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Pharisaitis

**The Methodology of
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**The Doleantie and the
Christian Reformed Church**

Edmund Burke: An Appreciation

Correspondence

Book Reviews

VOL. XIX, NO. 11

**TWO DOLLARS
A YEAR**

JUNE-JULY, 1954

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The Cross Versus the Crescent

Stuart Bergsma, M. D.

Pine Rest Hospital
Grand Rapids, Michigan*

WHEN the Cross became the symbol of the faith of the followers of Christ who gave His life sacrificially and vicariously upon that cross, that emblem of shame upon which men looked with disgust and hatred became the greatest uplifting power for good in this world. He who said "And I, if I be lifted up will draw unto me all men" became the emancipator of every man coming to a knowledge of and faith in Him, for He had come that men might be free, might have life and that more abundantly.

When the Crescent became the symbol of the faith of the followers of Mohammed, who lived a life in which immorality and the bloody sword were prominent features, that emblem of the new moon rising in its glory, to which men naturally look upwards in the heavens, was dragged down in the course of history to the greatest blight and source of human woe the Christian world has ever seen. He who believed himself to be the chosen prophet of God, far greater than his predecessor the Christ, became the agent for the physical, intellectual and moral enslavement of all who believe in his name.

The crescent was an emblem of success, of progress, of enlightenment. It was no doubt chosen as prophetic of the small beginning of a light, at first scarcely perceptible in the heavens or on the earth—Mohammed of Medina and Mecca in Arabia. From a small crescent of light appearing first some six hundred years after the great light of the world had appeared in Palestine, his light was to spread until it would engulf one-fourth of the then-known world. Prophetically it was assumed that this light would continue to spread until in full-moon stage it banished or far surpassed all other lights of this darkness in which we dwell, especially the light of the Star of Bethlehem.

I

If the Church of Jesus Christ in Mohammed's day had been faithful to the divine calling, had obeyed Him who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel" Mohammed might never have become the founder of the greatest anti-Christian religion this world has ever seen. Had a man of Mohammed's ardent nature, mystical, deeply stirred by contemplation of the eternal themes that from the beginning of time have troubled men's souls—had he but been put face to face with Christ as He in truth is, instead of a weak, decadent, prodigal Christianity,

still hopelessly burdened and beset by Judaism, it is very possible that the whole face of history would have been changed.

Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, tells us that for a time the issue was in the balances, and the sad blackening of the whole Mediterranean sea coast, then Christian, as if a devouring fire were sweeping through a field of ripe yellow wheat, might have been nipped in the bud. For there, across the Red Sea from Arabia, lay a virile Christian land, Ethiopia. In the century before Mohammed's birth there came cries of distress from the feeble Christian church in Arabia, persecuted by the worshippers of a great black stone called the Kaaba, pagans, idolaters. Across the Red Sea came thousands upon thousands of Christian Ethiopian warriors on flimsy rafts they had constructed. They pursued these precursors of Mohammedanism to the very gates of Mecca. Alas, here the valiant warriors were defeated. But, as Gibbon points out, had the Ethiopians but been able to win this one last battle at the very gates of Mecca in the land where Mohammed was soon to be born and Islam soon to raise its cobra head of destruction, Mohammed would have been crushed in his cradle and the whole tide of history changed.

Christian Students of Islam have at times expressed amazement that the Apostle John on Patmos, given a pre-view of major calamities which would visit the church of the new dispensation, was given no prophetic vision of the rise of Islam, that great foe of the Christ. Some say he was given a vision of the rise of Mohammedanism and that it is found in Chapter IX of the Book of Revelation. Sadler, in his *Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*, elaborates this view. You will remember that Chapter VIII of Revelation ends with Woe, Woe, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth! Chapter IX begins with the fifth trumpet sound; the bottomless pit is opened, an evil influence from hell bursts over the earth, darkening the sun. Thus Islam, denying the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Christ, is from hell, and its teachings darken the very light from heaven. Locusts come out of the smoke. Sadler takes this to be the army of fanatic Moslems coming out of the obscuring smoke of false doctrine which itself comes out of hell. Scorpions appear, poison for the soul is in their sting, eternal death. Even the crowns the men wear and their hair like women's, seem to indicate to him the Saracen kings and the turbanned warriors with their long hair. But their

* Dr. Bergsma was formerly connected with the Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, East Punjab, India.

real king is Satan and "his bondage makes the soul weary of life and makes it learn how bitter is the bondage of Satan." Even the numbers have been symbolically interpreted, the third part of men referring to one-third of the Roman Empire which fell, and the two hundred thousand thousand indicating the strength Islam would attain. Islam has approximately three hundred forty three million followers today.

The Mohammedans today would, of course, repudiate any such scurrilous reference to their leader and their religion, and maintain that there were numerous references to Mohammed as the true prophet of God in the original Old and New Testaments, but insist that these have been deleted by hell-inspired Christians.

II

The strength of Islam lies in its creed and in its insistence on the performance of the four duties required of all the faithful.

Mohammedans are monotheists, believe in the unity of God as expressed in the seven word Islamic creed. Theologically Islam is a strange mixture of good and evil.

There is so much to admire and so much to deplore in Islam. There is so much to which one can say Amen, and so much that must be Anathema forever. One cannot dwell for six years among a Moslem people as I have lived in Northern India far up the Punjab province near the Khyber Pass without learning to admire these stalwart sons of Mohammed, yet deplore all they stand for.

For six years in the North of India before it was called Pakistan I was awakened almost every morning by a recitation of the seven word creed of Islam over my head. The Moslems had built a mosque not only within a stone's throw of our hospital but literally so near our compound that learning over our fence I could touch the wall of the mosque with the proverbial ten foot pole. From the minaret of the mosque at daybreak every morning, as sure as the rising of the sun, came forth that beautifully modulated baritone voice. Would that I could reproduce for you the devotion in that voice, the reverence for Allah, the soul stirring, penetrating urgency of it as the *muezzin* proclaimed in a voice easily heard for a mile or more in all directions across the city: LA ILLAH LA ILLAHLA: MUHAMMED RASUL ILLAHLA. "There is no God but Allah. Mohammed is the prophet of God." From the courtyards of the city came the echo: *La Illah La Illahla*. Ah, but the *muezzin* did not just pronounce the words; he sang them with adoration!

How simple a creed, these seven Arabic words. God is a unit. There is only one God. Come to worship. Prayer is better than sleeping, prayer is better than eating, the *meuzzin* chants. "Come to Prayer." But with it is an equally binding affirmation: "Mohammed is the prophet of God." I have been

told by Moslems that even the reciting of the words as I have now done makes one a Mohammedan, hence I hasten to recant and say: "LA ILLAH LA ILLAHLA. YISU MASIHI RASUL ILLAHLA."

At daybreak the Mohammedan begins the first duty of every Moslem, prayer. Five times each day the faithful Moslem must prostrate himself toward Mecca. There must be a tremendous feeling of unity in prayer for the Moslem. Especially each Friday, the Sabbath day or holy day of Islam, at noon, when all the Moslem world faces Mecca, he knows he is one of two hundred million worshippers, all reciting in one tongue the Arabic creed to the one God, Allah.

I have watched these people pray. They are not all hypocrites in prayer. Note the devotion on their face, the ecstasy of soul in some, the resignation to the will of Allah in others. The word Islam means SUBMISSION or SURRENDER to the will of Allah. How often we heard the words: "It is the will of God." The baby dies: "It is the will of God." The crops fail: "It is the will of God." Fire destroys the whole wheat harvest, just stacked ready for threshing: "It is the will of God. I submit."

The second duty of every Mohammedan is almsgiving. In this I believe most Moslems as well as most Christians fall far short of the Biblical tithe. And yet as I observed evidence of financial sacrifice by Moslems I was often amazed that people so poor could give so much. There is scarcely a Mohammedan village, be it even of only five families, that does not have its Mosque, a small replica of some more famous mosque in Lahore or Delhi or Allahabad. As we travel, a few poor mud hovels meet our gaze, but towering above the wall of the village we see the dome of their little mosque. To build that house of worship meant sacrifice for the few Moslem inhabitants.

The holy men of Moslem Pakistan and Moslem parts of India, the *pirs* and *fakirs*, receive generous contributions, far above what the Mohammedan can afford, for fear he will call down the wrath of Allah. Spiritual leaders like the Aga Khan of India are known to receive almost astronomical sums of money annually from their Moslem constituency, part of which has been used to build beautiful mosques in London, Washington, Detroit and other centers where there is a handful of worshippers.

I have noted little of compassion and almsgiving to poor sick people in our hospitals, but in every Pakistan city and certain Indian cities, a numerous group of diseased Moslem male beggars infest the bazaars, and women in filthy *burkas* or veiled dresses, with emaciated babies in arms, implore one in the name of Allah to be generous, and curse one roundly in his name if one refuse to give. "Bismillah," "in the name of God," will usually result in the tiniest copper coin being flung to them by a Moslem.

The keeping of the fast of *Ramadan* for one whole month is the third duty of every Mohammedan, ob-

served annually in one month designated by the Islamic calendar. We have observed seven of these in our stay in India. When the tiniest slice of the new moon appears in the sky in the month designated for the fast a shout goes up all over the Moslem world: "Ramadan! Ramzan!" One center of India, the sacred center of Allahabad, I believe, is the final arbiter in the matter and if the tiny crescent be not observed there it is not official even though observed earlier elsewhere. From this center the news now goes instantly by telegraph all over India and Pakistan, and all Moslem India and Pakistan begins the fast which ends with a huge feast exactly twenty-eight days later when the new tiny crescent will be observed. For twenty-eight days most Mohammedans will not eat one small bite of food in the day and many will not even take a drop of water. You note I stress the word "day" for it is only during the daytime that they fast. From sundown to sunrise they are allowed all foods and the nights are often times of feasting. The daytime fasting is, however, very difficult if the *Ramadan* falls in a hot month. Many of our patients will refuse their medicines during the daytime but will take all three doses at one gulp during the night. The sick are allowed to claim exemption but many try to gain extra merit by being over-pious. The people become very quarrelsome during the fast. There is no fasting of the heart for sin; sin seems to abound the more. In fact we had more injuries of violence during *Ramadan* than in any other month of the year.

In my early days in Northern India, now called Pakistan I often noted, even in some mean outlying village, certain of the elders of the village with saffron dyed beards. These men seemed to be held in great veneration by all, and their words were listened to with awe and accepted almost as final. When I inquired as to their exalted status the reply was: "They have made the Pilgrimage to Mecca!"

This is the fourth great duty of every able-bodied Mohammedan. Many are unable to make it and fall short of the full reward. For thirteen hundred years these pilgrimages to Mecca have been going on without fail annually. Approximately 70,000 pilgrims attended each year to 1940. In 1950 on half million Moslems made the pilgrimage. The great expense, months consumed in travel, hardships for many travelling third class, sleeping outside to save expense, going into debt to finance the journey, all bespeak a great devotion to their religion. While making the pilgrimage gives glory and prestige, some fairminded Moslems are willing to admit that it is disappointing spiritually and that Mecca is one of the most immoral of cities.

III

The Christian church in its missionary efforts is confronted with no mean foe in this struggle of the Cross with the Crescent for supremacy. In fact, looking upon the globe as a whole, Islam remains the

most formidable foe we have facing us today. We in our small circle of the white race are so prone to look only immediately about ourselves for foes and to think of Modernism and Communism, both mere babes in years, as our greatest opponents. But taking a glance over this entire earth with its two billion inhabitants, of which more than one tenth are Moslems—and the Moslem world is not indifferent but definitely anti-Christian—we realize we have here our greatest foe. Islam has always been so since its rise to power.

A. Past Conquests:

No other rival has ever won from Christianity as many of its adherents as Islam. According to Kenneth Scott Latourette (*A History of the Expansion of Christianity*) "twentieth century skepticism, and fascist and communist totalitarian states of the 20th century have not yet cost Christianity nearly so large a percentage." And what Islam wins it holds fast. Christians may recant and become Moslems. Rarely to this day does a Moslem become a Christian. Social ostracism faces him; wife, children and property are torn from him; if need be, death will be meted out to him in some way or other, if he persists in his infidelity. In our six years in India we had one Moslem convert as a result of our hospital work. Our ordained missionaries and Indian pastors gain a few converts each year. But the lot of the convert is hard; he is not made into a "rice Christian"; he is not promised protection of the Mission and a Mission job; he is asked to go right back to his Mohammedan village and work among his brethren.

B. Present Activity.

There are evidences all over the Moslem world of a revival of not only nationalism in Moslem lands but also of a sense of unity in Islam throughout the Pan-Islamic world. Observe the rising strength of the Moslem government in Egypt, with Great Britain stepping out. Observe recent pronouncements against the teaching of the Christian religion to non-Christians. Note the increased importance and awareness of nationalism and Moslem unity on the part of the Moslem rulers of Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan. Turkey has shaken off many a shackle, has banned the veil and the fez, is no longer the home of the Caliphate, but many of her advances have fostered atheism rather than Christianity, and there is no question but that Turkey is still overwhelmingly Mohammedan. While not as militant in its methods of conversion as in the earlier centuries Islam is today numerically stronger, more vociferously vocal in its demands and more missionary in its zeal and program than it has been for many decades. The Moslem world is not shrinking but is expanding and demanding a voice in world affairs—a Moslem voice.

In this great crusade of the cross versus the crescent for souls of men we cannot take great comfort in the thought that the crescent remained a crescent

and now will perhaps again wane until its small ray of reflected light is blotted out. Islam has existed for 1300 years and remains unmoved today. In speaking to Moslems I have at times used the argument of survival. Christianity has survived nineteen centuries; many other religions have died out, therefore Christianity must be true and genuine and not founded on a hoax. Moslems and Hindus may use the same argument and maintain time will tell which will outlive the other. There is little doubt in their minds that Islam will survive to the end of time.

Since Islam has a monotheistic conception of God; since Moslems know about Adam, Noah, Abraham, the prophets, and Jesus Christ, is not Islamic teaching a stepping stone to Christianity? Can we not "appreciate" the good doctrines in Islam, pat the Mohammedan on the back as a rather distant brother in the "selfsame" faith, and then use the truths he embraces as building bricks to fit into the new edifice that is in the end to emerge as a Christian structure? After all, he is not a pagan.

We are in danger when we seek to emphasize the nobility in other religions. The Koran has many noble utterances. The Bible is full of truth which surpasses them all. Islam is not an ally, Islam is a competitor. Islamic teaching is not a foundation on which we can build, but an encumbrance. There is no conviction of sin in Islam. If God is to forgive sins it must be on caprice and not on a basis of justice. Our God is mercy tempered with justice. Islam's Allah gives salvation to some because of his mercy alone, no atonement is necessary for sin, he forgives whom he will on caprice, with no legal basis.

The character of the God worshipped is reflected

in the daily living of each group. A god of infinite love must have some of that love reflected in his children, as in Christianity, while fatalism is reflected in the daily life of Mohammedanism. A Mohammedan woman was brought to us, soon to give birth to a child. The woman had fallen from the roof, severely injuring herself and her unborn child. Surgery was imperative. She had come draped from head to foot and we obtained consent to examine her, even through the clothing, with reluctance. We explained that surgery was necessary. However, as this meant a male doctor would be observing this patient consent was not forthcoming. It was explained she might die enroute to the next city where a lady doctor was in attendance. The answer was: "If so it is the will of God."

Most students of Islam will agree that the light Islam has in it makes the acceptance of Christianity all the more difficult. We may point out to a Moslem: "You believe in many things we hold dear. You know of Abraham, for example, and how he offered up his son Isaac. Of course you affirm it was Ishmael who was ready to be slain and that all the promises are in Ishmael. You know of Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Old Testament prophets—why not admit the further truth of God's revelation and accept Christ and become a Christian?" But before we get this far he is likely to interrupt us and say: "You believe in so many things we Moslems hold sacred, why don't you go the whole way and accept the final revelation of God through Mohammed, become a Mohammedan and be saved?"

NOTE: To be concluded in the August-September issue, in which weaknesses in Islam will be stressed and certain Christian and Islamic doctrines compared.



Pharisaitis

Leonard Verduin

Pastor, Student Evangelical Chapel
Ann Arbor, Michigan

ANY person reading the New Testament will be struck by the account of the terrific collision recorded to have occurred between Jesus and the Pharisees of His day. He who in the preview had been described as meek and lowly did nevertheless exhaust the vocabulary of His rugged dialect in the sternness of rebuke that poured in torrent upon the heads of these religious precisionists. And He whose language too was a model of graciousness nevertheless styled them spawn of serpents and young of adders; He called them caves with carrion filled.

There must have been something unspeakably wrong with these men of such scrupulous religiosity. The Great Physician's practice in the presence of Pharisaitis proves that He knew it as Number One Killer of men's souls.

Although in this disease, as in every serious distemper, the patient will upon examination be found to suffer from a multiple ailment, we shall in this paper attempt to set forth but one or two of the salient features of the ailment.

I

Typical of the sufferer from Pharisaitis is a certain blindness as to the ambiguities of the present dispensation. The patient when examined for this symptom will invariably reveal a blind spot as to the non-absolute character of the differentiation of saints and sinners. Due to this defect in his optical responses the patient thinks he sees a world populated with saints and sinners, just like that. When speaking of the saint (in which category the victim of Pharisaitis always includes himself) he talks of him as of a man after God's own heart; but, he feels no need of adding "save in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." His saint is an unambiguous saint, one who when he says he believes feels no need of adding "But Lord, help thou mine unbelief!"

And his sinner is an unambiguous sinner. With the finality and absolutism so characteristic of this disease the patient suffering from it talks of a whole area of men whom he calls sinners with no strings attached. Having located this area he boycotts it, refusing to eat with those so designated. He seems unaware of their presence and he gestures in their direction only for the sake of contrast so as to make his own assumed wholly - other features the more evident: "I thank thee, God, that I am not like . . . this Publican." Sinners these, out of whose lives it is

good to secede, the rabble unskilled in the Law and cursed!

The deep and underlying cause of this killer of human souls is not yet fully known. It is comparatively certain that it takes its origin in a distorted delineation of Election. Investigators consider it likely that it begins with an essentially Islamic view of God, namely, that He is One in Whom love and its opposite are equally ultimate. In an idiom that shows a striking similarity to that of the Koran the patient has hallucinations of a God who is little else than a bundle of sovereignty; who is introduced saying "This one to eternal life and what care I; and this one to eternal death and what difference does it make to me." So distorted has the sufferer's representation become that he insists that God is as happy when He contemplates the reprobate as He is when He sees the elect; and, that He gets as much pleasure out of damning the former as He gets out of saving the latter.

A closely related feature of this pathological condition is that the victim loses his sense of the third dimension, so that his sense of perspective is hopelessly blurred. This leads him to transfer to the here and now that absolute fixity of the categories that is a feature of the hereafter. By this time the patient's sense of the meaning of history goes out of focus, so that time and the passing thereof become meaningless. The resulting condition may be described as a pervading blindness to the ambiguities of the present dispensation. The victim begins to live as if the Judgment were already past and as if a world of absolutes had already dawned, a world peopled with saints and sinners without present ambiguity.

By this time the patient, due to the disturbed perspective mentioned earlier, develops a tendency to classify men, all men of his acquaintance, as belonging to one of two unambiguous categories; and he feels that he must have this classification *before* he dispenses his emotional and ethical responses to them. They must, he keeps saying, be identified *anteriorly* so that he may know where to love and where to hate.

Men who have made a study of Pharisaitis are quite unanimously of the opinion that as soon as the patient begins to show these symptoms he should be institutionalized; seeing that his presence in society will be harmful to all with whom he comes in close contact, saints and sinners alike. If he is allowed to run with the saints the effect of his presence will be to turn them into boastful bigots, men who discourse

lengthily on sinners without feeling the need to add "of whom I am chief." His presence will be just as harmful to the sinners; and the damage will reveal itself in deep-seated resentment. Mature medical opinion is emphatically in favor of keeping persons with advanced Pharisaicis carefully away from sinners; for statistics indicate that no sinner has ever been helped by a fellow man who claimed to belong to a category wholly other and unambiguously different. The fetid breath of a person with a pronounced case of Pharisaicis causes sinners to cover their noses. This reaction is not so much brought on by any incorrigible aversion on the sinner's part for piety or sanctity as such; oh no, for they have been known to crowd for standing room in the presence of One who was sanctity itself. No, not the experience of holiness as such causes sinners to blaspheme and increase in wickedness; it is rather the experience of ambiguous holiness parading as holiness without ambiguity! The baneful effect upon saint and sinner alike has led the experts to clamor for isolation for persons with diagnosed Pharisaicis.

II

The Great Physician distinguished Himself with his insights touching the disease under discussion. He did pioneer work in describing the affliction as well as in investigating its true nature. His diagnostic techniques as well as the medications proposed by Him are of great importance for every student of the sicknesses of the soul; the student will do well to pay close attention to all the Master has said about this particular ailment.

Happily we have dossiers in which some of the work of the Great Physician is recorded. In the files are case histories of incalculable value to the student. Shall we read through a few of them?

Here is one of the earliest; in it a case is related that came early to the attention of the great Doctor, when He was just entering into His practice. For the sake of reference we may indicate that it is found in that part of the Papers which is lettered "Mth. 5:43ff". The patient discussed in this case (Notice this ever-recurring feature) has in typical disdain for the ambiguities of this present scene divided it into two hard and fast and wholly unambiguous categories; and, he talks vehemently of loving the one group (which he labels "neighbors"), and as unreservedly of hating the other group (which he terms "enemies"). To the by-stander who, because of his non-acquaintance with the features of Pharisaicis, is not likely to be alarmed at its absolutism, this may sound quite acceptable—it at least is *principal!*

But the Great Diagnostician frowns. For Him this absolutism on the part of His patient is an indication that the virus of Pharisaicis is at work. And He knows how deadly that can be. And so with one stroke He rebukes the whole differentiated emotional response clamoring for expression in His patient. He

enjoins instead a promiscuous response of love, benediction, benefaction, intercession, for "friend" and "foe" alike, with no questions asked. And with a masterful insight into the deepest cause of this ailment, with an eye for the erroneous God-concept that lies at its root, He prescribes a medication admirably suited to arrest it at its inception. The patient's distorted view of God, his erroneous idea of an election and a reprobation that are equally ultimate, is allowed to dictate the ethical responses of this man. And so the Great Doctor rounds out the patient's view of God by referring to a non-discriminating love of God, a love that causes Him to send His rain upon the just and the unjust alike. And the Expert writes a prescription, the medication indicated. "Let the patient emulate this perfection in God, this non-discriminating kindness. Let him be perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect."

The case history before us does not relate the outcome, whether the man died or recovered. We could wish we knew. When we recall how high the mortality rate is in this disease we are led to assume that the patient died of Pharisaicis; but when we contemplate the great name this Doctor enjoys and see the excellence of His treatment of this case we seem to be entitled to a more optimistic view.

Here is another interesting and instructive case history. The studious reader may want to know that it is recorded under "Joh. 8:3ff". It tells of persons with the usual telltale fixity of the categories, men who think in terms of white saints and black sinners with no ambiguity. With a confident rashness such as this absolutism inevitably engenders they bring a choice specimen of the sinner, a precious clinical instance, a woman taken in adultery, in the very act. Why not? The absolute otherness, the unequivocal antithesis, which they imagine to exist between them and her, makes them relish the juxtaposition of these saints and this sinner. They, the righteous ones on whom the Law doesn't have a thing and she, the unrighteous one for whom there is nothing left but a fearful waiting for judgment; how can they lose? They press for the last deed that will settle the issue for all eternity; let the judgment settle and fix forever a category quite fixed already.

But the Doctor has the situation all sized up. Just as a physician in the presence of a malady that knows no cure will sometimes look far away and then doodle on a scrap of paper on his office desk, so He traces meaningless characters in the dust at his feet. And then He dictates his prescription. What medical insight its abbreviated words reveal! "Let him who is without sin, this sin, cast the first of the stones"; let him who actually enjoys an unambiguous saint-hood precipitate the category-freezing judgment!

For a moment the focusless stare of these persons with Pharisaicis seems to clear up as the categories go back into solution for a moment so that they and she are no longer wholly in diverse brackets. But this demon does not vacate so easily as all that. And

again the great Doctor makes letters in the sand. And then the Sinless One, to whom alone is the prerogative of talking about sinners as persons in a category wholly other, resumes the theme of condemnation for her; but only to tell her that to condemn her here and now and finally would constitute an anachronism even for Him at this stage. And he liquifies her category and says to her, the sinner, "Run along now, and don't let it happen again!" What a scene! What a contrast in attitude and policy! They, the sinless (?) ones rejoice in the fixity of her category and only wish to have it receive its final and everlasting fixation; and He, the Sinless One (!) has an eye only for the fluidity of her rating, as He presses for a proper use of her days of grace!

One more such Case and then we must put all these papers back in the files. It is known as "Luk. 10: 25ff". The patient described in this instance is wholly typical in that he thinks of differentiation and classification the moment the duty of loving is broached. Having heard that loving one's neighbor is a considerable part of the Law he wants to know how to circumscribe the territory covered by the term neighbor. So he asks "And who is my neighbor?" He feels that this he must know and at the outset, in order that his love may not reach the wrong party.

The Doctor begins His treatment by composing and reciting a parable, the well-known one about the Samaritan and the plundered wayfarer. And one may well admire the expertness of the prescription. For the Master does not give him one word that could possibly be used to the end intended by the patient; even today one looks in vain for a single syllable in it that could possibly be taken to indicate the area which is rightly and properly loved. The parable says nothing as to who is one's neighbor. Instead, it gives marvelous instruction as to what neighborly conduct may be like. It refuses to have to do with the question "Where shall I love?" seeing that any old Samaritan will do as object. What does need attention is the question, "How does one love?"

III

One of the most promising young doctors ever to sit at the feet of the Great Physician (for He not only practiced, He also taught) was a frail whisp of a man named Calvin, John Calvin. This Calvin, although he had mastered the Teacher's idea of the decrees, so that he spoke of them unhesitatingly (although only in the proper connection), this Calvin, who would have spent his last breath in defense of the idea of two camps, this man nevertheless showed such virility of soul that the venom of Pharisaitis tried in vain to find entrance into his system. He was as adamant against any anterior classification as men dispense love and loving conduct; he would have nothing to do with a preliminary arrangement into two camps with the intention of then loving the one category and hating the other. Calvin knew his Bible well enough and had led his thoughts captive to it suf-

ficiently to make him rebuke emphatically every tendency on the part of a Christian to "elect" the objects of his love, and to bestow an opposite emotional response upon the remainder of men.

A few quotations from the Institutes will not weary the reader. For the writer they have been like a fresh gust of air in a room where several people have slept with the windows shut.

"The Lord enjoins us to do good to all without exception, even though the majority, if evaluated on their own merits, are most unworthy of it. But Scripture appends a most excellent reason, when it tells us not to look at that which men of themselves deserve but at the image of God which is present in all and to which we owe honor and love . . . And so, whoever the man may be that is brought to your attention as needing your help, you have no ground for declining it. Let us assume that he is a stranger; the Lord has given him a mark that ought to be familiar to you, for which reason he has forbidden you to despise your own flesh. Let us assume that he is mean and of no importance; the Lord designates him as one whom he has distinguished by the lustre of his own image. Let us assume that you are tied to him with no ties of duty; the Lord has substituted him as it were in his own place so that in him you may recognize the many great obligations under which he has placed you toward himself. Let us assume that he is unworthy of your slightest exertion in his behalf; the image of God by which he is recommended to you is worthy of you and all your exertions . . . In this manner only do we attain to that which is not only difficult but quite contrary to nature, to love those that hate us, returning good for evil, blessing for cursing, remembering that we are not to dwell on the wickedness of men but to look at the image of God in them, an image which as it covers and obliterates all their faults should by its beauty and dignity allure us to love them and embrace them." (III, 7, vi)

And here follows another passage not as long but quite as mighty. "But I say with a single feeling of charity; that here there is no such distinction as Greek or barbarian, worthy or unworthy, friend or foe, seeing that all are to be viewed in God and not in themselves. If we turn aside from this representation then it is no wonder that we get entangled in error. Therefore if we would hold the right course in love then our first step must be to turn our eyes not toward man, the sight of whom might more often produce hate than love, but toward God, who requires that the love which we bear to him be diffused among all mankind, so that our basic principle must ever be, 'Let a man be whatever he may, he is to be loved nevertheless, for the reason that God is loved.'" (II, 8, 1v)

The person suffering from Pharisaitis could of course, and probably would, get rid of this construction very easily. He needs only to resort to categories

that are absolute; he needs only to remind himself that fallen men have lost the image of God and that redeemed men have it restored to them, period. He needs only to close his eyes to the ambiguities that are a part of the picture here and now. This done, the indicated policy of hating the one and loving the other is just around the corner. But to do this, to succumb to the temptation to absolutize the catego-

ries, is to give evidence that one has more in common with the Pharisees than with Him who knew them for what they were.

It would seem to be the part of wisdom for anyone who discovers this trait in himself to make an appointment with the Great Physician at once. Delay may be fatal; for Pharisaism is an awful disease, most difficult to cure when once it has made progress.

The Methodology of Christian Evidences II*

William W. Paul

Chairman, Department of Philosophy
Shelton College

THROUGH experience men learn not only to converse with one another but also they discover ways actually to communicate feelings, attitudes, and factual information through words. We not only reserve the right to ask for adequate definitions of terms employed by a speaker or writer, but we also learn to check up on the verbal or written context for clarifications of meanings. When we do this we are really asking what a supposed statement of fact is intended to mean. Sometimes the interests and purposes of the person making the statement form an important part of the meaning which he wishes to put across. This is particularly true where pictorial or emotive expressions are involved. It is not always the case, even when we omit emotional elements and deal with logically cognate and factual propositions, that the meaning of a statement will be the same for the reader or hearer as for the writer or speaker. Full communication has not been established. In matters calling for action (including verbal responses) we can tell by observing the behavior of the recipient whether the full intended meaning concerning statements of facts has been grasped. The fundamental point to make here is that there are ways, both intellectual and behavioral, for determining common areas of meaning or common grounds of communication of factually based meanings.

I

Now the Christian is anxious that men should come to both a knowledge of God and fellowship with Him through His Son. If the unsaved man has some knowledge of facts concerning God and Christ, he nevertheless has failed to apply them to his own heart. The interpretations of the facts concerning the creator-saving God which the Bible makes clear have not become meaningful in the experience of our unsaved friend. Without meaningful facts there

can be no application of truth to life, no fellowship with God.

It would seem then that while the Christian and the non-Christian may have many areas of experience in common, at least one common ground that is lacking is the one that the Christian wants the non-Christian most to have. Now this is just the place where some of our leading apologists today like to insist that the admission we have just made means that there can be no common ground between saint and sinner. Professor Van Til rightly insists that the Christian has a right to claim that "his position is 'in accord with the facts of experience' . . . because he interprets the facts and his experience of them in terms of presupposition. The 'uniformity of nature' and his knowledge of that uniformity both rest for him upon the plan of God." This is certainly the *ultimate* reason why we have confidence in the coherency of the Christian view.

But what of the non-Christian? In the next paragraph the same writer boldly announces, "The non-Christian can never as much as discover any fact. On his principles he knows nothing of its nature."¹ Dr. Van Til ascribes to man two presuppositions which put him in this situation. "(1) Negatively he assumes that reality [matter or noumena] is not rationally constituted at all . . . (2) Positively, he assumes that reality [mind or phenomena] is after all rationally constituted and answers exhaustively to his logical manipulations."

To me the idea of common ground has seemed to involve a problem of assumptions and hypotheses rather than necessarily a difficulty with the facts themselves. We have already admitted that hypoth-

¹ "Does the Universe Have a Mind?", *His*, April, 1948, p. 30. In his pamphlet, "Why I Believe in God," Cornelius Van Til says to the God-rejector, "Often enough we have talked to you about facts and sound reasons as though we agreed with you on what these really are. In our arguments for the existence of God we have an area of knowledge on which we agree. But we really do not grant that you see any fact in any dimension of life truly. We really think you have colored glasses on your nose when you talk about chickens and cows, as well as when you talk about the life hereafter" (p. 12).

* This is the second of a series of three articles by Professor Paul. The third will appear in the August-September issue of the *Forum*.

eses may reflect one's life-values and hence may color one's interpretations of facts. With this in mind I wrote to Dr. Van Til on August 13, 1949.

"Why I Believe in God" (pp. 12f.) and your article in *His* (April, 1948, p. 30) state your position clearly. I follow you this far: I can see that the non-Christian cannot grasp the true or *complete meaning* of any fact. Unless one's philosophy forbids his making a distinction between facts and laws of interpretations of facts (hypotheses), then there should be *some common factual ground* between Christian and non-Christian. Where the non-Christian is *fully* consistent in applying his naturalistic system of interpretation, common ground of *meanings* will be removed.

Professor Van Til replied on August 26, 1949.

"I agree, of course, that there is common ground. In fact all facts are common as a challenge. I agree also that the non-Christian is *never* fully consistent. (Common grace holds him back.) On the other hand he *always* is consistent. He always is depraved in principle and this fact always has a bearing on his interpretations.

This is what we should expect, namely that the difference between sinner and saint is first of all a spiritual or moral one. Common areas of experience (ontological epistemological and ethical or social) may yet remain.

The practical problem in the field of Christian evidences for the witness is to determine by use of the means outlined earlier for determining meanings just what areas of experience he does have in common with an unsaved friend. The more "educated" the individual, the more he may be aware of the unregenerate assumptions guiding his knowing and living and the more explicit may be his adoption of a false system of belief. Some may suggest that we need a different methodology for dealing with this type of individual than we do for reaching the "average" unbeliever who only implicitly adopts a non-Christian system and who is ignorant of or confused about the truth concerning God. I do not think a different methodology of evidence is involved, but the level of application of the method may alter. Some people are receptive to the simple presentation of the facts concerning God's redemptive work. Others have to be met on the level of meanings or the implications and interpretations of facts. They need to be shown what bearing the facts have on their experience and problems.

When supernaturalist meets anti-supernaturalist, the one sees the maple tree as a product of creation and the other, as a result of chance. They may still agree as to many points concerning the botany of the maple tree, but if the vital issue of Creator-God vs. chance-evolution is to be faced it must be done both in terms of the facts of the sciences involved (theology and biology) and in terms of the total implications of the assumptions and propositions of the logically opposed views. Even here we use common grounds to communicate Gospel truth.² As always,

² Some Christian philosophers who restrict themselves to a coherence theory of truth make much of the word "*system*." It is still an open problem as to just what meaning this word must have in order to rule out common ground between positions involving one or more contradictory assumptions. What, for example, is really meant when it is said, "There is no such thing as common ground between Christianity and a non-Christian *system*?" (Gordon Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of*

it must be the Holy Spirit who does the regenerating of the life.

II

Before we have completed our methodological analysis of facts, meanings and common grounds in Christian evidences there is one more fundamental point that needs to be made. We must re-emphasize the need for realistically meeting men where we find them. This is one of the many lessons to be learned from the earthly ministry of Christ.

Strange as it may seem, some of the leading evangelical writers in this field attempt to deal with twentieth century minds as if they belonged to the eighteenth century. There is a feeling that in the field of philosophy not much has happened since the days of Immanuel Kant and that if one criticizes the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), the modern non-Christian philosophy has been answered.

So, for example, Van Til in "Does the Universe Have a Mind?" gives us the two presuppositions of modern man quoted in the preceding section. These are Kant's.³ (1) Noumenal reality (the-thing-in-itself, brute fact) is unknowable. (2) Phenomenal reality (sense impressions made rational through the a priori categories of thought) is knowable and is the field of scientific investigation. Kant himself was

Education, p. 164). Unclearly increases when this generalization is applied on the "metaphysical level" and "reflected back upon the lower levels", the "scientific" and the "personal." (Carnell, *op. cit.*, chapter XII. For more details on Van Til's position see Appendix A to this chapter.)

Perhaps logician Charles Baylis' description of systematic coherence (*Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Runes, "Truth," pp. 321-2) points to what these "systematizers" have in mind. Coherence "is more than logical consistency. A proposition is true insofar as it is a *necessary constituent* of a systematically coherent whole. According to some (e.g., Brand Blanshard, *The Nature of Truth*), this whole must be such that every element in it necessitates, indeed entails, every other element." If this view should be acceptable to my friends, then it is for them to explain in what this extra-logical necessity consists. Presumably the Christian's answer would point to an ontological necessity following from our knowledge of God as Creator and providence. But the present study has shown that this Biblical view does not exclude in practice the existence of common grounds between believers and unbelievers. Baylis' comment is apropos. "Strictly, on this view, truth, in its fullness, is a characteristic of only the one systematic coherent whole, which is absolute. It attaches to propositions as we know them and to wholes as we know them only to a degree. A proposition has a degree of truth proportionate to the completeness of the system of entities to which it belongs."

The Christian, of course, has the privilege of knowing the God of the Bible, the omniscient One. We are confident that the truths which we come to know arise consistent with revealed truth, but our knowledge is far from complete. Furthermore, the unbeliever's ideas are more likely to be empirically derived than to be systematic rational deductions from a complete and consistent set of propositions *every one of which* contradicts the Christian position. Hence, in applied Christian evidences when contradictory explanatory hypotheses are involved (as in the affirmation and denial of Biblical creation), these hypotheses use *terms* in common and there is generally a common recognition of *facts-to-be-explained* (e.g., both the creationist and evolutionist are faced with a natural world exhibiting some pattern, order and symmetry). This area of common ground remains, however radically they differ in the presentation and explanation of their views. Whatever may be our attitude toward *systems*, in practice we observe a degree of co-extensivity.

³ Those who would like a brief review of Kant's system and its intellectual and theological implications may find Appendix B to this chapter helpful.

aware of contradictions arising from his dualism. But he was not aware of the eighteenth century assumptions which got him into this philosophical mess. He followed the British empiricists' interpretation of experience as the perception of unrelated and chaotic sensations. To restore order to the picture he went the rationalists one better in the assigning of a priori organizing powers to the mind.

Now there are still many scientists, philosophers and theologians who today at least implicitly operate on these same presuppositions and assumptions. Where the criticism is appropriate it should be applied. So Van Til feels this is the way to attack Barth and Brunner. "To understand the trend of modern epistemological theory, we naturally begin with Immanuel Kant. It has been said that there are two kinds of theologians, those before, and those after Kant."⁴ Another writer has said that Kant is "the source of all contemporary philosophies, or at least the funnel through which all modern ideas have passed."⁵

There is much to be said for this perspective. But if we are to meet men and systems on their own ground in the second half of the twentieth century we must understand their views as they are. A lot happened to Kant in the hands of the Romanticists, Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard and the Existentialists. Much of Pragmatism-Instrumentalism must be understood in terms of the biological revolution of the last century and the development in this era of the physical and social sciences and of the psychological interpretation of experience. Here too the metaphysical and epistemological picture is changing. The theologies offered us may be no more acceptable. Certainly they are no more Christian. They remain humanistic and have become increasingly naturalistic. God is left out of the picture a priori. Man in nature is autonomous.

III

Our fundamental methodological suggestion for meeting men and their non-Christian systems forcefully and realistically is given in the next and closing chapter of this study. It would be fitting here to indicate a few important post-Kantian developments which are taking place in the field of facts, meanings and common grounds and to suggest our attitude toward them. It is especially important that we meet the challenge of Instrumentalistic-Naturalism. But this is a project which must await a later writing. Restricting ourselves to some problem-areas in American Pragmatism,⁶ let us conclude by stating two sets of questions and suggestions calling for study by future serious writers in the field of Christian evidences.

⁴ *The New Modernism, An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner*, (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1947), p. 9, cf. pp. 9-27.

⁵ Gordon Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things*, (Eerdmans, 1952), p. 34.

⁶ See *Classic American Philosophers: Peirce, James, Royce, Santayana, Dewey, Whitehead*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951. Very helpful is editor M. H. Fisch's "General Introduction."

(1) *The nature of experience.* Traditional empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume, etc.) referred ideas back to the experiences which supposedly generated them. They also made the mistake of assuming that man is merely passive in the reception of sense experience. We have noted how these assumptions led to the skepticism of both Hume and Kant. Pragmatism has altered this perspective, but has done it in such a way as to lose the valuable stress on the *objective* nature of experience implied by ideas we consider to be factual.

In spite of this important limitation, it is to the credit of pragmatism that it has rid us of the possibility of holding any *one-sided* spectator theory (or copy theory) of knowledge. The experimental conception of knowledge (see next chapter) insists that man is actively engaged in testing his ideas in terms of predicted experience. But when they deal with propositions about the past in terms of their futuristic pragmatic theory of meaning, yesterdays get reduced to tomorrows. "Christ rose from the dead" becomes "We believe Christ rose from the dead if we act in accord with this truth in the future." Needless to say, an adequate philosophy of historic experience must deal with the past as objective past and as relevant for the present as well as predictively related to events which are coming.

A basic issue in all this is, Can the Christian retain a pragmatic test of true experience recognizing the importance of practical and purposive considerations *along with the valuable elements* in the correspondence and coherence theories of truth *and* along with the ultimate test of Biblical-authority?

(2) *The experience of nature.* Was not the Cartesian dualism between body and mind (or matter and mind) frequently set forth in such a way by its exponents so as to justify the pragmatist's reaction against it? The same question applies to the Kantian dualism between fact and values. But how can we also escape the undesirable consequences of monism and pluralism? It is possible to accept the plurality of the contexts of human experience but at the same time to hold that all of these explanatory categories (hypotheses developed through experience) of existence center around two poles of human interest. Instead of a heterogeneous dualism it is possible that a *bi-polar* dualism (body-mind, object-subject, nature-experience) may be a clarifying hypothesis. There will be differentiations where they are empirically demanded within the processes and continuities of the Deweyites.

Neither the naturalizing of mind nor the mentalizing of nature (the reduction of substance to process) is either revelationally or experimentally satisfactory. An experimental realist finds continuities and interrelatedness in experience. The Gestaltian psychologist's way of saying this is that organisms respond to the complex but patterned flow of stimuli. The Christian knows that this is as it should be because of God's promise to Noah (Gen. 8:22).

An experimental realist finds *insistence* as well as interrelatedness in experienced existence. There is *objectivity* in the meanings implied by the facts arising in experience. This applies to the individual as well as to the world of which he is a part. There is the *interacting* relationship between man's corporeal and non-corporeal self. Objective personal identity is known not only from the *perduring* quality of consciousness but also from man's exhibition of *interest*. For the Christian this means *interestedness* in other persons and social communities, in one's own experiences with nature (substantive *things* and events), and in one's experiences with the Bible and the God of the Bible.

A Christocentric philosophy offers an interpretation of individual experience and experienced reality which is far broader than any naturalistic hypothesis which excludes God a priori. Nor does the Biblical view which accepts the historic reality of the Fall gloss over man's depraved moral nature or the empirical evidence thereof in man's social and physical environment. While man is *now* engaged in knowing and believing and acting within the natural environment created for man's habitation and use, on the Biblical view experience cannot be limited a priori to this horizon. On the strength of natural and revealed theology, the Christian knows that there is the Creator-God on Whom the plurality of present contingent processes is dependent and Who has a plan for his future.

There is much here to spell out in terms of a Biblically grounded experimental realism. To do it adequately will require the cooperative efforts of many Christian statesmen in all fields of study. It is in some such framework that an inductive system of Christian evidences needs to be presented today as a challenge to Instrumentalist-Naturalism.

Appendix A

Dr. Van Til's Apologetics

The influential views of Dr. Cornelius Van Til, Professor of Apologetics at Philadelphia's Westminster Theological Seminary, have been referred to in the preceding chapter. The following is essentially a summary, rather than a critical analysis, of the position which he presents in two chapters on "The Argument for Christian-theism" in his syllabus, *Christian Apologetics* (Jan., 1939). Professor Van Til begins by stating his basic contention that "in all Christian-theism we have a system of interpretation that is so different from all other systems of interpretation that we cannot find a common ground between them on the basis of which an argument with respect to the truth may be undertaken" (p. 28). He then sums up the metaphysical and epistemological position on which he bases his argument.

As Christians we hold to a two-layer theory of reality and a two-layer theory of knowledge. All non-Christian systems of interpretation hold to a one-layer theory of reality and a one-layer theory of knowledge. Accordingly for Christians the divine mind speaks with absolute authority to the human mind and for non-Christians the human mind owns no authority but its own. Moreover, for Christians, because of the fact of sin, the divine mind speaks with authority in the external form of Scripture whereas for non-Christians Scripture can be nothing but the product of human speculation. (*ibid.*)

There can be no disagreement concerning the last sentence. Van Til is to be commended for his constant dependence upon the

authority of Scripture and the postulate of the theistic God of the Bible as the basis for the whole Christian system. But he is not satisfied to simply separate all humans into two classes depending on whether they accept or reject the Bible as a fact. This would be a practical method for differentiating Christians from non-Christians. They are here also placed into two completely different metaphysical and epistemological camps. This is a logical rather than a practical distinction. As a logical distinction it assumes that the individuals in the two groups will carry out their theories of reality and of the knowledge of that reality consistently with their supernatural or anti-supernaturalistic presuppositions. If humans did so reason then the author would seem to be correct in stating that there is no "area of knowledge in common" between the believers and unbeliever. Occasionally Dr. Van Til admits to what men are in practice, by the common grace of God, but the force of his argument is based on the logical dualism.

Evidently Professor Van Til can talk with an unbelieving botanist about a maple tree. The botanist can identify the tree by describing those characteristics which distinguish it from other trees. In so doing he gives Van Til his "*interpretation* of the maple tree." Ordinarily one would assume the possibility that some valid information might be communicated in this fashion and that there would be some facts and an area of knowledge in common. Admittedly, the unbelieving botanist has nothing to say about the tree declaring the glory of God. But Van Til is not satisfied with pointing to such an important omission and showing how the botanist's non-Christian position colors his interpretations. He insists that the botanist's views are not only incomplete or partially mistaken and confused, but that he is completely wrong. He stresses

the absolute falsehood of the principle of interpretation upon the basis of which non-Christian scientists proceed. If we do not stress this falseness what have we? We have then an intolerable situation. Believers and non-believers then have an area of knowledge in common. *Thus the legitimacy of the main principle of interpretation of the non-Christian is recognized.* (p. 40).

But is it not possible to admit that they are fundamentally wrong in leaving creation and providence out of the picture, and *tell them* so when we are seeking to witness to them for Christ. If we then proceed to try to meet them on their own ground, in the sense of showing them the logical outcome of their principle of interpretation, are we thereby putting our rubber stamp on Godlessness? I think not. Our flag is flying. But Van Til does not recommend the possibility. Rather, he proceeds simply to emphasize his logical categorization.

Every fact is a fact by virtue of the creation and providence of God. Every law operating in this universe is a law by virtue of the creation and providence of God.

With this we agree. But in the next sentence he adds, Common grace cannot tone down the basically false misinterpretation of every fact in the universe if creation and providence are not recognized (p. 41).

Lying behind this statement is Van Til's distinction between bare or brute "facts" (he unfortunately does not consistently employ the quotes to indicate the distinction) and facts as interpreted. In talking to the botanist

We have not had the maple tree in common but we have had the "maple tree" in common. We have not had the facts of the universe in common but we have had the "facts" in common. Thus there can be no area of facts known alike without a difference between Christians and non-Christians. When we speak of a known area of facts we speak of facts that are brought into relationship with one another by means of a principle of individuation. If a non-Christian tells us that he is simply *appealing to facts* and asks us to accept nothing but undeniable facts, he is really asking us to accept "facts" as interpreted by exclusively immanentistic categories. "Facts interpreted by immanentistic categories" are the only "facts" he can speak of upon his assumption. On the other hand if as Christians we tell men that we are simply *appealing to facts* and that we ask them to accept nothing but undeniable facts we are really asking them to accept the "facts as interpreted ultimately by superhuman or divine categories." What a non-Christian is really contending for is that "facts" are meaningless unless they are interpreted by immanentistic categories. What a Christian is contend-

ing for is that "facts" are meaningless unless interpreted by divine categories (pp. 29-30).

We may say again that Dr. Van Til is here stating two *logically* contradictory positions which, by the grace of God, need not necessarily be what we actually find existing in practice. It may just be the case that we can agree with the botanist that "maple leaves" may properly be interpreted as being maple leaves which are green, five-pointed, etc. It may also just be the case that the "facts" do *imply* more than an immanentistic interpretation, a Creator God.

The fact that there is not a "common area of knowledge" is said to be a fortunate state of affairs. If there were common ground the unbelievers "could force us to their conclusions" (p. 37)!

In Van Til's view all we need to carry on a witness to the lost is a "formal point of contact" (p. 38). This consists in "an intellectual understanding of the truth" and "an ethical reaction to the truth" (p. 38) and a "coincidental cooperation in the work of civilization" (p. 41). All this is made possible by the fact that all men were created in the image of God.

It has not become clear to me how Van Til's brief suggestions concerning *applied* apologetics are to be reconciled with his predominately *formal* analysis. One expects to find further practical suggestions in Professor Van Til's syllabus on *Christian-Theistic Evidences* (1947) especially in the chapter called "Christianity and Factual Defense." But here he attacks the scientific method as based on a metaphysics of chance. It is admitted that the scientist has performed valuable detail work and that there is need for experimentation and observation. But the Christian interpretation (which gets its hypotheses from God) has no use for the scientist's method.

A third syllabus which deserves study is *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Dec. 1949). In it Van Til makes clear that his procedure is quite different not only from that of Kuyper, Bavinck, Hodge, Warfield, Buswell, etc., but also Clark and Carnell are said to have departed from the fold.

For Dr. Buswell's views on "Presuppositionalism" in Dr. Van Til's *Common Grace* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1947), see *Bible Today*, Nov., 1948. (Cf. also March, 1949, "Warfield vs. Presuppositionalism".) For Van Til's reply see the April and June-Sept., 1949, issues. Another recent publication by Van Til is *The Intellectual Challenge of the Gospel*, 1950, Tyndale Press, London. For a criticism of ambiguous language and idealistic metaphysics in Van Til see the three essays by Dr. Jesse De Boer, *Calvin Forum*, Aug.-Sept., Oct. and Nov. 1953.

Appendix B

Kant's Critical Philosophy

In 1781 Immanuel Kant tried to critically examine the function, validity and limit of knowledge in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He handled this distinction between fact and interpreted fact (meaning) in terms of perception and conception. Empiricists like Locke and Hume had stressed sense perception. Rationalist Leibniz championed the intellectual power of conception. Kant insisted both were needed. "Thoughts with-

out content are empty, perceptions without conceptions are blind." (Watson translation, p. 41.)

Kant insisted that what we *can* know are the "objects of possible experience," which he called "phenomena," by which he meant to include everything that appears to us in perception under the forms of space and time and in the manner determined by the *a priori* "categories" of thought (especially the relational thought-form of cause and effect.) They act as hypotheses in searching for and organizing phenomenal fact. (An early form of the hypothetico-experimental method of modern science.) A point to be remembered is that Kant looked upon the factual content of possible experience as fed by rather chaotic waves of sensations which get synthesized through these thought processes into an intelligible, coherent world. This was the common assumption of his day. The world of perceptual facts become meaningful conceptual facts. And contrariwise, the world of human experience becomes universally uniform and lawlike. This is the world of "phenomena" which can be known scientifically. It is this world of natural phenomena in which scientific predictions can be made from known causes to future effects.

Here Kant introduces his famous dualism. We believe that the phenomena of sense perception imply the existence of real, intelligible objects—"noumena." The only thing that we can know about these objects-in-themselves (brute or uninterpreted facts), according to Kant, is that they exist. Noumena are not known by the senses and hence are not objects of thought. All known facts are interpreted facts. "Reality" cannot be known.

The inadequacy of the Kantian scheme was revealed when Kant himself showed that his system permitted the holding of contradictory views concerning the soul, the universe and God.

The four paralogisms (fallacies of reasoning) concerning the self have to do with whether or not the soul is a permanent substance, a simple substance, a personal identity, and with immortality. Kant not only cannot establish by pure reason the fact of personal immortality but also concludes that there is the phenomenal I but no metaphysical I. He brings these back into his ethical philosophy in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) as moral postulates of faith.

The four antinomies (contradictions) of reason deny that we have knowledge of the universe *as a whole*. The science of phenomena cannot decide whether the universe had a beginning in time or is eternal, whether it permits the relation of freedom and necessity, and whether or not there is a necessary Being. Freedom, he decides, is a moral value belonging to man's noumenal nature.

Kant's skepticism toward the rational (deductive) proofs for God's existence is well known. See *Bible Today*, March, 1947, "Pauline Theism and Kant on the Theistic Arguments" for Dr. J. O. Buswell's defense of the inductive arguments. Kant set forth his own moral argument for God's existence in an inductive form. But he based religion on morality rather than on revelation. One of his last works, *Religion Within the Limits of Pure Reason* (1794), speaks lightly of miracles, the deity of Christ and the Trinity. Prayer helps us to forsake our natural deceitfulness and to understand the categorical imperative. The end of this "Copernican revolution" is the subjective approach to God through feeling Him in our hearts.



The Effect of the Doleantie on the Christian Reformed Church

G. Van Groningen
Senior, Calvin Seminary

IT IS not a simple task to state the effect of the Doleantie on the Christian Reformed Church. The Doleantie is of fairly recent origin. Since we are still in the midst of its spreading influence it is difficult to find a suitable "lookout tower" from which we can view the field and thus evaluate the effects properly. Surely no one will dispute the fact that a movement originating sixty-five years ago is still a recent one; nor will anyone contend that the permeating leavening influence of the Doleantie has spent itself in our comparatively young denomination, which has just recently begun to develop beyond adolescence. Another problem which has a bearing on the difficulty of our task is this: can one really ever determine what the full effect of one movement upon another is? E.g., some historians have batted the ball "the Christian Church's effect on the Early Roman Empire" back and forth: How different would the Empire have been if the church had not arisen? Can a final answer ever be expected? Hardly. Now pertaining to our problem; were the germs of the Doleantie not inherent within Reformed Theology all the time? Would the American Reformed not have developed these truths, which the Doleantie stressed, of and by themselves? Some ask "was not our church doing that very thing?"—granted: slowly—before 1886? For example, was there not discussion of Christian education and works of mercy before they ever heard of the Doleantie? Was there not already an awareness, though not in deeds, due to the exigencies and conditions of the times, of the Lordship of Christ over all spheres of life?

There is another difficulty facing us: the lack of authoritative documents from which to draw material to answer our question. The recentness of the movement may be one reason for this. But, this, which an old pioneer said, seems to be a more weighty reason, "In those days (referring to 1890-1915), we did not take the time to write down everything said and discussed. We talked things over and acted. We just did not put our discussion in writing." Now, it is these very discussions that would give us an indication of the effect the ideas that migrated from the Netherlands had on our fathers. Fortunately, we still have some periodicals which carried discussions. But of these discussions, the ideological are few, the polemical numerous. The former, though very few, are the fruitful sources to which we can turn. The latter have to be used with

great care. Dr. Hepp wrote a series of articles, evaluating one of the struggles in the American Christian Reformed Church.¹ He deplored the presence of the "heat of battle" on both sides. This heat, he was sure, caused much to be said and written which should never have been expressed. Now we must calmly and coolly evaluate the products of the earlier smoking, belching, spewing volcanoes, not permitting the heat to influence us; however, we must attempt to arrive at the objective facts buried beneath the lava.

Last of all, the task is complicated by the fact that there was another stream or influence upon the American Christian Reformed Church, namely: Americanization.² The immigrants felt the impact of their new environment and this had to be dealt with. It is very difficult to determine just what role the two influences had on the church, and even more difficult to single one out and determine its effect.

In order intelligibly to state the effect of a movement upon organization, the essence, the true character of each, prior to the interaction, must be determined. Therefore a brief discussion of the Afscheiding and the Doleantie is imperative.

I

A detailed history is not in order. But we must ask—what was the cause or, how did the Afscheiding originate? If one reads the various historical accounts of the Afscheiding,³ he will agree that Dr. Beets epitomized the condition of the State Hervormde Kerk of the Netherlands in the following words,

"A lax conservative liberalism, due to the influence of the French Revolution, characterized the Hervormde Kerk in 1830. Though men feared the utmost consequences of the French Revolution, they held to its principles. The watchwords by which all things passed were 'toleration', and 'compliance.' Indefiniteness, vagueness, half-heartedness and irresoluteness gave the predominant color and tone. Though men attended worship, 'enlightenment' and 'liberality' purified men's souls. Men no longer were narrow-minded as the early Reformed Fathers, their theology had been good for them, but science and culture had advanced theology far beyond them. The theology of 1830 in the Hervormde Kerk was a superficial supernaturalism which undermined the Scriptures and lent support to the independence of human rationality. God was conceived of

¹ *The Witness*, Vol. III, pp. 78-80, carries excerpts from Dr. Hepp's series.

² Kromminga, D. H., *The Christian Reformed Tradition*, p. 115.

³ Such histories as G. Keizer, *De Afscheiding van 1834*, and Rullman's *Een Nagel in de Heilige Plaats*.

Deistically, the mystical union and fellowship between God and man was negated. Christ was an example of love and virtue who knew nothing of tears due to the guilt of sins."⁴⁾

From a church in such a condition, holding such views, the adherents of the confessions and believers in the Word of God had to separate. H. De Cock, Scholte, Van Raalte and others, the leaders of this movement, realized it was impossible to retain a Reformed character in a church spiritually dead and under the domination of the State. These devoted servants of the Lord were determined to be true to the Lord of the church; therefore they began boldly to proclaim the gospel of free Sovereign grace to men lost in sin. The secession of 1834 followed, which developed into the church which is the rock from which our Christian Reformed Church was hewn.⁵⁾

How is this seceding group to be characterized? Various. Soon a few divergent streams of thought became apparent. The Labadistic, Puritanic and the Pietism groups became predominate. The group which was the backbone and is the root of the Christian Reformed church, has been referred to as the Pietism group. It is well to remember that Pietism need not always be considered a derogatory term. Some of the seceders had a false and warped piety, placing excessive emphasis on the will and emotions; however, De Cock and his intimate associates had a warm piety that protested against formalism and dead orthodoxy that emphasized *personal* regeneration and conversion, and that attempted to make religion a matter of doctrine and life. In general, Dr. Beets concludes, the seceders were true to the Word of God, which was for them the only rule and guide for all of life and teaching.⁶⁾ Prof. D. H. Kromminga remarks that those of the seceders who, due to persecution in their home country, emigrated to America were soundly Reformed at heart.⁷⁾

That they were is evident from their motives for emigrating. The predominate motive was not to escape persecution, but rather to seek a place where they could live according to God's Word, there to have freedom of worship, freedom to train their children according to that Word, and freedom to proclaim that Word and thus be a blessing for God's kingdom on earth. Their sound Reformed character is also evident in their inability to feel at home in and cooperate fully with the Dutch Reformed church, which was already giving evidence of compromise with the modern American church world. Thus, in 1857, the Christian Reformed church was officially established and recognized. She now again became united with the Afgescheidene in the Netherlands in that they were one in teaching, administration of the Sacraments, church government and discipline,⁸⁾ but actual relationships were not too cordial.

⁴⁾ Beets, H., *De Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*, p. 18.

⁵⁾ *loc. cit.*

⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷⁾ Kromminga, D. H., *The Christian Reformed Tradition*, p. 100.

⁸⁾ Beets, H., *op. cit.*, p. 87.

The various problems with which the new American Christian Reformed church was struggling were not viewed too sympathetically in the Netherlands.

There was life in this new group. Evidence for this is the many questions and problems discussed, e.g., which holidays to acknowledge officially as a church, the dress of the ministers, *doopledenstelsel*, i.e., baptizing children of non-confessing members, and in this connection also the meaning of the Covenant of Grace and Baptism; regeneration and some of its implications; sanctification—its beginning and progress, and such questions pertaining to the social aspect of life as vaccination, insurance and women voting.⁹⁾

Though there was discussion on various problems, the predominant theological emphasis the first twenty years was the emotional. This is readily explained by that period of strife and pioneering. But the emotional emphasis in no way indicated a laxness in adherence to the forms of unity or a lack of solid instruction given from the pulpits and in catechizing. Now, the interesting thing to notice is that as the general theological climate in the Netherlands became more intellectualistic about 1880, so also a change in the same direction was noticeable in America.¹⁰⁾ *De Wachter* editorials of that time reflect this; the sermons preached reflected this; they became more objective and immediately voices arose protesting the lack of emphasis on Saving Grace. Also, complaints regarding worldliness and Sabbath desecration began to appear. The question before us is: was it merely coincidental that in both countries the Reformed began to reflect an intellectual emphasis contemporaneously? Or was it due to the general spirit of the age? Or could this alternative be the correct one—The Netherlands' Reformed influenced the American? The fact that from 1880 on the harmony between the churches was restored, correspondence between them increased, and many immigrants came over and joined the Christian Reformed church seems to favor the latter alternative. However, it is highly improbable that a dogmatic answer can ever be given to the question.

In summary: by 1880 the Christian Reformed church was established in America. Its leaders were soundly Reformed at heart, but only beginning to develop various aspects of their theology and to apply these doctrines to the various aspects of life in their new homeland. Our problem is: how was this development and application affected by the Doleantie?

II

As to the Doleantie, let us begin by defining it in its narrower sense. Doleantie is a derivative of the Latin term *doleo*—to bear pain, to smart, with the added meaning of making this pain, smart or grief known to a judge or some other authority. The true Reformed in the State Hervormde Kerk were

⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

grieved at the conditions of the church, made their griefs known, and followed this up by action, i.e., by rejecting the State Synodical authority.

Thus we speak of the Doleantie as the casting off of the unlawful Synodical yoke; but, when we speak of the effect of the Doleantie we do not limit ourselves to this narrower definition. Rather, Doleantie has a far wider denotation: the entire movement including (1) its causes— theological and political; (2) its method—ecclesiastically political; (3) its genius, its theology, and ecclesiastical organization; and (4) its development and results in the various spheres of thought and activity.

Leaders

Dr. A. Kuyper is usually referred to as *The Man of the Doleantie*, and undoubtedly he is outstanding in the movement in its wider sense. However, others, especially in the inceptive stages, had a large and influential role. Rullman considers Rev. J. Van Den Bergh and J. Ploos Van Amstel as the fathers of the Doleantie. These men were predominately evangelical, motivated by a deep piety and love for God, who was increasingly dishonored in His own church. To make sure that due credit be given to these men, Rullman states that before these men ever heard of or realized there was an Abraham Kuyper, they were laying the ground work of the Doleantie. Accordingly, the congregations of these two men were the first ones to reject the Synodical authority. According to Rullman, the Doleantie's equilibrium is evidenced in its three outstanding men: J. Van Den Bergh as the conscience, A. Kuiper as the soul, power driving force, and Rutgers as the mind.¹¹ The tragedy was that the "Conscience" spent his energies beginning the movement, and thus his needed influence was cut off early by death.

In these days when a false distinction is sometimes made between Calvinistic and evangelical preaching,¹² it may be well to point out that Rullman devotes a section to the influence of the "Friends of Truth" in the Doleantie. This was an evangelistic society, often labelled as the Reformed Methodists. One member of this organization, Mr. W. De Jong, a close friend of the "Conscience," was especially active and influential. It is interesting to note that this man, evangelical, possessing a deep warm piety was very enthusiastic about the establishment of the Free University where a thoroughly balanced Christian education would be given.¹³

The Hervormde Kerk had three outstanding forces which were undermining her and tapping her very life blood. Modernists of various hues were leading the attack on the Scriptures and its teachings. The ethical movement emphasized the moral aspect of the supernatural concepts of the Christian doctrines; the slogan was: Christianity is a life, not doctrine. Then there were University Professors, as at Gronin-

gen, who denounced Calvin, exalted Erasmus, fought the trammels of the three forms of unity, and declared the Calvinistic doctrines, e.g., predestination, as anti-humanistic.¹⁴

These forces had the protection and support of the State Synodical organization. Thus, when the orthodox Reformed ministers and consistories objected to the status and the regulations of the church, they were in conflict with the State as well as the church. But the conscientious Reformed men had no choice. Conflict followed. Rullman cites an example. A young lady appeared before the consistory of Dieren, requesting it to honor her as a communicant member. Upon examination, the consistory refused her, for she denied that the Scripture were God's infallible revelation; she denied the Trinity, and hence the divinity of Christ. The consistory was soon approached, and had extreme pressure applied by the Classical committee to accept her. The consistory refused. At the next State Synod the minister was suspended, in the name of and by the authorities of the state as well as the church.¹⁵ What other choice did the Dieren consistory have than to cast off that hierarchal political power?

Thus, the primary cause of the Doleantie was the "modernity" of the State church, and this was brought to a head by the question of accepting outspoken Modernists as communicant members of the church. Christ was not recognized as head or king of His church. Jesus Christ, the Lord, was rather dishonored, negated and rejected. The Reformed tradition was cast aside; a new theology was in the process of development. The Spirit-filled, conscientious Reformed men in the church were convinced that they should, as Dr. A. Kuyper stated, "hold fast what you have: the Scriptures, but also that which our fathers, who died in the Lord, had and taught."¹⁶

Another cause, closely related to this first one, was that in place of Christ, the state was the recognized head and ruler of the church. A diagram appeared in *De Heraut*, December 6, 1885, which illustrated this.¹⁷ One diagram had this order: the Source of all Sovereignty is in God; this sovereignty is represented in Christ as King which comes, bound to the Inscripturated Word, to the consistories who rule the individual congregation. These consistories are united confederatively in a classis, and the classis in a Synod. This is the Reformed conception. Now the State church had this order: the source of authority is in God; the representative of this authority is the State Synod which delegates classical committees to rule the consistories, and these in turn the individual church members.

Method

We will deal only with the Doleantie in its restricted sense in this section. The method employed

¹¹ Rullman, J. C., *Doleantie*, p. 36.

¹² *The Banner*, March 1953, p. 327.

¹³ Rullman, J. C., *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁴ Kromminga, D. H., *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹⁵ Rullman, J. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 86-96.

¹⁶ Kuyper, A., "Conservatisme en Orthodoxie."

¹⁷ Rullman, J. C., *Doleantie Stemmen*, pp. 26, 27.

was one definitely in the field of ecclesiastical polity. The Doleerende consistently maintained that they in no wise separated from the church. Dr. A. Kuyper stated the method thus: "we do not overthrow, nor revolt, but we will continue to progress, building on the true Reformed foundations laid in the past."¹⁸ This was actually carried out, e.g., by the congregation of s'Gravenhage, who described their action thus: we are called to be obedient to the highest authority; this is the first law of the church. This highest authority is Jesus Christ; He is Lord of the church. Now the Synod must recognize this also. But, it has chosen to make the crooked straight, the straight crooked. In faithfulness to the Lord of the church we say—we cannot follow or obey the Synod. We will obey the Lord first.¹⁹ Thus the congregation remained intact, in the true Reformed line, but it cast off an usurping authority and readopted the confessional, Scriptural form of church government.

III

At this point we may briefly consider the differences between the Afscheiding and the Doleantie. In so doing we shall again refer to the Doleantie in its restricted meaning.

The difference was not a matter of principle, since both recognized Christ as the Sovereign of the Church. Neither was the difference a question of the matter of the proper guide for doctrine and life, for both were unswervingly loyal to God's Word. Nor was the difference in their purpose; both worked for a revival in and a reformation of the historic Reformed church. The difference was in the *method of the Reformation*.²⁰

The Afscheiding had cast off the historic Reformed church entirely, it is said. It did not retain individual congregations; but the seceders grouped together, formed new congregations and a new society (denomination). Hence they were, and still are, given the name Separatists by many. The Doleerende, as seen above, were said to have remained in the line of the historic Reformed church. They had remained intact as local congregations, and it is in the congregations as organizations that the church as an organism is found. The essential factor to note is the emphasis on the local congregation. That the Afscheidene adhered to the three Reformed standards of unity, and to God's Word and its Reformed interpretation did not make it truly Reformed, the Doleerende contended. The most determining factor was: what is the conception of the "organization" of the church. This emphasis of the Doleerende, however, may never be taken and judged out of its historical context. But, if this is done, the question still remains, Are the Doleerende justified and supported Scripturally? The Scriptural evidence for their position over against the Afscheidene should

be more weighty than it is to make the answer favoring the Doleerende conclusive.

This emphasis on the autonomy of the local congregations led to some unhappy situations; this distinguishes the Doleantie from the Afscheiding more vividly. Professor F. M. Ten Hoor correctly stated—the Doleantie was a blessing to the Netherlands Reformed cause, but it is saddening to have to think of the dark side.²¹ J. Ploos Van Amstel was aware of the dark side. He, as a co-father of the Doleantie with the "Conscience," who was no longer alive, sent forth a passionate plea to all those who truly acknowledge, love and wish to serve Christ to be less concerned about material things.²² The issue too often was—who is the rightful owner of the church property—the local congregation or the denomination? This befogged the real issue: who is Lord of the church, and how can we best serve Him? There was also another aspect to the dark side. Professor Ten Hoor stated it lucidly, "The Doleerende, emphasizing their remaining in the Historic Reformed church, considering the Afscheidene as seceders and separatist offended the Afscheidene."²³ The result was an antipathy, often strong, within the Gereformeerde Kerk even long after the union of the two in 1892.

Both aspects of the dark side of the Doleantie have been felt in America. Reference will be made to the former aspect later. Here it can be said that the tendency to emphasize the material things in the struggle carried through into the other spheres of life, in that in various ways these aspects receive greater attention by those who claim to have their roots in the Doleantie than by those who claim the Afscheiding as their direct tradition. As to the latter, the lack of charitableness and consideration for one another between the differing groups in our church today may be directly traceable to the antipathy between the Afscheidene and Doleerende in the latter part of the 20th century.

Before discussing the influence of the Doleantie upon the Christian Reformed Church, a few preliminary remarks seem necessary. The first is that this subject cannot be dealt with adequately, completely, and conclusively for various reasons, the weightiest of which is the immensity of the scope of the problem. The second is that the answer will always, to a certain extent, be relative and personal, due, e.g., to the purpose one may have in mind in seeking to determine and evaluate the effect. This in turn may determine the point from which one views the problem as well as the aspect or aspects of the problem which will constitute the focal point. One may strive to view the two streams and their interaction upon each other objectively, yet his heart will be primarily with the one or the other. Our church is a product of the two streams, and these two streams

¹⁸ Kuyper, A., *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Rullman, J. C., *De Doleantie*, p. 81.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

²¹ *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan*, Vol. XV, pp. 32-38.

²² Rullman, J. C., *Doleantie Stemmen*, pp. 102-104.

²³ *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan*, Vol. IX, p. 211.

have not fully amalgamated; hence we are caught up predominately in either of the two streams. It seems as if they are few, if there be any at all, that have been able to work out a harmonious balance for themselves, much less give one to the church as a whole.

The third (and one hesitates to discuss it, yet one must face facts) is this: Dr. A. Kuyper was an intellectual giant, and some of his contemporaries were almost his equal intellectually. These men were also spiritual giants—men who were thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures and who lived in close communion and fellowship with God. These men have left a heritage the virtues of which we, as a church rooted in the Afscheiding, must assimilate. Now what do we all too often do? The very thing that the philosophers after Kant did. Take some aspect, or maybe a greater part of the contribution left us and, by separating it from its context, permit it to lose its proper proportion and size. The result is a one-sided emphasis.²⁴ Thus, if we today stress God's Sovereignty, the central theme of the Doleantie theologians, and neglect human responsibility, we are not true to them. So also, if we stress common grace, relegating Special Grace and the antithesis to a less prominent position, we are not true to the heritage left to us. If we stress the social implications of the Reformed faith, minimizing the proclamation of the Gospel of Sovereign Grace through Christ's blood by not giving it proper attention, we certainly are not true to the Reformed Fathers of the late nineteenth century. We must remember the Doleantie had a Rev. J. Van Den Bergh as well as a Dr. A. Kuyper, a Professor Rutgers as well as an evangelist De Jong. We may not forget that Dr. Kuyper wrote *In Jezus Ontslapen, In de Schaduw des Doods* and *Als Gij in Uwe Huis zit* as well as *De Gemeene Gratie*, "Tractaat van de Reformatie der Kerken" and *Encyclopaedie der Heilige Godgeleerdheid*. Some have stated it thus: there is a true view of the Doleantie, or of Dr. Kuyper, and an alleged one. Any time we appeal to or stress some aspect of or fact stated by the Doleantie theologians, which we have taken out of the proper setting and context, and permit it to lose its proper proportion, size and weight we are guilty of appealing to, or stressing an alleged view! Against this we must maintain an eternal vigilance if we are to, as Dr. Kuyper said, "hold on to and build upon that which was given to us." That we have neglected to do this, or rather, have all too often made an erroneous appeal, will be indicated later.

IV

It will be an aid to a proper grasp of the effect if we consider the means briefly. How did the Doleantie's ecclesiastical, organizational, philosophical and theological influences and implications cross the Atlantic? The channels were various. Which was

the more important and effective is difficult to determine. It is a known fact that a stream of literature flowed in from the Netherlands and was scattered over America.²⁵ Books, pamphlets, circulars, personal letters, all the various literary means were employed. It seems fairly safe to say that the one greatest literary channel was Dr. A. Kuyper's own literary mouthpiece, *De Heraut*.

The other important channel was the immigrants themselves. The Netherlands, many impressed by the new implications of Calvinism, came imbued with the spirit and vision of their former leaders. These immigrants arrived here, and many, irked by the hesitancy or wariness of the earlier immigrants, clamored and pressed for the adoption of the ideas and methods employed in the Netherlands. This had the general effect of dividing the constituency of the Christian Reformed church. One writer stated it bluntly, "we have two camps: the energetic, fresh, newly arrived immigrants, and the older immigrants who considered it the wiser policy to develop their own theology and its implications rather than taking over the Dutch theology completely."²⁶

There is another channel that merits attention, and may be considered a part of the second one. A number of ministers and students immigrated, who had had their training under the Doleantie influences. A few of these soon assumed a leading role in our church. Then also, in 1898 Dr. A. Kuyper visited America and had a great influence in the actual furthering of the holy ideal (present before though not as influential as it should have been): *Pro Rege*—In the name of the King we must conquer and develop all the spheres of life.²⁷

It must be understood that in referring to the Doleantie henceforth we will be considering it in its wider meaning, even when discussing the second main point under this head. The Doleantie had implications for all of life, which we will attempt to classify under four main heads. Rather than to develop the actual achievements of the Doleantie in each one, reference will be made only to that which was influential upon the American church scene.

The focal doctrine of all Reformed teaching is the Sovereignty of God, the full implications of which will never be comprehended by finite minds. For this very reason the Doleantie is important. There was considerable development in the dogma of the Sovereignty of God itself and even more development and progress in the understanding, applying, and systematic formulating of the doctrinal implications of this great central truth.²⁸ Reference is to such doctrines as Common Grace—the Sovereign God's relationship to the sinful world; *Pro-Rege*—the Sovereign God's relationship to all of life; sphere Sovereignty—the Sovereign God directly endowing

²⁵ *loc. cit.*

²⁶ "The Chimes," 1918.

²⁷ Beets, H., *op. cit.* p. 343.

²⁸ Hulst, L. J. & Hemkes, G. H., *Oud en Nieuw Calvinisme*, p. 21.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

the various spheres of life with authority; and the Covenant—the Sovereign God's relationship to the great work of Redemption.

A few remarks on the general theological approach or method is in order here. It has been stated that the late 19th century Dutch theologians were spiritual, intellectual giants, but there is one factor that does not specifically honor them i.e., their approach to Dogmatics. They knew the Scriptures thoroughly; therefore they were successful Dogmaticians in spite of this approach. It does not require a long concentrated study of their Dogmatic works to fully realize that these men did not take their actual starting point in Scripture. Rather, with the knowledge they had of Scripture they worked at reasoning out and developing their theological systems. They did not ignore the Scripture; it was their source of knowledge and of proof texts for the propositions they set forth. But had these men consistently begun with the actual text of Scripture; had they analyzed and

reconstructed the truths directly from it demonstrating how each doctrine is organically derived from it they would have given us a more directly Scripturally orientated Dogmatics. Their approach has been carried over to America early and is still with us.² Anyone attending the classes in Dogmatics in Calvin Seminary will have to admit that our Dogmatics is not exegetically related to Scripture as it should be. There seems all too often to be an unhealthy cleavage between the doctrines studied and the Scripture texts intended to prove the doctrines. At the Seminary the complaint is heard so often, "we are kept so busy with things about the Bible in general, that our opportunity to learn to know the Bible is very limited." Would not a solid exegetical approach accompanied with the necessary historical material instead of the philosophical approach to Dogmatics obviate this situation?

²⁹ *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan*, Vol. IX, p. 223.

NOTE: To be concluded in the August-September issue of the *Forum*.

Edmund Burke

Professor A. Vander Zee

Northwestern Junior College,
Orange City, Iowa

A RECENT contributor to the *Forum* suggested that all *Forum* readers should read Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Perhaps an introduction to this great man will prove that his suggestion is a good one.

I

Samuel Johnson was convinced that Burke was an "extraordinary man." Burke had a full mind gained from a wide reading. His vast store of knowledge and great range of ideas was brought to bear upon the political problems of his age. With keen insight he cut deep into the heart of human experience and extracted from it its permanent qualities. To him there was such a thing as an enduring common sense, what he termed the "permanent sense of mankind." All abstract literary and political theories had to be hammered upon the forge of the common sense of life to see if they rang true. Young Mackintosh claimed Burke was like Cicero and Bacon for powers of mind. Johnson himself recognized Burke's power as a conversationalist. He called forth Johnson's greatest exertions. While ill one time, Johnson said, "Were I to see Burke now, it would kill me." The praise of Burke by his intimates, culminating in the extravagant eulogy of Dr. Parr when he claimed that "Burke is the greatest man that ever lived," arises from their recognition of Burke's complete nature, of his full-rounded human qualities. All

these were brought to bear upon his understanding of society. Because he himself was a complex person, he knew that the state was a complex organism of custom, law, prejudice, passion, will, and reason. From it all was to be extracted the enduring principle, that "permanent sense of mankind." It is this ability to see life whole that is Edmund Burke's first distinction. It enabled him, in spite of the limiting aspect of party and caste, to leave to posterity a rich mine of political wisdom.

One of the richest veins in that mine runs through Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. In this book, on the whole, his method of reasoning is the inductive method. He begins with one grand religious assumption and from then on draws his basic principles from English history and from human nature. He accepts the truth that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. "The awful Author of our being is the Author of our place in the order of existence,—and that, having disposed and marshalled us by a Divine Tactic, not according to our will, but according to His, He has, in and by that disposition, virtually subjected us to act the part which belongs to the place assigned to us." There is a Divine Order established through a process of historical evolution discoverable in the relations of man to man and of man to human institutions and of man to God. Burke felt that every man must approach the institutions of government with

reverence and realized that any task in life must be carried out as a duty to God.

Burke did not exclude human society from his concept of nature as Rousseau did. "We fear God; we look up with awe to Kings; with affection to Parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility. Why? Because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected."

To Rousseau and his followers, Parliaments, Priests, and magistrates were the sources of all the evils in society. Nature to them meant a return to the primitive state of society in which man's instinctive sympathy towards one another would prevent evil, war, oppression, and greed. Man's feeling for natural rights based upon his reason would produce the ideal state. Burke saw far deeper than they did. He knew that rights could be guaranteed only by institution and law; that laws were bound up inextricably with the heart, not with the head, but with custom, prejudice, habit, and society. Since Burke believed that the state is "The known march of the ordinary Providence of God," he often expressed vehement disapproval of political thinkers like Rousseau who would undermine what God had willed. He was convinced that people should realize that the radical political writers were making deep critical analyses of the very foundation of society and doing so from a purely speculative point of view rather than from a view grounded upon political fact. Such metaphysical moonshine was fraught with danger to the state.

Burke loved a "manly, moral, regulated liberty," but not a liberty standing in all "the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction." Circumstances lend reality to every principle. How could he congratulate France upon its new found freedom when there was no government to insure that freedom? Freedom must be combined with government. Freedom is not a selfish liberty; it is rather social liberty. It is a set of circumstances wherein no person or group can trespass upon the liberty of any other person or group. "This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice, ascertained by wise laws, and secured by well-constructed institutions." His conclusion that liberty and justice can be attained only by slow progression through the Divinely established means, the State, is a truth that has its value for all time. We can readily see why the thought of Edmund Burke was a great influence on the ideas of Groen Van Prinsterer.

II

Burke often warned against democracy. It is unfortunate that he once referred to the people as a swinish herd. But this stricture must not be wrenched from its setting; he merely warned against the mob. Burke was too complete a man to subscribe to Rousseau's narrow view that man was by nature good. He knew that man in the mass, loosed from

the restraints of law and government, would be inclined to all manner of evil. Nor did Burke believe in the total depravity of man; he saw men as great artists do, as a mixture of good and evil tendencies, and he believed God willed the state not only to restrain evil but also to provide a means for the perfection of virtue.

Burke was always opposed to broadening the franchise. He believed the populace was too ignorant to rule. Out of a population of over five million, he held that only about 400,000 had the leisure and ability to discuss politics intelligently in order to cast a meaningful vote. He calls upon the wisdom of Solomon to back his conviction: "The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure; and he that hath little business shall become wise . . . How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad; that driveth oxen; and is occupied in their labours; and whose talk is of bullocks? . . . They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation."

To deny the vote to the great majority of people was the instinctive wisdom of the founding fathers of our democracy. A very small portion of the people could vote in the early years of our existence as a nation. At first, franchise was limited by the restriction of ownership of property and even religious affiliation. Concessions were made gradually in conjunction with the slow development of universal education.

The unlimited franchise of the French Republic, Burke felt, would endanger the state. Aristotle's warning that democracy leads to anarchy or oligarchy was reiterated by Burke. And did he not predict that the chaos of popular rule would call for the strong hand of dictatorship? and did he not foresee the rampant destructiveness of mob rule evidenced soon after his *Reflections* was published? Here especially Burke's prophetic wisdom shows forth. Government could not be based upon the abstract sentimental notion of the innate goodness of the individual and the ability of everyone to rule.

Burke taught that it is of vital significance that the "electorate . . . should recognize that the man of their choice is not fit to be chosen if he have not a mind and will of his own." At Bristol in 1780 he told his constituency that he refused to have his decisions made for him. He always insisted that the representative be free to use his trained intelligence to make decisions for the best interest of the country at large.

Other principles in Burke's writings that can still be a guide to those in positions of trust today are: the need for a high sense of responsibilities; the need for a sound knowledge of human nature; the insight to see present problems in the light of circumstances that gave them birth; prudence to grasp and weigh the circumstances of a situation; and the nerve to decide what the day or the hour or the moment requires to be done. His psychological insight into the value of prejudice is significant. Prejudices need

not be inimical to reason, but rather are rooted in reason. Often there is "a latent wisdom which prevails in them." They combine the reason with an emotional drive that makes a man ready to make a decision with confidence. "Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit."

Critics generally classify Burke as a mystic, but it would be more accurate to call him a theistic humanist, one who applies his religious and classical heritage to the bases of good government. Above all he taught that since government is divinely instituted, it must be approached with reverence and respect. "All who administer in the government of

men, in which they stand in the person of God himself, should have high and worthy notions of their function and destination . . . they act in trust . . . and are to account for their conduct in that trust to the one great Master, Author, and Founder of society." All who believe in institutional religion will feel with Burke that "religion is the basis of civil society," and that reverence and respect for government can best be maintained by the church. This is more than just a vague religious mysticism. His theistic principles are clearly and repeatedly expressed and are the foundations of his political thought.

From Our Correspondents

Dr. Cecil De Boer, Editor,
The Calvin Forum,
Calvin College and Seminary,
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

Dear Dr. DeBoer:

I AM delighted with the article entitled "The Extent of Antithesis" by Professor Dirkse in *The Calvin Forum* for March, 1954. I agree with the author that the antithesis between the thinking of the Christian and the thinking of an unregenerate person is "manifested to a greater degree in some areas of life than in others."

I have a suggestion to make however. Professor Dirkse says:

"... the greater degree of abstraction, the less distinct the antithesis becomes. . . . As the interpretation includes a larger and larger portion of reality, as the interpretation deals with a more integrated and less abstract point of view, the difference between Christian and non-Christian—or the antithesis—becomes sharper."

I do not believe that this explanation will hold. For example in discussing the question of the nature of moral evil in the abstract, the Christian and the non-Christian experience the sharpest possible antithesis. The Christian must regard moral evil as sin against God, whereas the non-Christian will define sin as anything but that. On the other hand, if a Christian and a non-Christian are discussing the

Shelton College
Ringwood, New Jersey
April 29, 1954

process of photographing the heavens by the great telescopes at the Palomar Observatory, they will be discussing an extremely large portion of reality, but nevertheless they may be in very close agreement.

I would suggest therefore that the antithesis increases or decreases along another dimension of life. It is not a question of the degree of abstraction or of the large or small area of reality included in the question which may be at issue; rather it is a question of the known, or more or less vaguely felt relationship of the question at issue to the revealed plan of salvation in Christ.

With reference to a rather broad concrete matter Christ said: "Ye know how to discern the face of the heavens; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." (Matthew 16:3. See also Luke 12:56). The Apostle Paul declares that among "them that are lost . . . the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, less the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them." (2. Cor. 4:3, 4)

I believe that it is when the persons involved see, or sense or perhaps dimly feel that the subject under discussion is more or less directly related to a Christian system of doctrine, that the various degrees of antithesis are most clearly observed.

With much appreciation of your excellent publication, I am

Yours in Christian fellowship,
J. OLIVER BUSWELL, JR.
President.

Announcement:

Because of the rise in printing and other costs, the Calvin Forum Board regrets to announce that, beginning September, 1954, the subscription price of the Calvin Forum will be three dollars per year.

Editorial Committee.

Book Reviews

J. A. Alexander, COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co.; 1954). \$8.95. 974 pp.

A REPRINT of a commentary first published in 1843, written by a theologian and linguist (he read his daily Scriptures in six languages) who was acknowledged by Charles Hodge as the greatest scholar produced by the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. Alexander was professor at Princeton from 1830 to 1860 and this work, along with his commentary on the Psalms, represents the choice fruit of the Princeton era when "profundity of scholarship was wedded to a deep and reverent faith."

B. B. Warfield, MIRACLES—YESTERDAY AND TODAY, REAL AND COUNTERFEIT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co.; 1953). \$3.50. 327 pp.

WARFIELD, another of the Princeton "great," delivered the Smyth Lectures at Columbia Theological Seminary in 1917. They were first published under the caption *Counterfeit Miracles*. In it the author posits the thesis, in opposition to the Anglicans who claim that the charismata gradually die out, reaching their terminal in the time of Constantine and the Roman Catholics who claim their continuance into the present day, that these charisms ceased at the end of the first Christian century because "they were part of the credentials of the Apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the Church. Their function thus confined them to . . . the Apostolic Church, and they necessarily passed away with it." He concludes that the purported miracles of the patristic, medieval, and modern periods must be attributed to fraud, pathological aberrations, or operation of laws not yet understood by us.

George Smeaton, THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co.; 1953). \$5.95. 502 pp.

THE atonement of Christ has met with varying interpretation throughout Christian history. Extremistic and inadequate views of it were current in the British Isles in the last century, and this Calvinistic scholar, preacher, teacher and editor of the *Free Church of Scotland* felt impelled to counteract them. It was his conviction that the "one-sided views on this great theme, held not by scoffers of vital religion, but by earnest men, are not to be corrected by a human authority, nor even by appeal to the Church's past . . . They can be confronted and silenced only by the explicit testimony of the Church's Lord." Smeaton weighs that testimony and concludes that a vicarious and limited atonement, one that effects forgiveness of sins and satisfies the offended justice of God, and one that utilizes faith as its appropriating organ or instrument, is the doctrine on it that comes from the lips of the Lord.

John H. Bratt

Gera Kraan-van den Berg, BRANDENDE HARTEN (Kampen: Kok; 1953). 252 pages; 3.95 florins.

OUR story retrospectively takes us back a few generations, in fact—more than a century, to the time of the great struggle between church and state and the final separation between the two. The dialects, and the cities around which the plot revolves, give it considerable local color. The customs, transportation facilities and characteristics of the age add to the milieu. It is perhaps somewhat difficult for the present generation, with a limited knowledge of the mother tongue, to give full credit to the writer.

The author, after a definitely artistic fashion, describes under four heads: Sparks, Glow, Flames, Fire (with a suitable number of subdivisions) the life and experiences of a Christian family. Maurice, in the service ripening to positive religious convictions meets Susie—of the State church, but without any appreciative leanings. Working in a law office after his marriage, he shows strong sympathy for the New Separatist Movement, and as a brilliant young lawyer is often asked to defend its cause—now victorious, then again defeated.

This religious turn in the story brings us into a rather intimate contact with the outstanding representatives of the movement—Budding, Scholte, de Clerque, Koenen, Capadose, Da Costa—men basically standing on the same fundamental platform, but with a wide range of individual viewpoints and personal characteristics. We are thus given an insight into the restrictions of public worship by government authorities in those days, the courageous stand of the devotees, demonstrating that they feel duty-bound to obey God rather than man, and the mental and corporal sacrifices that had to be made, for maintaining and propagating religious convictions.

The author proves to be well informed, to have a thorough understanding of customs, practices, and conceptions of a century ago. Sketches of the middle and working classes, army and student life, holiday observances, family reunions, at weddings and anniversaries, calamities such as cholera and smallpox epidemics and their naive treatment—may well serve as excellent examples. In short, we see life—not merely romantic, fanciful, unreal, or even at its best—but we see life in its reality: with its joys and blessings, with its burdens and anxieties, with its doubts and fears, with its conflicts and triumphs.

The moral of the book is uplifting. Religious conflicts are not drawn out to the extreme. Implications are not stretched to the danger point. Heartbattles are well-balanced, though perhaps with slight leanings toward the subjective side. In the hard way of selfdenial and absolute dependence and unwavering reliance on God; in perseverance of faith over circumstances and ultimately death—victory is won. In spite of all disagreements, also among the servants of God, the Unity of Faith and Glorious Expectation is achieved. Not a dull moment anywhere. Highly recommended.

Richard Veltman

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