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**On Brute Facts**

**The Death of a Salesman**

**The Interpretation of *Ecclesiastes***

**Investing in Good Schools**

**Correspondence**

**Book Reviews**

**VOL. XX, NO. 8**

**THREE DOLLARS  
A YEAR**

**MARCH, 1955**

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THE CALVIN FORUM is published by a board of the combined faculties of Calvin Seminary and Calvin College. Its purpose is to provide a means of intercommunication among all persons interested in the application of Calvinistic principles.

Address all editorial correspondence to Dr. Cecil De Boer, Editor THE CALVIN FORUM, Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. Address all subscription and circulation correspondence to: THE CALVIN FORUM, Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

THE CALVIN FORUM is published monthly, except from June to September, when it appears bi-monthly. Subscription price: Three Dollars per year.

Donors or underwriters for subscriptions from Japan and similar "soft-currency" areas:

Bergsma Brothers Foundation  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.  
W. J. Dykstra, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Entered as second-class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at Grand Rapids, Michigan under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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# The CALVIN FORUM

Published by the Calvin Forum Board of Publication

VOLUME XX, NO. 8

MARCH, 1955

## Contents

### Articles

- Franklin's Proposal for Prayer in the Federal Convention.....Peter Hoekstra 147
- On Brute Facts.....Harold J. Franz 150
- The Death of a Salesman.....Charlotte F. Otten 153
- The Interpretation of *Ecclesiastes*  
.....Martin J. Wyngaarden 157
- Investing in Good Schools.....John A. Vander Ark 161

Correspondence..... 162

Book Reviews..... 163

# Franklin's Proposal for Prayer in the Federal Convention

P. Hoekstra

IN ONE OF the stormy sessions of the constitutional convention, held at Philadelphia in 1787, Benjamin Franklin made the proposal that prayers be held every morning and that the local clergy be asked to officiate for this purpose. Perhaps because of its association with the glamorous name of Franklin, knowledge of this incident has been kept alive to our day. The incident is still frequently referred to and has been subjected to various interpretations. A few instances will suffice.

During the discussion on the Draft Treaty in the Consultative Assembly of the European Council, held at Strassburg, in May, 1953, M. Schmal, the Dutch representative, seems to refer to it as an example of the need of prayer in time of crisis.<sup>1</sup>

President Eisenhower, when he endorsed the World Day of Prayer in March, 1954, cites it as a striking instance of the efficacy of prayer. He assumes, as a fact, that Franklin's motion was adopted, and is then quoted as saying "after that silent moment the delegates suddenly seemed to be united in their purpose and there was born the great document by which we live." Dr. A. Kuyper also shows a fondness for citing this incident for he refers to it in at least three of his works.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes he uses it to illustrate the difference in spirit between the French and American Revolutions, and then again as an instance of the influence of Calvinism in American History.

Since history aims to establish the truth, if possible, it may be of value to subject this incident to the test of historical criticism. What are the known facts and in how far do these facts warrant the conclusions that are sometimes drawn?

## I

The convention had been in session about a month when the question of the charter and composition of the legislative branch came up for consideration. There was general agreement on a legislature of two houses but not on their composition. The small states demanded equality of representation in both houses. The large states insisted that representation, also for the upper house, should be apportioned to population. To this the small states would not agree and, after conferring together, they handed in their

<sup>1</sup> In *Europe Today*. International Bulletin of the European Movement. June, 1953.

<sup>2</sup> *Het Calvinisme, Oorsprong en Waarborg onzer Constitutioneele Vrijheden*; *Stone Lectures*; *Antirevolutionnaire Staatkunde*, I, 715.

ultimatum on June 28, 1787, to the effect that, unless each state, small as well as large, should be given an equal vote in the Senate, they would secede from the convention. If they seceded, the work of the convention would fail and a new national government could not be formed. This was therefore a crisis of major proportions.

There is a tradition (which may or may not be correct) that in the moments of deep gloom which followed this ultimatum Washington, who presided, gave Franklin a significant look, and that the old philosopher moved to have the convention adjourn for three days, to give the heated passions time to cool. Before being seated, Franklin reminded the convention that daily prayers used to be held in that very room and that these prayers "were graciously answered."<sup>3</sup> He asked whether they had "now forgotten that powerful friend, or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance?" Then followed his oft-quoted motion: "I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

Franklin was the oldest member of the convention. He had become famous and had been honored by all manner of learned societies before Hamilton, Madison, Randolph and other members of the convention were born. Because of his reputation for wisdom and common sense, his motion was, as Madison relates,<sup>4</sup> "treated with the respect due to it"; though there may well have been some astonishment that such a motion should be made by one who was not himself a professed Christian. Since this motion is unique in the annals of the convention, it may be assumed that there was considerable wagging of tongues that evening at the Coffee House, *The Indian Queen*, or Mrs. House's famous boarding place, which the Virginia delegation made its headquarters. But of these discussions and of the reaction of the members not a word has come down to us.

## II

The explanation for this lack of information is an obvious one. The Federal Convention was a secret

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the meetings of the Continental Congress.

<sup>4</sup> Max Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*. III, 531.

society, if ever there was one. Not only did it meet behind locked doors, but one of the rules of order stipulated that "nothing spoken in the house be printed or otherwise published or communicated without leave." The *Journal* was kept locked up; no extract from it, or resolution presented could be taken from the room without a formal vote of the convention. This injunction of secrecy appears to have been kept punctiliously while the convention was in session. Edmund C. Burnett has collected in eight volumes the *Letters* of the Members of the Continental Congress. Many members of the Congress were also members of the Convention. Burnett's volume VIII covers their letters for the period of the convention, yet in all these pages one finds not a single word as to Franklin's motion and but vague references to the convention in general. When the convention adjourned, its secretary, upon orders, burned every scrap of paper and placed the *Journal* in the custody of Washington. Thirty-two years later, in 1819, it was finally published by government order.

There was also an understanding among the members that the rule of secrecy should extend beyond the convention to the lifetime of its members. This understanding, too, though not considered binding by all, was in the main well observed. Thus Washington, with his massive sense of duty, relates that he refrained from entering in his diary for that period any of the doings of the convention, lest posterity should learn forbidden secrets. One of the few who departed from the injunction of secrecy was Jonathan Dayton, perhaps the youngest member of the convention. His oral reminiscences were put into writing by William Steele and published in the *National Intelligencer* for August, 1826.<sup>5</sup> In Dayton's recollections is to be found the fullest known account of the convention's reaction to Franklin's motion. But his account comes to us admittedly at second hand, four decades after the event, and though substantially correct, it shows errors in essential details. The most reliable account is to be found in the comprehensive notes which James Madison kept from day to day while the convention was in session. These were kept secret during his lifetime. In 1840, four years after Madison's death, these were purchased and published by the federal government, and with their publication, fifty-three years after the convention adjourned, the curtain of secrecy which had enshrouded the work of the federal convention was finally raised. Thanks to Madison's *Notes* or *Records* we today may know more of the tenseness of the emotional atmosphere within the convention than did the entire generation to which the framers of our constitution belonged—of the pettiness and bitterness of some, the broadmindedness and lofty patriotism of others, of the compromises and heart-breaking disappointments. These notes afford a

<sup>5</sup> Given in Farrand's *Records*, III, 467-71.

beautiful study of human nature at its best and at its worst.

Dayton's version is that after Franklin had presented his motion, Washington's countenance lighted up and that the convention at once gave evidence of admiration and approbation. He then states very positively that "the motion for appointing a chaplain was instantly seconded and carried."<sup>6</sup> Madison, who was still living when Dayton's version appeared, took occasion to point out, in 1834,<sup>7</sup> that Dayton's memory was at fault and that his account was "erroneous." If we now turn to Madison's very accurate *Notes* we find that the motion of June 28 was seconded by Roger Sherman, one of the peacemakers, but that it progressed no further. The record then shows that several objections were raised, that the convention purposely adjourned "without any vote on the motion," that the motion was not revived at a later session, and that no chaplain was ever appointed. Madison's *Notes* are regarded by all historians as the official account of the convention; the *Journal* is seldom quoted. Yet Dayton's erroneous version still circulates today as does the unwarranted inference that harmony was at once restored. The record shows that the week which followed, July 5, was marked by vehement and passionate debate.

### III

Why did the convention fail to adopt Franklin's motion? One could wish that Madison's *Notes* were a bit more extensive at this point. But from the data furnished it is clear that the members were still concerned about the injunction of secrecy. Several members expressed the idea that such a motion might have been proper at the beginning of the sessions, but if prayer were resorted to at this late date it might have disagreeable consequences and "lead the public to believe that the embarrassments and dissensions within the convention had suggested this measure." Mr. Williamson made the practical and pertinent observation that the convention had no funds to pay a clergyman. In later year (1834) Madison suggested two other considerations which may have had their influence at the time. The first: "Due to Quaker usage and influence, prayers were never offered in the legislature of Pennsylvania, which held its sessions in the same building where the convention met." And the second: "The discord of religious opinion within the convention, as well as among the clergy on the spot."<sup>8</sup>

The question of motive, which may at times be a vexing one, should in this instance not offer too much difficulty. It may safely be said Franklin would have been the first to resent the implication that his motion was an evidence of his personal Calvinism or of any intent to promote Calvinism. In early youth Franklin had deliberately broken away from

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 471.

<sup>7</sup> In a letter to T. S. Grimke, Farrand, III, 531.

<sup>8</sup> Max Farrand, *Records*, III, 531.

the Calvinism of his environment, and had begun drifting toward Deism, which was then a strong influence in the lives of many of our public men. He came to reject the Trinity, doubted the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and had a vague notion of being able to enter heaven on his own merits. While in France he had been made one of the highest dignitaries in Freemasonry. His speech as Madison records it—it has all the earmarks of a prepared speech—may be couched in noble and lofty words but it is the vague language of a professed Deist. To interpret his motion as an evidence of Calvinism is to indulge in a bit of wishful thinking or of pure romancing about the past. Franklin's motion should be appraised simply as an evidence of his pacifism and of his utilitarian philosophy.

A word should be said as to the part which Alexander Hamilton played on this historic occasion. In several of his works Dr. Kuyper pictures Hamilton as being something like an American Groen van Prinsterer, who chose "*well bewust*" to take his stand on anti-revolutionary ground in the "*principiele strijd*" against the influence of the French Revolution in America. In passing it may be said that this too is a complete misinterpretation of American History, but that is just now not the point of interest. I am aware of the fact that when Kuyper casts Hamilton in this role he is speaking of the year 1793. But 1793 is separated from 1787 by only six years and there is no evidence of any radical conversion in Hamilton's life in the course

of these six years. Throughout his life Hamilton was never a member of any church. What part did he play in 1787? On the strength of Kuyper's idealistic characterization one would expect Hamilton to be among the first to back Franklin's motion, but the record does not permit this favorable interpretation.

Hamilton's speech on June 28 seems to have made an impression on the mind of young Dayton. Forty years later Dayton refers to it as "impertinent and impious." He is quoted (by William Steele) as saying that Hamilton, in response to Franklin's motion, launched forth in "a high-strained eulogium on the assemblage of wisdom, talent and experience which the convention embraced . . . said that he was confidently of opinion that they were competent to transact the business which had been entrusted to their care . . . that they were equal to every exigence which might occur; and concluded by saying that therefore he did not see the necessity of calling in foreign aid." Though we have no means of checking the accuracy of Dayton's recollections, his testimony should not be disregarded. This much is clear from Madison's *Notes*, that Hamilton was the first to be on his feet in opposition to the motion and that "several others" echoed his views. Madison himself, who was one of the most frequent speakers in the convention, seems to have taken no part in the discussion, though one might have expected that this favorite pupil of John Witherspoon of Princeton College would have lent some support to Franklin's motion.

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# On Brute Facts

Harold J. Franz

LOVE OF the truth is the hallmark of the Christian scholar. A platitude? Seemingly so! Yet such a remark makes dramatic the obvious tragedy and failure of much of the Christian's pursuit of knowledge by making commonplace what should be the driving motivation for knowledge driving the Christian at all times. This is not to deplore either argument or criticism. Certainly the contention of A. Kuyper needs much consideration in a day of "irenical ecumenicity"; i.e., that the creeds of the Church were forged out of spiritual and dogmatic strife.<sup>1</sup> In my opinion it is one of the merits of the article of Mr. Orlebeke<sup>2</sup> that he seeks to come to grips with the problem facing Dr. Van Til in a way which merits our approval. If he disagrees it is an honest and careful disagreement. It is for this reason that I feel his article is worthy and demanding of answer.

## I

Mr. Orlebeke's criticism of Dr. Van Til is two-fold:

1. If this be granted, Prof. Van Til's disjunction between "brute facts" and "interpreted facts" would seem to be faulty. To say that all facts are intrinsically intelligible and that all facts are divinely understood and pre-interpreted is to state two distinct (and true) propositions. But the intelligibility of fact is not the same as the being-interpreted of fact, unless one is prepared to affirm as well that the 'being' of a fact is identical with the 'being-known' of a fact.

2. The Christian, then, would have no hesitation about affirming "common ground." Reality itself is that common ground. The Christian knows that even the unbeliever, whenever he makes a pronouncement is talking about that reality. If this were not so, the unbeliever could not say anything at all, not even something false. When the unbeliever says something which is not completely false, the Christian would not discount it completely, but glorify God for His grace in revealing a partial truth to the unbeliever.<sup>3</sup>

It ought to be noticed from the start the type of argument Mr. Orlebeke is pursuing. He constructs his criticism in the following fashion: 1. Dr. Van Til obviously uses terminology which betrays a philosophic orientation toward Contemporary Idealism. 2. The problems besetting Dr. Van Til are identical with those of Idealism: i.e., a.) wrongly identifying the "being-known" of a thing with its "being"; b.) confusing the systematizing power and interrelatedness of thought-worlds with the actual world, the world of Reality. Hence, the way to refute Dr. Van Til is to show the inadequacy of the Idealist position. This Mr. Orlebeke does by arguing from a Realist

position; i.e., setting over against a coherence theory of truth a theory of correspondence, and appealing to an objective Reality.

I do not intend to question the adequacy of the Realist position. As a matter of hermeneutics, it would be unsound to criticize the scanty statements of Realism to be found in Mr. Orlebeke's article. In point of fact, however, for better or worse, the contemporary philosophical point of view claims to have transcended the problems common to either Idealism or Realism asserting that both positions are quite inadequate. On the contrary, I intend to show that Mr. Orlebeke's assumption that Dr. Van Til is incipiently an Idealist is a matter of historical interpretation and is in this case entirely inadequate to Dr. Van Til's apologetics and/or that of any Christian. It is perfectly justifiable to analyze the position of one who refuses to carry his thinking to its logical conclusion because of prejudices or non-rational commitments, by showing how his premises carried to their logical conclusion in another's thinking become entirely inadequate or even absurd. This is a common and profitable tool of historians of philosophy. But the analysis cannot be sustained merely by showing that both parties had a common vocabulary or even by showing that they share other common assumptions.<sup>4</sup> The analysis must demonstrate that common vocabulary or points of reference are evidences of a real dependence one on the other. If not dependence, then at least that the two positions really accept a common orientation toward the same problem and employ the common vocabulary in an identical systematic context.<sup>5</sup> In a large measure Mr. Orlebeke attempts to prove his assumption that Dr. Van Til is operating in an Idealistic context. Yet the major steps of his argument depend upon his identifying "constitutive" as used by Idealists (and/or Kant?) with Dr. Van Til's use of the term. Similarly the word "interrelatedness" does yeoman work in his argument.

When Mr. Orlebeke suggests that Dr. Van Til gets his terminology from Kant, i.e., "constitutive," he is exactly right; in fact, Dr. Van Til says as much.<sup>6</sup> What Mr. Orlebeke does not see is that Van Til and Kant apply this notion in such radically different contextual systems as to make any suggestion of

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> A study of H. A. Wolfson's *Spinoza* should soon convince anyone of this. If Spinoza has been interpreted unjustly in the past, it is because interpreters have paid too great attention to words such as "substance," "mode," etc., but have given little thought to the context of this medieval vocabulary.

<sup>6</sup> Van Til: *Christian Theistic Evidences* (Philadelphia, 1951), p. 55.

<sup>1</sup> Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Knowledge* (New York: 1898), p. 576.

<sup>2</sup> Orlebeke, Clifton, "On Brute Facts," *The Calvin Forum*, volume XIX, Nos. 1-2 (Aug.-Sept. 1953).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

common usage nonsense. Dr. Van Til applies this notion to God in His creative activity; Kant applies it to man in his creative activity. Pressing one step further, we can deny that both Kant and Van Til use the term in the specific sense for which Mr. Orlebeke criticizes them. Kant does not use "constitutive" as meaning that "thoughts enter into the very being of facts."<sup>7</sup> Kant explicitly declares in contradistinction to Leibniz that "Reason" or even "concepts of Understanding" are only possible schemes or flights of imagination apart from sense "intuition."

Certainly, if I know a drop of water in all its internal determinations as a thing-in-itself, and if the whole concept of any one drop is identical with that of every other, I cannot allow that any drop is different from any other. But if the drop is an appearance in space, it has its location not only in understanding (under concepts) but in sensible outer intuition (in space), and the physical locations are there quite indifferent to the inner determinations of the things.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever else the Idealistic tradition has made of Kantian philosophy surely it is unjust to forget those empirical and pragmatic elements found in Kant, especially in the section on Transcendental Aesthetic, and Kant's insistence on the function of the concept *ding an sich*. Surely this is what Mr. Orlebeke, himself, implies when he writes:

His [Kant's] refutation of Hume was logically dependent upon the doctrine that mind is constructive in the act of knowing—a doctrine which, *with the elimination of the thing-in-itself*, is idealism.<sup>9</sup>

We do not deny that Kant gives a very large place to the operation of the mind in the ordering of the phenomenal world, but when we recollect that Mr. Orlebeke has placed himself on record as allowing only the literal use of the word "fact" (as a state of affairs or aspect of reality<sup>10</sup>), we readily see that he cannot characterize Kant's doctrine as "thought entering into the being of facts." Thus Kant says:

The principles of pure understanding, whether constitutive a priori like the mathematical principles, or merely regulative, like the dynamical, contain nothing but what may be called the pure schema of *possible* experience.<sup>11</sup>

If this use of "constitutive" be true of Kant, how much more is it true of Dr. Van Til. In no place is Dr. Van Til's use of "constitutive" more graphic than in his discussion of the doctrine of creation:

As the absolute and independent existence of God determines the derivative existence of the universe, so the absolute meaning that God has for Himself implies that the meaning of every fact in the universe must be related to God. . . .<sup>12</sup>

If the divine act of will is emphasized, so also is it to be kept in mind that this will does not act *in vacuo* but according to Divine plan, and power. Thus indeed, there are no surprises in the act of God's creating. The world was made exactly as He planned it to be. God's thought is constitutive in the or-

dering, relatedness and determination of every item of reality. Consonant with these affirmations is the statement of Dr. Van Til cited by Mr. Orlebeke: "By God's thoughts do the facts of the universe come into existence . . ."<sup>13</sup> Apparently Mr. Orlebeke interprets "by" to mean not only "by means of," but "with." Or as the dictionary illustrates the distinction: "the mark was made *by* me but *with* a pencil." "A mark made *by* me" expresses an agency. "A mark made *with* me" expresses a material mode. We could never use the phrase "a mark made with me" except in most radical and unusual circumstances, as for instance, a covenant signed with one's own blood. What Mr. Orlebeke really thinks Dr. Van Til has said is that facts of the universe are constituted *with* God's thoughts, *i.e.*, God's thoughts are the very being of the universe. But surely in the face of the clear affirmations elsewhere of Dr. Van Til<sup>14</sup> such an interpretation of one statement would be unwarranted.

## II

Mr. Orlebeke makes his own Realistic position clear when he criticizes the idealist doctrine, *i.e.*, "Every fact must stand in relation to other facts or it means nothing to anyone." This is a quotation from Dr. Van Til. Although it appears here in its abstracted form, it must be kept always in mind that Dr. Van Til holds no brief for any particular theory of the character of man's knowledge (whether pragmatic, idealistic, realistic, phenomenological or what have you?). The one thing he does want to emphasize is that all of these theories of knowledge are antagonistic to the revealed character of God's knowledge. If the above quotation is suggestive of a theory of knowledge proper to Idealism, the context makes it abundantly clear that Dr. Van Til feels that even this idealistic theory of knowledge stands condemned in the radical judgment of God's revelation. As we have already seen in Dr. Van Til's use of Kant, what Van Til finds of significance in Kant's use of "constitutive" knowledge is that this concept can be applied only to God's knowledge. Having said that, he makes no attempt to characterize or criticize other details of Kant's epistemology. What Dr. Van Til means when he makes the above quotation is that "Every fact must stand in relation to God and by virtue of its *God-ward relation* in relation to every other fact or it means nothing to anyone."

If we admit that this is an indiscriminate statement of Dr. Van Til's which is easily corrected and articulated even within its own context, we must also be equally charitable with the rashness of Mr. Orlebeke's statements. Mr. Orlebeke suggests of this "Idealism" of Dr. Van Til that:

If it is meant that no fact can have meaning to some mind unless it be known by that mind, the statement is

<sup>7</sup> Orlebeke, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, (New York: 1929), N. K. Smith trans., p. 283. cf. also pp. 450, 454.

<sup>9</sup> Orlebeke, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. Cit.*,

<sup>11</sup> Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>12</sup> Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, (Philadelphia: 1949), p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Orlebeke, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Van Til, *Christian Theistic Evidences*, pp. 53, 55, 60, 85, 87 (versus notion of creation of Idealism).

tautologous and requires no proof. On the other hand, if it is meant that no fact can *be* without being observed or interpreted by some mind, then the argument is non sequitur.

He then summarizes with this statement:

... given that no one understands or is aware of some fact, it does not follow that the fact is not capable of being known. To deny this is to affirm that there is no meaningful distinction between being and being-known, and to accept the standard epistemological argument for idealism.<sup>15</sup>

Whether Mr. Orlebeke is seduced by his own dichotomy into thinking this is also a dilemma or whether he is like Van Til, caught in an exaggerated and injudicious statement, I will not judge. It is certain that this statement can be denied without implying Mr. Orlebeke's conclusion. The proper formulation of the whole problem is as Dr. Van Til has suggested, the doctrine of creation. It is the Christian doctrine of creation that no fact can be unless it is created and interpreted by God. There are no non-interpreted facts because there are no non-created facts.

This does not mean for the Christian that "if . . . God's thought is constitutive of the facts, it is also necessary to say the facts are constitutive of God's knowledge and therefore of God."<sup>16</sup> Mr. Orlebeke argues this because he sees rightfully that on a non-Christian system with a doctrine of the logical relation of God and the world such as Spinoza's or Hegel's, there can be no way to prevent the mutual implication of God to the world and the world to God. Yet again the answer cannot be Realism for then God and the world are equally separated, and there are sounds which God has not heard or facts which are knowable but not known by God. In contrast to either of these stands the doctrine of creation.

### III

I quote from a Christian "realist," Thomas Aquinas, in order to show by comparison with Mr. Orlebeke the implications of creation doctrine: [*italics mine*]

Now it is manifest that God causes things *by His intellect*, since His being is His act of understanding; and hence *His knowledge* must be the cause of things in so far as His will is joined to it.<sup>17</sup>

The cause of a thing must needs be the same as the cause of its preservation, because preservation is nothing else than its continued being. Now we have shown above that God is the cause of being *for all things by His intellect and will*. Therefore by His intellect and will He preserves things in being.<sup>18</sup>

Thus the doctrine of creation does not hesitate to say of God's creation that it is given meaning even in the act of creating by the planning and thought of God, even as also creation is given substance in the creating by the act of His power. Thus Aquinas quotes Augustine: "Not because they are, does God know all creatures spiritual and temporal, but because He knows them, therefore they are."<sup>19</sup> Never-

theless, if this relationship is sustained, it is sustained not because God's thought is the substance of the world's being but the cause of the world's being.

Mr. Orlebeke is not so naive that he has not heard of the creation doctrine, indeed he employs it continuously through the article. However, there is shyness in all of his allusions to this doctrine to make any such statements as cited above. He, whether in exaggeration or design, speaks only of the will of God in creation. Whenever he speaks of God's knowledge, it is usually in terms of providence, not of creation. The one statement which he makes on the explicit relation of God's thought to creation is ambiguous on this issue [*italics mine*]:

God, who is Being and Truth, has created, by a free act of His Sovereign Will, a cosmos which really is, but whose being is dependent upon His own Being. Because this is so, the cosmos is completely and intrinsically intelligible and is known exhaustively and comprehensively by Him. *Because He makes all facts to be what they are, He knows them as they are.* All facts are, indeed, preinterpreted by Him in a divine System of knowledge. There are no brute facts, no surprises for God.<sup>20</sup>

It would be equally to the point to take Mr. Orlebeke's statement above and rewrite it in the way Augustine was quoted with no loss of accuracy and perhaps a gain of relevancy to the argument. However, the mere statement of Mr. Orlebeke's that God made the universe does not imply *in itself* that the universe is intelligible, for God may be equally surprised at the product of His will as we should be. The argument gains point however, when we insist that creation is willed, but willed according to His purposeful planning and hence the universe is intelligible. We should rephrase the above quotation this way: "Because He makes all facts to be what He intends them to be, He knows them as they are."

If I have refused to press the meaning of Mr. Orlebeke's statements, largely because there is no really adequate evidence for attributing to him a positive error, certainly it has become evident that his formulation of the creation doctrine is less adequate and relevant to the philosophical situation. This much is clear, however; Mr. Orlebeke has no grounds for pressing the extravagant charges he has made against Dr. Van Til's apologetical criticisms of epistemology. If in the final outcome, my paper loses sharpness and the attack seems to fade, it is because of the conviction of the author that Mr. Orlebeke is really in agreement with Dr. Van Til even though philosophically less mature.

We turn now to the second criticism of Mr. Orlebeke. This criticism as quoted in the first part of the article concerns the allegation of Dr. Van Til that between the Christian and the non-Christian can be found no neutral area of common knowledge. As Mr. Orlebeke suggests:

Dr. Van Til does not admit the truth of *any* proposition uttered by the 'natural man' for the reason that 'all knowledge is inter-related in such a way that "the mind of man . . . cannot know one thing truly without knowing all things truly."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Orlebeke, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Orlebeke, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Pegis (New York: 1944), Vol. I, p. 147.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 116.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 147.



Mr. Orlebeke presses this criticism in the interest of a positive approach to the problem, an appeal to "Reality": "a real order of intelligible fact-in-relation which is what it is in spite of our knowing it."<sup>22</sup> This Reality is the common ground of believer and unbeliever. To the extent that the unbeliever talks about reality, he cannot talk in complete falsehood. Hence, the Christian should not discount it completely, but glorify God for His grace in revealing a partial truth to the unbeliever. This position Mr. Orlebeke holds "as an avowed defense of Kuyper's

<sup>22</sup> *Loc. cit.*

conception of common ground"<sup>23</sup> and in no way implies the possibility of a natural theology.

We propose to do two things:

1. to show how Dr. Van Til and A. Kuyper really are insisting upon the same viewpoint, Dr. Van Til's criticism notwithstanding.

2. to show the ambiguity of Mr. Orlebeke's position as he fluctuates between a realistic and a Christian position.

(To be continued in the March issue)

<sup>23</sup> *Loc. cit.*

## The Death of a Salesman

Charlotte F. Otten

**A**LTHOUGH the thirties were lean years for bread, they were fat years for drama. President Roosevelt's relief theatre was that great dramatic venture which absorbed thousands of unemployed actors, designers, and writers and provided drama for over thirty million people in twenty-nine states, cheap. The dramatists, as might be supposed (with the notable exception of Eugene O'Neill), concentrated on social and political issues. The big playwrights, such as Odets, Hellman, Kingsley, Sherwood, dealt with mass problems like unemployment and racial prejudice.

Then along came the 'forties and the war years, fat years for bread and lean ones for drama. Oddly enough, wars make people scurry from themselves to laugh at inanities. Social and political drama were lost in the whirl of musical comedy. The classic drama of the period was *Oklahoma* (1943), a kind of folk musical with all foam and no beer. Against this frothy background, there suddenly appeared on February 10, 1949, a play with so somber and striking a title as *Death of a Salesman*. It seemed as though an America that had rocked with laughter at *Oklahoma's* "Poor Judd Is Dead" was hardly ready to weep for Arthur Miller's Willy Loman. *Death of a Salesman* was, however, an immediate and overwhelming success. It won five awards, including the Pulitzer Prize. Why was *Death of a Salesman* so popular and at the same time so significant? Probably because it held up such a large mirror that none of us could escape a glimpse of ourselves; probably because it asked the basic question about human identity. *Death of a Salesman* was projected against the deep philosophical forces of all times and took its place right next to Sophoclean and Shakespearean drama, though it spoke in the modern American idiom. It was colloquial and suburban, yet profound and universal.

*Death of a Salesman* is the story of Willy Loman, Salesman. It picks up Willy when he is past sixty, yet, in superb dramatic form, by means of both the memory-sequence device and the realistic narrative, reveals the whole of Willy's life. I should like now to examine the play critically, placing it in the context of world drama with its perpetual concern for "Know Thyself."

### O find, and be, yourself.

—Pindar

"Who am I?" is a question that has echoed through the universe for centuries. The Sophoclean tragic character uttered the cry in the fifth century before Christ. The Delphic injunction, "Know thyself," was more than a handy Greek maxim for Socrates: his life was a long attempt to do just that. It is a question that comes to the ears of us twentieth-century people; but Willy Loman, Salesman, had put cotton in his ears and could not hear it.

When we first meet Willy Loman in *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*, we find a weary man. We hear him saying, "I'm tired to the death. I couldn't make it. I just couldn't make it, Linda," and we wonder immediately who Willy is, why he is tired and what he couldn't make. As the play progresses, we, the spectators, find out who Willy is, why he is tired, and what he couldn't make; but Willy himself never finds this out. Willy thinks that his basic trouble is exhaustion, and so does Linda, his wife ("the man is exhausted"). We soon learn that he will not ask himself anything, not even why he is tired. Instead of listening to the Oracle, Willy quickly diverts attention from himself and shifts it to Biff, his thirty-four-year-old son. He says to Linda, "How can he find himself on a farm? . . . Not finding himself at the age of thirty-four is a disgrace." By talking about Biff's failure to know himself, Willy escapes from the basic question, "Who am I?"

As we learn more about Willy, we discover that he lied to himself habitually. He wanted to be a great salesman; he wanted it so hard that he finally believed he was a great salesman. Even an occasional pinning-down by Linda could not shatter this illusion. There is, for example, the scene when Willy returns from Boston boasting about his sales. Linda, oh so gently, tries to find out exactly what his commission is. After all, she pays the bills. Willy finally admits that it is "seventy dollars and some pennies," but he immediately blames others for it. "You know, the trouble is, Linda, people don't seem to take to me." This in the same breath with, "I'm very well liked in Hartford."

A man who does not know himself inevitably dreams the wrong dreams. His dream had no complexity about it. It was the same dream over and over again—simply a dollar sign with the word *Personality* written large under it. Willy not only dreamed them for Biff. He wanted Biff to be an even greater man than himself. He died motivated by the wrong dream: the dream of leaving money for his family so that Biff, a one-dollar an hour man, could be magnificent. For a person in the habit of deceiving himself, even death can scarcely bring about sober self-discovery. Willy's last illusion was shattered, and so he got himself another one and committed suicide fast so that there would be no opportunity to destroy this one.

A man who constantly deludes himself cannot be expected to tell a round unvarnished tale, even occasionally. In fact, he is incapable of realizing that he is making two contradictory statements almost simultaneously, "Biff is a lazy bum . . . He's not lazy." Biff says near the end of the play, "We never told the truth for ten minutes in this house," but the fact is that Willy could no longer tell whether something was true or false. One of the most pathetic scenes in the play is when Biff attempts to explain about Oliver to Willy. Willy can only sputter and shake his head and go on believing what is false. Willy did not know himself; therefore, he dreamed the wrong dreams and believed the lie. By deluding himself, Willy, like Oedipus, brought on his own doom; but, unlike Oedipus, he was not willing to admit it. The result for Willy is disharmony and pathos, not harmony and tragedy.

Had Willy known himself, he would not have clung so tenaciously to adolescence. Adolescents rarely know themselves, but they are quite convinced that they can see into the heart of everyone else. Charley touched a very sore point when he said to Willy several times, "When . . . are you going to grow up?" Unable to face the question, Willy, incensed, shouted, "You big ignoramus, if you say that to me again I'll rap you one!"

One of the major parts of self-knowledge is to "know what thou canst work at." Willy never knew. There was more of him in that front stoop than in

all the sales he ever made and yet he despised carpentry. Had he known what he could legitimately work at, he might have been a better and happier man.

Now this problem which Willy faced, or perhaps it would be more correct to say this problem which Willy never faced, this problem of self-knowledge, is the problem which Oedipus, Iocasta, and all the other Sophoclean tragic characters faced. But the knowledge that Oedipus had to acquire was perhaps easier to get. He had to find out what his relationship to the gods was; man for him was defined in terms of the supernatural. For Willy the problem of self-knowledge is more complex because he lives in a world where the concept of God is an irrelevant one. This is not to say that God does not exist. The Christian asserts that the basic problem for all men is still to get to know God and to enjoy him forever. But in this current post-Christian era, God has lost his place; and so that makes Willy's problem a big one. How in the world can he find out who he is, unless he can relate himself to someone bigger than himself? Counting God out, how can he possibly dream the right dreams? Success is his god, and it is a pretty meagre one. He never knew the right God, but the right one was infinitely more difficult for him to find than for Oedipus.

\* \* \*

**May you never learn  
Who you are.**

**—Iocasta to Oedipus**

This, too, is the cry of Linda, but yet it is far different from that of Iocasta. Iocasta pleads with Oedipus:

For God's love let us have no more questioning!  
Is your life nothing to you?  
My own is pain enough for me to bear. . . .  
Listen to me, I beg you: do not do this thing!

Iocasta, however, is a woman of great tragic stature, and when she discovers her ignominy and Oedipus', she takes her own life. Linda, though a kind of Iocasta, yet lacking her insight and measure, also pleads, "Let us have no more questioning." Linda, all Willy's life, offered Willy tenderness and warmth. But she also, all his life, shielded Willy from himself. She would permit no self-discovery nor self-revelation. She is incapable of a great decision—she was even afraid to remove the suicidal hose from the basement in case Willy might get sore. Linda loved Willy—not wisely but too well. Her sympathy for him blinded her to his faults and so she could not save him either. In the end she makes that most untragic speech of all: "I can't understand it. At this time especially. First time in thirty-five years we were just about free and clear. He only needed a little salary. He was even finished with the dentist." A pathetic but perfectly blind speech. She and Willy thought in the same terms, and at his

grave she mentioned something so inane and yet so precious to them both as dental bills. It was not from her that Willy could expect help and self-revelation. She is no Iocasta, not even a Candida. She is only a loving, affectionate, misguided wife. "We're free," she sobbed quietly at the end of the play—not realizing that they both still wore chains.

Happy, Willy's younger son, "confused and hard-skinned," is a coarser and obtuser Willy. Happy is no less deceived than Willy. When faced by Biff with the consistent falsehood of their lives, Happy shouted, "We always told the truth!" He firmly believed that he would have helped out Willy financially, that he would get married, that he would someday be the buyer, although we know that he will be lucky to keep his job as one of the two assistants to the assistant. Happy is a pretty small man, hardly capable of either love or malice. He is completely self-centered, and the self-centered person has not a chance in a million to know himself. Not knowing himself he could not possibly understand his father. At the grave, when Biff said, "He had the wrong dreams," Happy replied, "Don't say that!" And then he continued, in a similar self-deceptive vein, "All right, boy. I'm gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good dream. It's the only dream you can have—to come out number-one man. He fought it out here, and this is where I'm gonna win it for him." There is nothing wrong, of course, about wanting to be a number-one man; it just happens to be a total impossibility for a man so far down the scale as Hap. Because Happy has no insight into either himself or Willy, he neither disturbs Willy nor helps him. It is Biff who rubs the salt; Happy does not even see Willy's wound.

\* \* \*

**No: I will never tell you what I know.  
Now it is my misery: Then it would be  
yours. —Teiresias to Oedipus**

The role of Biff in DEATH OF A SALESMAN is an extremely interesting and provocative one. Biff most irritates his father; it is he whom his father most loves and dreams for. It is he whom Willy thinks is lost; it is Willy who is actually lost. Hap informs Biff that "most of the time he's talking to you." Linda informs Biff "It's when you come home he's always the worst. . . . When you write you're coming, he's all smiles, and talks about the future, and—he's just wonderful. And then the closer you seem to come, the more shaky he gets, and then, by the time you get here, he's arguing, and he seems angry at you. . . . Why are you so hateful to each other?" There is an odd relationship between the two which runs strangely parallel to the relationship between Teiresias and Oedipus.

*Teiresias:*

How dreadful knowledge of the truth can be  
When there's no help in truth! I knew this well,  
But did not act on it: else I should not have come.

*Oedipus:*

What is troubling you? Why are your eyes so cold?

*Teiresias:*

Let me go home. Bear your own fate, and I'll  
Bear mine. It is better so: trust what I say.

*Oedipus:*

What you say is ungracious and unhelpful  
To your native country. Do not refuse to speak.

*Teiresias:*

When it comes to speech, your own is neither temperate  
Nor opportune. I wish to be more prudent.

*Oedipus:*

In God's name we all beg you—

*Teiresias:*

You are all ignorant.

No; I will never tell you what I know.

Now it is my misery; then, it would be yours.

*Oedipus:*

What! You do know something, and will not tell us?  
You would betray us all and wreck the State?

*Teiresias:*

I do not intend to torture myself, or you.

Why persist in asking? You will not persuade me.

*Oedipus:*

What a wicked old man you are! You'd try a stone's  
Patience! Out with it! Have you no feeling at all?

*Teiresias:*

You call me unfeeling. If you could only see

The nature of your own feelings. . . .

*Oedipus:*

Why,

Who would not feel as I do? Who could endure  
Your arrogance toward the city?

*Teiresias:*

What does it matter?

Whether I speak or not, it is bound to come.

*Oedipus:*

Then if 'it' is bound to come, you are bound to tell me.

*Teiresias:*

No, I will not go on. Rage as you please.

*Oedipus:*

Rage? Why not!

And I'll tell you what I think:

You planned it, you had it done, you all but

Killed him with your own hands: if you had eyes

I'd say the crime was yours, and yours alone.

*Teiresias:*

So? I charge you, then,

Abide by the proclamation you have made:

From this day forth

Never speak again to these men or to me;

You yourself are the pollution of this country.

*Oedipus:*

You dare say that! Can you possibly think you have  
Some way of going free, after such insolence?

*Teiresias:*

I have gone free; It is the truth sustains me.

*Oedipus:*

Who taught you shamelessness? It was not your craft.

*Teiresias:*

You did. You made me speak. I did not want to.

*Oedipus:*

Speak what? Let me hear it again more clearly.

*Teiresias:*

Was it not clear before? Are you tempting me?

*Oedipus:*

I did not understand it. Say it again.

*Teiresias:*

I say that you are the murderer whom you seek.

*Oedipus:*

Now twice you have spat out infamy. You'll pay for it!

*Teiresias:*

Would you care for more? Do you wish to be really angry?

*Oedipus:*

Say what you will. Whatever you say is worthless.

*Teiresias:*

I say that you live in hideous love with her  
Who is nearest you in blood. You are blind to the evil.

*Oedipus:*

It seems you can go on mouthing like this for ever.

*Teiresias:*

I can, if there is power in truth.

*Oedipus:*

There is!

But not for you, not for you,

You sightless, witless, senseless, mad old man!

*Teiresias:*

You are the madman. There is no one here

Who will not curse you soon, as you curse me.

Oedipus pleads with Teiresias for the answer to the problem—for self-revelation and discovery, that is. When Teiresias finally acquiesces, Oedipus is enraged and terrified. He temporarily refuses to see himself; the vision of self is too horrible. Now Biff is the only person who really knows Willy, and he got to know him in one sordid instance. This instance, finding the woman in Willy's room in Boston, opens Willy up wide to Biff. It symbolizes the whole of Willy's life. From then on Biff is Willy's conscience, something strangely gnawing away like a secret cancer—and Willy isn't strong enough to stand the pain. Biff is the one who is finally forced to tell Linda, ". . . I know he's a fake and he doesn't like anybody around who knows." At the hotel Biff says to Willy, "Don't touch me you—liar! You fake! You phony little fake! You fake!" The only person who can help Willy is Biff: he knows Willy and he knows himself. It is for this very reason that Willy cannot tolerate Biff and at the same time loves him dearly. He is profoundly moved when Biff cries for him and it is for Biff and the \$20,000 he can leave for him, that he commits suicide. "Ben," says Willy, "He'll worship me for it!" And here is the final and supreme act of self-delusion. Willy rejects Biff's moral role and therefore loses his life. Oedipus accepts Teiresias' verdict and loses his life that he may find it.

\* \* \*

### **Tragedy is an imitation of personages Better than the ordinary man.**

—Aristotle

Willy Loman, it is quite obvious, is not a personage elevated above the ordinary man. His ideals are quite common, his ideas almost vulgar, his sensibilities dull. We could never say of Willy, as Antony did of Brutus:

His life was gentle and the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, "This was a man."

We can only say with Linda, "After all, he's a human being"; and we have to add with Biff, he was only "a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can." Willy Loman was only "a little boat looking for a harbor" but in order to be a tragic figure he would have had to be the *Queen Mary*. Willy is too small for great tragic action. He is not even a hero in his death. Now this is not entirely Willy's fault. In

Greek tragedy, as well as in Elizabethan tragedy, this idea prevailed: that society consisted of layers, with certain men, the heroes, on the top. C. M. Bowra, in his book, *SOPHOCLEAN TRAGEDY*, says this about both Greek and Elizabethan tragedy: "They display the hazards of the mortal state and the depths, no less than the heights, which human nature can touch; both are concerned with the great not merely in station but in natural endowments and force of character; both involve, sooner or later, speculations about the powers that govern the universe, about their injustice or injustice, their solicitude or indifference to suffering men; both lead through crisis, agony, and disaster to an end which somehow, despite all the horror, provides peace." Willy Loman and *DEATH OF A SALESMAN* cannot fit into this description. Again, this is not entirely Willy's fault. Hobbes' challenge of the medieval supposition that man has a moral dimension, with its consequent denial of selfhood and transcendent individuality, has eaten through to the fabric of our everyday ethical behavior. In a naturalistic universe, which is the one currently in vogue, in a universe where people are merely tidy or untidy (Willy Loman) arrangements of atoms, there is no possibility for moral choice—for tragic flaw or heroic action. This is neither Willy's fault nor Arthur Miller's. Willy is, in many ways, the victim of the thinking and ideals of his age. He is caught up in this mechanistic universe and he cannot get out; he has neither the strength nor the desire to free himself. So in the traditional Aristotelian sense, Willy is not an Oedipus; nor is he, in the Elizabethan sense, a Lear. He is only a decent, god-less man, his only monument the asphalt road and a thousand lost golf balls. The result is not tragedy, or at least not personal tragedy, though one feels the profoundest sympathy and responsibility for Willy. It is simply not possible to motivate tragedy in a non-tragic, non-Christian age. Willy's range for suffering and sympathy is limited; he is not a creature on a higher spiritual level than the universe in which he lives. Rather, we might say that Willy symbolizes the tragedy of humanity itself.

John Gassner, in an introduction to *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*, gives Miller's view of tragedy. He states, "The commonest men may exhibit man's heroic spirit; Willy Loman was a character of heroic dimensions." As a matter of fact, neither Willy nor anyone else today, for that matter, is a character of heroic dimensions, granted a naturalistic universe. For all Willy's "willingness to throw all he has into the contest," it was but a frantic attempt to assert his own importance as a person. This is the tragedy of a non-tragic, unheroic age. It seems as though the very aim of this society is to have people lose a vivid sense of the distinction between good and evil, the sense of moral order. The problem of evil is not the cardinal problem today, and Nietzsche has said, "Banish evil and it will go badly with the writers of tragedy." Not only does tragedy disappear, but real

humanity disappears, and the 1984-man is left—tragic, and yet most untragic.

Says C. S. Lewis in *THE ABOLITION OF MAN*: "And all the time—such is the tragi-comedy of our situation—we continue to clamour for those very qualities we are rendering impossible. You can hardly open a periodical without coming across the statement that what our civilization needs is more 'drive,' or dynamism, or self-sacrifice, or 'creativity.' In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtues and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

\* \* \*

**To show...the very age and body  
of the time his form and pressure.**

—Hamlet

Although Arthur Miller did not create tragedy in the classical or Elizabethan sense, he did manage

something universal. He reveals in this play the typical American weakness; he reveals the American dream of success. And yet he does more than that. This play is more than an American drama about a salesman. It is that to be sure. But, basically, all human beings are salesmen; basically, all human beings wear the salesman's mask. This play reveals more than the weakness of Willy's dream, more than the weakness of the American dream: it reveals the basic problem of self-knowledge that each human being must face. In this sense, Arthur Miller shows us the form and pressure of our time. Arthur Miller cries out, less dramatically than the Delphic Oracle, but nevertheless just as piercingly, "Know Thyself." And it is this phrase that we find inscribed on Willy's tomb and on all our tombs.

(SOURCES: Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, in *A Treasury of The Theatre* (New York: Simon Schuster, The Dryden Press); introduction to the play, by John Gassner. C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press). C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan). *Oedipus Rex* of Aeschylus, translated by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.).)

## The Interpretation of Ecclesiastes

Martin J. Wyngaarden

RESEARCH CONCERNING the interpretation of the Book of Ecclesiastes has apparently overlooked two important features, concerning chapters 8 to 12.

However enigmatical the early part of the book may seem, with its apparent doubts concerning immortality, in chapter 3, there is easily observable a series of six problems and their respective solutions from the beginning of chapter 8 to the epilogue and a seventh in the epilogue. This is incidentally an argument for the genuineness of the epilogue.

But the sequence of seven problems and solutions is, in itself, however, not the only unique feature about this section, comprising Ecclesiastes 8 to 12. Not only the beginning but also the end of this division seem designed to set it apart for the beginning has an introductory formula and the end contains a concluding formula,—both indicating how this section is to be interpreted.

The introductory formula, in chapter 8, verse 1, inquires: "Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?"

After such a query, one naturally looks for illustrations of puzzling "things" and their "interpretations." In fact we are given a series of seven such paradoxical "things," each followed immediately by its respective "interpretation."

But this introductory formula, "Who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?" stressing problematic

things and their interpretations, is not the only one of its kind.

For there is also a concluding formula to this section, identical in sense but different in form.

If the introductory formula makes one alert to a difficult thing followed by its interpretation, the concluding formula puts this sequence far more graphically, in the epilogue.

Leading up to this concluding formula, we are told that Ecclesiastes, or rather Qoheleth, set in order many proverbs, and the problem naturally arises, in what order and sequence did Qoheleth set them?

The Epilogue itself seems to come to the rescue with the solution—by showing this order to be one apparently of "goats" followed by "nails." Tentatively speaking, there are thus proverbs that rate as "goats" followed by proverbs that rate as "nails,"—though the difference between the "goats" and the "nails" remains quite enigmatic, and though a good look at the lexicons and Bible encyclopaedias will not solve the contrast.

Meanwhile, the verse in question can be faithfully translated in two rather divergent ways, but both translations retain the implied contrast between the "goats" followed by the "nails," and both are therefore useful for this inquiry.

The American Standard Version translates the verse in question, Ecclesiastes 12:11, as follows: "The words of the wise are as goats; and as nails

well fastened are *the words* of the masters of assemblies, which are given from One shepherd."

On the other hand the Jewish translation of 1917 (copyrighted by the Jewish Publication Society of America) reads as follows: "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well fastened are those that are composed in collections; they are given from one shepherd."

Another form of this latter translation is found with Barton, in the "International Critical Commentary": "The words of the wise are as goads and as driven nails are the members of collections; they are given by one shepherd."

And the philological grounds for this latter or second interpretation are adduced with especial fulness by the Keil and Delitzsch commentary.

Whether one prefers the one translation or the other, one still retains the sequence of the "goads" and the "nails," and their comparison and contrast may be of importance for the interpretation of the book of Qoheleth. This comparison and contrast between the goads and the nails has been interpreted in at least three ways by Delitzsch Barton and Paul Haupt, and we propose to add a fourth.

Delitzsch provides some contrast between the goads and the nails. He thinks that the appearance of the words of the collections of proverbs is like a row of driven nails, "made nail-fast they stand on common ground." On the other hand the words of the wise are goading words, "designed for driving on, thus *stimuli*"; and then Delitzsch adds inquiringly: "And is there a more natural commendation for the proverbs of the wise men than that they incite to self-reflection and urge all kinds of noble effort?"

Delitzsch thus sees considerable contrast between the goads and the nails, but he does not exploit the difference.

Barton does exploit the difference to a greater extent, although we do not agree with his manner of doing so. He holds that the permanent effect of the written words embodied in a collection is compared and contrasted with the goad-like effect of the spoken words.

Paul Haupt exploits the difference between the goads and the nails to a still greater extent. Haupt contends that "the contrast here is between disjointed sayings such as the Book of Proverbs, and more connected thought such as is contained in Qoheleth's book" (quotation from Barton).

Barton regards this as a "less favorable view," and so do we, because the Book of Proverbs is not under discussion in this epilogue of Qoheleth.

But is there not still another view of this contrast between the goads and the nails, than has yet been given, that might cast light on the interpretation of the book Qoheleth? We believe so. It is this.

Right within the book Qoheleth, there may be some passages that are goads and others that are

nails. The goad may then represent a goading problem that is shown as driving the reader on, through a protracted series of proverbs.—

And the nail may then follow and, like a nail in a sure place, it may present a firm and masterful and authoritative and glorious solution to the goading problem that had just preceded.

Thus the Book of Qoheleth might represent now a goad, as a goading problem, then a nail as its sure and masterful interpretation, and again another goad-like puzzling section, to be followed by such a *solution* that it could be *nailed* up as an authoritative placard or announcement, on the problem.

The book might even continue thus alternately with a goad followed by a nail, from the very beginning until the end.

That would give us an interpretation of Qoheleth, *by* Qoheleth and *for* Qoheleth, which as such is not original, for many writers have observed some alternation of positions in the book, as can be seen from Ginsburg's Commentary and his immense history of the interpretation. But our paper aims to add evidence that such alternation between goads and nails is involved in the very plan of the book.

This general *view* of the interpretation of Qoheleth, stressing the section on the goads and the nails, in the epilogue, is not found *exclusively* in the epilogue, however.

For it tallies very well with the similar view of the structure of the work, which we have indicated briefly, right in the heart of the book of Qoheleth. For in chapter 8 verse 1, as we have seen, the questions are asked:

"Who is as the wise man?

And who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?"

Then, after a brief consideration of the wise man, there is a further alternation of some puzzling goading problems stated in many proverbs, all followed immediately by their respective interpretations. Frequently, the second series representing the nail is more brief than the first series of proverbs representing the goad.

This is in line with the mental pictures invoked by the words, goads and nails. For the ox-goad was a farmer's spear-like wooden affair, often some eight feet long, with a metal point on one end, to goad the oxen, and with a metal chisel on the other end, to clean the plowshare.

On the other hand, the nail was the carpenter's favorite, made of iron or of gold, the iron nail for constructing massive city gates, and the golden one for affixing beautiful golden ornamental plates or tablets to the walls and the ceiling of the temple.

The American Revised Version gives the rendering that the *nails* are given of one shepherd. The Jewish Translation of 1917 leaves room for the interpretation that *both* the goads *and* the nails are given of one shepherd.

Be that as it may, who is this shepherd? From the context it is scarcely possible to give another ap-

appropriate interpretation *than* that this Shepherd is God; and for this interpretation Barton correctly adduces the following passages: Psalm 23:1, 80:1, 95:7, Isaiah 40:11 and Ezekiel 33:15.

If the goad represents the standpoint of the goading problem and the nail that of the solution or interpretation, is there any similar alternation of standpoint elsewhere in the wisdom literature? There certainly is, for in the Book of Job we have the alternation of Job's *own* standpoint, and that of his friends, while *his* standpoint receives a ratification in the epilogue, though Job must humble himself for some of his statements.

There is a similar alternation of standpoint in Psalm 73, a goading problem concerning the prosperity of the wicked that did not receive its interpretation until the psalmist went into the Sanctuary of God and contemplated the end of the wicked.

Likewise, Qoheleth, who is literally one congregating, or meeting, with the congregation, Qahal, had his problems and their interpretations. He too reveres the sanctuary of the Lord and accordingly urges his readers: Keep thy foot, watch your step, when thou goest to the house of God, (5:1). He adopts a strange name, Qoheleth, the active participle of a verb meaning one congregating, or meeting, with the congregation of God, and the feminine form of that participle. This may be a feminine of office or rank designating a person of rank that congregates, or meets, with the congregation. As a feminine it might even be applicable to either an individual of some position or to a collective group of some position. Compare inhabitant, *yosheveth*, in Micah 1:11, 12, 13, 15, and Isaiah 12:6, and *mevasereth*, O thou that tellest good tidings, in Isa. 40:9, both words allowing for either an individual or a collective reference. Qoheleth is used for an individual in chapter one, but the word may have a somewhat broader collective bearing in connection with the expression "the words of the wise," (12:11), because the Hebrew form of wise is in the plural, *kheka-mim*. We might even paraphrase as follows: Words of wise (men) are like the goads, but like driven (implanted) nails are (the masterful, authoritative) members of (proverbial) collections,—which are given from one Shepherd. This formulation thus gives us another very appropriate translation of Ecclesiastes 12:11 as a possible guide to the interpretation of Ecclesiastes.

Here then follows a very brief outline of the Book of Qoheleth, divided, accordingly, into the "Goads" and the "Nails."

The first discourse, Eccl. 1:2 to 2:26 represents a goading problem in 1:2 to 2:23, for it shows that man and nature in their labor are subject unto vanity (1:2-11); furthermore, this discourse shows, on the basis of experience that also the strivings after earthly wisdom (1:12-18), and selfish pursuits (2:1-23), under the sun, are vain and unsatisfactory. Thus

far the first discourse represents what the epilogue would call a "goad" (12:11).

Now, however, at the very close of the first discourse, Qoheleth makes a transition (2:24-26) and indicates, by contrast, the higher standpoint of him that pleaseth God; for to him a grateful acceptance of the present good constitutes a boon from the hand of God (2:24) who giveth him knowledge and wisdom and joy (2:26). This close of the first discourse (2:24-26) therefore constitutes what 8:1 would call an "interpretation" or what the epilogue would designate as a "nail" (12:11).

The second discourse involves chapters 3 to 5 inclusive. It contains three parts, first a "nail," then a "goad" and again a "nail."

The prior discourse had also finished with a "nail" and this discourse continues in the same vein, in 3:1-15. For this second discourse proceeds from the higher standpoint that life is a "gift of God" (3:10, 11, 12, 14) to "the man that pleaseth God" according to the context (in 2:26). This life is therefore to be viewed in the light of the present "time" (3:1-8) but especially also in the light of the future age or "eternity" (3:11, 14). Viewed in the light of this higher standpoint, this part of the discourse shows that all human activities depend upon God's providential times and trials (3:1-11) and upon His dispensations (3:12-15) of temporal good to be enjoyed cheerfully (3:12-13) and of the highest good, which is eternal, and to which the fear of God leads (3:14-15). Very evidently thus far, in this second discourse, we have what the epilogue would call a "nail."

But now Qoheleth turns to what might be called a "goad," in 3:16 to 4:16. Man may live on a lower standpoint "under the sun" (3:16), the standpoint of the world. That leads to many a doubt, and a warped perspective of life. Thus it was an entirely wrong perspective that Qoheleth "saw under the sun," (3:16; 4:7). For his reflections, as long as he saw things "under the sun," did not favor immortality. (3:16-4:16) Thus they presuppose at least a temporary isolation from God. Moreover, it was the age of sun-worshippers. And would not an apostate sun-worshipper and even a syncretistic Jehovah-worshipper be likely to have his times of doubt? Inasmuch as the reference here is evidently to Solomon, as it is also in 1:12, we may compare I Kings 11:5-7, where it becomes clear that Solomon at one time was a sun-worshipper.

That type of religion in any age, ancient or modern, would lead to doubts concerning immortality. It would tend to leave immortality an open question, a goading problem. Whatever its historic background may be, this section is what the epilogue would designate as a "goad."

But it is again followed by a section that the epilogue would designate as a "nail," in 5:1-20. Qoheleth teaches that "the house of God" (5:1), is instrumental in bringing home the thought: "Fear

thou God" (5:7). Hence the highest good should be sought, according to Qoheleth, in connection with the congregation of God, meeting at "the house of God" (5:1) and serving Him in strict obedience to His ordinances (5:1-20). This section is therefore clearly again what the epilogue would designate as a "nail," and it shows how man may "enjoy pleasure for all his labor, wherein he laboreth under the sun, all the days of his life which God hath given him" (5:18). Meanwhile, the expression "under the sun" appears in *bonam partem* here in this fifth chapter.

Incidentally, St. Augustine, formerly himself a worshipper of sunlight, was, apparently, right when he held that Qoheleth presents a contrast between that life which is under the sun and that life which is under God who made the sun. Thus the expression "under the sun" may have been used in *malam partem*, as in 3:16 and 4:7. But this same expression "under the sun" may also be used in *bonam partem*, as here in 5:18.

We now come to the third discourse, involving chapter 6 and 7. This division gives us first a "goad" in 6:1-12, and then a "nail" in 7:1-29. The "goad" of this discourse shows the state and the "name" (6:4) of the miser in his "evil . . . under the sun" (6:1), to be more evil than one whose "name . . . is covered with darkness" (6:4) and who "hath not seen or known Shemesh" (6:5). Here Shemesh is used without the article, as in Beth-Shemesh, temple of Shemesh, the sun-god. Kuenen thinks there is a reference to sun-worship in Eccl. 6:5, because of the absence of the article, while everywhere else in Ecclesiastes sun has the article.

Life "under the sun" is at any rate sketched here, in Chapter 6, in *malam partem*, presenting a goading situation.

But Chapter 7 involves a contrast. Infinitely "better" (7:1-11) is the "name" 7:1 and the state of the man whose "wisdom is as good as an inheritance, yea more excellent is it for them that see the sun" (7:11). Here seeing the sun appears in *bonam partem*. This wisdom doth "consider the work of God" in providence (7:1-14); it "feareth God" (7:18) in spite of the incongruities of this life (7:15-18); and it giveth "strength to the wise" (7:19) in spite of the difficulties of its attainment (7:19-28). These difficulties, and incongruities are due to man's depravity, since "God made man upright" (7:29). Evidently this entire seventh chapter is what the Epilogue would designate as a "nail."

We now come to the fourth and last discourse, including chapters 8 to 12, beginning with the inquiry:

"Who is the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of the thing?" Then follow seven "goads" and "nails" or seven puzzling "things," each difficult "things" followed by an "interpretation" from the higher, authoritative standpoint.

We have the first "goad" in the question "Who is the wise man? (8:1), followed by the "nail" or "interpretation": "The wise man's heart discerneth time and judgment." (8:2-5).

The second "goad" appears in the words: "The misery of man is great upon him" (8:6-8). But it is followed by the "nail": "I know that it shall be well with them that fear God" (8:9-13).

The third "goad" is indicated by the words; "There are righteous unto whom it happeneth according to the works of the wicked" (8:14-15). But the "nail" follows promptly. "The righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God" (8:16; 9:1).

The fourth "goad" looms up in the words: "All things come alike to him that sacrificeth and him that sacrificeth not" (9:2-6). But the "nail" is right at hand: "God hath already accepted thy work, let thy garments be always white" (9:7-10).

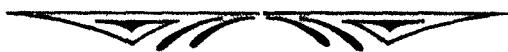
The fifth "goad" reminds us that "the race is not to the swift" (9:11; 10:20). Nevertheless it is followed by the "nail": "Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall return to thee after many days" (11:1-6).

The sixth "goad" indicates both the "vanity" of youth and the "vanity" of age (11:7-10). But it is followed by the "nail": "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth" and serve him through old age when "the spirit returneth unto God who gave it" (12:1-7).

Then comes the seventh and last "goad" in the epilogue, 12:8-14. In connection with his favorite proverb, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," Qoheleth tells us that he "set in order" many proverbs; but the goading problem is evidently: In what order did he set these proverbs?

This is followed by the "interpretation," that the order and sequence is one of "goads" and "nails," and he adds a very appropriate and earnest homiletic close to this perennially intriguing book, on which the last word has not yet been spoken.

Meanwhile, like *yosheveth*, to thou inhabitant, and like *mevassereth*, O thou that tellest good tidings, so also Qoheleth may allow for an individual reference to Solomon and a collective reference to wise men, as in 12:11: "The words of the wise are as goads and as nails well fastened are the words of the master of assemblies that are given of one shepherd."





# Investing in Good Schools\*

John A. Vander Ark

TO GIVE A scriptural setting to the topic under consideration, I would like to refer to the education of children during Bible writing times.

There were no schools for children in ancient Israel. Instruction, however, was not lacking. That religious instruction was given by parents is evident from the record of Scripture. Deut. 6:7 reads: "And thou shalt teach them [law or the words of God] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou risest up."

Although the emphasis was on religious instruction, reading and writing were perhaps not uncommon among the young. Note through inference in Isaiah 10:19 in the context of the prediction of the fall of Assyria, "And the rest of the trees of the forest shall be few, that a child may write them." That indicates at least a literacy.

In the Greco-Roman period the education of the young was more carefully attended to and space was provided in various synagogues. At Jerusalem a room connected with the outer court of the Temple apparently was used. Luke 2:46 reads: "And it came to pass that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors both hearing them and asking them questions."

The topic on which I have been asked to deliberate is "Investing in Good Schools."

When you first hear the topic, you very likely will be inclined to agree with a character of E. A. Poe's creation when he said in, *The Purloined Letter*, "The very simplicity of the thing puts one at fault." Something in its most obvious place is often the hardest to find.

The topic is so much in character with the pattern of things as they exist in our culture that one is not in the least startled by its announcement, and yet the most vital part of our culture's life can be vitiated by taking schools for granted.

In order to give some progression to the thought I chose to break up the topic into three simple statements, using the three key words in reverse order.

## 1. First note the word "schools."

Schools are necessary for the accomplishment of an essential task. A question of first importance is, "Whence the school?" We who have a Christian commitment like to look to the Bible for beginnings. One would look in vain, however, for a Bible text or even a series of texts which specifically instruct us to establish schools—Christian or otherwise. The

other major agencies having responsibility in the rearing of children, namely, the home and church, both have divine origins.

God "instituted" both the family and the church, but that cannot be said of the school. It is a cultural product—a man-made institution.

That does not mean, however, that the case for a special type of school, *i.e.*, a school for Christian instruction, is in the least minimized. Let's hold that for the second proposition.

Literacy, citizenship and participation in cultural activity are rightful accomplishments of the school. After all, our civilization and society in a broad yet certain sense depend on the enlightenment of every individual member.

## 2. Let us consider the quality.

The word "good" establishes the character of the schools but says very little or nothing unless we define it.

A school may be said to be good if it is meeting its goal—its objective.

"The educator," says Dr. Waterink, "that lacks an objective cannot educate." A qualification of a good school, then, is one which is governed by objectives.

The prior question is, "Is the objective in harmony with the purpose of life as revealed to us?" We make no apology for beginning with a confessional point of view. The whole process of education, yes, the activity of the school is determined by the question, "What end do we seek for the child?"

Although we can find no directive to establish schools we have a clear cut obligation to conduct schools that take into consideration the full nature of the child, including his moral and religious nature.

## 3. Now consider the investment.

The many new buildings which accommodate modern education are a far cry from the "sleeping ragged beggar" of Whittier's day. Our modern Christian schools are no less a wholesome improvement over the early Christian schools, many of which grew up and out of ill-suited church basements or from other pioneering housing conditions.

Sometimes the argument is advanced that the building is relatively unimportant. No one will gainsay that the teachers make the school. I read recently that former President Gilman of John Hopkins University put the renown professor of classical languages, Gildersleeve, into an empty room with four bare walls and told him to radiate. He did.

\* A speech delivered as part of the devotions at Calvin College on November 19, 1954, during Christian Education Week.

The bare room was soon occupied by graduate students of various colleges. Buildings and teachers are both essential to the investment.

We are in the context of a growing consciousness of the necessity and the improvement of Christian education. We are definitely in the stream of enrollment increases and numerical growth. At present there are 177 member schools in the N.U.C.S., an increase of ten over last year. There are currently 33,377 pupils in grades K through 12—representing an increment of about 2600. The schools are manned by 1200 teachers.

By investing, a person assumes a responsibility. He builds an estate, not in the gold that perishes, not in substance where moth and rust corrupt, but in the substance that is imperishable. The estate is composed of immortal souls and the mandate to form them for serving a Sovereign God. I believe it is permissible to say of the investment in good schools that it is agreeable with the passage, "Buy the truth and sell it not." The investment also is in harmony with the truth epitomized by the Psalmist when he said, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

## From Our Correspondents

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station,  
Crystal City, Texas.

Dr. Cecil De Boer,  
Editor THE CALVIN FORUM,  
Calvin College and Seminary,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Dr. De Boer:

FOR THE past several years I have been receiving the *Calvin Forum*. Of late, the articles have been restricted to a rather narrow field, apparently forgetting the application of Calvinistic principles to all of life. I trust too, that poor Dr. Van Til at Westminster has been dragged across the *Forum* pages for the last time and will be permitted to rest awhile. The November issue, it seemed to me, was magnificent. Let me express my appreciation for the fine selection of thought-provoking articles. "An Evaluation of Christian Colleges" by T. M. Benson was especially good. I wholeheartedly agree with his conclusions and would like to see this article given wider circulation in Fundamentalist circles. Incidentally, I am not a product of Christian colleges but took my undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Wisconsin.

For the benefit of we who are not so familiar with *Calvin Forum* writers, would it be possible to note the title or position of the author in each case? I am especially curious to know who Mr. Benson is and why he writes as he does.

Thanking you once again for the fine November issue of the *Forum*, I am,

Sincerely yours,  
C. S. Hoveland

### International Congress for Reformed Faith & Action

Amsterdam, Dec. 21, 1954.  
Rijnstraat 35 II.

Dear Editor:

Included I send you a copy of the programme of the next International Congress for Reformed Faith and Action, which will be held July 31—August 7 1955 at Detmold in Germany.

We shall appreciate it very much, if you are willing to include an extract from the programme in the next issue of your magazine.

You can mention, that copies of the programme are available with Dr. J. T. Hoogstra, 6 East 24th Street, Holland, Michigan.

We hope and pray, that a number of Americans may be able to attend the congress, which will lead probably to a closer cooperation between Reformed christians on an international level.

With christian greetings,  
Yours very sincerely,  
Dr. Jan D. Dengerink

### INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR REFORMED FAITH AND ACTION 30 July to 7 August 1955 Detmold, Germany

The Congress will be a continuation of the International Congress for Reformed Faith and Action, held at Montpellier in 1953, and of similar congresses held in London in 1932, in Amsterdam in 1934, in Geneva in 1936, in Edinburgh in 1938, and in Amsterdam in 1948.

The Landessuperintendent of the Reformed Church of Lippe, Professor Dr. W. Neuser, has invited the Congress to hold its next meeting in Detmold, Germany, the capital of the Land Lippe.

#### BASIS AND OBJECT

The object of the Congress will be to proclaim and reaffirm the absolute sovereignty of Almighty God over His world in every department of human life.

The Congress welcomes the attendance of all those who submit unconditionally to the authority of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God — and therefore the sole principle of reformation in this and every age of the Church — as interpreted by the Reformed Confessions of Faith of the different countries;

who in consequence confess the eternal Trinity of the Godhead and acknowledge Jesus Christ as the very Son of God, truly God and truly Man, and as the only Lord and Saviour of mankind and the world;

and who accept, as being consonant with the Holy Scriptures, and as an expression of their personal faith, the ecumenical symbols of the ancient Church, namely, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.

Thus the Congress will carry on its work, asserting the true succession in faith and doctrine from the Apostles, through the ancient Church and down through the Reformers, to the present day.

#### PROGRAMME

The general Theme of the Congress will be:

Man and World under the Lordship of Jesus Christ

### Bible-study

under the above general subject on sections of the *Epistle to the Colossians*. Daily introductions will be given by Director Georg Vischer (Switzerland), Dr. J. T. Hoogstra (U.S.A.), Prof. Dr. Jean Cadier (France), Rev. Emmerich Gyenge (Austria), and a delegate from Asia. The President of the Congress, the Rev. W. A. Langenohl (Germany), will also preside over the Bible-study.

### Papers

will deal with the following subjects:

1. "Modern society in the Light of the Lordship of Jesus Christ."  
Prof. Dr. H. van Riessen, Delft (Netherlands)
2. "The claim of Jesus Christ on modern education"  
Dr. J. Chr. Coetzee, Vice-Chancellor Potchefstroom Univ., S. Africa
3. "The Lordship of Jesus Christ, transforming power in the world"  
Prof. Dr. O. Weber, Göttingen (Germany)

### Reports

will convey to the members of the Congress a clear picture of the situation of the Reformed Churches in Asia, Africa, South America, Central, South, and East Europe.

### Discussion

The Congress will be divided into small groups. For the thorough discussion of bible-studies and of the above mentioned papers.

### Excursion

One Congress-day will be free for an excursion to the surrounding country-side, which will include a visit to the institution of the "Innere Mission" at Bethel, founded by Friedrich von Bodelschwingh.

The Congress will be opened on Saturday, 30 July 1955, at 5.00 p.m. by a service in the Erlöser-Kirche in Detmold, in which

Director Rev. R. Grob, Zurich, will preach. A welcome meeting of all members will be held in the Musical Academy on the same day at 8.30 p.m.

Each Congress-day will start and close with a devotional service and common prayers.

On both Sundays the members of the Congress are free to attend the services in the local churches. A special evening service for the members of the Congress will be conducted by Rev. Dr. D. M. Lloyd-Jones, London, on 1 August at 8.30 p.m. His sermon on Phil. II, 5-11 will deal with the subject

"Jesus Christ, the Crucified,  
Lord of Heaven and Earth"

and will serve to introduce the series of Congress Bible studies.

In the course of its meeting the Congress will have to deal with the proposal for the foundation of an "International Association for Reformed Faith and Action." The proposal will be submitted by the members of the committee set up at Montpellier.

On Sunday, 7 August, an afternoon meeting with Reformed Christians from the whole Lippe district will take place.

The Congress will close with the final meeting of all members on Sunday, 7 August, 8 p.m. in the Musical Academy.

### PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Rev. W. A. Langenohl (Germany), President; Dr. L. Coenen (Germany), Secretary; Mr. G. Wienands (Germany), Treasurer. Rev. E. M. Braekman (Belgium), Rev. G. N. M. Collins (Scotland), Dr. J. H. Coetzee (South Africa), Dr. J. D. Dengerink (Netherlands), Director R. Grob (Switzerland), Dr. J. T. Hoogstra (U.S.A.), Rev. Ph. E. Hughes (England), Rev. P. Ch. Marcel (France), Prof. G. Peyrot (Italy), Prof. Dr. W. Stanford Reid (Canada), Prof. Dr. H. J. Strauss (South Africa), Prof. J. Ferreira (Brazil).

Chairman of the local organizing committee is Rev. Dr. Hermann Noltensmeier, Detmold, Meiersfelderstrasse 41.

## Book Reviews

Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, A HISTORY OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT, 1517 - 1948, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press; 1954) pp. 822 + xxiv, \$9.00.

A BOOK REVIEW may be any one of many things. Some of them are tirades; some are opportunities for the reviewer to show off his own knowledge; some reviewers find a jumping-off place to talk about something else; others present a digest of the book itself; other reviews can best be described as a plug for the sale of the book in the interests of author and publisher.

This review is a plea. It is a plea to those who form the *Calvin Forum's* circle of readers to be well-informed on the most significant movement in current church history. It is directed to the teachers, the preachers, the elders and deacons, the men and women in the pews. We must know that the ecumenical movement did not spring suddenly out of nowhere; we must know that at least for this reason, that we ought not foolishly to expect it to disappear suddenly and without leaving traces behind. We must recognize that the movement is of such dimensions, and has such sound reasoning and religious sentiment and even Scriptural warrant behind it that every thinking member of the Church must face the problem of ecumenicity today.

I know of no book in which those lessons can be more clearly seen today than the one under discussion. Its 822 pages contain approximately 400,000 words, including a useful index and a detailed bibliography and such assorted items as a table of past attempts—successful and unsuccessful—at reunion and plans for reunions of churches now

pending. The sixteen chapters are written by fifteen authors, including such notable names as W. A. Visser 't Hooft, Kenneth Scott Latourette, John T. McNeill, and Georges Florovsky. The book is published on behalf of the Ecumenical Institute, a subsidiary of the World Council of Churches.

The ecumenical movement here comes forward in all of its strength and weakness. The great diversity of thought and emphasis within the movement is in a sense a weakness. Despite efforts to be really objective, despite excellent editing, and despite the fact that every one of the authors is an ecumenical enthusiast, different attitudes creep into the respective chapters on the questions of the basis on which and the methods by which ecumenicity is to be sought. Nor is real unanimity to be found in the attitude taken toward those who are not—or not yet—in the movement.

But in a sense, this very diversity is a sign of strength in the ecumenical movement; in a way, this is the ecumenical movement. There is conversation and cooperation in spite of these wide differences in heritage, in theological position, in outlook upon life and the Church.

Certainly the movement, when as broadly considered as it is in this volume, is a rich movement. On these pages one finds reflected such cooperative movements as the World's Student Christian Fellowship; the International Missionary Council; the YMCA and the YWCA; such fascinating individuals as John Dury, John Amos Comenius, and Hugo Grotius; such denominations as the Protestant Episcopal, the Disciples, the Anglican, the Eastern Orthodox, and the Roman Catholics, all of whom have said in their

own way, "Come over to us and take our standpoint, and we can have ecumenicity."

This work is an interesting example of the way in which a neglected phase of history can seem, under fresh treatment, to be the real key to history. One finds here in one unified study the ecumenical significance of the Reformation, of Pietism, of revivals, of the Synod of Dort, and so on through item after item of modern history. So abundant have been the churchly efforts and theological writings in favor of unity that the impression may be given and received that this has been the main business of the Christian Church in the modern age. This is, of course, erroneous. One must bear in mind, for instance, Calvin's insistence on the truth in the midst of his interest in churchly unity. The ecumenical movement claims Calvin in this volume; with what right it does so is another question. (I have heard that Calvin was imagined on the platforms of both the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston and the Plenary Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches in Philadelphia. To be in both places would be quite a feat, even for Calvin. Perhaps as good an argument could be made for his participation in *neither* movement.)

This volume contains a wealth of interesting thoughts. In their summaries of the contributions of this movement or that to ecumenical thinking, most of the authors do not remain purely descriptive, but become guardedly hortatory. Some of the vistas thus opened up are fascinating indeed; so fascinating that I must encourage my readers once again to make them their own, and so diverse that I must warn the readers not to expect one or a few students to interpret them to the whole church.

It is almost inevitable, I suppose, that in such a work as this, the strongly confessional churches should come off rather badly on the whole. Not all of the authors are equally severe. Some are quite appreciative of those who have the courage of their convictions, and maintain that the ecumenical church cannot be enriched by those who leave their own heritage. But others are sharply critical of insistence on doctrinal formulations, no matter what those formulations may be, and consider such meetings as the Synod of Dort, with its sharp definition of doctrine, a setback for ecumenicity. But what perhaps is most painful of all is the very scarcity of mention which is given to the conservative churches who are not in one phase or another of the ecumenical movement. The Missouri Synod Lutherans and the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands are briefly and unfavorably mentioned. The Christian Reformed Church is not mentioned at all, which is probably the most devastating comment that could be made about its attitude in the perspective of ecumenical thinking.

My critical comments, particularly on the way orthodoxy is reflected upon (or not reflected upon) in this book are not argument against reading it. Quite the contrary. They are arguments in favor of careful reading and re-reading, so that we may both see ourselves in the light of the ecumenical movement and see the ecumenical movement in the light of our criteria. Whatever the wealth or poverty of our position, we profit from seeing ourselves as others see us. Whatever the reasonableness or lack thereof in the ecumenical argument, we profit from seeing them clearly. Whether the ecumenical movement is a devouring monster or the worldwide Body of Christ, it is here; and we ought to confront it with open eyes. This book is a good eye-opener.

J. H. Kromminga

Pearl S. Buck, *MY SEVERAL WORLDS*. (New York: The John Day Company; 1954). 407 pp. \$5.00.

MANY years ago Sir Leslie Stephen complained that "the last new terror of life is the habit of reminiscing;" and memoirs are multiplying daily, memoirs by means of which everyone is invited to admire their authors' geniality, imperturbability, brilliance, modesty, and charity. When an author writes a long book on the genesis of his mind, one is inclined to believe there is something in it. Sometimes there is. But too often the autobiography is a garrulous stream of nostalgic reminiscence. How many of Herbert Hoover's ardent admirers would beat their way through his autobiography? A charming autobiography must reveal either a picturesque and unforgettable personality, or a life inherently significant or dramatic. Twain's autobiography is an example of the former; Pearl Buck's of the latter.

Pearl Buck's *My Several Worlds* is the record of an unusually dramatic life; but it is only rather indirectly a revelation of character. The book is largely objective; the delightful self-revelations one finds in a Gibbon, as when looking at the Gothic cathedrals he said, "I darted a contemptuous glance at the monuments of antiquity," one seldom finds here. The importance of the book lies in the magnificent drama in which Pearl Buck's life was involved, and which she so brilliantly portrays, rather than in the peculiar flavor of a fascinating personality. She has, of course, an impressive personality; that is obvious by indirection, the books she wrote, the people she attracted, the influence she has had; but the revelation is partial rather than copious. What strikes one is her serenity, intellectual strength, loving heart, and occasional opinionated convictions. But the revelation is far from the uninhibited portrait of Rousseau. One misses the idiosyncrasies that make people live. One notices in many places the firm restraint about personal data.

What a saga her life has been! Born in West Virginia, she was taken by her missionary parents to the river and port city of Chunkiang, where the ancient life of peasants fused with the life on the river. She talked and thought in Chinese as a child, and also as a child she saw poverty, famine, flood, and fear. Her world was dual from the beginning. Her father preached Christ; Mr. Kung, her teacher, preached Confucius. She early resented the effrontery of the foreigners who systematically pillaged the good earth and its people. She saw the Manchus evicted, and the vacuum filled by the Communists. Educated at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Virginia, she returned with her two worlds distinct. In China she married and lived unhappily many years after with "the man in the house" as she calls him. She moved to Nanking in North China, where some years later she and her family were saved from a barbarous death by loyal Chinese and afterwards evacuated on an American gunboat. She resided for some time in Japan and traveled through most of the major lands. She received the Nobel prize at the hands of the Swedish king and was in the last years elected a member of the Academy of Arts and Letters. She has now lived in Pennsylvania for some twenty years, living on a wooded estate where she has brought up her four adopted children, entertained orphans and piteously wounded soldiers, political refugees, and some of the great men of our time. She has seen, felt, and learned more than most people.

The burden of her book is the transmission of the meaning of her complex experience. The basic meaning of that experience is the ironic and arrogant folly of the "white man's burden." Everywhere she sees the permanent effects

of Occidental greed; she traces the tragic steps of European and American exploitation. She makes it perfectly clear that Red China is largely the product of white men. The world's greatest need at this midnight hour is understanding and loving our fellow men. Peace and cooperation are the product of intelligent regard, and that regard is found only here and there between China and America. To increase it is the basic aim of the book, and this aim has certainly been realized.

But the author moves only on the level of the humanitarian. She is an ardent liberal; her basic assumption is the inherent loveliness of men, not their evil human nature. She bids us to love men because they deserve it, not because God commands it. God, in her book, is little more than a pious ejaculation. Missionaries are a nuisance because they wish to work their way to heaven at another's expense; the whole enterprise is effrontery. Ruling out supernatural grace, and the incontestable fact of depravity, she would build a loving world out of human nature. What disenchantment lies ahead for all of us unless God helps. Man's inhumanity to man can be cured only by grace.

She also becomes heated about certain features of American life. She launches a biting and convincing attack upon the red-tape and greed of many adoptive agencies; she castigates our benighted attitude toward colored people; she finds us amazingly provincial. She has sentimental words on education and children. She finds our children neglected and often unloved. Children have valuable opinions and these should be consulted. They get the vote too late. Our schools are a "sausage mill, this hopper." She wants the children to be happy, school to be fun, and study a delight. So do I. But the miracle of method is not indicated. She says, "But here I begin to ride a hobby and I dismount." She should not have got on.

The strength of the book lies in its incomparable picture of China. "China," she says, "I know to the core of heart and the last convulsion of my brain." And her portrait of China is indelible and absorbing. We see the tightly-knit and wholesome family life of the old China in which there were no orphans, unemployment relief, or abandoned old men, because the family provided. We see the charming naturalness of the Chinese, their earthiness, their age-old wisdom, their rollicking humor, their fortitude, their subtlety in human relationships. We get glimpses of their delicate art. We become interested in their great novelists. We see the teeming cities with their shocking contrasts of palace and hovel. There are inspired descriptions of the Chinese landscape in the sunshine and under flood. We feel somewhat acquainted with the Chinese people; and we are stunned by the series of unparalleled disasters which have wrecked the family, upset the economy, and left a sullen and despairing people to embrace a Communism which has betrayed them.

Pearl Buck writes clearly, simply, and at times with poetic eloquence. She wrote this book out of a full heart and mind, and it is rich and enthralling. She says that no one should attempt a novel "unless he has been hopelessly and helplessly involved in life." This book shows us a person so involved; it is poignant, often wise, and basically sad. Human hands and hearts are not enough for our time; and as long as we depend, as Pearl Buck does, on them alone, we shall continue to be hopelessly and helplessly involved in the maelstrom of our day.

John Timmerman

John De Bie, *THE STORY OF THE OLD WORLD. Study Aids* by Henry J. Kuiper; drawings by Armand Merizon. (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1954*). 409 pp. \$4.95.

"MAN was from the beginning a highly intelligent being." This is the leading chord heard at the commencement of this sixth-grade history book. And the musical theme, which this leading chord introduces, —well-known and refreshing to a Christian's ear—sparkles throughout the entire work. Its introduction is strong in the clear rehearsal of man's creation, fall and consequent toil. Then it is submerged in the crash and thunder of man's struggle in developing the various civilizations which came to the fore in time as history developed,—civilizations like those of the Sumarians, the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Feudal Europe, the Mohammedans, and the Modern European Countries. But the theme itself, namely, the sovereign God in His controlling power and mercy among men,—that theme is presented with intentional clarity in those parts which deal with Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent, the Church of the Middle Ages, and the Reformation.

"Man came up from the primeval slime." This is the leading chord of every other sixth-grade history book in our country that we know of. And its consequent ideologies are diametrically opposed to that of revealed truth. They begin with the cavemen, their grunts and cruelties, their initial accidental discovery of the raising of plants and animals, and the making of fire, tools, and clothing. This hypothetical construction of the beginning of history of man enfolds the flattering but untrue proposition that man has improved himself by his own efforts, with the resultant conclusion that God is not needed.

It is with congratulatory acknowledgement to the author of *The Story of the Old World* that we want to express our appreciation not only for his writing a history book from the Christian point of view, but also for accomplishing well this herculean task. His style is direct and, on the whole, readable for pupils for which it is intended. To this reviewer it seems that the selection of the facts from the thousands of those in history, and the conveyance of true and adequate presentations of the numerous peoples and movements over a period of thousands of years, and then the tendering of them to the immature and uninformed minds intelligibly and interestingly, that herculean task has been accomplished with a great degree of success. The illustrations, also, are artistic, and helpful to the text.

However, this is a textbook which needs a teacher's guidance when it is put into the hands of children. There is perhaps too much material for any one sixth grade to cover. Many subjects must be taught on the sixth grade level, several of them during the hour of the day which is allotted to the teaching of history. There are competitors for time taking such as hygiene, library periods, formal reading classes. Yet too much material is better in the case of history than too little. A teacher can select from the wealth of information which permits her to allow for different emphases in successive years.

This textbook also needs the help of a teacher in providing more audio-visual aids than those given. Though the maps and pictures are helps, yet they are not sufficient to concretize the many concepts given. For example, a teacher would have to have her pupils consult their geographies and have them make a sketch of the locations of the places listed in these sentences on page 351: "The men discovered the Azores, the Madeira Islands, and the Cape Verde Islands. Lisbon grew wealthy with the rich African trade."

The places mentioned in these sentences are not given on the textbook maps. Then, also, concepts like, "Columbus proved that the earth is round," and "the just shall live by faith" need concrete elucidation if the children are not only to know these parts of history, but are also to be trained in correct habits of wanting to understand what they are reading.

The next step to complete this great project is to assemble bibliographies for the various outstanding periods of history. For instance, a fiction and fact bibliography from whose entries the children may obtain detailed and dramatized information concerning the time of the Reformation, so that they are enabled to write playlets and skits during the English period, would clinch historical facts and deepen appreciation for the work of the reformers, and provide opportunities for original expression. In many schools the feudal age with its knights and castles is dramatized and lived through vicariously by the eleven year olds. Theirs is the age of hero and adventure worship. Why not give them to know the strength and courage of the reformers intensely by means of fictional and non-fictional material? Another danger is that a lack of visualized and dramatized information might reduce the teaching of history by means of a textbook of this type to mere verbalism, which is vitiating.

This book would be a valuable addition to the library of any public community and of any home, as well as to that of any school, whether it be used as a textbook or as a reference for individual information and inspiration.

Helen Van Laar

J. G. Feenstra, BARTH OF DORT. *Second altered and amplified edition. (Kampen: Kok; 1954). 68 pp.*

THOSE WHO can read the Dutch may well feel rewarded by books like this little work. In brief compass, but clearly, it puts its finger on the errors of Barthianism.

Its aim, as the foreword states, is to offer light in a simple way on dialectal theology and to warn against the dangers it presents to our Reformed Standards, especially to the Canons of Dort. Ds. Feenstra points out that here the very foundations are being undermined.

The treatment is eminently practical. Very helpfully it sets forth our positions over against those the author criticises.

Ds. Feenstra writes appreciatively of the strong reaction of Barth against ethical theology; and of his *actuality*, which has shaken many lethargic spirits broad awake.

But then he at once reminds us that this reaction has swung full-pendulum, and dangerously, to the opposite extreme, attacking the "certainties" on various sides but especially among the Reformed.

Our author complains that the dialectical theologians speak much in paradox and, without notice, use old terms with changed meanings, all making for unclearness and confusion.

Barth's view of the Bible is especially repugnant to our Reformed conviction. To him the Bible is inspired only when, and insofar as, God by special intervention makes it so. To him, holding to a verbally inspired Bible is like setting up a "paper pope." God is so sovereign and transcendent that it is unthinkable that he would give his Word "out of his own hands."

According to this "new modernism" there is no constant speaking by God in his Word; no constant covenant relation

of man to God; no place for Christian Action, and Christian organization.

We hope this sound and helpful work may find its way among many of our people and that many of its passages will be underlined.

C. Holtrop

DE APOSTOLISCHE KERK *centenary volume of contributions by the Faculty of Kampen Theological Seminary. (Kampen: Kok; 1954) 244 pp.*

THE FOREWORD tells us that the purpose of the book is to shed light, from different sides, upon its important and lastingly relevant subject, but that the treatment is neither rigidly systematic nor exhaustive, each writer making his approach from the standpoint of his own branch of study.

As we would expect, each writer bases his presentation carefully on Bible data, and text references abound. Ample documentation shows that close study has been made of Reformed and other sources bearing on the subject.

Dr. J. Ridderbos provides the introduction and goes on to show that while the title "APOSTOLIC CHURCH" points to the New Testament form of the church, that church is essentially one with the Old Testament people of God. In the old dispensation the promises, with their initial fulfillments, were more temporal, earthly, national, and shadowy; but they led right on to the fuller blessings of the new dispensation which, in turn, leads on to the final consummation.

Dr. H. N. Ridderbos treats "the apostolicity of the church according to the New Testament." He writes at length of the places of the apostles in relation to the progress of the kingdom and the work of the church; by propagating the church they advanced the kingdom extensively, intensively, and distinctively. The apostles had a unique office; their gifts, powers, and authority are very special, so that the New Testament knows of no apostolic succession.

Dr. G. Brillenburg-Wurth captions his contribution "The Apostolate of the Church," and midway in his discussion he takes up the question whether the term is acceptable. We wonder about that order; whether that question should not have been taken up first.

The apostolate of the church implies her apostolicity. The church may never forget she is "on the march." "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," such a Church dares, and can, enter *fully into the world*, says Dr. Wurth, but along with her *solidarity with the world*, she maintains a holy "strangeness." (p. 133) (We italicize and express some doubt about these expressions.)

Dr. K. Dijk writes about the apostolic church in her internal functioning. The apostolate purposes not only a world mission but also a serving of Christ's Church. Truly, God gave special gifts and powers to the early Church for that special time of need, but since then she continues to be blessed by abiding elements of the apostolic ministry.

Dr. A. D. R. Polman deals with the preserving of the apostolicity of the Church. Dangers threaten; false prophets from without and errorists within. To be sure, Christ will preserve his Church but his Church must abide true to him!

Finally, Dr. J. H. Bavinck presents the mission challenge, under the head of "apostolicity and catholicity." He reminds that the latter word includes both the unity and the world-perspective of the Church. He raises the question whether we are too little catholic because too little apostolic. But, he adds, apostolicity means loyalty both to apostolic *word* and *mission*. Church unity must base upon united loyalty to the Word, the whole Word, working out in its organic oneness from center to periphery. Then may that

Church have effective front-line unity on mission frontier. It is a book to read carefully, to mark, to ponder; to be challenged by. We heartily recommend it to studious readers.

C. Holtrop

Okke Jager, *DE HUMOR VAN DE BIJBEL*. (Kampen: Kok; 1954). 177 pp.

TRANSLATED, the title of this book is, "The Humor of the Bible." And, let it be stated at the outset, I don't like this book.

This is indeed a strange book. Who is Okke Jager? You will never find out from this volume. No one will deny that there is room for humor in life. Whatever is said about the beneficence of a sunny disposition is sound, even scriptural. That many people take themselves too seriously and have never learned to laugh at themselves also is certainly true. And that this category of men includes ministers and church officials, well, would anyone care to deny that? If this were all this book contended, one could certainly appreciate it. And it is delightful reading.

Whoever Okke Jager may be, he is a spiritual affiliate of Thys Boy. The latter is quoted with approval on several occasions. The opening chapters of this work give us a parody on the parable of the Great Supper. Jager uses it to hold up to ridicule the conditions in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. This reviewer is not competent to judge that situation accurately, but he is very sure that to use this parable for this is a very distorted conception of humor.

Which brings us to the heart of the matter. What is humor? This book leaves one completely in the dark. For Jager it is certainly purely subjective. And it is determined by your own bias. Thys Boy is supposed to be funny. Rev. H. Veldkamp, who has criticised Boy mercilessly, supposedly has no sense of humor at all. Fact is that I laughed with Veldkamp far more than I ever did with Thys.

So it is throughout this book. Jager finds humor in many situations where no one else ever found it. I have never seen humor in the sacraments. It never occurred to me that the writer of Hebrews must have chuckled when he wrote about Melchizedek that he had no genealogy just to give a dig to these people (p. 63).

On page 26 he tells us of a letter received from one who has no pleasure in the church services. That is nothing unusual, but would humor cure it? Jager says he could at times long for the time when people walked three or four hours to enjoy a sermon that lasted three hours. But does he mean to tell us that these people did that to enjoy a good laugh? If one reads some of these sermons they were anything but humorous.

That there is some humor in the Bible is true. But what Jager considers humorous is something else. He makes much of the irony of history, and correctly so. God laughs about the doings of men. We too can laugh about the puppets in the Kremlin. But that is not to be done in the spirit of levity. If that is humor, it is grim humor. It is not funny.

One could wish that the author had differentiated between humor and being joyful in the Lord. This book reminds me of many a master of ceremonies at weddings or social functions who tries to be funny and doesn't know how. What pathetic figures they usually turn out to be.

While the book is well written and presents an attractive appearance, this reviewer does not recommend it. If I may be permitted a Dutch expression: *Ik heb me er aan geergerd*.

C. Huissen

J. A. Heyns, *DIE GRONDSTRUCTUUR VAN DIE MODALISTIESE TRINITEITSBESKOUING*. (Kampen: Kok; 1953) Pp. 209. f.5.75.

This is a doctoral thesis, written in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the Th. D. degree at the Free University of Amsterdam. It is an exceptionally able and thorough historical study, which deals with the development of a particular and heretical representation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The language in which it is written is Afrikaans, which is really a special form of the Dutch as it came to development in South Africa.

The special conception of the Trinity with which it deals, is one that originated under the influence of Greek philosophical speculations in the early history of the Church. It failed to do justice to the ontological or essential Trinity as it is taught in the Word of God. The author gives abundant evidence of the fact that he has made a thorough study of all the relevant literature on the subject. It is no exaggeration to qualify this study as a real scholarly and learned work, especially adapted to the needs of professional theologians, and as an important contribution to a particular phase of the history of dogma.

The wealth of material found in it is such that a reviewer can do no more than merely indicate the development of the author's thought in a general way. According to him the doctrine of the Trinity is not primarily presented in the Bible as an abstract truth, but as a truth of the greatest practical importance. To him it is a doctrine in which one feels the heart-beat of the Christian religion. It is exactly through the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, that the revelation of God concerning the salvation of man is made possible. In Christ God himself becomes man, and in the Holy Spirit He communicates himself to man unto salvation. Not only the work of creation, but also that of re-creation is qualified by the trinitarian character of God. His tri-personality is necessary to the redemption of man.

The problem with which the author deals concerns the modalistic view of the Trinity, which came to expression in the second and third centuries of the Christian era. According to it God is in himself the one undivided Godhead, but in course of time he developed into a threefold Godhead. This means that the trinitarian relationship as not original in God, was not grounded in his very being, but resulted from successive actions of the divine will. The modalistic representation of God was the fruit of reflection on the three following scriptural truths: (1) God is one; (2) Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and therefore also himself God; and (3) Jesus Christ is not identical with God the Father.

The author begins by tracing the origin of the problem with which he deals, and finds this in an over-emphasis on the supreme rule of God in the interest of the defense of his unity. This special interest in the unity of God was such that it resulted in one of two misrepresentations. Either it denied the fundamental distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or it denied the deity of the Son, and the personality of the Holy Spirit. This became perfectly evident in the early current speculations respecting the Son as the Logos, and in the Gnostic heresies of the second century. The great problem of the early Church was how to reconcile the idea of the unity of

God with the notion that Christ is also God. Where the theological interest was uppermost, the recognition of Christ as a divine Person seemed to endanger the unity of God; and where the Christological interest was in the foreground, the idea that the Son was in some sense subordinate to the Father seemed to compromise the deity of Christ.

This, according to the author, resulted in two different views, called Arianism and Modalism. According to the former Christ was originally a mere man, a creature, who was gradually deified as the result of his connection with God. And in the second view the three different Persons of the Godhead were simply considered as three different modes in which God manifested himself. The second view is best known (after the name of its most prominent representative) as Sabellianism.

The second chapter constitutes by far the greatest part of the book. In it the author considers in great detail the different forms which Modalism assumed in the course of history. Because of the limitations of this review, it is quite impossible for us to follow the author in the various paths and bypaths in which he leads us. The number of these forms is too great and varied, the terms by which they are designated are entirely foreign to most of our readers, and the discussion of them would involve many fine theological distinctions which could hardly be made intelligible in such a brief compass.

We consider it sufficient to say that the chapter is very instructive and makes a real contribution to our knowledge of this erroneous view of the Trinity, and of the various forms in which it persisted throughout the centuries and continues right down to the present time. The different representations of it in the writings of Noetus, Praxeas, Sabellius, Marcellus of Ancyra, Joachim of Floris, Servet, Schleiermacher, and Seeberg—all pass in review and are thoroughly discussed. Those of such philosophers as Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, are also mentioned in passing. The author finds that this unbiblical view of the Trinity is also responsible for the fact that some in our day stress the economical Trinity, and prefer not to speak of an ontological Trinity.

In a supplement the author discusses the views of Barth and Brunner, in which he says many interesting things. According to him neither the one nor the other can be called a Modalist, though their views cannot be regarded as scriptural. The final chapter of the book contains the author's conclusion. He finds that the Church must constantly be on its guard against the dangers of Modalism, and should insist on the truth that God is essentially trinitarian, trinitarian in his very being, for with it the doctrine of redemption stands or falls. We congratulate the author with the publication of this book and with his promotion, and cannot refrain from expressing the wish that it may be carefully studied by our theological students and ministers.

L. Berkhof

ACCOMPANISTS OF THE GOSPEL. Edited by Henry A. Bruinsma. (Grand Rapids: Calvin College and Seminary; 1945); \$2.00. 71 pp.

This work is a collection of eight papers and two chapel addresses presented at the first annual Calvin College Conference on Church Music, which was held in August of 1953. It is, as Dr. Spoelhof points out in the foreword, "not intended to contain definitive pronouncements on moot questions." Nevertheless, taken as a whole the various papers reflect a generally intelligent approach to specific problems confronting the Reformed church musician, and the pronouncements, while not definitive, point the way to an eventual solution to these problems.

Some of the papers, I feel, are of purely academic interest and will appeal only to students of music history. At the other extreme is the highly practical discussion by Professor James J. De Jonge, entitled, "Techniques in Radio Performance." This paper with its appended bibliography should prove a valuable source of information to groups engaged in or contemplating a radio program.

For the rest, the collection contains a good deal of common-sense observation by some of our more prominent musicians and theologians. In *Accompanists of the Gospel* a fair start has been made toward defining a Calvinistic view of music pertinent to our times, and, I am pleased to note, the aesthetic side of church music has not been slighted.

This work deserves wide dissemination, not only among the organists and choir directors in our church, but — and particularly — among the clergy and consistories and teachers and Sunday School workers of the denomination. The creeping "fundamentalism" which has invaded our circles in the past decade has, almost without exception, gained admittance first through the type of music — choruses and catchy tunes of little or no aesthetic or religious value — that all too often appeals to the tastes of our constituency. Those who are inclined to the use of such ditties will find something to think about in the papers of Dr. Bruinsma, Rev. Van Halsema, Mrs. Trena Haan, Rev. R. B. Kuiper and others.

There are shortcomings, minor flaws that can perhaps be eliminated in future reports of the conference. Some of the contributors, even while listing lengthy bibliographies, show a rather unscholarly reluctance to indicate the exact source of quotations and key facts. And I cannot help thinking that the prayer on page sixty-eight, if, indeed, it had to be published at all, might better have been arranged in a simpler form rather than in the Mr.-Jones-Meet-the-Master style in which it appears. Finally, the price is too high. As a souvenir of the conference, these papers may be worth two dollars to those who attended, but it is doubtful that those who stand to profit most by the reading of them will be willing to pay the price. If future publications are to reach the general public, something must be done to keep the price within reasonable bounds. Nevertheless, the overall effect is good and augurs well for the future contributions of the Conference on Church Music.

Richard R. Tiemersma

