



*the* **CALVIN**  
**ORUM**

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At Nuremberg

**Ecumenical Synod**  
A Resumé

**Ethics and Economics**  
The Christian Challenge

**The Zwolle Synod**  
A Report

**The O. P. C.**  
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# The CALVIN FORUM

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## THE CALVIN FORUM

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# EDITORIALS

## Divine Justice

**I**N THE early hours of Wednesday morning, October 16, in one of the buildings of Nuremberg prison the irrevocable summons of death came to ten men whose names are known around the world. Condemned to death by hanging they marched in turn to the gallows to pay the supreme penalty for the crimes they had committed against humanity. Here was the end of a trail—a terrible and ghastly trail—for ten of the Nazi bigwigs who had, each in their own way, terrorized and tortured thousands of individuals and even nations in the few years of the dominance of the Hitler regime. One's sense of justice and historical propriety calls for the presence of others in addition to these ten to be summoned to this last march up thirteen wooden steps to a platform eight feet high and eight feet square with a noose and a trap. At least Hitler and Goering, one feels, should have been there to lead the gloomy procession. But Hitler, to the best of the world's knowledge, has already met his Maker in judgment, and Goering, with the defiance of a Prussian soldier and the cowardice of a suicide, preferred a self-administered dose of cyanide of potassium to the noose of his executioners. If he has cheated the gallows, at least his corpse was taken to the execution chamber for symbolical execution of the tribunal's sentence.

What shall we say as Christians in the presence of these Nuremberg executions? For one thing there is no room for exultation. Whatever words of bitterness may come across the lips of others, the Christian in the presence of these executions begins in all humility to think of himself. Especially he who believes that the roots and inclinations of the grossest sin are found in his own heart will be kept from hurling bitter, defiant, and triumphant epithets at these criminals. Viewed in this light, he can only say, as he watches each one of the ten figures going to the gallows: "There, but for the grace of God, go I." But that is not all that a Christian has to say at this scene. He sees in these executions the judgment of the highest court of the civilized world upon the dastardly acts of unprovoked aggression, murder, and torture of which these men—together with others—were guilty. On this score he rejoices—not in the misfortune of these men—but in the maintenance of justice in a sinful world. He knows that human justice is not perfect. He knows that many others should be brought to justice. But that does not detract from the fact that in this execution he welcomes the ex-

pression of the aroused conscience of the world in harmony with God's law for human society. He feels satisfied that the trial, which has lasted over ten months, has not only been fair but has been carried on according to the finest traditions of a high-minded jurisprudence. Insofar as any human being could have a fair trial in a sinful world, these men—and many held that they did not deserve it—have had a fair trial and are finally condemned to death and brought to execution by the highest representatives of human justice on earth.

This is a source of satisfaction to the Christian as he reflects upon these grim events, but it is such to him only because he sees more in these Nuremberg trials and executions than the judgment of the nations. Behind the judgment of the nations, he discerns the judgment of God. Giving meaning and force to international law, in accordance with which trial and execution have been carried out, he acknowledges the inexorable law of the Judge of the universe. These executions are a demonstration of divine justice operative in human society. God will not be mocked. What a man sows, that he will reap. The haughty disdain, the bitter race hatred, the sadistic torture, and the cruel killings which must be charged against these men and the Hitler regime they represent, were not only crimes against their fellowmen, but also constituted a dastardly defiance of and trampling upon the law of God. This the Christian sees in the trial and executions of Nuremberg. And his judgment on this score is confirmed in a most striking manner by the solemn words of one of the very men who should have stood trial as did the others. Goering is not the only one of these Nazi leaders who committed suicide. There was another, the Nazi labor leader, Robert Ley, who took his own life in October, 1945, after he, together with his fellow-henchmen, had been imprisoned and was awaiting trial. Like Goering, he was a coward. But unlike Goering, he left a remarkable confession behind. Here it is, as reported literally by the Associated Press, at the time of his death a year ago. "We have forsaken God and therefore we were forsaken by God. We put human volition in the place of His godly grace. In anti-Semitism we violated a basic commandment of His creation." Terrible words these—but terrible in their naked truthfulness.

No epitaph will be chiseled into a monument over the graves of these Nazi criminals. Their ashes are scattered. But if they could have been buried, and a monument could have been erected over their corpses, no words more truthful, more pertinent, and more eloquent than these of their con-

frere Robert Ley could be chosen to serve as an epitaph for each and all of them: "We have forsaken God and therefore we were forsaken by God."

C. B.

## On Being Reformed and Ecumenical

IN LAST month's editorial we spoke of a new ecumenicity—the Reformed type. The traditional plea for ecumenicity is made by those churches which soft-pedal any and all emphasis on the distinctive doctrines of their denomination and plead for coöperative action and possible union of all evangelical, i.e. Protestant, churches. Proponents of ecumenicity in this sense of the word believe in coöperative action by the pursuit of a common purpose on the part of all churches whatever their denominational history, creed, polity, and worship may be. In sharp distinction from this ecumenical activity with its doctrinal indifferentism and its implied denial that there are essential differences between two groups of nominally Protestant or evangelical churches, is the ecumenical spirit that has recently become manifest in certain Reformed Churches in different parts of the globe. The outstanding difference is perhaps that this ecumenicity is prompted by a desire for a clear-cut, aggressive maintenance and further development of the great historic Reformed Faith and that its proponents seek the coöperation of every denomination which pursues a similar ideal, whatever its language, historical background, and geographical location may be. In this sense it is ecumenical and desires to become ever more ecumenical. Such ecumenicity is fostered precisely in the interest of maintaining, unfolding, and enriching the great spiritual heritage of the Reformed Faith and of making it increasingly a living power in human life.

It will not be easy to maintain that ideal and to create enthusiasm for this kind of Reformed ecumenicity. The First Reformed Ecumenical Synod, which recently met in Grand Rapids, comprised delegates of only three denominations, though these came from three different continents. One of the most difficult questions which this Synod (which, according to its own repeated statements, desired to be only foundational and preparatory) had to face was, which bodies to invite to join them in this ecumenical fellowship. Unless we are entirely mistaken, this difficulty will loom large in future deliberations and decisions. Nor is the difficulty solved by the resolution to refer the decision on this score to the synods of each of the three—so far—participating denominations.

As we see it, those who desire to invite other groups into this Reformed ecumenical fellowship must be aware of two dangers, of quite the opposite type, but both of them fatal to a genuine Reformed ecumenicity. The one danger is that cer-

tain Reformed (or Presbyterian) bodies might come into the group whose life and existence is wrapped up with some ecclesiastical or doctrinal hobby, pet notion, unique idiosyncrasy. This is often the case with very small groups, who, though they are historically Reformed, maintain a separate existence only because of this particular hobby which may have occasioned its separate organization. If such bodies can see the larger perspective of the Reformed Faith, they may gradually be led into a closer fellowship with other Reformed groups. But if they should view joining the Reformed Ecumenical movement only as an opportunity to have a new platform for their "hobby" and to propagate it in season and out of season, they could do the Reformed Ecumenical movement no good and might even cause it harm.

But there is also a danger that threatens from the opposite side. There are Reformed bodies that have a Reformed creed but whose loyalty to that creed is either problematical or, at best, traditional instead of real and live. Such bodies may have a large group among its constituents who are more or less loyal to the distinctive Reformed truths and practices, whereas other groups in that same body may be of a different opinion and attitude. Among the latter the broadly evangelical, indifferentist ecumenical ideal is embraced and pursued, and emphasis upon the glory and power and beauty of the distinctive truths of the Reformed Faith is correspondingly weak, if not altogether absent.

Of this latter danger we were reminded as we read this week the report of a leader in the Reformed Church in America of his impressions received during his recent stay in the Netherlands. We refer to Dr. Edgar Romig's article, "Church Life in the Netherlands—a Retrospect," which appeared in the October 18 issue of *The Church Herald*, the official weekly of the Reformed Church in America. Dr. Romig, who is pastor of the West End Collegiate Reformed Church in New York City, spent two months in the Netherlands; while there visited the Synod of Zwolle; and in this article makes revealing comments on both the "Hervormde" and the "Gereformeerde" Churches, with some interesting sidelights on the Geelkerken and the Schilder groups.

Speaking of the Dr. Geelkerken group, which (as our readers possibly know) left the "Gereformeerde Kerken" two decades ago when the Synod of that body would not tolerate the leader's denial of the consistent historicity of the fall narrative of Genesis 3, Dr. Romig calls it "a small body which was forced to leave the Gereformeerde Kerken twenty years ago because a minuscule of supposed theological heterodoxy was detected in their utterance." For those who may not have a good-sized dictionary at their elbow we may say that the term "minuscule" in its adjectival form is defined by Webster as: "Very small; diminutive; petty; insignificant."

And here is his comment on the Schilder defection. He places it in the context of a word of praise

for the "Gereformeerde Kerken" who, he says, "are not going to allow themselves to be swerved from working shoulder to shoulder with other Christians to combat evil." He then continues: "The rejection of the contentious Dr. Schilder at the special Synod session some months ago was a happy portent that the Church is weary of heresy-hunting. It has a larger task. And it is evident to anyone who looks below the surface that now there are so many of the clergy and laity who want their denomination to come back into the current of ecumenical life that we may hope that in due season the Spirit will bring it to pass." If this statement were intended to convey the thought that the brethren of the "Gereformeerde Kerken" are eager to turn from the "miserable" Schilder defection and all it entails to constructive effort, we (and they) could echo the words of Dr. Romig one hundred per cent. But to say that Dr. Schilder was rejected because "the Church is weary of heresy-hunting" not only is contrary to fact but betrays, we believe, a complete lack of insight into the attitude and motives of the leaders of the "Gereformeerde Kerken."

"Heresy-hunting" on the lips of Dr. Romig apparently is synonymous with the church's insistence on doctrinal purity. It is not surprising that he considers its suppression the precondition for participation in the ecumenical movement, but it is equally clear that Dr. Romig means by the ecumenical movement the doctrinally colorless movement which in America has drawn its inspiration from the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ. Of this movement he is an enthusiastic proponent. On the other hand, what his attitude must be toward the movement initiated by the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod of Grand Rapids is abundantly clear from this sentence in the same article: "I must add that as I spoke [i.e. at the Synod of the "Gereformeerde Kerken" at Zwolle] I was aware that in that particular communion, as in the Christian Reformed Church in the United States, there is a considerable body of steadfast resistance to any ecumenical fellowship except with small groups of supposedly crystal-pure Calvinists, compared to whom other Reformed and Presbyterians are suspect." And although he adds in the next breath: "I would not censure that attitude," this sentence is completely neutralized and nullified when he goes on to say: "I would only hope that in His time God will bring their uncompromising devotion into the responsibilities of the more comprehensive fellowship of the Protestant Churches."

Comments like these speak volumes on the matter not too frequently touched upon in *The Church Herald*, viz., the attitude of the leaders of the old-

est and largest Dutch Reformed body in the United States on the matter of insistence on doctrinal purity and loyalty to the great historic confessional writings of the Church. We cannot forget either that it was Dr. Romig, who in 1941 as Retiring President of General Synod in his report on the state of religion, took occasion to insert a plain denial of the doctrine of original sin in these words: "I could no more in the Baptism Office ask parents to subscribe to the question, 'Do you believe that our children are sinful and guilty before God?' than I could ask them to believe in Mohammed. For I cannot find warrant in Scripture for any doctrine that children whose wills have not yet been formed and who therefore cannot exercise the power of moral choice are guilty before God." (*The Intelligencer-Leader*, June 13, 1941, p. 7.)

All this—we say it with deep regret—makes for the undermining and not for the establishment and progress of the Reformed Faith. The ecumenicity of Dr. Romig and of the prevailing leadership in the Reformed Church in America is of the liberal, Federal Council type. We know that there is a group in this great historic body which does not share these views and strives to maintain the distinctive testimony which a Reformed type of ecumenicity would foster and propagate. We rejoice to read in the same issue of *The Church Herald* in which the article of Dr. Romig appeared such words as these, written presumably by the editor in his brief article on "The Ministry of Publishing." "We believe that the Reformed Church has a distinctive message and contribution to make to the religious life of America. While we do not have any specific peculiarities as a denomination, neither are we content with hazy generalities. We are an evangelical Church with Calvinistic heritage, and we believe in a supernatural Gospel of salvation. We have some very earnest convictions that are centered in our belief in the Sovereignty of God. These convictions may well be published, placed on the printed page, and used in our Churches and our Homes."

Would that these "very earnest convictions that are centered in our belief in the Sovereignty of God" were living realities on the pulpits, in the class rooms, and in the daily experience of ministers and parishioners throughout the Reformed Church of America. Would that not some, but all of the leaders in this great historic Reformed body would become enthusiastic and aggressive—instead of apologetic—about these great living treasures of their faith. This also would greatly promote the cause of a strong Reformed ecumenical movement.

C. B.

# First Reformed Ecumenical Synod:— A REPORT

Louis Berkhof

President Emeritus, Calvin Seminary  
Synodical President

IN THE year 1924 Dr. H. H. Kuyper of the Free University in the Netherlands delivered an address at the Synod of Rustenburg in Transvaal, which gave the first impetus to the movement that resulted in the meeting of the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod, which held its sessions in the month of August, 1946. Dr. Kuyper pointed out that Calvinism never wanted to limit itself to a purely national Church, intended for a single people, but always wanted to give practical expression to its confession: "We believe a holy *catholic* Church." In the conviction that Christ did not found His Church for any single people, but for all those who believe in His name; and that this Church throughout the world forms a spiritual unity,—it feels that this unity should also come to outward expression. He further stressed the fact that the Church is at present confronted with problems so serious that no one Church can efficiently cope with them, but will need the assistance of other Churches.

The seed thus sown fell in fertile soil in the Reformed Church of South Africa. In the year 1927 this Church delegated the Reverend D. Postma to the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands with the instruction to urge upon these Churches the necessity of calling an Ecumenical Synod. Since the writer of this report was present at the same Synod as a delegate of the Christian Reformed Church, he heard the plea of Reverend Postma and also noted the reaction to it. While this Synod was not averse to the idea and saw the importance of more united action, it could not come to a decision. Moreover, it was quite uncertain as to whether such an international gathering should have an ecclesiastical character and therefore be a Synod, or should be of a more general nature, and hence called a Calvinistic Congress.

The South African Church did not lose courage but kept the ideal of an Ecumenical Synod in mind and corresponded about the matter, not only with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, but also with the Christian Reformed Church in America. The result was that the idea of such a Synod gradually crystallized in the minds of these Churches, and that an Ecumenical Synod came to be regarded as an ideal that should be realized in the future. During the lean years of the depression no move was made toward the realization of the ideal, but at the Synod of Sneek in 1939, which

was also attended by delegates from the Reformed Church in South Africa and from the Christian Reformed Church in America, tentative plans were made for an Ecumenical Synod, to convene at Amsterdam. The execution of these plans were frustrated by the Second World War. After the invasion of the Netherlands on the 10th of May, 1940, even correspondence with the Churches in the Netherlands was impossible.

However, the committees appointed by the Reformed Church in South Africa and by the Christian Reformed Church in America decided to carry the matter forward and to continue the work of preparation for an Ecumenical Synod as much as possible. They felt that such a Synod should be held as soon as possible after the war. But since the Church at Amsterdam would hardly be in a position to serve as host immediately after the liberation of the Netherlands, the American committee suggested that the first Ecumenical Synod should convene at Grand Rapids, Michigan. This suggestion met with general approval; and, accordingly, the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod held its session in this city August 14-30 of the year 1946.

## Convocation and Constitution of Synod

It was entirely fitting that the sessions of Synod should be preceded by a Prayer Service. This was held in the Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed church. The pastor of the church, the Rev. John Weidenaar, took charge of the introductory elements of this service; the undersigned preached the synodical sermon on Ephesians 4:12-15; and the Rev. Idzerd Van Dellen offered an appropriate and stirring prayer.

On the following morning at 10 o'clock the first session of Synod was formally opened. Pursuant to the instruction of the last Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, the opening exercises were in charge of the writer of this report, as chairman of our Synodical Committee on Ecumenicity. From the credentials that were handed in it appeared that the following brethren were delegated to the Ecumenical Synod:

From the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands,—Dr. G. Charles Aalders, Dr. Gerrit C. Berkouwer, Dr. Jacob Hoek, and Mr. Abraham Warnaar;

From the Reformed Church of South Africa,—Dr. Stephanus Du Toit, Dr. P. J. S. de Klerk, and Dr. H. G. Stoker;

From the Christian Reformed Church in America,—Prof. Louis Berkhof, Prof. Diedrich H. Kromminga, Rev. Emo F. J. Van Halsema, Rev. Idzerd Van Dellen, Dr. Jacob Hoogstra, Dr. Herman Kuiper, Dr. Edwin Y. Monsma, Dr. Lambert J. Flokstra, Mr. Gerrit Buist, and Mr. Frank Keegstra.

The Declaration of Agreement was read, and all these brethren declared themselves to be in agreement with our Reformed Standards. This was followed by the election of officers with the following result: president, Prof. L. Berkhof; vice-president, Prof. G. C. Aalders; first clerk, Rev. E. F. J. Van Halsema; second clerk, Prof. S. Du Toit. Dr. Ned Stonehouse of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Calvin theological Professors who were not members of Synod were requested to serve Synod with advice.

It was clearly understood that this Synod could only be of a foundational and preparatory character. Its main task would therefore be to lay the proper foundation and to prepare the way for future Ecumenical Synods. It could hardly be expected to cope effectively with great theological and ecclesiastical problems without preparing for the discussion of these by further intensive study. But even so its work was of the greatest importance, since the foundation that is laid will always to a great extent determine the superstructure, and the proper preparation made for a succeeding Synod will greatly facilitate its work, and will enable it to engage in a fruitful discussion of some of the difficult problems with which the Reformed Churches of the present day are confronted, and to indicate the position which they will have to assume over against subversive theories, philosophies, and movements.

### **Nature and Authority of the Present Assembly**

There was considerable difference of opinion and discussion about the nature of the present assembly. While all were agreed that it could hardly be called 'ecumenical' in the full sense of the word, it was felt, however, that this qualification could be maintained in view of the fact that it was ecumenical in principle and intended to be only the beginning of a more truly ecumenical movement.

The real question was, whether it could be called a 'Synod.' Some doubted the propriety of this use of the term 'Synod' and preferred some other name, such as Council, Conference, Convent, or Assembly. It was pointed out, however, that a Synod is described in our Church Order only as an ecclesiastical assembly, and that the present gathering is certainly also an ecclesiastical assembly. It consists of ministers and elders, delegated by their respective Synods with proper credentials, and with the authority to deal with ecclesiastical matters in an ecclesiastical way. And all these delegates expressed their full agreement with the Forms of Unity of the Churches which delegated them. Hence it was decided to retain the name

'Synod,' though it was understood that it is not a Synod in the ordinary sense of the word. Its authority differs from that of the national Synods, represented here, and it cannot be regarded as a highest court of appeal.

Holy Scripture, as interpreted by the Forms of Unity of the participating Churches, was declared to be the foundation of this Synod; and its purpose was found in the general edification of the Churches represented, and in a united witness to the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. The Churches concerned seek to reach this purpose by expressing their unity in Christ, by strengthening one another in the faith, and by assisting one another in the struggle to maintain soundness of faith and practice. The binding character of the decisions of this Synod depends entirely on the instructions given to the delegates by their respective Churches.

### **The Basis of Future Ecumenical Synods**

After the nature and authority of the present Synod was determined, it became necessary to decide on the basis of future Ecumenical Synods. There was a lengthy discussion of this important point, and the decisions to which Synod came were formulated as follows:

"1. The foundation for the Ecumenical Synod of Reformed Churches shall be the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as interpreted by the Confessions of the Reformed faith, namely, Helvetica Prior, Heidelberg Catechism, Confessio Gallicana, Confessio Belgica, Confessio Scotica Prior and Posterior, Westminster Confession, Canons of Dort, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. It should be understood that the Scriptures in their entirety, as well as in every part thereof, are the infallible and ever-abiding Word of the living Triune God, absolutely authoritative in all matters of creed and conduct; and that the Confessions of the Reformed faith are accepted because they represent the divine, revealed truth, the forsaking of which has caused the deplorable decline of modern life. It must be emphasized that only a whole-hearted and consistent return to this Scriptural truth, of which the gospel of Jesus Christ is the core and apex, can bring salvation to mankind and effectuate the so sorely needed renewal of the world.

"2. Because of the diversity in the forms of government of the Reformed Churches, uniformity of Church Polity cannot be stressed as a fundamental requisite, except in so far as the principles of this Polity are contained in the Reformed Confessions, as, for example, the headship of Christ, and the marks of the true Church: the pure preaching of the gospel, the Scriptural administration of the sacraments, and the faithful exercise of discipline.

"3. All Churches which, in the judgment of Synod, profess and maintain the Reformed faith, will be invited to participate in the Ecumenical Synod, on the basis mentioned above. Moreover, they will be kindly requested to express their explicit agreement with it, and all delegates to the Synod will have to express their adherence to the Confessions of the Reformed faith and to the aforesaid statement.

"4. A statement with regard to the history and the organization of this Synod as well as the character, authority, and purpose of Future Ecumenical Synods should accompany the invitation to the various Churches."

The statement referred to in the last paragraph was drawn up and adopted by a later session of Synod.

## The Churches to be Invited

It was felt that membership in future Ecumenical Synods should not be limited to the three Churches represented in this preparatory Synod. On the basis stipulated by Synod other Churches should be invited, and it was the task of Synod to determine to which Churches an invitation should be extended. It was decided that the delegates of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands should advise Synod as to the various European Churches that might come into consideration; that the delegates of the Reformed Church of South Africa should serve Synod with a similar advice respecting the various Churches of South Africa; and that the delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in America should render a similar service with reference to the various Churches of America.

The reports were brought in during a closed session of Synod. Naturally, the discussions carried on there are not for publication. It may be said, however, that their ultimate result was that the decision as to the Churches to be invited was left to the national Synods of the Churches represented in this first Ecumenical Synod. The main reason for this lay in the lack of information respecting some of the Churches that might come into consideration. The basis as formulated by Synod calls for further investigation.

## Important Subjects for Study

The various Churches had also suggested several important subjects for the Agenda of the first Ecumenical Synod, namely Inspiration of the Scriptures, Evolution in its bearings on theology, Eschatology, especially in its Dispensational and Barthian forms, the Unity and Multiforimity of the Church, and its task in the world, and Church and State, particularly the Reformed view of their interrelation. Synod at once felt that it could not take up these subjects fruitfully without further preliminary study but set aside a whole session for the further elucidation of some or all of these subjects. Several questions were asked, and the session proved to be both interesting and illuminating. Synod decided to issue a Testimony, embodying the leading thoughts of the Reformed Churches on the subjects under consideration, and emphasizing especially the absolute authority of Holy Scripture, and to send this out into the world. The difficult task of drafting such a Testimony was entrusted to a committee of two, consisting of Professor Berkouwer and Prof. Kromminga. When the finished product was read at Synod, it was readily adopted by Synod, and was duly praised for its general excellency. [This Testimony was placed in last month's issue of THE CALVIN FORUM.—Ed.]

It was felt, however, that Synod should go a step farther and should appoint committees for the

study of the important subjects mentioned in the preceding, in order that a following Ecumenical Synod may be able to take them up for careful consideration, and may come to some conclusions which will be of lasting benefit for our Reformed Churches. It was decided to appoint such committees, but the appointment of the committees was left to the officers of Synod.

## Questions Pertaining to the Schism in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

The Synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands referred the following questions to the first Ecumenical Synod:

- "A. Gravamen has been introduced against the decision of the Synod of 1905, sub. 40. Synod has judged the decisions in harmony with Scripture and Confession. Was this right?"
- "B. Even if it might not be right, would this justify a rupture in the Church?"
- "C. Is a Synod justified in suspending and deposing a minister of the Word? Are church members, who are of the contrary opinion, justified in forcing a breach?"
- "D. What is our evaluation of the declaration which the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands formulated re the covenant of grace and baptism?"

There was some difference of opinion as to whether this Synod should consider these matters. Finally, however, the following decisions were taken:

1. Synod declares that it has the authority to take up the case of "Ecclesiastical Difficulties in the Netherlands," since:
  - A. Synods may assist member-churches of the Ecumenical Synod in their difficulties when requested to do so—a principle already embodied in the principles which the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands and the Christian Reformed Church have laid down in inter-church correspondence;
  - B. No review of concrete disciplinary cases is requested of us, and
  - C. Synod should be an assembly to which doctrinal appeals may be made.
2. Anent the question submitted under A., Synod decided "to reply to the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands that this Ecumenical Synod cannot give an answer to this question, since it lacks the necessary time to take adequate cognizance of the gravamen presented to the Synod of the Netherlands and of the reports occasioned by this gravamen. Moreover, in the judgment of Synod, Synod should limit itself to a formulation of opinion with respect to the 'Declarations of the 1946 Synod,' without entering into the concrete difficulties of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, and therefore should leave the Utrecht Conclusions as much as possible in the background, particularly since these have been superseded by the 'Declarations of the 1946 Synod.'"

3. Concerning the question submitted under B., Synod adopted the following advice of its committee: "Synod informs the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands that in its judgment in case one is convinced that a Synod makes an unwarranted doctrinal pronouncement, one is not justified to bring about a rupture unless he has exhausted all the possibilities provided by the Church Order for procuring a revision, and the Church insists on maintaining its position contrary to one's conviction concerning the truth."
4. In connection with the question submitted under D., Synod appointed a special committee to study the declaration of 1946, in order to determine whether it is in conformity with Scripture and our Confessional Standards. This committee, after making a careful study of the declaration, and seeking further elucidation from the delegates of the Netherlands, came to Synod with the following report and recommendation: "Your Committee is of one mind, that the declaration of 1946 is in conformity with the Scriptures and the Creeds. We recommend Synod adopt this judgment as its own." This was adopted by Synod.

The Committee consisted of the following members: Dr. P. J. S. de Klerk, Prof. D. H. Kromminga, Dr. H. G. Stoker, Dr. J. T. Hoogstra, Dr. L. J. Flokstra, and Prof. L. Berkhof. Dr. W. Rutgers and Dr. S. Volbeda served the committee as advisors.

## Church Correspondence

The Synod was also invited to express itself on Inter-Church Correspondence. A committee was appointed to consider this matter and to report to Synod. The report contained a brief discussion of the principle of Church Correspondence and ended with the following recommendations, which were adopted by Synod:

- "1. It is in harmony with the spirit of Article XLVIII of the Church Order for Reformed Churches to carry on church correspondence in a wider sense by meeting in an Ecumenical Synod unto general edification.
- "2. It is also advisable for Reformed Churches to carry on church correspondence in a wider sense with Churches which deviate more or less from the Reformed standards, by sending fraternal delegates to their Synods in case mutual consultation will tend to mutual profit.
- "3. For Church correspondence in the narrow sense, to wit, such church correspondence as involves that Churches open their pulpits to one another, recognize as valid one another's certificates of membership, admit one another's members to the sacrament of Holy Communion, and send delegates to one another's Synods, with the understanding that these delegates are to be given advisory vote, it is requisite that Churches are at one in church polity and discipline as well as in creed.
- "4. Reformed Churches should seek to influence for good Churches which depart more or less from the truth of God, by sounding forth the Reformed faith in clear and definite notes."

The following added recommendation was also adopted: "In order to promote a closer bond be-

tween the three Churches represented in this assembly each of the three Churches shall see to it that henceforth two copies of all its official documents be sent to the other two Churches."

Attention was called to the fact that the term 'correspondence' in Art. XLVIII of our Church Order does not adequately cover what is meant nowadays, when we speak of church correspondence in a wider and in a narrower sense. The committee advised Synod to declare that it is desirable that the next Ecumenical Synod present to our Churches a better and more up-to-date formulation of church correspondence. This matter was referred to the three national Synods of the Churches represented.

## General Matters

In connection with the question as to the Reformed witness in missions and evangelization, the following was adopted: "Synod recommend to the three national Synods the appointment of two by each Synod, who will then constitute an International Board of Missions for consultative purposes. This newly constituted Board of Missions shall consider its task to be the study and dissemination of Reformed principles of missions and consultations in matters concerning mission policy. This Board shall be called the *International Reformed Mission Council*."

In answer to the question, How can we make our Reformed Confession more effective in the world today?, Synod adopted the reporting committee's answer as its own, namely, that it could think of no other way than of encouraging the Christian press and Reformed organizations to set themselves the task of propagating our Reformed faith in every sphere of life.

Synod decided to express its appreciation of the work done by such organizations as the Calvinistic Action Committee. *Evangelie en Wereld*, *Federasie van Calvinistiese Studenteverenigingen in Suid Afrika*, and *Calvinistiese Studiekring*, and encourages these organizations as well as College, University, and Theological Faculties to study and set forth the truths of the Reformed faith.

It was decided that the following Ecumenical Synod should convene at Amsterdam in 1948 or as soon thereafter as possible. The sessions of Synod were closed in an appropriate manner on the 30th of August.

And now the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod belongs to the past, but we trust that its fruits will abide. Naturally, its work was largely foundational and preparatory for greater things to come. Much of its time was spent in committee work and in free and open discussions of the problems with which it was confronted. There was an evident and earnest desire that the venture thus begun should move along the lines of the Reformed truth. A

foundation was laid on which, we trust, future and more inclusive Synods can build. The discussions at this Synod were both interesting and instructive, and in all of them we felt the pulse-beat of the Reformed faith. May God's indispensable blessing

rest on the accomplished work, and may this small beginning, in the not too distant future, lead to a Second Reformed Ecumenical Synod, more inclusive, more representative, and therefore also more truly ecumenical.

## Economics and Ethics

**Henry J. Ryskamp**  
Professor of Economics  
Calvin College

WE need only listen to one's friends and neighbors, indeed catch himself in his own thinking or speaking, to note the frequent, almost constant insistence upon individual and group "rights." Just a few minutes before this sentence was written the writer overheard a remark concerning the difficulty of obtaining new cars and trucks. One person said: "They are sending 'our' cars and trucks overseas. That is why 'we' can't get new cars or trucks." The writer wondered who needed transportation more, we or the inhabitants of devastated foreign countries, but the moment was not propitious for the utterance of that thought. When it was suggested, a few days ago, that we should import meat from Argentina to relieve the meat shortage in this country one of the best known senators in the United States Congress was reported as saying that such action would ruin the market for meat for "our" American producers.

Housewives struggle for nylon stockings, fight for lace curtains, not at bargain counters but at what seem to be exorbitant prices. We cannot get sugar enough to suit us; we cannot get meat when we want it. Not that we are suffering for lack of any of the essential food products; our per capita consumption of practically all of them, including meat, has been astonishingly high right down through the war years to the present. We'll have the things we want if "by hook or by crook" we can get them. Those who can afford to and do not object to paying black market prices do get them when they want them. One and all we want what we want or else . . . Consequently our tempers are up and we use individual and group pressure of every kind to satisfy our desires.

### Lack of Perspective

We lose all sense of perspective and balance. A leading industrialist was heard to say recently, in public, that our standard of living had not been lower at any time in the last few years, even in years of the depression, than it is now, when it seems that, except for the difficulty of getting certain scarce articles, we are living so high, wide, and handsome that we should shudder what the

aftermath of our high living will be. Not only do we lose all sense of balance, we seem to have lost a keen sense of what is right and what is wrong. Everywhere in industry one observes the pitting of right against right and of group against group. Men are willing to strike even when the strike is obviously against the public interest, not only to obtain higher wages but also to insist upon some minor right previously gained by collective bargaining. Labor, apparently, is not going to lose one opportunity to get "its share." It cannot wait to learn whether an increase in production will bring prices down and thus increase "real wages." An increase in prices, even though it would seem that the increase must be shortlived, must be matched by an increase in wages. Such a policy is shortsighted and not in the interest of society or of Labor in the long run. But the blame is not all Labor's. For Labor knows, from bitter experience, that the attitude on the other side is no better. The advantages that Labor has gained have been won only after continued struggle and have been given very reluctantly by the employing groups. And Labor is aware of and feels the pressure of a strong movement to curtail the powers it has recently won.

### Individual and Group Conflict

We are witnessing today a return from a war economy to a type of economy which many have argued for ever since the time of Adam Smith, an economy in which one demand is set off sharply against another, in which buyers and sellers of commodities and services are compelled to bargain sharply with their competitors. But the situation is different from what it was in Adam Smith's time. He was afraid of the widespread use of the corporation in business competition, and he would certainly have been afraid of the super corporations of today. He could scarcely have foreseen the labor unions of today or he would have been afraid of them also. He would have been astonished at the way each side to the present struggle can use its power, not only in active competition with the other but even in fighting the other. He would have been astonished at the way strikes by labor-

ers can paralyze industry or the way a strike by producers, the cattle growers, for example, can deprive the public of goods. (Some may object that the action of the livestock producers should not be called a strike. The fact is that it has been labelled such by one of the leading newsletters and also by radio commentators. Besides whether justified or not, this concerted action, as well as that of most concerted action on the part of Labor in recent strikes, was undertaken because those engaged in the action wanted "more money.") Adam Smith would have been astonished also at the way each side in the present industrial conflict attempts to influence and manipulate government controls in its apparent attempt at free bargaining. Indeed if he had lived in this country during the last fifty years he would have realized how one side for a considerable period of time, covertly but quite successfully, used the government for its own ends. He would have seen the reaction in the rise to power of Labor to a previously undreamed of increase in power, used openly to oppose the other side.

### **Danger of Communism or Fascism**

The end of such a struggle as we are now witnessing, if not checked in some other way, can only be complete mastery, based upon political power, by one or the other of the two sides. As the experience of European countries has recently taught us, the extremists in the one or the other camp will in such a case usurp control. These events in European history have taught us a lesson that we cannot afford to ignore.

The implication if not always the expressly taught doctrine of economic individualism is this that the self-interest of one individual in a free economy will be opposed and thus cancelled by that of another. Undoubtedly the hope of individualists was that the opposing of the desires and interests of individuals would lead to the best interests of all. Unless there is something else than mere human self-interest that guides men in such a struggle the end result will, however, always have in it the evils that one finds in the individuals themselves. "Two wrongs do not make a right," men say. The pitting of one wrong against another does not result in good either. Two evils do not cancel each other. Selfish economic individualism or group competition, as we now know, can in fact lead to either of two terrible concentrations of power, communistic or fascistic totalitarianism.

### **Danger in Separating Economics and Ethics**

Economists are wont to tell us that Economics and Ethics are separate sciences. One is led to believe not only from economic theory but also from economic practice that they should be kept sepa-

rate. The point has frequently been made that we must study the economic order as it is and not approach it with preconceived notions as to what is right and what is wrong. The fact is, however, that men begin by describing the economic system as it is and often wind up by insisting that "what is" and has been "must be." In other words "what is" tends to become "what is right." Upholders of "what has been" use every resource to maintain the "status quo" and to defend it as "the right." As critics have been quick to point out "the right" and "their rights" are often identified. Foes of the established order, also appealing to what is right, usually as a screen for "their rights," fight until they obtain the mastery and then "their rights" are set up as the standard.

### **Our Opportunity in this Country**

We are fortunate in this country that we still have an economic and political system in which each side to the labor struggle can assert its rights. We are unfortunate indeed if each side has so limited a concept of what is right as to think that its conception of its "rights" embraces all that is "right." Obviously if we are to escape communism or some other form of dictatorship there must be a higher conception of right and duty than that. And if we are to escape the developments of such evils the government must not "play favorites" with either side, nor must it be the tool of either.

On this Thanksgiving Day we must certainly admit that God has literally showered the good things of this earth upon us. We cannot, this second Thanksgiving Day since V-J Day, be very proud of ourselves. We should be humbly grateful to God and humbly aware both of our duty to love Him above all else and of our duty to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have the finest natural resources in the world and the best system of government (if we can but learn to use it) with which to demonstrate our gratitude. Quite apart from our duty to recognize the rights and needs of others we are in the best position of any people in the world to be charitable and generous.

### **The Challenge to the Christian**

Is there much reason to be optimistic concerning man's willingness to recognize and to work for what is right and good for others, as well as to work for and protect what he himself can get? The present world situation does not furnish much ground for such optimism. It is, putting it very mildly, as some writers do, to say that this is a sick old world. This is, the Christian will declare without any hesitation, a sin-ridden world. The Christian will acknowledge that conflict and confusion are to be expected, that they have, in fact, existed in the past in as great a measure as in the present. He, better than one else, knows, or should know, that the shape

of things will not be greatly changed so long as man does not change. He realizes, better than others do, the futility of human effort to change this world. But he knows also, in the very depth of his heart, that if it were not for another influence, other guidance than man's, the situation would be even worse than it is now. If it were not for the checking influence of generally observed principles of right and wrong, if it were not for the checking influence of Christian morals what would this world be like? God has His own purposes in mind and He will ac-

complish them, even in this topsy-turvy world. The Christian knows that God's purposes include and involve him, and, inscrutable, even hopeless as the future may seem, the Christian knows he is in this world and that he has a task in it. He is a part of the economic and the political system, or better, these systems consist of arrangements made by him and his fellows. It is and will be what he as well as they make it. This fact we cannot escape and this involves a bigger challenge to active Christian participation than we have realized.

## The Synod at Zwolle

H. Henry Meeter  
Professor of Bible  
Calvin College

THE recent General Synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, which met in the city of Zwolle during late August and September, is of more than passing interest to us. What disposition has it made of the Schilder case, which has rocked that great Church to its very foundations? What evidence, if any, is there in its decisions of attempts at religious and moral rehabilitation of the people of the Netherlands? And what is the attitude of the Reformed leaders of Holland to our country, and to the Christian Reformed Church in particular?

### The Schilder Case

As delegates of the Christian Reformed Church to that Synod it was the privilege of the Rev. N. J. Monsma of Paterson, N. J., and myself to attend the first three weeks of its sessions which began August 28. Since the schism which resulted from the deposition of Professor Schilder and his Kampen Theological School colleague Professor Greydanus had just been decided at a previous Synod, and had caused from eight to ten per cent of the members of the Reformed Churches to leave the denomination, the presumption was that the present Synod would still be very much occupied with that case and devote its major attention to that problem. Occasion for the discussion of that problem was given in what has become known as the Schelhaas appeal. A certain Rev. Schelhaas and some sixteen others had presented to Synod a list of grievances against the treatment of the Schilder case by previous Synods. However, the Schilder matter did not come to the floor of the Synod during the whole of the three weeks except for an incidental reference or two. The Schelhaas appeal was discussed at a combined meeting of two committees, a committee on doctrinal matters and a committee on Church government, to which the

aggrieved brethren were invited. We learned that the matters had been presumably settled to the extent that most, if not all, of the aggrieved would remain with the church. While the report of the Committees was to be made after our departure, it was expected that the brethren who did appeal were not planning to appear at Synod itself.

The Schilder case was also to come before Synod in another form. The previous Synod had through its delegates invited the Schilder faction to a discussion of the matters in dispute. To this invitation the Schilder group had made reply in a document entitled: *Samenspreking, Ja of Neen?* This document reiterated at length charges previously made and stipulated as conditions before a conference would be agreed to that the deposed brethren be reinstated, certain differences be eliminated, and all discussions be recorded and published. Since the conditions set prejudged some of the important matters which were at issue and since the Schilder leaders had refused to recognize the Reformed as Christian brethren, it appeared that no conference was possible on such basis. While the reply of the Schilder group had not as yet been before Synod when we took our leave, it was understood that the Committee would advise that a Conference could serve no useful purpose as long as the Schilder group showed no inclination to modify its position in this matter. It thus appeared that the whole Schilder matter, both from the standpoint of the Schilder faction itself and from the standpoint of the Reformed Synod, was very much a closed case. The element that sided with Professor Schilder had no immediate intention of returning and from the Reformed churches there was no longer any exodus being planned to the Schilder group.

One other important reference to the Schilder case was made at Synod though not as part of Synod's procedure. This reference was made in the welcoming address of the churches of Zwolle to

Synod by its spokesman, the Rev. H. A. Munnik, who later was elected President of Synod. At Zwolle, so the Rev. Munnik related, the Schilder matter had created considerable stir. Through the wise administration of its ministers, however, especially of Dr. Thijs, an elder minister respected by all, the matter was at first settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. Dr. Thijs had drafted a series of resolutions which covered all the doctrinal issues at stake and had presented these to the aggrieved brethren of the church at Zwolle. These brethren agreed that, should these resolutions be adopted by the church at Zwolle, all would remain with the church. The resolutions were adopted and all did decide to remain with the church. A few days later, however, leaders of the Schilder group from elsewhere intervened and urged their Zwolle sympathizers not to abide by that decision, with the result that one minister, several elders and no less than nineteen hundred members of the Zwolle congregation left the church.

### **Efforts at Religious Reform**

As one travels through Holland, not only in the region of Arnhem and Nijmegen and on the island of Walcheren in Zeeland, but through the whole of Netherlands, west and north as well as east and south, one soon discovers that the devastation due to bombing, pillage by the Germans, and inundation, is far more extensive than we in America might suppose. The devastation has affected larger areas, impoverished more homes and demanded greater sacrifices than most Americans imagine. Multiply your impressions by two or perhaps triple them and you will be more nearly correct. In view of such destitute conditions when one observes what these sturdy Hollanders are doing in the way of rehabilitation, how they are fast solving their transportation problems, rebuilding the many destroyed bridges in that land of canals and rivers, reconstructing and repairing wrecked homes, reclaiming the soil so that even on inundated Walcheren sizeable crops have this year already been covering the fields, then one admires the pluck of these Hollanders.

But what about the reclamation of the souls of men religiously and morally which have suffered much during this holocaust of war? There is in Holland a widespread disappointment that there is no great evidence of a return to religion and to a higher standard of morals. Even the much publicized revival in the "Hervormde" Church is not all that it has been claimed to be, although a certain measure of reform is indeed in evidence in that church. What has the Reformed Synod done in the way of measures for the reform of religion and morals in Holland? The record of what has been accomplished forms one of the very pleasant chapters in the history of that Synod. It was first of all evident in the spirit of peace and unity that pre-

vailed among the members of Synod themselves, in the courtesy and mutual esteem that characterized the delegates in their Synodical discussions. Not once did we observe any tone of bitterness, but rather one of mutual respect and friendship. In view of the wide divergence of opinion on details relating to the Schilder matter in bygone days, this spirit among the members of Synod was nothing short of remarkable.

It was, however, when one noted the topics which received the greatest attention of Synod and about which the most important decisions were taken that the efforts at revival loom large. During the three weeks that it was our privilege to attend the Synod the important issues discussed were not those relating to doctrine and church government—fields in which the Hollanders of Reformed persuasion have made themselves deservedly famous—but the outstanding decisions related to the two important matters of evangelization in Holland and of missions in Netherlands India and Curacao. Great decisions involving increased personnel and the outlay of large sums of money were taken with well-nigh unanimous consent. Moreover, it was repeatedly asserted by members of Synod that the decisions regarding evangelization were not mere decisions from the top down but had been taken in response to a strong and fast growing sentiment among the members of the churches themselves. The need of winning Holland's people back to Christ and the gospel was felt by all.

### **Attitude to the Reformed Brethren in America**

Our readers will be interested to know the attitude of these Holland leaders toward our country and toward us. Several of the readers of THE CALVIN FORUM can surmise what that attitude would be if they have had association with the gentlemen from Holland who attended the ecumenical Synod at Grand Rapids this summer. When these gentlemen on returning to Holland appeared at Synod to present their written report, no words of praise were too much for America and for the Christian Reformed Church and the manner in which the many members of our churches had gone out of their way to entertain them. At a meeting of the Committee on foreign contacts held that same day these Holland delegates to the ecumenical Synod at Grand Rapids and the members of the Synodical committee were quite agreed with the Christian Reformed delegates that from now on all effort should be put forth both by official means and as well through unofficial channels, such as exchange of articles in periodicals, delegations to the annual conventions of Men's Federations and Young Men's Federations, evangelization and mission gatherings, etc., to stimulate the ties between us. Whereas the natural means of correspondence such as unity of language and family ties were fast dwindling, the need was felt by all that the fellowship between

us should be promoted as much as possible by the interchange of delegates and of views.

It had been the determination of the Christian Reformed delegates from the outset of their visit to Holland that their voyage across the sea should pay for itself in the way in which it would aid the cause of the Reformed faith and Calvinism among us by stimulating the interest of these Holland leaders in us and in the common tasks which they and we could together undertake. Now that our journey is completed it is our frank opinion that the journey did pay for itself. Eminently so! Without a doubt the circumstances under which we met these brethren contributed an important part to that end. America had been a very mighty factor in the liberation of their country from the abject slavery to the Nazis. In the impoverishment that resulted from the German occupation Americans again had shown genuine sympathy in distress. Among them all they had found that their brethren in the Christian Reformed Church of America had so lavished their aid upon them that these Hollanders could never forget it. When we therefore expressed our ardent desire for closer fellowship with them, there was no thought of opposition. What did occasion somewhat of a surprise to us was the assertions of these leaders that they de-

sired closer contact with us quite as much as we sought it with them. Conceivably it might be supposed that such a large church in a small country with an array of distinguished leaders and a glorious past would feel less need of fraternizing with a small church in a large "methodistic" country like America. But such thoughts are entirely foreign to their minds today. In response to our suggestions that we needed contacts with them, their leaders would almost invariably reply: "And we need you." Laymen said so, and ministers. Professors, members of the Dutch Parliament and former ministers of the Dutch cabinet told us that very thing, and had no hesitation in consenting to have us tell our people that this was their mind on the matter. It was accordingly an impressive moment when Rev. Munnik, the President of Synod, in his farewell address to Rev. N. J. Monsma of Paterson and myself as delegates of the Christian Reformed Church, expressed Synod's deep appreciation of our three weeks' stay with them and observed how that fact had led to the establishment of strong ties of friendship as the oneness of spirit became increasingly evident. The Synodical members bade us farewell with the best of good wishes for ourselves and for their brethren across the sea.

## From Our Correspondents

### THE O. P. C. AND THE UNIVERSITY PROJECT

Goffle Hill Road,  
Wyckoff, N. J.,  
Sept. 17, 1946.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

PLEASE allow me to point out the discourtesy shown me in the August-September issue of THE FORUM. In that issue appears a news-letter written by the Rev. Richard W. Gray dealing with matters that come within the zone that properly belongs to me as the official reporter for THE FORUM as clearly indicated in the list of correspondents that appears in each issue.

It is not my concern to consider the question of blame in this matter. Yet, as your official reporter I cannot refrain from registering my surprise at the appearance of Mr. Gray's letter. If there was doubt in anyone's mind as to the fairness or accuracy of my reporting on these matters, the courteous thing would have been to wait until my report appeared. Then there would have been ample time to indicate any objection that anyone might have to my reporting.

#### Comments on Mr. Gray's Letter

Now that Mr. Gray's letter has appeared, however, I am constrained to comment on some of the points that he raises. In the first place his letter carries several critical references to *The Presbyterian Guardian*, particularly in connection with the appearance of a new paper (or a revived old one) of which Mr. Gray is one of the editors.

One of these criticisms referred to by Mr. Gray is that the *Guardian* has shown a "lack of tact and charity" in "raising and handling issues", and that this has sometimes made it hard for pastors who were seeking to win Fundamentalists to the Reformed faith. I have a great deal of sympathy for pas-

tors who have to deal with Fundamentalists in an effort to win them to the Reformed faith. That is usually a tough job. But a quick glance at the history of the *Guardian* plainly reveals that from its very inception this paper has consistently followed the policy of speaking forthrightly for the Reformed faith and has faithfully pointed out aberrations from the great faith of our fathers. This is best illustrated by the fact that two months after the magazine made its appearance in October, 1935, it began a significant series of articles on the theme, "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes," written by Professor John Murray of Westminster Seminary. In this series Professor Murray in a plain-spoken manner and yet with "tact and charity" pointed out the unbiblical character of the Dispensationalism of the popular Scofield Bible and of Arminianism, both of which were commonly adhered to among the readers of the *Guardian*. If the *Guardian* had embarked on a policy of soft-peddling the distinctive features of the Reformed faith for the sake of winning Dispensationalists and Arminians, it would not have published a series of articles like this so early in its crucial career. And, let it not be forgotten, Dr. Machen was prominently associated with the *Guardian* at that time.

Another very touchy issue was raised in Dr. Machen's time, namely, that of Premillennialism. Forthrightly Dr. Machen stated editorially that the Westminster Standards "teach not the Premillennial view but a view that is opposed to the Premillennial view" (*The Presbyterian Guardian*, October 24, 1936). There was plenty of "tact and charity" in Dr. Machen's editorial, but that did not satisfy the more fervent chiliasts in the church, a fact demonstrated in the subsequent history of the church now known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Allow me to use one more illustration. In the February 27, 1937, issue of the *Guardian* appeared an editorial on the sub-

ject "Godliness and Christian Liberty", dealing with the troublesome issue of the Christian's liberty in the use of alcoholic beverages. It was a carefully written editorial, presenting this matter in a thoroughly biblical and Reformed fashion. And there was no lack of "tact and charity". Permit me to quote the conclusion of the editorial: "Let love prevail! . . . In every instance we must keep before us the goal of the salvation and the edification of men's souls through our testimony to Christ. And let us take care that our testimony to Christ be to the Christ of the Bible. Jesus said, 'Blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me' (Luke 7:23)."

That is typical of the policy of the *Guardian* throughout its whole career. Always it has spoken plainly and kindly, always vigilant to carry the banner of truth with the Bible as its unflinching teacher and guide, along with the Westminster Standards as a secondary guide. What other way is there to testify to the truth of God, other than to state it as plainly as we can, in a spirit of love? What happens to our testimony if we begin to trim it here and soften it there for the sake of the faulty understanding or the prejudices of men? Once men start on that treacherous road they can only come to that sad station where they feed watery skim milk to undernourished babes. It is the sure road to doctrinal apathy and indifference.

A further word on the matter of "tact and charity" is called for. No one exercised more of that than did Dr. Machen. Truly he ever spoke the truth in love. Yet, how did men respond to his charity? Certain Fundamentalists responded by ousting him from the presidency of the Independent Board of Foreign Missions. His friends and associates of long standing—Macartney, Craig and Allis—responded by refusing to go along with Dr. Machen in the formation of a new church, preferring rather to remain in the doctrinal wilderness of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

Mr. Gray and his associates (Strong and De Velde) revived the paper they now edit in the wake of the storm that broke over the *Guardian* regarding its handling of the celebrated "Clark case". In its handling of this thorny issue the *Guardian* frankly reported all the developments and frankly took a critical view of Dr. Clark's opinions. As to the reporting on the Clark case, the *Guardian* could do nothing else than to be open and above board in its account on all the developments. In its editorial expressions on the case it was at perfect liberty to express the deep concern which the editors felt toward what they sincerely felt were serious errors in Dr. Clark's thinking on some of the deeper issues of the faith. That much of this discussion went over the heads of many readers is no doubt true. Yet the *Guardian* could do nothing other than to present the matter as best it could to the public, since the policy of carrying on doctrinal debates in hiding from the public is always to be condemned. And it must be remembered that the *Guardian* opened its columns to expressions of opinion from men on either side in the debate.

I dare say that Mr. Gray and those who think like him in the church have criticized the *Guardian* in the "Clark case" not so much for the fact that it discussed the merits in the case frankly, but rather because it took a position which was not agreeable to those who support Dr. Clark's views. No sane person could condemn the paper for reporting on such a significant development in the church. That cannot be the ground for complaint against the *Guardian* in this instance. The ground is rather that the *Guardian* frankly and consistently opposed the views of Dr. Clark. This persistent and frank opposition to Dr. Clark's views was a most troublesome deterrent to those who were intent on having Dr. Clark ordained. As indicated in my last letter to THE FORUM, there were those who sought the ordination of Dr. Clark for the express purpose of gaining his ability and prestige to further a particular program of action in the church.

### The O. P. C. General Assembly Again

In Mr. Gray's comments on the General Assembly of the O. P. C. are certain points that call for elucidation. In the

first place I must ask what connection there is between the fact that Dr. Clark nominated Dr. Machen as moderator of the first General Assembly and the accuracy of Dr. Clark's doctrinal conceptions? It goes without saying that no one takes pleasure in questioning the views of such a man. But what real connection there is between these two matters other than one of sentiment or prejudice I am at a loss to see.

In the second place note must be taken of Mr. Gray's remark regarding Professor Murray's minority report of the committee to study the "Complaint" against the Presbytery of Philadelphia in its action in licensing and ordaining Dr. Clark. Of this report Mr. Gray says that "it did not agree with the Complaint's charge of error in Clark's views, but held that the Presbytery did not give an adequate examination." This statement is both inaccurate and misleading. It is inaccurate in that it contradicts the plain statement in Professor Murray's report that calls Dr. Clark's views on the relation between Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility "fallacious". Mr. Gray's statement is misleading in that it wholly fails to represent correctly Dr. Murray's clearly enunciated opinion that it was not the task of the committee to give a final appraisal of Dr. Clark's views, as the Complaint was not against Dr. Clark but against the Presbytery of Philadelphia. With characteristic caution and thoroughness Professor Murray examined the evidence in the case and came to the conclusion that since Dr. Clark's doctrinal formulations were in many instances seriously defective or unsatisfactory or even "fallacious", the Presbytery of Philadelphia erred in proceeding to the licensure and ordination of Dr. Clark, and therefore the Complaint should be sustained. In this connection a sentence from the "Protest" against the action of the assembly makes Dr. Murray's position quite clear. "In our judgment," reads the Protest (drawn up by Professor Murray and the undersigned), "satisfactory answers respecting important questions of doctrine had not been given by Dr. Gordon H. Clark to the Presbytery of Philadelphia in the theological examination required for licensure."

Mr. Gray expresses surprise that the *Guardian* "should editorially charge the commissioners with doctrinal indifference" in view of the length of time spent in debate on the floor and in the work on the reports of the committee. This is a reference to the leading editorial in the issue of June 25, 1946. Mention of one incident at the assembly will explain the attitude of the editor of the *Guardian* and will account for the "sadness" expressed in the editorial. When Professor Murray, author of the minority report, proceeded to the dais to begin his speech in support of his report, a considerable number of those whose minds were already made up in favor of Dr. Clark left the assembly hall. This disregard for the opinion of the ablest theologian on the committee was a rather revealing indication of the attitude of several of those who were zealous for the ordination of Dr. Clark. Many times during the debate those who were favorable toward Dr. Clark expressed their impatience with the discussion and pressed for an early taking of the vote that they knew was in their hands. I mention these things with no pleasure. But Mr. Gray's comment on the *Guardian* editorial leaves me no alternative.

In his letter Mr. Gray asserts that on a particular point Dr. Clark "silenced" the criticism by quoting from two well-known authors. Whether Dr. Clark actually "silenced" his critics on this important point still remains to be seen, of course. And, furthermore, this has little to do with the real point at issue before the assembly. The precise point at issue was this: did the evidence that the Presbytery of Philadelphia had before it regarding Dr. Clark's views at its meeting of July 7, 1944, give to the Presbytery the warrant to approve the theological examination and to proceed to the licensure and ordination of Dr. Clark?

### The Christian University

In my last news letter to THE FORUM I indicated that I hoped to say something about the Christian University in a subsequent letter. This declared intention on the part of your regular correspondent has been embarrassed somewhat by the

inclusion of Dr. Gray's letter of material on this subject. I shall add very little to what Dr. Gray says regarding the meeting of the Christian University Association. It was not the kind of meeting that made one feel that the proposed Christian University was heading for success. In fact, when one reflected on the thought that this meeting was part of a great spiritual movement dedicated to the attainment of the monumental objective of establishing a university, only sadness could fill one's soul. At times the spirit of the meeting resembled that of an assemblage of political hirelings rather than that of a meeting of Christians joined in a high and holy seriousness intent on the gaining of a tremendous objective. The lowest point of the meeting was reached when Dr. Robert Strong moved that when the meeting adjourn it adjourn to meet again in October after the September meeting of the Board of the university. This motion was a shrewd means of circumventing the clear terms of the constitution, which stipulate one meeting of the association per year to be called by the Board of Trustees. Although the Rev. Robert S. Marsden plainly pointed out the "immoral" character of this motion and Professor Murray called it "unethical", it was easily passed by an audience that seemed to have little interest in such niceties. So distressing was the spirit of the meeting that the undersigned begged to be excused from giving the address that he had been asked to render on this occasion.

Again, there is nothing pleasant about reporting such things. And some may gain the impression that such events presage the end of the Christian University project. But the Board of Trustees is not so minded. This meeting, poorly attended as it was, brought out certain weaknesses in the whole set-up that have to be taken care of if the project is to succeed. It is best that these weaknesses show up at this relatively early date. Furthermore, the real direction of the project is in the hands of the Board of Trustees. The spirit that prevailed at this meeting does not prevail in the Board.

The Board of Trustees met in Philadelphia on September 11. The most important news coming out of this meeting is that the services of Mr. Rian as General Secretary have been discontinued. The vote by which he was removed from office was 18 to 5.

This is no doubt a surprising development to many and calls for some elucidation. It may be said at once that those who see a connection between this event and the "Clark case" in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are correct. That connection may be indicated as follows. Although Mr. Rian was until last May president of the Board of Trustees of Westminster Seminary, he consistently championed the cause of Dr. Clark in opposition to the stand of virtually the entire body of able theologians that make up the faculty of the seminary. In this stand Mr. Rian has championed what he and his allies have called "historical, ecumenical" Calvinism in opposition to what they have called a "narrow personal Calvinism"—terms used in a recent communication sent out to the members of the university association by friends of Mr. Rian. (This letter makes no reference to Dr. Clark, but I use these terms because they aptly describe Mr. Rian's attitude of mind throughout this entire complex of events.)

What do these terms mean? Mr. Rian has never defined them precisely, so far as I know. It is significant to note the fact that Mr. Rian has never, in all the debates on the Clark case, publicly entered into the discussion of the merits of the theological issues involved. At the same time Mr. Rian has used terms like "worthless" in describing the doctrinal contents of the Complaint against the Presbytery of Philadelphia in this matter. These facts clearly indicate that in using the question-begging terms "historical, ecumenical" in describing the "Calvinism" that he stands for, he means a vague, not-too-carefully-defined article that must not be subjected to the scrutiny of careful theological discernment. The simple fact is that Mr. Rian is opposed to the Calvinism represented by Westminster Seminary, the institution with which he has been officially connected these many years. And in the same breath it can be said on the basis of word coming to me from many

sources that Mr. Rian likewise has no great affection for the type of Calvinism represented by the Christian Reformed Church. Hence, in view of Mr. Rian's attitude toward these two strongest and most forthright Calvinistic institutions in the country, it is not surprising that he is on the outside looking in today so far as the university project is concerned. It is a sad story, indeed, in view of Mr. Rian's history. But it is a story of Mr. Rian's own composing.

This letter has become very long. Yet, I think you will agree that the things it deals with are of real interest to the readers of THE FORUM. So I shall appreciate your publishing it in its entirety.

Cordially yours,  
EDWARD HEEREMA.

## APPRECIATION

CALVARY ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
Volga, South Dakota

LOUIS E. KNOWLES, *Minister*  
Telephone 2672

September 13, 1946.

Dr. Clarence Bouma, Editor-in-Chief  
THE CALVIN FORUM,  
Calvin College and Seminary,  
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

*Dear Dr. Bouma:*

When I received my current issue of THE FORUM I was delighted to find the letter of the Rev. Richard Gray among the regular correspondence. I am sure that many of your Orthodox Presbyterian leaders will feel the same as I. It is refreshing to have the other side of the controversy that undeniably exists in our church represented in your pages. As a reader, I say, let us have more such letters.

Sincerely,  
LOUIS E. KNOWLES.

## PATRICK OF IRELAND

15 College Sq., East,  
Belfast,  
Northern Ireland,  
August 24th, 1946.

Dr. C. Bouma,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*Dear Professor Bouma:*

IT is of exceeding great interest to probe back into Irish History. All History holds a fascination, and especially is this true in connection with the Church. The History of the Emerald Isle emerges out of a maze of exaggerations, distortions, errors and absurdities, which have gathered around it during the centuries; so that it is difficult at times to pick out the real history of the country and distinguish it from legend and myth. This is a country in which hundreds of myths are preserved.

In the days of Julius Cæsar, Ireland was recognised as a trading centre by both Romans and Greeks, and her ports were of the best; and in general development the country was not lagging. It has been pointed out that in the third century a water-mill for grinding corn was erected in Ireland.

It is possible that during the reign of Constantine the Great, when Christianity was firmly established in England, that, owing to the free intercourse between these islands, Christianity had become known to the Irish. In fact it would be remarkable if a country in touch with the trading centres of the world, as was this island, should remain ignorant of the great change taking place in the Roman Empire under Constantine. However, the earliest notice we have of the Gospel in Ireland is a reference made by a French writer who states that in A. D. 431 Palladius was sent by the pope "to the Irish believing in Christ as their first bishop." We see from this that the Pope had recognised the spread of the Gospel in our island, and

tried to establish his authority over it by sending Palladius. This bishop was not well received by the Irish and finally he was asked to leave the country, which he did.

Why was Palladius driven from Ireland? The answer commonly agreed upon is that the Irish Christians, among whom Patrick had laboured for a number of years, refused to accept Palladius as their "first" or chief bishop. Naturally Patrick and his fellow-workers did not relish the idea of bowing to supervision from Rome.

For about twenty-five years now Patrick had been preaching in the island, and he played a big part in evangelizing the people. Much fiction has been attached to Ireland's patron saint, "The Apostle of Ireland," and to-day a certain amount of controversy exists between Roman Catholics and Protestants as to the faith of Patrick. Each side claims him. When we clear away the thick growth of legend, superstition, and prejudice which has grown around his name, some interesting facts are revealed.

Patrick has left us his famous "Confession," which is his autobiography, and has strong external proofs of great age and veracity; and critics of all parties have acknowledged this. In this "Confession" Patrick recounts that he was the son of a deacon. His birthplace was North France; when sixteen years of age Patrick was taken as a slave to Ireland for a period of six years. During these years the instruction of his childhood began, by the grace of God, to bear fruit, and he turned to God. So Patrick wrote in his "Confession," "I was daily employed tending sheep, and often during the day I prayed, and the love of God more and more increased. . . . I used to remain even in the woods and on the mountain, and was wont to rise up before day to pray in snow, in frost, and in rain, and I felt no injury; nor was there any sluggishness in me, such as I now feel, because the Spirit was then ardent within me." When Patrick escaped from slavery, it was only to return to this island as a missionary. His mission was a success, and many were won from paganism.

Patrick has often been confounded with a certain monk known as Sen-Patrick (Patrick Senior) who lived in the same period; and this may explain some of the mistaken ideas connected with "The Apostle of Ireland." The stories that Patrick was sent from Rome are destitute of support and are the production of cunning Romanists who try to place Patrick as one of their persuasion. Also the miracles, prophecies and other wonders attributed to him are purely legendary, and of Rome. If Patrick had in any way been authorized by the Pope, he would have in some way referred to the fact in a lengthy "Confession;" this he does not do. Ireland, in fact, was not converted by missionaries from Rome, and when the Pope later sent ecclesiastics to hold fellowship, the Irish for a while refused to have anything to do with them.

It has also been firmly established that Patrick did *not* practice confirmation, teach celibacy, conform to the Roman tonsure, use Roman form of worship, respect papal laws as to ordination and Church government.

Much could be written about the Theology of Patrick. May it interest readers of the FORUM that Patrick, if alive to-day, would be termed a Calvinist. His Theology was definitely of a Calvinistic trend, thus in his "Confession" he wrote: "I was like a stone that lay in the deep mire; and He who is powerful came, and, in His mercy, relieved me; and raised me up, and placed me on the top of the wall; and from thence I should cry aloud, 'What shall I render to the Lord for so great benefits here and hereafter, which the human mind cannot estimate.'" The following points of Patrick's Theology are worthy of note: (1) The supreme authority of the Sacred Scriptures; (2) The doctrine of the Trinity; (3) The Atonement; (4) Sovereign Grace. Patrick knew nothing of prayer to Mary; relics; atonement by works; purgatory; and other Romish addition; and there is not a vestige of proof that he was ever "first Primate of Armagh."

I will leave you with a quotation from "The Hymn of Patrick," reputed "the oldest undoubted monument of the Irish language in existence,"

" . . . may the strength of God pilot me; may the power of God preserve me; may the wisdom of God instruct me; may the eye of God view me; may the ear of God hear me; may the word of God render me eloquent . . . Christ be in the heart of each person to whom I speak; Christ in the mouth of each person who speaks to me; Christ in each eye which sees me; Christ in each ear which hears me."

With greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Yours in His service,

FRED S. LEAHY.

## A NETHERLANDS LETTER

Groningen, Holland,  
September 16, 1946.

*Dear Professor Bouma and  
Esteemed Readers Everywhere:*

IT IS more than time for me to write. No doubt you ask: How do matters stand in Holland now? For one thing, we have had a cold and wet summer, and the grain has been harvested with great difficulty. A large part of it, in fact, has gone to rot. However, even so the yield was surprisingly large.

Yes, we have our bread, but . . . not much more than that. However, the moment we recall past days of famine and meals of sugar beets, we are very, very grateful indeed! And our gratitude increases greatly when we remind ourselves of the German occupation with its terrible tyranny and its daily threat of death.

You, my dear friends, living in America and England, will not take it ill if I observe that you have not the remotest conception of what such tyranny and starvation mean. No pamphlet, film, or speech can bring that home to you. Only actual participation can teach you that. In a certain sense I have sometimes wished that America and England might have been "occupied" for a year or so. Don't misunderstand! But it is necessary that Germany with its past practices and methods be dealt with very firmly, lest she ever again dare to undertake a similar exploit. When I say this, I am not prompted by any unchristian desire for revenge, but simply by a deep sense of Christian justice.

The attitude of many toward the "unspeakable German" is either one of boundless fury or of unpardonable laxity. There seems to be little sense of divine righteousness, which it is the duty of earthly governments to practice and maintain. This is what Scripture teaches us, but it is not the teaching of current Humanism, and the latter regrettably sets the pace largely in current government policy. The Dutch government today is in the hands jointly of Socialists and the more liberal element of the Roman Catholics. The Socialists are in the lead, and hence the punishment of our Quisling group is unpardonably lax, vacillating, inconsistent, and often outrageous—at least to me, and many Calvinists.

And how about the labor situation, you ask. This is favorable. There is very little unemployment. Everybody buckles down to hard work. But the reconstruction of our devastated cities and villages in the southern and eastern part of the country progresses very slowly, for the simple reason that we lack the required building materials. We lack everything, because there is no money to buy. Our nation has been hopelessly impoverished and heavily in debt because of the destruction and robbery of the enemy. If only the allied nations would be ready to come to the aid of a small nation, but reparation in the form of annexation (even though on a very small scale) seems to be unacceptable to America. The idea seems to be that Germany must remain unimpaired, and as a result we can hold the bag and Germany dodges her just punishment—in fact, her payment of indemnity, which does not begin to be her punishment.

I am not a pessimist—not at all, but you can well imagine that this condition is a source of great offense.

Just a word about the central problem of our national life today: Indonesia. Also this is a sore spot and cause of great offense. There is an unpardonable delay in the restoration of law and order over against the so-called republic of the Japanese sympathizer Soekarno, as also in the protection and deliverance of thousands of prisoners. Christian people, and all who realize the dire need of a firm policy of law and order, are irritated day after day. How necessary it is for the great powers to be acquainted with the real conditions!

As far as our church life is concerned, we are enjoying a little breathing spell. After much bickering and controversy, we are finally beginning to devote our energies to constructive work. Subjects like missionary organization and evangelism are filling a large place on the docket of the Synod in session at Zwolle. The Synod is marked by a good spirit and by the desire to build. The Schilder schism has spent its force, and has not reached its objectives. Those of the Schilder group are unwilling to participate in joint *discussion* by leaders of the two groups. They only desire public debate in *written* form. They seem to be eager to write, write, and write some more. Our Churches regret this attitude. May the Lord grant a change of heart to these brethren.

Our Synod is becoming more favorably inclined to the idea of ecumenicity. There was a time when we of the Reformed Faith were too much inclined to isolation. We are beginning to realize that the Church of God is not limited to the walls of the Reformed Churches. Happily so. May the Lord build up His Church throughout the entire world upon the firm and immovable foundation of His Word. And may we, you and all of us, be united in the fear of His Name and in love to our Redeemer and in zeal for His cause!

With cordial greetings, yours,

PIETER PRINS.

## MICHIGAN CALVINISTIC PHILOSOPHY CLUB

ON Wednesday evening, August 21, the club had the honor of having for its speaker Prof. Dr. H. G. Stoker of the University College of Potchefstroom, South Africa. After the opening by our President, Dr. J. T. Hoogstra, the speaker gave us a review of a Calvinistic philosophy, its principles and its methods, and its relation to other philosophies.

### The Principles

The first principles of a Calvinistic philosophy are all derived from Scripture. Philosophy is part of reality; it is a study of man's relation to the cosmos. It leaves to theology the study of man's relation to God. All the other sciences are parts of the universe. The totality and the diversity of these sciences is discussed by philosophy. And for totality as well as diversity the Bible lays down principles. The cosmos is a whole, but each science then must be a unit also. Each science has sphere sovereignty, for it has its own character. The cosmos and the sciences should be explored by philosophy. The theocentric character of the cosmos is a matter for theology.

### The Methods

The methods of a Calvinistic philosophy are not the result of investigation, but are based on *a priori* principles. The *first method* is the discovery of the religious essence of reality. For this we need three kinds of principles:

a. Ontological principles, e.g., (1) The self-insufficiency of the cosmos; (2) The law-structure of the cosmos; (3) The principle of unity and coherent diversity; (4) The principle of the inherent meaningfulness or the truth of the cosmos; (5) The principle of abnormality, the curse of sin conquered by Christ.

b. Anthropological principles, e.g., (1) Man part of the cosmos; (2) Man has eternity in his heart; (3) Unity of the human race; (4) Unity of human destiny; (5) Principle of

knowledge: Man can understand the cosmos; (6) Principles of limitation due to creation and sin; (7) Principles of fall and regeneration.

c. Epistemological principles. These include all the preceding ones and moreover the principle of revelation, which means among other things that God and man are different in essence, and that the cosmos is one and diverse.

The *second method* is to discover the relations in reality, to observe differences of quality and quantity, etc. Some differences are reducible; others not. To discover these relations we need three cosmic dimensions according to Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd: cosmic time, structure and values. The speaker would rather speak of four cosmic dimensions: modality, structure, events, values.

There are fourteen kinds of modality according to the Amsterdam school. Starting from the simplest they are: number, space, motion, growth, emotion, reason, action, expression, social contact, sharing, harmony, justice, love, and faith. These fourteen do not each form a separate sphere, but they accumulate in the spheres. The sphere of arithmetic has only number for its aspect. The sphere of geometry has two aspects: number and space. Then come physics and chemistry with three aspects. And so further: plant life, animal life, logic, history, language, social life, economics, politics, morality, religion. But these fourteen aspects work also upon each other in a different fashion. Faith is the most basic aspect. To faith must be added love; to love justice, etc.

The speaker could not see that history formed a separate sphere of laws. His idea is that events are found in every sphere. And so history, or events, ought to be counted as a dimension and not as a separate sphere and aspect.

By structure we mean individual and cosmic structure.

The values are the result of modality, structure and events.

The *third method* is the triple foundation of the cosmos. Everything has an absolute basis, God. But it has also an individual and a cosmic basis, e.g., the individual or essential basis of morality is human love of the human personality. But its cosmic basis depends on life, knowledge, economics, religion, etc. Socratic ethics is intellectualistic, but modern ethics is evolutionistic.

The *fourth method* is that of the Excluded Antinomy, as the Amsterdam school calls it. With the doctrine of the spheres there is no confusion possible. If there is contradiction, it is because the items belong to different spheres.

Finally the speaker compared Calvinistic philosophy with other systems of thought in the following respects:

1. Calvinism accentuates the principles of Scripture: the cosmos is theocentric. Man is abnormal, etc. Other views are immanentistic, i.e., cosmocentric.

2. Calvinism repudiates speculation on Biblical fundamental principles. Other views are entirely speculative.

3. Calvinism accepts all principles of the Bible. Other philosophies want to reduce everything to one principle, and absolutize it.

4. Calvinism has no mutually conflicting schools. Calvinists may differ on detail but not on the ultimate principles.

5. Calvinism rejects real antinomies because all truth comes from God. Some philosophies are dualistic.

6. Calvinism makes no science either subservient or dominant. Other views do.

7. Calvinism acknowledges its own limitations. It accepts the inexplicable of the miraculous. Other philosophies rule out the miraculous. Reason is their only guide.

Since there were about fifty people present there was a lively discussion. At ten o'clock the meeting was formally closed by Professor Henry Stob of Calvin College. An informal discussion among about twenty men continued until eleven o'clock.

In the discussion the following topics were considered: verification in theology, verification of religious principles, theology

and philosophy, theology and religion, interpretative character of primary principles, theological and philosophical ethics, difference in methods between Christian and non-Christian scientists, common task of such scientists, the excluded antinomy, the fundamental principle: law, creation, or revelation, etc.

Every one was convinced that we had an excellent paper by Dr. Stoker and a very important meeting.

HENRY J. VAN ANDEL, *Secretary.*

## HUNGARIAN LETTER

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I AM still under the influence of the Third American Calvinistic Conference. It was a Spirit-filled grand occasion. I look back upon it as if it had been a stay on the mount of transfiguration. I wrote and spoke about it so much, that I am confident the next Calvinistic Conference will be attended by a much larger Hungarian contingent than ever before.

Interest in these conferences and in the life, ideals and achievements of the Christian Reformed Church was deepened and widened by the appearance of Dr. Jacob T. Hoogstra before the fall conference of our Ministerial Association held on September 4-5 at Ligonier, Pa., about fifty miles east of Pittsburgh on the Lincoln Highway. That is the place where our Bethlen Home, an institution for homeless children and for dependent elderly folks, is situated. Dr. Hoogstra delivered an enlightening and inspiring address on "Ecumenical Calvinism" and answered questions with an admirable command of all related subjects. He was a fine representative of your group, and we were very glad to have had him with us.

A parallel meeting was held at the same time and at the same place for the elders of our different groups and an Association of American Hungarian Reformed Elders was organized. The purposes of the new organization are identical with those of our Ministerial Association as applicable to the needs of the elders, viz., to promote fellowship, to deepen the spiritual and intellectual perception of their high calling, to face and possibly to solve common problems with common effort and coöperation. It was a grand sight to see so many of our ministers and elders together and partake of Holy Communion at the opening service conducted by the representatives of our several groups. A longing for a more closely knit unity touched the heart of all of us. We do not know what the future will bring, but the two days spent together brought spiritual refreshment to all those present at Ligonier.

It was here that we committed to the Lord's special care the Rev. Dr. Francis Ujlaki, the president of our great fraternal and insurance organization, the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America. Dr. Ujlaki was to leave and toward the end of September did leave for Hungary as a good will ambassador of brotherly love and interest from the American brethren to the brethren in Hungary. We have long felt the need of one of us going over to Hungary and to bring us reliable information concerning our brethren "in the old country". Dr. Ujlaki was duly authorized to represent our several groups and we are eagerly waiting for him to come home and to share his experiences with us. He took with him not only words of sympathy and encouragement, but also a sizeable amount for the purpose of alleviating immediate needs. For the first time in seven years we will have the opportunity to see things in Hungary through the eyes of one of us. No wonder that all of us are in a state of suspense until his arrival. In the meantime most of the members of our congregations are busy sending relief packages over to their folks, before the well-remembered continental winter sets in. The need is still very great, especially for winter clothing. Money, too, is being sent, while the new Hungarian currency is holding its own. Remembering that the Calvinistic Conference thought of the theological professors of our four seminaries in Hungary, the Free Magyar Reformed Church followed it up by sending a thousand dollars to the needy students

of these same seminaries. The ministry of the Word of God must be strengthened in a country where the Lord's cause is to prosper under severe trial and in the midst of adverse conditions.

Much as we think of our brethren in Hungary, nevertheless we must not forget about or become slack toward our duties in our own work here. Guided by this maxim our own group held a conference for its youth in Perth Amboy on September 1-2, and the Evangelical and Reformed group held a conference for its women-folks toward the end of September in New York City. Both conferences were well attended and served their intended purposes well. On the 2nd day of October our Free Magyar Reformed Church subjected four of its younger ministers to a very serious ministerial examination, after they completed their theological studies in approved seminaries. They will be ordained in Detroit on the eve of the anniversary of the Reformation. Thus we strengthened our ranks and lived up to our tradition for a well-trained and devoted ministry.

As I do not know of any other important news in our ranks, I will close my letter by sending to you and to the many friends I met in Grand Rapids my best personal regards and good wishes in the Lord.

CHARLES VINCZE.

Perth Amboy, N. J.

## ECUMENICITY—LOOKING AHEAD

MANY complimentary things have been said of this past summer's advancement in Calvinistic ecumenicity. Those who have been privileged to have had a share in this work gratefully appreciate the encouragement received. It would be lamentable, however, if already at this stage we should over-estimate our achievements. Today's success will be appraised by tomorrow's usefulness. What a small beginning compared with the greatness of the task! We must look ahead.

### Calvinistic Conferences Look Ahead

The Reformed world needs two distinctive instruments: conferences and ecumenical synods. This conviction has been established this past summer. Both conference and synod have made their contributions.

The success of this Third Calvinistic Conference lies in the spontaneous response on the part of the people to seek the advancement of God's kingdom. It is an indication that the Calvinistic world hears the imperious call: "Rise to the challenge of the hour!"

A conference is an instrument or a voice of the Calvinistic "soul". No matter where a Calvinist may be found, no matter in what denomination he may have his membership, he can meet with fellow-Calvinists in conference.

This Third American Calvinistic Conference was distinctly "American" in operation and "international" in representation. What a happy combination! It helped to unify the Reformed world. By personal contacts new possibilities of service were disclosed. It created a desire to coöperate with other Reformed people in different lands.

The distinctive thing of this conference is that it took advantage of the Ecumenical Synod convening in Grand Rapids. This, we take it, may have set a precedent. There is a strong likelihood that a new synod may be preceded by another conference. We hope our Dutch brethren will take this suggestion now made. By taking advantage of ecumenical synods we are creating an international Calvinistic "soul". Such coöperation may be the finger of providence pointing to the road to international Calvinism.

Of course, this raises a problem. There have been several international Calvinistic conferences in Europe in the last two decades. How will all this be interrelated or appraised? No doubt an answer will be found.

## The Ecumenical Synod Looks Ahead

The major question before this Synod was: how can we safeguard the Reformed character of future synods and still be inclusive? This problem has several implications.

Churches can transact business only with churches. Synods work with synods, not with individual churches or men. In this respect Calvinistic conferences have a great advantage. They do not have to worry about ecclesiastical procedure. May we cooperate with a church that in its actions is modernistic, but has within its membership splendid Bible-believing men and women? A synod should serve, not silence the truth. Its hands would be tied if it had to compromise its message with modernism.

A further refinement of this question is this angle: Suppose a church subscribes to and maintains the classic creeds of the Reformed faith, how much latitude must be allowed for differences? If too broad the testimony is too general lacking, consequently, pungency. If too narrow, no joint action will be possible.

This synod has adopted the following basis of fellowship to the effect that any church delegating any one to a future synod must subscribe to and maintain the classic Reformed creeds. Since this synod is not a super-synod and does not create a world denomination, it can allow for differences in practice.

The distinctive value of this Synod is the birth of a new ecclesiastical instrument—the ecumenical synod. As far as we know there is nothing in the Reformed world that can be compared with it. It is the child of our age made possible only because of the scientific and transportation advances of this century. Its authority is primarily consultative. Its aim is to be mutually helpful. Its goal is to speak corporately to the entire church and the world. The instrument has been forged. This, we take it, is the value of the past ecumenical synod. We do not know how God will be pleased to use it in the future. We cannot blueprint the future. The instrument is there, and no doubt God has work for it to do.

Among the reflections others may not touch upon is the question of Reformed methodology clearly evident at this Synod. What we mean will be clear from what follows. The past decades have given this Synod several questions for investigative purposes: inspiration, evolution, eschatology (last things), ecclesiology (church), and the church and the state. Synod viewed all these questions through international spectacles. Each represented continent gave its slant. What a value in studying these questions from all angles! The question naturally arose after enjoying this two-day post-graduate course in theology: "what next?"

The first possibility was to impress upon the heart of the present Calvinistic organizations the urgency of concentrating their chief efforts upon these vital issues, and to cope with them according to their own methods of operation. Through these organizations people will be enlightened. This method has in its favor that the church as an "organism", that is the entire membership of the church, becomes active. Each one feels the burden resting upon his own shoulders. All talents come into play. The burden does not fall upon a few willing shoulders. Then, too, we steer clear of a great danger. When a synod accepts any report as its own, this report in its creedal statements becomes tantamount to a doctrinal declaration either as a revision or as an expansion of the creeds. This is not objectionable, provided the membership involved is mature for such a revision or expansion. If not, we may court unwholesome controversy. When *organizations* make any commitments they carry no church approval. They can be subjected to a scrutinizing controversy and if conducted in a Christian spirit, these can lead to good results.

The other method suggested is the appointment of committees. Then the burden falls upon synod. The advantage of this method is: "Everybody's work is no man's work". If Synod does not initiate these studies then we shall meet unprepared in 1948

or thereabouts. Perhaps all would admire intelligent and definite leadership in these chaotic days.

Synod accepted both methods. The second method finally gained sufficient support. We believe that this was the wisest thing Synod could do, for we believe that perhaps we can adopt reports as information and then commend them to the churches for serious study without rushing into creedal expansion.

The organizations especially encouraged to study and to propagate the great Reformed truths are: the South African organizations, "Evangelië en Wereld" in the Netherlands, and the "Calvinistic Action Committee" in the United States of America. Perhaps a later article in THE CALVIN FORUM may acquaint our readers with the fine work these societies are doing. This must be stressed, however, that synod took cognizance only of the societies it knew. It would be the last to limit its encouragement to these three. Nor does this exclude the splendid work our religious press is doing. The only trouble is that the moment we begin to enumerate the various periodicals we shall soon jokingly say in the jargon of the old-fashioned auctioneer: "too numerous to mention".

The instrument has been created. The task has been entrusted to both the church "organism" and the church "institute". We look ahead to 1948 or soon thereafter. The intangible ecumenical "soul" yearns for synodical fellowship as soon as possible. How beautiful this visible expression of unity of the invisible faith and love in our Lord!

We regret that we can make only passing mention of the Ecumenical Synod's decision to create an International Reformed Council of Missions. The participating synods will be asked upon concurrence to appoint two of its members to work together with the other appointees as a missionary council. The duty of such a council will be the study of Reformed mission principles, and especially of Reformed mission technique. The great value, of course, lies in the field of missions. At the same time no Christian of today can deny the close connection between missions and ecumenicity. We believe this council among other things will be a new link in the growing chain of ecumenicity. It merits our most serious attention.

## Calvinistic Organizations Look Ahead

The Calvinistic organizations we have in mind are those mentioned above.

The Third Calvinistic Conference has strengthened the desire of these organizations to come in closer contact with each other. Representatives of these three societies sat and ate with each other. Possibilities were discussed over coffee cups (*a la Dutch*). The conference itself has encouraged the Calvinistic Action Committee to seek ways and means for closer coöperation, and to create a new "instrument" whereby Calvinistic scholars throughout the world can collaborate in their given fields. It was also suggested that the C. A. C. set things in motion whereby we gradually could formulate some political and social creed. (cf. *The Banner* of Oct. 12, in which the Rev. P. Van Tuinen makes the same suggestion.)

What is in the offing? Again, no one can blueprint the future. "Unless the Lord builds the house"—is true today as always. Perhaps the following may be said to be in the minds of those who have taken a special interest in this phase of kingdom work.

We do not know in what way we can coöperate with the South African societies. The South African Synodical delegates are still marooned in the United States waiting for the maritime strikes to cease, and the passenger lists to shrink. We believe that when the South African delegates return home they will effect a closer relationship. The undersigned has nothing but admiration for the indefatigable action for the Reformed faith these societies display. He is looking forward to a closer coöperation.

The C. A. C. and "Evangelië en Wereld" have been in correspondence for a little while already on a very small scale.

An invitation has come to the C. A. C. to work along similar lines as the society "Evangelie en Wereld" does.

The Calvinistic Action Committee hopes soon to give an entire meeting to this specific question: How best can we serve the cause of Calvinism in the United States as well as internationally? It has already published one book. It soon will publish the second. But that is not enough.

The supreme thing is that no group of persons can do this work single-handed. Already our ambitions outrun our time

and strength. Still success is bought only by sacrifice in faith. The Reformed world must speak: "Crisis!" It must shout, "Crisis!". After all our oratorical ammunition has been exploded, and our oratorical sweat has been wiped from our excited brows we must sit patiently at the feet of the common man who says in his unexcited, droll manner: "What are you going to do about it? Don't tell us the world is bad, we know that, let's get going".

JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

## Book Reviews

### GREAT TEACHERS

GREAT TEACHERS AS PORTRAYED BY THOSE WHO STUDIED UNDER THEM. Edited with an Introduction by Houston Peterson. Published by Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N. J. 21 + 351 pages. 1946. \$3.50.

THERE are not a few terms that are overworked by book reviewers these days; terms such as lusty, salty, compelling, rattling, blue moon, (intriguing seems to be passing out), and, especially, "must book". There can not possibly be so many books that *must* be read as reviewers would have us believe. Of course, there are books that demand reading. For the Christian the Bible is the "must" book. For the Reformed theologian, Calvin's *Institutes*, as for his Roman Catholic colleague, Saint Thomas' *Summa* is such a book. So is, I suppose, even still, for the medical student Osler's *Principles*, and for the mariner Bowditch's *Practical Navigator*. Every science, I take it, has its "must" books. After more than eight decades, Helmholtz's *Physiological Optics* is still indispensable to the student of optics. And, surely nobody would venture to speak on psychology with any semblance of authority if he were ignorant of Wundt's *Grundzüge*.

This granted, I must confess that little irritates me more than to be told by every upstart reviewer that this or that book of possibly only passing interest is a "must" book.

The book now under review definitely is not an indispensable book. One can not know optics if ignorant of Helmholtz, but one can teach, teach superbly well in complete ignorance of Peterson's book and in complete ignorance of everything in it.

This having been said, I add in the same breath that I wish I could persuade every teacher, at least every college teacher to read, reread, and to ponder this book. He could not do this without great profit. Will it make him a better teacher? If he really reads, and inwardly digests, yes, positively yes. Will it improve his technique? Not one whit. But he should get from the reading a new inspiration, a new stimulus to high endeavor, a new appreciation of truly great teaching, a new respect for himself and his profession.

Being in the nature of an anthology, or something resembling an anthology, like all anthologies it can satisfy nobody. From the present reviewer's point of view the omission of Rufus Jones' beautiful chapter on his Haverford teachers in his *The Trail of Life in College*, seems most regrettable. If anything it is even finer than Irwin Edman's very fine chapter, included in this book, on his Columbia mentors. Room could have been found for Jones by omitting some chapter which seems of minor value. There are a few such chapters.

There is, of course, a chapter on William James. This is as it should be. One would think that a place should have been found as well for Stanley Hall. If the reader will pardon the impropriety, the grave impropriety, I will say that I would have been glad to write the chapter myself. If James was the embodiment of the undergraduate's ideal teacher, Hall was that of the graduate student.

But, it is objected, the editor was subject to limitations of space. Undeniably. Space, however, could readily have been found by omitting, for example, the selection on Sanderson of Oundle. Surely, if that fairly illustrates Sanderson's teaching, he deserves no place in the company of great teachers. If the editor wished to include, as well he might, the famous headmaster of an English so-called public school then why did he not choose Arnold of Rugby?

But one must not bicker. I dare say a case for greatness of a sort can be made for every teacher, or nearly every teacher, or shall we say, most teachers in the book. Here are their names: Anne Sullivan, James Mill, Lizzie Moore, Moses Woolson, Frederick Sanderson, Mark Hopkins, Charles Edward Garmann, Francis Barton Gummere, Woodrow Wilson, Simon Nelson Patten, George Lincoln Burr, John Dewey, Agassiz, William James, Frederick Jackson Turner, George Lyman Kittredge, Sigmund Freud, Cesar Frank, Theodor Leschetizky, Auguste Rodin, Robert Henri, Emerson.

In most instances the appreciations are written by those best fit to write them. Who better than Helen Keller could write on Miss Sullivan, on Gummere than Christopher Morley, on the Columbia Galaxy than Irwin Edman, on Agassiz than Nathaniel Shaler, on Kittredge than Stuart Sherman, on Freud than Hans Sachs, on Emerson than Lowell?

However, I confess being puzzled by the inclusion of A. P. Dennis' contribution on Woodrow Wilson. It would seem to be fair and yet is actually devastating. It probably more nearly approximates the truth than the highly laudatory chapter in the second volume of Ray Stannard Baker's monumental biography, but it leaves at least one reader questioning. This represents the final judgment of one student of Wilson. Is it that of other discerning pupils? Of a majority of them? One wonders.

All in all the book is a credit to the editor, who, moreover, has written a most excellent introductory chapter. One should buy the book so one may read it leisurely, savor it thoroughly as one reads, and then may return to this and that and another chapter again and again.

J. BROENE.

### PROTESTANT SAINTS

A BOOK OF PROTESTANT SAINTS, by Ernest Gordon. 376 pages. The Moody Press, 153 Institute Place, Chicago, Ill. 1946. Price, \$2.50.

MR. GORDON, we are informed, is active in the anti-alcohol movement and a writer on that subject, editor of a hymnal, and news editor and staff writer for the well known *Sunday School Times*. His literary and journalistic ability and command of an easy, popular style is evident throughout this volume.

When calling it *A Book of Protestant Saints* the author certainly gave this latest production of his a catchy title. This title, of course, raises questions. The New Testament has the

custom of calling every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ a saint. But evidently this book is setting up a special category of saints within the totality of believers. Usually that is considered to be a Roman Catholic peculiarity. Since it is possible for a professing Christian to fall away from the faith, it is, of course, possible also, with good sense to reserve the title of saint in the sense of proven saint to such as complete their life in the faith. However, it is clear that thus every one who is saved would have to be placed into the category of saints and every saved Protestant in the class of Protestant saints. If one is going to make a selection from that entire class, it becomes a question of interest, what criterion he will use for selection.

It is not clear, just what Mr. Gordon's criterion is. What is clear is the fact that the author would not at all deny the sainthood of every true believer but embodies a reminder of the large class of saints without fame in his chapter on Saints of Humble Station. Nor would he limit the saints specifically to the men and women whose daily vocation can be called religious, for he also has a chapter on Some Lay Saints. And in no sense can the list of saints dealt with in this volume be taken as meant to be exhaustive. In many cases the picture of the saint which the author paints shows in its margin one or more or even a multitude of less prominent persons whose own sainthood shines forth clearly from what little we learn about them. Of course, the title itself suggests that there are other than Protestant saints; and quite a number of Roman Catholic saints, whether sainted or branded by their own Church, are warmly commended. Why the author should speak also of saints of present-day humanism, examples of which class he sees in Socrates, Tolstoi, and Ghandi, is undiscoverable, and this use of the term, saints, surely is not commendable.

A veritable host of saintly men and women passes in review in this book. Not taking account of the many secondary persons mentioned in passing in the sketches, I find over sixty individuals treated in whole chapters or subdivisions of such. They represent quite a cross-section of Protestantism since the Evangelical Awakening. Church leaders, missionaries, workers in various philanthropic fields, men and women from the Christian West and from churches of converts in the mission fields, Norwegians, Swedes, Russians, Germans, Britishers, French, Dutch and Swiss, men in the most varied stations of life, constitute a collection that is quite universal in every sense, a very representative selection. If any one wishes to catch a glimpse of kingdom work in out-of-the-way places or to get a bird's-eye view of the various types of kingdom work, as well as samples of whole-souled devotion to the cause of Christ, let him read this volume. The perusal will be an inspiration. Apart from a few details, as the author's attitude to modern miracles and the extended mention of cures from demon-possession, where one might raise a question or two, the book belongs definitely in the class of popular edificatory literature of the sane kind.

The fact that no Protestant saint of the first two centuries since the Reformation finds a place in this selection might have been indicated in the title. Even the leaders of Pietism and the Wesleys are absent. For readers of Dutch antecedents the sketch of Dr. A. Kuyper will be of particular interest. The book appropriately closes with a sketch of a Russian martyr and his sufferings at the hands of the Bolshevists, thereby bringing its catalog of saints of Protestantism down to the present.

D. H. KROMMINGA.

### THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, by Dr. Henry Beets. The Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1946. 174 pages. Price, \$2.00.

**D**R. BEETS has for years been known as the historian of the Christian Reformed Church, and rightly so. Besides his English manual with the same title and somewhat different make-up which carried the history until 1923, and his much more extensive history of the denomination

in the Holland language that had come from the press five years earlier, I know of only two books that are entirely devoted to the Christian Reformed Church and its history. One is a mere Outline of that history from the pen of the Rev. H. Vander Werp, which appeared in 1898, and the other a memorial volume, published on behalf of the denomination itself when it was half a century old, in 1907. His leadership in this field, the field of denominational history, restricted to his own Church, is quite undisputed, and he is to be congratulated, as no doubt he is grateful for the fact that his advancing years have not prevented him from getting out a further volume on his beloved subject, which will no doubt continue his leadership for another period.

Dr. Beets has peculiar qualities and has been peculiarly fitted for rendering his Church the service of writing up its history. His long years of service in the press and in the pulpit have perfected his characteristic style and simple, direct presentation and choice of material which every reader can grasp, with a natural emphasis on the points which he desires to remain with his readers. His period of active service spans the years of transition, in the course of which his denomination changed from a Church of foreigners to a thoroughly domesticated Church. The Church is not yet ninety years old, and the writer's own seventy-seven years cover most of that period, while soon after his arrival in this country as a young man of about twenty his active interest in the affairs of the then still very young denomination must have begun. There are now few men left who have had the extended personal acquaintance with the first leaders of the denomination of which Dr. Beets can boast. Above all, Dr. Beets has never been a recluse, but has always emphatically moved among men, easily making contacts, eager to extend his contacts, and ever careful to keep them up. And almost from the first he was thrust into positions in the Church that amply gave him opportunity to put his talents in this line to the utmost use. As pastor of our first English-speaking Church, right in the center of the denominational life, as representative of his Church on a committee for revision of the Psalter in which nine denominations cooperated, as editor of the Church's English weekly, *The Banner*, and then as the Church's first Director of Missions, which office gave him opportunity for extensive travels, the author has been able to gather first-hand acquaintance with the life of the Church he loves from almost every conceivable angle.

This new volume on *The Christian Reformed Church* has perhaps two distinctive features. It has a bit less to say on the distinctive stand of the Church than the volume of 1923, but it amply compensates for this by dwelling at much greater length on the history out of which the denomination came forth with historical necessity. To this trait the author himself calls special attention in the Introduction. In fact, to this previous history some fifty-four pages are devoted, while the denominational history proper is reviewed in fifty-three pages. It has definite advantages, to treat of the activities of the denomination in a separate section, and Dr. Beets does this in another fifty-three pages, dealing with the educational institutions and the missionary endeavors connected with the Christian Reformed Church. With one exception the thirty-two pages of cuts and maps are not numbered and outside the numbered pages of the book. The great predominance of personal portraits in the cuts accords quite well with the objective character of the book: it deals throughout with persons and events, with the indisputable data of history and not so much with its more recondite and less certain and less plain meaning. The great mass of such information which is gathered between its covers will be helpful to every minister in the Church and greatly informing for its alert laymen. As a gift to our young men and young women it can render incalculable service in alerting them and developing their denominational consciousness, especially since it is easily digestible for the ordinary run of them. May it have wide usefulness.

D. H. KROMMINGA.

## BOWEN BIBLE MUSEUM

THROUGH BOWEN MUSEUM WITH BIBLE IN HAND. By Barbara M. Bowen. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. \$2.00.

**I**N the Foreword Mrs. Bowen tells us that she wants to make the Bible a *living* book for many people to whom it is at present not living. To accomplish her aim she went to the Bible lands and spent much time "getting acquainted with the people, their country, their manners, folklore, superstitions; their ways of living, dressing, eating and thinking; the geography, and archaeology of the lands" (p. 1).

Besides studying at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, she and her husband brought back thousands of slides and several tons of antiquities dating from the Christian era back to 3500 B. C.

With this material the Bowens filled a museum in order to help young people understand the Bible from the Oriental standpoint. E.g., there is a complete collection of the herbs mentioned in the Bible as well as the trees and the flora.

Some of the chapter headings give us the information that there is a collection of drinking vessels, musical instruments, agricultural instruments and scenes, towers of which models have been reproduced, models of tombs, charms, alabaster and ancient aids to feminine beauty, coins, weights, scrolls of the Torah, candles, lamps, mirrors, tear-bottles, etc., in endless profusion and variety.

Further, there is an interesting chapter on the medicines of the primitive Arabs, also one on "The Cities and Products of Antiquity," and "Jars from Long Ago".

Some interesting observations are made about tear-bottles, vessels of honor, mandrakes, pulse, and numerous other items about which the ordinary reader of the Bible knows next to nothing. As an example I cite the case of Mary moistening Jesus' feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. Mary, we are told, did not produce these dust-removing tears on the spot but rather poured them out of her tear-bottle, which was a priceless possession of every Hebrew in that day.

This book undoubtedly has a certain value as the study of archaeology has a general use of corroborating the historical details of Bible history. As such it may serve a useful purpose for Sunday School libraries and also in the home. However, it is not documented and is of no use to the scholar who is looking for scientific information on the subject. This is no disparagement of the book as such which merely aims to give the common people a better appreciation of the truths of the Bible by picturing the historical setting in which the events of the Bible took place. It is, of course, assumed that people will be interested and will profit from seeing stones from Carmel; water out of Jacob's well, the Jordan and the Red Sea; a crown of thorns; a circumcision instrument and some frankincense.

But it is really amusing and a strain upon one's credulity to be told that some of the leaves and acorns of Abraham's oak (or at least from its descendants) have been secured; that a stone from Rachel's well was bought from the caretaker (reminiscent of the stones that are annually carried from Helen Hunt's grave by her devotees and as religiously restored by the government Rangers in order to be ready for next season's crop of credulous tourists). The whole thing borders on the pathetic, and one readily understands why the Jews want to muscle in on this fine tourist business of the Arabs. The matter becomes exceedingly incongruous when we are solemnly assured that this Museum has the only piece of the Judas Tree extant. The story of how it was obtained is related with religious fervor and harks back to the literature of the Crusades, but to the unbiased mind it suggests only mendacity and Western gullibility.

However, this whole business has a serious angle which ought not to be overlooked. In my modest opinion, we are traveling the way back to Rome with all this exaggerated interest in the relics of the Holy Land. This is a fundamentally pagan business with a good deal of awe and hushed reverence for these "sacred" objects.

As far as I am concerned there is nothing sacred about the whole business—sand, stones, tears, water, or Judas' Tree. And there is nothing holy about Palestine either. And if we as Calvinistic Protestants do not oppose this paganistic Romish tendency which is abroad today, we'll end up with a lot of fetishes and shrines and magic things. It all smells of an unhealthy mysticism, of an externalism which may indeed make the Bible live as a book of Oriental customs, but which in reality has nothing to do with the LIVING WORD.

HENRY R. VAN TIL.

## THE USE OF SCRIPTURE

THE CHRISTIAN USE OF THE BIBLE. By Frank E. Gaebelien. Chicago: The Moody Press. 1946. \$1.25.

**T**HE volume under consideration constitutes the "Griffith Thomas Memorial Lectures," a special lectureship established in May, 1926, at the Dallas Theological Seminary. The author is headmaster at Stony Brook School, Long Island, and is head of the Bible Department as well. He has published eight other books and writes a weekly meditation for several religious periodicals and is a minister of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

The author takes the *locus classicus* for the doctrine of inspiration—II Timothy 3:16, 17—and calls it "a carefully considered, balanced, and authoritative statement of the Christian use of the Bible" (p. 20).

The use of any book depends upon its reading, but more especially is that the case with the Bible. However, with the presupposition that the Spirit of God must give us the true interpretation we can proceed to find the meaning of Scripture by a study of the Scriptures. By a "Scripture" is meant any self-contained portion of the Word of God.

The plan followed by the author is a careful study of his text, both exegetically and homiletically; with special attention to the use of the Bible for the four functions of teaching (doctrine), conviction (reproof), restoration (correction), and education in righteousness (instruction in righteousness). And, finally, we have a consideration of what the Christian use of the Bible does to, for, and through the man of God.

It gives me pleasure to say that this is a very reputable piece of exegesis, that it makes very fine devotional reading, that every student of the Bible can greatly profit by a careful perusal of these pages. The work is marked by simplicity of style, a clarity of expression, and directness of thought that is refreshing. It is also orthodox, scholarly and inspirational—a good book for your church library or for the home. I liked especially the emphasis on the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian consciousness and the apologetic approach in general, e.g., the contrast with the "modern use of the Bible" which is shown to be out of step with the latest scientific data.

However, I feel constrained to register a few demurring remarks. The author asserts "with confidence" as the cornerstone of his thinking, that Paul here gave not a casual reference as to the use of Scripture, but a plain and comprehensive definition of these things. Two propositions are involved. All of Scripture, i.e., every Scripture, is profitable for these four uses mentioned above, and this is their total value.

But the argumentation, to me, at least, is not convincing. Of course, I also believe that the Holy Spirit applies the Word and that His power is infinite. However, it is not made clear in what way every Scripture is useful in these four ways, e.g., the genealogies, or the recital of names in the taking of a census, or the Levitical regulatory statutes, etc. In my humble opinion the author is losing sight of the temporary, ceremonial provisions of the theocracy and the abiding, living Word which is normative and binding for the saints of all times. It does not necessarily follow that because all of the Bible is the Word of God and all is good, that it is all equally good for the four uses mentioned by Paul.

Furthermore, Paul is here speaking of the positive benefits to be derived for the man of God, but there is also a negative

result—the use of the Scriptures by God's faithful ambassadors tends to harden some in their sin and the Word is a savor of death unto death for many.

In the second place, I cannot concur with the judgment of the author, which is buttressed with the authority of Origen *et al.*, that the function of the Bible proves the inspiration just as the inspiration proves the function. These two propositions are not convertible logically any more than they are literally. Origen is quoted with approval in this connection, viz., "for one alternative you must admit regarding those scriptures—either they are not God-inspired since they are not profitable; or that, since they are profitable, they are God-inspired" (quoted on p. 30 from the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IX, p. 299). Here the matter of inspiration is altogether a pragmatic issue in the best style of William James c. s. This is a very dangerous apologetic because the truth is made to depend upon its profitability in life. Here the author goes far beyond his first statement that the profitability of Scripture is *further proof* of its divine origin. In the latter statement it is taken for granted that the inspiration of the Scriptures rests upon their self-testimony, and the profitability is merely corroborative evidence.

In conclusion, a word about the use of "use". The ambiguity results from the fact that the title suggests the manner in which the Christian ought to use the Scriptures, but the main exposition is concerned with four *uses* to which we may put the Scripture in training the man of God unto every good work. The words "profitable for" suggest that these four ends may be achieved through the use of the Bible. In reality they constitute four proximate ends that we must set for ourselves in order to attain to the ultimate perfection of the man of God. Actually the use of the Bible which the author recommends is *mechanical*. Since it is all God's Word and all profitable, therefore one can open it at random and receive the profit. The case of Augustine taking up and reading the first passage upon which his eyes fell is cited in substantiation for this method. I merely wish to point out that we cannot follow the example of Augustine, who was not a saint at the time. We ought to use the Scriptures intelligently and reverently, but not as a magical device ignoring the normative character of what is written.

Enough! I wish to acknowledge that the perusal of this book was profitable—it stimulated and inspired me.

HENRY R. VAN TIL.

### BIBLICAL NOVEL

CHARIOTEER. *A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph.* By Gertrude Eberle. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids. 1946. Price \$2.50.

MRS. GERTRUDE EBERLE, author of the stirring historical novel, "Charioteer", has accomplished what few writers of this type of novel have been able to achieve. She has presented an accurate account of Biblical history and has done so without being hostile to the spirit of imagination. She is an ardent student of Biblical history, and has adequately equipped herself to write this book by means of her extended travels through the areas which form the setting of her story, and by her strongly developed philosophy that a steadfast, positive faith can accomplish all things. From the pagan faith of the hero, the "Charioteer" emerges his victorious trust in the God of Joseph. Mrs. Eberle is to be commended on her authentic and inspiring presentation of the Biblical facts as given in the book of Genesis, chapters thirty-seven to forty-one.

Outstanding is the atmosphere of a definite locality—from the dragon-like caravan procession winding its way from Dothan to Egypt, to the weird and mystical strangeness of the heathen lands. Supplementing the well-planned plot and counterplot are the brilliant play of characters and the well-balanced contrast of personages. Mrs. Eberle's ability to analyze her characters and to lay bare their real selves gives her book the added touch of a psychological study. While remaining true to the Biblical facts, she supplies her book with excitement and suspense, grief and happiness. And always there is the sustaining note of faith.

The one fault, if any, is that the love scenes and the emotional patterns of the main characters are too modern. It is a little difficult to imagine that the courting of Joseph and his friends could so closely resemble that of the present day romancer. However, this point is negligible in view of the success of the author in giving to modern readers a book which both strengthens the soul and elevates the mind.

RUTH B. HOEKENGA.

