption; it makes grace, saving grace in distinction of common grace and special grace; on the area of commonness between the regenerate and the unregenerate, between the recipient of ontological grace (saving grace) and those devoid of it. It involves the whole question of the antithe-
sis.

Whereas most R. C. divines settle for one formal cause of adoption, viz., gratia sanctificans, which is called by them the unica formalis causa of adoption, Scheeben adds a second formal cause, i.e., the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is actually an organic union with the Holy Spirit. This he claims is the perfecting cause of adoption; it makes for a fuller adoption. He did not intend thereby to teach a deficiency of the gratia sanctificans, for this, he claimed, is wholly sufficient for eternal life. But the second formal cause of adoption gives a “still firmer basis and higher luster. It is not a matter of a deficiency, but of a comple-

ment.” (p. 98) The Holy Spirit “crows and perfects an existing adoption.” (p. 102)

Scheeben has set up the norm for adoption to be sonship, and consequently the question he sought to answer was: What is the nature of sonship? He claimed that human sonship is based on similarity with the father and a sub-

stantial connection with the father, i.e., a unity of simi-

larity and a unity by union. If the adopted son is to be a real son, and not a fictitious son, these two conditions of sonship must be met. The adopted son only on that basis will have an intrinsic right to the inheritance, and not merely a legal right.

As set forth by Scheeben, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit centers on two main points: the close union with God, and the special union with the Holy Spirit. (p. 64) As the natural son is given a substantial part of the father in generation, similarly in divine adoption the semen spirituale, the Holy Spirit is given to and united with man. This is not a pantheistic Verschmelzung, but an insertion, an Einsenkung, Einpflanzung of the semen divinum in the creature. As for the nature of that union: it is similar to that of the body and the soul, an Aristotelian-Thomistic, form-matter relationship, which is one of information, like the soul’s informing the body. Accordingly, true to R. C. theology, adoption and justification are relative concepts. They may be more or less complete. Obviously, this is about the exact antithesis of the Reformed position, i.e., of forensic theology. Justification and adoption rest squarely on the objective, variscious, substitutionary atone-

ment wrought out by Christ. This objective atonement furnishes an all-sufficient and adequate foundation for man’s hope, the assurance of complete salvation and the title to the inheritance.

Not only did Scheeben teach a personal presence of the Holy Spirit in the adopted son, but also a presence of the individual persons of the Trinity in their personal characteris-
tic distinctiveness as well. The Holy Spirit is, accord-
ing to Scheeben, the Schlusstein of the Trinity, and due to that position the Holy Spirit is the mediator of the adoptive generation as the sealer and anointer of the creature. (pp. 73-74) But the ultimate purpose of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling by the Father. The first person of the Trinity becomes the adopted father; the Holy Spirit cries within him: Abba Father (p. 75) God thus indwells the adopted son in a real, proper and not figurative sense. This indwelling is mystical-organic. Thus the adopted son has a substantial connection with the Father; he is a real and not a mere legal or fictitious son; he has intrinsic right to the inheritance: eternal life.

In his earlier days Scheeben taught that the gratia infusa was sufficient for adoption. That grace made man partaker of the divine substance, i.e., metaphysical simplicity, in which the action-impeding potentiality is so suppressed that man’s substance resembles God’s metaphysical sim-

plicity. The transformation occasioned by this grace enables man to rise to acts which are specifically like God’s. Man can now know, love and trust God just as immediately and directly, without any mediating objects, as God knows Himself, loves and trusts his own being. By that grace the Christian receives an image of God that is of a much higher type than the one which he has by nature. The similarity is so close that man then participates in God’s nature and life, is called God, is deified. (p. 79) But according to his later views this gratia sanctificans, while sufficient to make man a true son of God, because of the similarity it produces, is not capable of imparting the fullest type of sonship, since there can be no real, substantial union on the basis of grace alone. Therefore, he argued for the second formal cause: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which led to the organic connection with the Father. This is a real element of sonship: substantial union, origo vivendi a vivente conjuncto. For this novel position he was attacked by Granerath, and the bitter controversy only served to sharpen and clarify Scheeben’s position, both as to a definition of gratia sancti-

ficans, infusa or creata, and no less of the gratia increata, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the substantial union of the adopted son with the Father. When Granerath charged Scheeben with pantheistic views and tendencies for his novel view relative to the divine indwelling in man, Scheeben answered that this oneness is not as in the one, un-

divided divine nature, but a union with the Holy Spirit; a union like an information, not per confusionem in unam natura, but simply per inhabitationem. While he insisted on a substantial union with the Father, which would certainly lay him open to the charge of moving in the direction of pantheism, Scheeben was able to squirm out of that predicament by saying that grace is not in reality a substance, but is a quality; it is Geistigkeit, the Uebernatur, ground for a whole new complex of acts and a whole new life. But then Scheeben’s plea for a real union with the Father, as a natural son has organic connections with his father, fades into thin air! When pressed he said that this connection was only analogous to that of Christ’s union with the father. The analogy even then thins out, for, said Scheeben, it is not a matter of an analogous substance, but of an analogous manner of possession. (p. 86) And yet the only reason for his defense of the second formal cause of adoption is that this “fulfills an entirely different need of sonship, that of a substantial connection, which grace can
not fulfill because it is only a quality.” (p. 101) This gives the fuller adoption, it crown and perfects it. Yet, according to his own words, the gratia infusa, sanctificans, is in itself sufficient to make one a son of God. The second formal cause thus dribs out; its foundation is rather insecure. Scheeben teaches a basic and ideally complete adoption; a less adequate and a more adequate one; one with real merit and another that gives still firmer merit; one that lacks nothing for a true adoption and another which has an abundance; for the lesser adoption, gratia sanctificans is sufficient; for the fuller adoption, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is required. (p. 103)

The last three chapters of the book comprise an appraisal and a critique of Scheeben's and with it, the R. C. view concerning grace, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and adoption. Dr. Palmer shatters the R. C.'s criticism of Protestantism, and of Calvinism in particular, that the Calvinist theology lacks reality. The Calvinist supposedly has not real grace, nor real adoption, nor real justification, etc. We have, according to Scheeben, but an imputative, legal, fictitious, paper-money adoption and justification. Dr. Palmer makes a careful exegetical analysis of the pertinent scriptural deliverances relative to these matters, and this greatly adds to the value of his work. He demonstrates that Calvinism finds its theology on the sure Word of God, whereas the R. C. position is speculative, deriving its support in the main from tradition. When appeal is made to scripture the interpretation Scheeben gives is wholly prejudiced by traditional, Aristotelian-Thomistic-Scholastic theology. Scripture is forced to fit their theology. The supposed realism of R. C. theology is in reality built on the quicksands of human speculation; whereas the realism of Calvinism stands firmly grounded on the Rock of God's sure deliverances in Scripture.

As regards Grace, the gratia infusa, Scheeben asserts that it is a quality. He further defines that quality as metaphysical simplicity, the Aristotelian Thomistic form-matter and potentiality-actuality system. But there is no Scriptural basis to prove such a metaphysical-simplicity of God, this distinction between potentiality and actuality. According to Scheeben this grace, conceived as metaphysical simplicity, immateriality, quality, etc., is productive, and its foremost product is thinking. In consequence he teaches a radical theory of psychology. The more spiritual, i.e., the more grace one receives, the finer and more material a substance is, the purer its thinking will be. This too is a pure speculation, with no scriptural basis to support it. The Bible speaks of the heart as the psychological center of the whole man. When the heart is changed, the root of man is changed, and this alters the whole man in the whole of his expression. The Bible does not reveal a finely worked out psychology.

When, however, Scheeben argues against Nominalistic tendencies, against moralism and against Scotus, that grace is not only a Tätigkeitshabit (love) but also a Seinshabit, it is well to remember that this is not only a R. C. but also a Biblical and Reformed position. Says Palmer, “It is exegetically responsible to speak of grace as a Seinshabit.” (p. 123) There can not be simply a moralistic change of outward deeds — without a corresponding change in the existential self, out of which all actions proceed. The change is not merely in the agere but primarily in the esse. (p. 127). That is, grace effects an ontologist change. For that Scheeben argued and that is biblical as well. Proof for this ontological effect of grace (saving) and not simply a moralistic influence can be derived from the doctrine of the unio mystica with Christ. As Reformed people we do teach a real grace, a grace that has a mystical-ontological working in the saved man. Thus the Christian is ontologically, not simply morally, united with Christ and the Holy Spirit. He is really united to Christ. This is taught so less by the doctrine of total inability, effectual calling and irresistible grace. “The Bible and Reformed Faith do teach an ontological grace that affects and changes the very essence and being of man.” (p. 135) While we agree that scripture teaches that grace effects an ontological change, we deplore when Scheeben contends that grace brings about a substantial change in the soul. There is no evidence of this Aristotelian Thomistic concept in the Bible. Thus, at this point, the “essential Rome-Reformed dilemma is not ontology versus fiction; but rather ontology versus ontology, one kind of reality versus another kind of reality. There is no disagreement concerning the that, but concerning the what.” (p. 138) Scheeben’s theology abounds in dualisms. There is a twofold ontology, two types of spirituality, two types of knowledge, love, hope. Natural man has a knowledge which in itself is good and unaffected by sin; endowed with grace’s spirituality, however, he has a better and more perfect knowledge (p. 139). Reformed theology teaches an absolute antithesis; it recognizes a common grace but not the hybrid sort of common grace which at its highest reaches shades off into saving grace! On the basis of the palingenesia and irresistible grace, man becomes a new creature, in Paul’s terms, and this is an ontological change, a change not merely in the agere, a refined moralism, but a change in the esse.

As for the second formal cause of adoption, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the organic union with the Holy Spirit, Palmer proves that this too is a speculative notion and not scriptural. We are not to conceive of the giving of the Holy Spirit for a possession, but rather given for a task, guaranteeing a future salvation. Scheeben’s view is a mystical-organic union between the Holy Spirit and man, similar to that between form and matter. The Bible speaks of the activity of the Holy Spirit; it never refers to a mystical union with the Holy Spirit. No scripture proves or indicates that the nature of the inhabitation of the Spirit in our hearts is one of organic union. The Bible teaches a mystical union with Christ. The exact definition of the nature of that mystical union with Christ is difficult to describe. Christ sanctifies us through the Holy Spirit. Scheeben’s interest in the sovereign working of the Holy Spirit was not for sanctification, but rather with the effect that the Spirit has as a semen divinum for adoption. (p. 163)

In the last chapter Palmer examines the nature of adoption, a matter on which there is difference of opinion among Reformed thinkers. The usual view as advanced by Turretin, C. Hodge, Dabney, Hoenig, Berkhof is that adoption is the second part of justification. The negative aspect of justification is that the sinner is forgiven his sins on the ground of the atoning work of Christ. The positive element is based on the active obedience of Christ and consists of adoption of children and the right to eternal life. On the basis of the active obedience of Christ the sinner whose sins are forgiven is adopted to be the son of God. He now
stands in a new legal relation, which entitles him to the inheritance.

There are others who hold a different view of this matter. Amesius asserts that adoption is beyond justification. Orr claims that adoption is concerned with the paternal and personal aspect of God's character and not with the judicial aspect. Similar views are espoused by Candlish, Crawford, and especially by T. Whaling and R. A. Webb. Palmer sets forth a brief summary of the view of Webb. Basic to Webb's thought is that man stands in relation to God as a servant and as a son; therefore he had a twofold disposition: a civil and a filial. He could obey as a dutiful servant or as a loving son, receiving a just reward or a gracious one. Analogous to this, the principle of God's rule was double: justice and love, or righteousness and affectation. The end of the one was the majesty of the law, of the other, the happiness of the child. The punishment of the one was penal, of the other remedial. Adam was put on trial in a twofold capacity: as a servant and as a son. And so, according to Webb, if man is to be restored as both servant and son, then Christ must make amends for both. Says Webb: "Justification is that act of grace whereby we sinful subjects of God's government are received into the number of and given a right and title to all the privileges of the kingdom of God. Adoption is that act of grace whereby we fallen sinners are received into the number of and are given all the rights and privileges of the sons of God." (p. 167) Palmer believes that these latter theologians are essentially correct in sharply distinguishing between justification and adoption, for when adoption is assumed under the positive aspect of justification, one of its "richest blessings and most characteristic aspects is neglected. Justification describes the redemption from the point of view of God's holiness only. The negative element concerns the legal forgiveness of man's sins against God's holiness; the positive element, the legal awarding of rights to eternal life, based on the imputed righteousness of Christ." But, and this is the point that Palmer wants to make, justification does not describe man's redemption from the point of view of God's fatherly love. Adoption does just that. (p. 168) Adoption includes an attitude of God the Father toward the elect which is full of fatherliness, tenderness and compassion. That does not mean that justification temporally or logically precedes adoption. Salvation is one, and the steps of the ordo salutis are only aids in our understanding of the one great good: salvation through Christ. Palmer only means to argue that whereas justification is a forensic concept, setting forth man's relation to God legally, and is concerned with the holiness of God; adoption establishes another relation: childish, or sonship, and here we see more of the Fatherly compassion and tender love of God. Justification is a legal forgiveness; adoption is a paternal forgiveness. The present reviewer would only remark here that everything depends on how inclusive one makes and uses his terms. Our creedal terminology is perhaps more true to the full-orbed salvation as set forth in the Bible than some of our refinements in systematic theology. For instance, regeneration in creedal usage is far more inclusive than its definition in Systematics. The more exact distinction and definition however, of the various steps of the ordo salutis are eminently in place in systematic theology. Palmer is quick to assert that the similarity between adoption and justification can be deduced from the unity of salvation; the origin of both, stemming from the sovereign love of God; the means of both, faith in Jesus Christ; and the one all-sufficient ground for both: the substitutionary, vicarious atonement wrought out by Jesus Christ.

We heartily congratulate Dr. Palmer for this splendid, academic study and without reservation recommend its serious consideration.

W. H. Rutgers

SOURCE-BOOK IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION


Fundamentals in Christian Education is a compilation of forty addresses, articles, etc., spoken and written over the past thirty-five years on various aspects of Christian education. Some of the seventeen contributors have been life-long educators, and we may be sure many have given expression to some of their best thoughts on the matter. There is a wealth of material in the volume which is very suggestive; some of it is definitive for our understanding of Christian education. No more can one speak responsibly on the meaning of Christian education without reference to some of the significant things that have been said in these past thirty-five years, for a good bit of what was rather widely scattered is now more accessible to us than it ever was. For these and other more important reasons we must be grateful to Dr. C. Jaarsma for the kind of book he has edited.

Much of the material in Fundamentals in Christian Education is taken from addresses given by some of our leading men at National Union Conventions, from two works published in the Netherlands, from Guide for a Course of Study for the Christian Schools by L. Vander Zweep, G. Wielenga, and J. W. Van Hulst, and from The Distinctive Character of the Christian Schools by A. Janse, as well as from various addresses and articles by Dr. Jaarsma. The addresses before the National Union conventions deal primarily with the philosophy and aims of Christian education, and they undoubtedly have influenced our understanding and definition of Christian education considerably. This material is placed in Sections I and II, "The Basis of Christian Education" and "The Aim of Christian Education."

Section III, "Organization and Implementation of the Program of Christian Education," deals primarily with a consideration of the child. I think it may fairly be said that it is in the interest of a better understanding of the child that Dr. Jaarsma is seeking to make an original and significant contribution to our understanding of Christian education. It is in this section that much of Dr. Jaarsma's own work appears, and it is interesting to note that he selects educators from the Netherlands to supplement his own contributions.

The Basis of Christian Education

Respected scholars in our midst have based Christian education on various principles or foundations. Ultimately, of course, it is based on God's Word, His special revelation serving to help us interpret His general revelation. More particularly, in this section of the book Prof. L. Berkhof has emphasized the covenant principle, Prof. C. Van Til the creation principle, and Prof. W. H. Jellinek the implications of the Calvinistic world and life view for Christian education. (See Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of Section I). Each emphasis enriches the others and points up the many-faceted nature of the Christian commitment with its bearing on...
education. To exclude any emphasis would be by that much to impoverish the meaning of Christian education.

Not one of these emphases sanctions a narrowly conceived notion of education. Though no contributor spells out a curriculum which gives adequate expression to his emphasis, each position demands a broad and relatively prescribed curriculum. Prof. Berkofe speaks of a “royal education” for children of the kingdom. Covenant “promises cover the whole range of life, natural and spiritual, temporal and eternal, . . .” (p. 32). Prof. Van Til says that “Christian education means to us more than a soteriological lifeboat, an institute of conversion. Christian education then becomes the sine qua non of human life itself, a true humanism and a genuinely human culture presupposes a temporal creation. Thus, the education, not only of the Christian, but of the human being, of man as created, is a divinely ordained necessity” (p. 54). And finally, a world and life view must necessarily prescribe a broad education, one which relates the learner to God, to nature, and to man, i.e., to the human spirit.

The Aim of Christian Education

Section II deals with the aims of Christian education. But basis and aim are not easily separated, for the former conditions the latter. Therefore, one will find some discussion of the basis of education in Section II as well as in Section I. The aims that are developed in Section II are those of long standing among us. Though Prof. Van Til and Prof. Henry Schultze give more comprehensive expression of the goal(s) of Christian education, Prof. H. Ryskamp and Rev. E. Heerema make significant contributions.

Both Van Til and Schultze consider the implications for education of man’s being created in the image of God and called to be perfect. Prof. Van Til speaks of “the fully perfect (developed) man and the fully perfect (developed) creation” (p. 122) in his article entitled “Faith and Our Program,” and in “The Full-Orbed Life” as something which is obtainable only as it is lived in union with man’s total environment, which must necessarily include God as well as the world. Prof. Schultze develops the ideal of training a person to represent the world before God and God to the world as “God’s Image Bearer in the State of Perfection.”” In “The Man of God Thoroughly Furnished” he assumes that the integration of human personality is possible only as the child is conformed to the image of Christ.

Space prevents any further summary of the other contributions to Section II, and the above extremely brief summaries by no means do justice to what these men have said before the National Union conventions. Only as they are read carefully and gotten at from the inside and then implemented in everything we do in the Christian school will they become more than verbalisms among us.

But something more needs to be said about Section II. Most of the contributors are conscious of the organic or unitary nature of human personality and the unity or wholeness of life itself. In one way or another most of them integrate what they have to say with the fact of this two-fold unity. Van Til says, on p. 170, “If the principle of the organism is a modern one we have been modern for all these years and centuries that it took ‘modern thought’ to become modern, for we have never separated head and heart and hand.” Schultze is concerned in his address “The Man of God Thoroughly Furnished” with the integrated personality. “A man of God who is thoroughly furnished unto every good work is an integrated personality” (p. 173). Factual knowledge or mental discipline or character development alone will not result in the integrated person. Prof. Ryskamp has this to say on p. 186, “The social purpose of education is the helping of the individual to an understanding of the beauty of that unity, and to an ordering of his own life so that in it he may achieve organic oneness of body, mind, and soul and organic oneness of himself with his fellow men and with his God.” In the light of what I consider to be one of Prof. Jaarsma’s primary purposes in compiling these statements on Christian education I do not think he would want us to overlook this emphasis.

Organization and Implementation of the Program of Christian Education

Many of the ideas found in Sections I and II are more or less familiar to most of us. Many of the selections would be included in any good book of readings on Christian education. It is in Section III (“Organization and Implementation of the Program of Christian Education”) however, that Dr. Jaarsma is seeking to place before us material which is not as well known, material which needs to be reckoned with in the light of developments in education and psychology over the past fifty years. In Section III men grapple with the findings and experiments of progressive education and of psychology, believing that they have insights and implications which must contribute to our understanding of Christian education.

In this section Jaarsma and educators from the Netherlands dominate. From his recent expressions it is evident that Dr. Jaarsma is seeking to do some creative thinking about the child, “Not because the child is central in our philosophy of education, but because the child as subject must be understood in the light of God’s truth, would we educate aright” (p. 286). In other words, the child is not to be studied only in terms of the findings of psychology and sociology, nor independently, i.e., apart from the covenant, creation and the Calvinistic world and life view. Rather, all this and more throws light on our understanding of the child, and it is out of this soil that Dr. Jaarsma is seeking to enlarge our understanding of the child.

The largest and most important chapter in Section III is a reprint of Dr. Jaarsma’s series of articles, which appeared in the Christian Home and School, entitled “Teaching According to the Ways of Child Life.” There can be little doubt that the author of these articles is seeking to articulate something of what we have long professed about the child but have not developed or applied with painstaking care. Perhaps in our reaction against the modern emphasis on the child as central in education we have shielded too far away from the child, giving too great an emphasis to the content of education. Jaarsma wants us to consider the child seriously, though I do not believe at the expense of subject matter. Inevitably he involves himself in the development of a Christian child psychology, but this reviewer’s knowledge of psychology is inadequate for critical appraisal. By way of criticism, however, it may be said that the style is not always clear, and concepts at times are inadequately developed. Moreover, Dr. Jaarsma is trying to encompass too much in the space which he allotls himself. Even after careful re-reading one comes away with the frustrated feeling of not being able to put all the pieces together.

In order to understand the child we must have an idea what man is, and we can make only a beginning of what he has to say on this score.

1. The most important thing about man is not that he with all men has been created in one blood, nor that he with his fellow-creatures came from the dust of
the earth, nor that his origin in part is biological, but that man is spirit. The spirit (the ego or I) is related to the psycho-somatic, and "in the spirit man is rational, moral, social, free, and responsible" (p. 287). But above all, "It is in his ego, spirit, I, in fellowship with God, that we find man's distinctive origin" (p. 287).

2. "Man's fellowship with God is the prerequisite for the fulfillment of himself as man" (p. 281) and genuine fellowship is a fellowship in love.

3. This defines man's nature as being religious, and therefore his mandate is religious in scope and his deepest need is a religious one.

One might shrug one's shoulders and exclaim, "Is this so new?" The answer, of course, is "No." The significance of Jaarsma's contribution lies in part in the way in which he develops this, but more importantly, in his development of the implications of this analysis for Christian education. Further still, what are the implications for education of the covenant; of the believer's membership in the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God; of sin, redemption, and restoration; of love, faith and obedience (these three being, according to Jaarsma, the structure of Christian education); of the anti-thesis, etc.? How must all this influence education in the Christian school? It is the development of these implications and their implementation in the classroom to which Dr. Jaarsma is urgently calling our attention, and we will want to read him carefully. I cannot refrain from saying again, however, that in view of the broad and all-embracing task he assigned himself, he should have allotted himself more space to develop his concepts more adequately. But that which has been said must suffice to give the reader an appreciation of the fact that Dr. Jaarsma is dealing with fundamental concepts, and that he is speaking out of the soil of historic Reformed Christianity.

About the child and the learning process he has many things to say, and the following ideas selected more or less at random can only suggest the total impact that he is trying to make:

1. The child must be considered as a unitary whole.
2. Effective teaching demands knowing the ways of child life.
3. The child must be considered as an active agent in his education.
4. The learning process is linked to our definition of the child. "The child as image-bearer is a person whose core is spirit, and the spirit is related to the psycho-somatic.
5. The learning process begins with a view to commitment and finds its consummation in acceptance or commitment.

Nearly everything else in Section III deals with some phase of "Teaching According to the Ways of Child Life." Matters such as curriculum, integration, discipline, obedience, etc., are discussed usually in relation to the child. Nearly every writer militates against any education which does injustice to 'heart education', and that is good, but at times their interest in 'heart education' seems to run away with them. For example, when Mr. A. S. De Jong says, "And here once more we find light upon our pathway from the Scriptures that teach us that God has laid the times into the heart of man so that we may expect to find interest in the hearts of the coming generation for the things that concern the problems of their own age" (p. 224), I am a little perplexed. Is he not here claiming too much from Scripture? Again, there are times in Jaarsma's discussion of the curriculum when meanings are not always clear, or, in wanting to make his point about 'heart education' he says more than he wants to say or than he should say. For example, on pp. 257-8 he writes, "No learner comes to accept in his heart what appears to him unrelated to life. Intellectual comprehension is not a prerequisite to heart acceptance. Faith is of a higher order in life than analysis. Meaningful relationship in the unity of life is more important for acceptance than intellectual comprehension." I'm inclined to believe that Dr. Jaarsma does not really mean this. Certainly we must differentiate between faith and intellectual comprehension or analysis as such, but the one must not be pitted against the other. Meaningful relationship involves some intellectual comprehension. True faith must always, and does, involve some sure knowledge or intellectual comprehension or analysis, if you will, even though in the last analysis intellectual comprehension is never complete. But to imply that meaningful relationship in the unity of life is possible without some intellectual comprehension is hardly credible. If we find here a challenge of the Calvinistic idea of the primary of the intellect, long accepted among us, the burden of proof lies with him who implies its error.

It is interesting that Dr. Jaarsma takes so much material for Section III from educators in the Netherlands. They are all interested in the nature of the child and the ordinances of child life. Though appreciative of modern or progressive education, they are on the one hand critical and on the other hand at times overly enthusiastic and naive.

At times one wonders why so much of the material for this section was taken from the works of fellow Christian educators in the Netherlands. Some of the things they say are nothing more than that which has been said time and time again by American educators. Then, too, they all battle against what appears to be the great evil in the Dutch schools -- intellectualism, i.e., education which concentrates on the mind at the expense of the heart, but we in American Christian schools have our own evils to contend against, and they are not necessarily the same as those found in the Dutch schools. Our own schools are not so much afflicted with intellectualism as perhaps with the uninspired manner in which subject matter is handled and the failure to integrate it with our total commitment. At the same time we are probably unduly influenced by some of the unfavorable characteristics of the contemporary American educational scene. And finally, one questions some of the selections for Section III because they lack the quality of clarity and organization which should mark a book of significant readings on Christian education. But these observations must not detract from the value of their contributions. I think it fair to say that they are feeling their way and one is therefore happy that Dr. Jaarsma placed some of their works between the covers of his book. "The New Obedience" by A. Janse is in several ways a gem.

But we must bring this review to a close. In the Preface to Fundamentals of Christian Education Dr. Jaarsma states that these readings have been selected "to help us to take stock" and "to make available . . . to the Christian community at large some fundamental discussions on Christian education." He also writes, "Some may not agree with the choice of selections made by the author." I for one would not have wanted him to omit many of the selections he chose, but there are other significant expressions on Christian education which we cannot afford to leave out of our thinking if we "take stock." For example, back issues of the Calvin Forum and more recent issues of Torch and Trumpet and the Reformed Journal contain some invaluable material. Then, too, one finds it difficult to understand why
that masterpiece, Prof. W. H. Jellema's "Calvinism and Higher Education" in God-Centered Living, was not included in Jaarsma's compilation.

Because Fundamentals in Christian Education contains the expressions of seventeen different men it is impossible to do justice to what each has to say. Dr. Jaarsma has performed a valuable service in editing a book of this kind. It is a must for every teacher's library. But it is also intended for the Christian community and it will be regrettable if the Christian community does not root itself in the insights these readings impart. Dr. Jaarsma states that "We must build internally even more than externally." Believing this to be true we must root ourselves in the things that have been said in the past as well as in the things that are being said today, for the past is a rock, not upon which to sit, but the foundation upon which we must build.

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**ETHICS AND ESCHATOLOGY NOT INCOMPATIBLE**


The volume under consideration is a gem. It is the best book that has come to this reviewer's desk this year, bar none. Let's see, is there a book entitled "Hemel en Hel in Dackauft" by J. Overduin? And is this the same author? If so, then he is eminently qualified to write on this subject. The first edition of this work was written before the war. So the Preface indicates. Between the first and second edition lies the war and, for the author the concentration camp. If this be true, and we think it is, the material of this book gains enormously in value and importance. Value, because it is a brilliant exposition of the biblical concept of hope which has been put to the test in personal experience in the proximity of the gas chambers of recent memory. Overduin was confronted with and sustained by HET OANAANTASTBARE in a way he never dreamed of when he first wrote. He tells us in this second Preface "Since that time [the time of the first printing] we have been cast with this message in the fiery furnace of trial."

It is not easy to give an exact translation of the term onaanlastbaar. Literally it means untouchable, but this term does not do justice to it. Unassailable comes closer, but is not exactly what is meant either. Indestructible might be as good a term as any.

Just what moved the author to write this book? He saw the gathering storm of the world war and set himself to alert the Church of Jesus Christ that God's Word would supply strength in every coming need and that Christ is the hope of glory. But he also saw that it was imperative that, if the church would be able to weather the coming storm she had to be shaken out of her complacency, lethargy, and worldliness. And Overduin wishes to correct the erroneous conception that ethics and eschatology are bound to live in tension; that they are more or less incompatible. "Ethics without eschatology is a pious death; eschatology without an ethic is the persuasion of a sickly concept." (p. 6.) The meaning of life is determined by the fact that God has placed us on earth, as well as He has destined us for the new heaven and earth. The former makes us accept our calling (ethics), and at the same time long for the renewal of all things (eschatology). Calling and nostalgia may not exist as hostile antitheses; they must not stand in estranged juxtaposition, but must support, sanctify, intensify each other. "Everyone who has this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

The war did not overthrow the reality of hope as here presented, but made it more actual. Western European civilization exists in crisis no less than before. Volcanic forces are at work which may burst forth in violent eruption at any moment. Also, the atheistic philosophies of existentialism and nihilism have not diminished in virulence and are levelling the whole lump.

To review this volume is not an easy task. One is tempted to quote extensively but quotations cannot do the author justice. One must read this book, not once but several times. It grows and grows on you. One is simply overwhelmed with the abundance of material which Scripture supplies on this subject. And Scripture is made to speak throughout.

A brief digest of the contents of this volume is in order. The Christian hope is the offshoot of affliction. The Psalmist contended that it was good for him to have been afflicted. Affliction was the teacher who made him learn God's statutes. (Ps. 119.) Paul gloried in tribulation. But the classical treatise of hope is Peter's first Epistle, an epistle of hope written to those whose condition seemed "hopeless" in the present world. The fiery trial of faith intensified their hope, and their hope sustained them in the trial. But the Christian hope does not exist in isolation. In Paul's triad of faith, hope, and love, the three are concomitants. Faith without love is nonexistent because "faith worketh by love." Love without faith is a sham; love and faith without hope is vain. In other words a Christian without love is a nominal Christian; a Christian without faith is an enigma; a Christian without hope is an impossibility. If one of the three is absent, all three are missing. These three are one. The one is ever the thermometer of the other; whoever is strong in faith loves deeply and becomes firmly established in hope. Separation of these three is impossible because all three have one and the same object, namely Jesus Christ. Whoever is implanted in Christ by faith will love Him, and all expectations will be from Him. The Christian's hope is his comfort, but he never hopes enough. Here it is true, "What eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, . . . ."

In chapters VI, VII, and VIII, the book deals with the problem of hope and the problem of time: time in general, hope and the future, and hope in the present. The joy of hope does not come after the tribulation, but in the affliction; Scripture teaches that not after all these things, i.e., suffering of persecution, sword and nakedness, but "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom. 8:37.)

Fascinating is the author's discussion of hope and the problem of sin—the guilt, power, and consequences of sin. Jesus was crucified, says the author, not because they had expected too much and were disappointed but because they did not expect enough. (p. 64.)

In conclusion this reviewer would like to make some observations. The question will not down, why is it that no such theological literature produced among us? Are we American clergy so overloaded with routine and organizational work that there is not time for solid theological study? Or must the reason be sought in another direction? Are we intellectually inferior? And we extend our sympathy to all of our younger clergy and the clergy in spe who are not able to avail themselves of this type of literature and use it because it is written in what is for them a foreign language.

**CHRISTIAN HUIJSSEN**

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