Natural Science
   At a Christian College

Mission History
   Four Stages

Isaac Watts
   Hymn Writer

Capitalism
   Christian or Anti-Christian?

China's Plight
   Its Crying Need

Books
Letters
Verse

VOL. XIV, NO. 6  TWO DOLLARS  JANUARY, 1949
                     A YEAR
THE CALVIN FORUM

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

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Contents

Editorials

Looking Forward and Looking Upward................................................ 107
Coram Deo 1948................................................................................ 107
Christian Students in China............................................................... 108

Articles

The Freedom of Science................................................................. 109
Natural Science and Divine Teleology................................................ 110
Now and Then..................................................................................... 111
Four Stages in the Expansion of the Church....................................... 112
"Sing a New Song"............................................................................. 116
Is Free Enterprise Anti-Christian?...................................................... 119

From Our Correspondents

China’s Students and the Gospel....................................................... 122
The China Prayer Movement............................................................. 123

Book Reviews

Solid Sermons..................................................................................... 125
Sounding the Alarum.......................................................................... 125
The Criticism of Fiction.................................................................... 127
The Criticism of Poetry.................................................................... 127

Verse

Winter Mood....................................................................................... 108

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JANUARY, 1949
Looking Forward and Looking Upward

Standing on the threshold of 1949 our mood can hardly be one of easy cheer and light optimism. Even those of our contemporaries to whom optimism is a sort of temperamental religion will have to confess there is not much in the world scene of the day to inspire them. Four years—almost—since the joyous days of the end of the European war, but to this day no peace treaty has been signed, and some of us are beginning to doubt whether there ever will. We are gradually slipping from one war into another. Those who were allies at one time have long since become our enemies and opponents, even if we do sit at the same conference table with them. The diabolical force of Nazism has been liquidated, but the equally devilish power centered in the Kremlin is spreading its tentacles farther and farther around the globe. Nations who only a few years ago were gloriously liberated from the forces which robbed them of freedom and held them in slavery are again filled with fear and terror before the new tyranny which threatens to engulf them. Many West-Europeans are eager to flee their homeland and find a haven of refuge in the comparative safety of the United States. Meanwhile everyone knows that no nation is safe anywhere if once the available knowledge of modern technology is brought to bear in military fashion upon it. Such is the prospect when we look ahead.

Happily the Christian also has a higher perspective. He not only looks ahead; he also looks up. He knows that all of human history must fulfill the purposes of God. He does not believe in a universe in which God is fifty per cent, but one hundred per cent, in control. You say such knowledge, if he really believes it, will lead to indifference, to fatalism, to complete ethical apathy and inaction? You are quite mistaken. There may be such Christians, but they are off the beam. They do not know the full-orbed Christianity of the New Testament. Theirs is a caricature of the Christian Faith. Genuine Christians are inspired by the fact that God is in His heaven and that He "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" True Christians know that He in Whom they trust is not a mere good chum, a well-meaning Santa Claus, a God "who is Himself infinite, who Himself struggles in His great effort from strength to strength", who is "like us a being in conflict with the unknown and the limitless and the forces of death" (H. G. Wells). They know Him as the sovereign Lord, the God of Isaiah forty. Though they dare not themselves laugh at the terrible enemies they have to face, they know and trust in Him Who sitteth in the heavens and laughs in derision over the diabolical plots of the godless. And so they have nought to fear, and still they face the grim task before them with a deep sense of solemn divine summons upon them.

The Christian can look forward with undaunted faith, because he has learned first to look upward.

C. B.

Coram Deo
1948

Recently duty brought me to Michigan's town of Ann Arbor, the seat of one of America’s largest and most influential universities. Being invited to address the Michigan Christian Fellowship which met that Sunday afternoon in Lane Hall, I utilized the few spare moments before the meeting to drive to the spot where only two days before the cornerstone of a new students' chapel had been laid. The inscription chiseled into the stone was impressive in its simplicity: "Coram Deo, 1948". It reminded me at once of the two simple initials engraved upon an unpretentious stone in the Genevan cemetery of Plainpalais: J. C. No better, no more expressive inscription could have been chosen for this cornerstone at Ann Arbor. For this is to be the new building of the Ann Arbor Students' Chapel of the Christian Reformed Churches of the State of Michigan. In this university town with its thousands of students, various denominations are seeking to provide centers of spiritual nurture for the young men and young women who are daily drinking at the fountain of human knowledge. Some groups have had churches in this city for years which make it a point to be "university churches". The Christian Reformed Church came into this city to provide preaching services for its students enrolled at this center of learning. Most Christian Reformed students take their undergraduate work at Calvin College, but there is a large contingent of these who go on to the University for graduate and professional study. Besides, there is also a more permanent group of Christian Reformed people at Ann Arbor engaged in teaching, in nursing, and other professional labors. To these people the Ann Arbor Students’ Chapel of the Christian Reformed Church seeks to minister. Under the guidance of the student pastor, the Rev. Leonard Verduin, a fine constructive piece
of work has been done. The laying of this cornerstone and the eventual erection of this building marks a step forward in this program of student evangelism as carried on by the Christian Reformed Church. In the spirit of John Calvin and in full harmony with the biblical, evangelical faith the Gospel is being preached here from Lord's day to Lord's day. This is a great work. It should be generously supported. Let the Christian Reformed Churches of Michigan, the state in which the largest contingent of Christian Reformed people are living, do their part to hold aloft the Calvinistic banner on the campus of the University of Michigan. It is gratifying to know that many students of other denominations show their appreciation of the Reformed type of preaching that is being offered for spiritual nurture by this Chapel.

C. B.

Christian Students in China

The present plight of China brings this “mastodon of the nations” into the focus of our interest and attention. This nation is deserving of our sympathy. It has been in almost continual war for nearly two decades. Japan had overrun China long before the Second World War and Pearl Harbor, and since the elimination of her Nipponese foe, this nation of over four hundred million people has been slated by civil war. All this is now becoming part of the pattern of the advance of Communism in the Far East. Into this political bog we do not care to penetrate at the present time. We do feel that this is the time for every Christian force in China to assert itself. The Chinese nation is not so much in need of our sympathy as of our courageous spiritual aid. Whether the attitude of the present administration in Washington is a wise one with a view to the world situation, we do not know. We do know that China needs Christ today more than ever. We do know that China needs the Gospel whether its civil war should end or should drag on indefinitely. The key to the spread of that Gospel lies to a large extent in the student world. The Chinaman naturally reveres the scholar, almost in the same way—one is tempted to say with a bit of exaggeration—as the American reveres the business man. Confucianism naturally worships the scholar. The good scholar, versed in the Chinese Classics, is supposed to be the good ruler. And the Christian forces in China have not failed to utilize this approach for the spread of the Gospel. They have sought to win the students. Christian work among students is one of the outstanding achievements in China. With this background one appreciates some of the recent informative letters from our correspondents in China. Bruinooge in his letter from Peiping (Nov. issue), Calvin Chao in his informative note from Shanghai (Dec. issue), and Andrews and Chang both in the present issue make mention of the importance and value of this student work. All four make mention of the important work of the Chinese Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and urge upon Christians both in China and in America to pray for and support this work. It is also of great value and significance that the present Chinese student mind is remarkably receptive to the Christian Gospel. They have nowhere to turn. It is the only true and effective alternative to the pernicious ideology of Communism. Only Christ can save China, and save it to the uttermost. May the eloquent pleas of Peter Chang and Egbert Andrews, which providentially and without previous knowledge or planning appear in this current issue of The Calvin Forum, be heard far and wide and find great response. With the rising tide of atheistic Communism in the Far East, the Orient has no greater need than that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May our advantageous position of today in Japan be utilized for the spread of the Gospel. May Southern Korea be given the opportunity to embrace the best of our Christian civilization as the fruit of the Gospel. And may China—which has faced great crises before in its history—come out of the present tumult and turmoil to embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the civilization of freedom which is inseparable from it. If this goal is ever to be accomplished it is certain that the Christian student organizations must play a leading role. God bless the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and its affiliates in China!

C. B.

WINTER MOOD

Now are the valleys softened
And the far hills lost to sight
As the slow, persistent snowfall
Sifts down in a cloud of white.

Gone are the sounds of summer
From the dull, ice-thickened creek.
Here sound but the hush of drifting
And the sudden rasp of sleet.

The day and the night blend slowly,
The wind, in the distance, dies.
Then a star in the far-off darkness
Pins up cloud-brocaded skies.

Marie J. Post

The Calvin Forum * * * January, 1949
The Freedom of Science*

Dear Friends of Calvin:

Today we are witnesses of, and participants in, the laying of the cornerstone of the new Science Building of Calvin College. A happy occasion indeed. First of all for our Faculty and students, but also for all our Christian Reformed people. It tells them that good progress is being made in the work for which they so generously contributed. And once more our hearty thanks to all our people and to all our Churches for their loyal co-operation.

Your gifts guarantee, with the help of God, the continued success and popularity of Calvin, at a time when adequate equipment and facilities for scientific study and teaching are an absolute must for any college that would maintain its place of honor and influence in the educational world of our day.

However, let us enlarge our vision. Let us not think merely of our school or of our denomination. Let us see very clearly that the erection of this new Science Building is a significant contribution to the life of our country and to the cause of human welfare.

For one thing, it will be a symbol of the essential harmony between true religion and true science. It proclaims to all who will see and hear that there is no conflict between the teachings of the Bible and any real fact or discovery in the field of the natural sciences.

However, there are even greater reasons for rejoicing on this occasion. Let us remind ourselves that we are living in an age of fear—fear of war, fear of tyranny and slavery, fear in the hearts of the masses, but especially fear in the hearts of those who have firsthand knowledge of the mighty weapons of destruction that science has put into the hands of modern man; weapons such as the atomic bomb and deadly bacteria. And the awful realization is coming home to the hearts of men with crushing, almost stupefying, force that modern man cannot be trusted with the mighty weapons he has forged. Moral progress has not kept pace with scientific development, and unless there is a mighty religious revival, a tremendous moral re-armament, mankind may well destroy itself, and that very soon.

It is over against this dark background that we must see the beautiful importance of this occasion, and of the erection of a new Science Building for Calvin College—a College that aims to give to our country and to the world not merely scientifically trained minds, but Christian young men and women who believe that character, integrity, and decency are even more important than scientific development, and who will seek to use their scientific knowledge to the glory of God, and not to the destruction, but to the welfare of humanity.

Again, this occasion is so beautiful because the erection of a new Science Building for a Christian college is the guarantee of truly scientific study. For science means more than the mere cataloging, and counting, and analysis of physical facts. Science seeks to know the truth in the higher sense of the word. And God, the great eternal reality, God alone is the truth. Only when the facts and the forces and the laws of this physical universe and all human life are studied in relation to God, and as His handiwork, are they really understood.

Such scientific study is truly free. Let us not be disturbed by the criticism of an unbelieving world, that a church-controlled college cannot give truly scientific teaching. It is not the Christian church, but its violent enemies, that today threaten and deny academic freedom. Only recently Professor Anton R. Zhebrak, a prominent Russian scientist of international repute, felt himself compelled to repudiate deeply cherished views on the question of heredity versus environment because those views—and I quote him—"were recognized as erroneous by the Central Committee of our party."

There you have the real threat to scientific freedom today. The suppression of honest scientific opinion by the crude strong arm of a tyrannical political state. On the other hand, every teacher of science is free if he can and may freely give to his students and to the world views and opinions on scientific questions that are in accordance with his own intellectual and conscientious convictions.

That freedom is denied in communistic Russia. It is not denied, thank God, in our beloved America. It is not denied in or by the Christian Church.

And, finally, the highest freedom that any scientist can enjoy is that his thinking shall be free of all false philosophies that obscure and deny the divine meaning and purpose of the universe and of human life. That is the freedom of Calvin College. That is the freedom enjoyed by all our teachers, also in the field of the natural sciences. Therefore we thank God for this happy occasion, and we thank God for the glad hope that is ours that soon we may see our new Science Building in all its completed beauty, and occupy it and use and devote all its facilities to the study and triumph of true science, unto the welfare of mankind and unto the glory of our covenant God.

* This and the following address were delivered at the recent laying of the cornerstone of the new Science Building of Calvin College.—EDITOR.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JANUARY, 1949 109

* Gerrit Hoeksema
President Board of Trustees
Calvin College and Seminary

* JANUARY, 1949 109
Natural Science and Divine Teleology

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board of Trustees, and of Our Faculties, Former and Present Students, and other Friends of Calvin College and Seminary:

In view of the erection of our new science building, I am reminded of a young lady who, when she received an unexpected valuable gift, exclaimed, “I am so happy that I can see doxologies everywhere.”

So also, when we, science teachers, recall how greatly God has increased Calvin’s opportunities for Christian education, even within the short space of a lifetime, it seems that our God has been heaping unmerited favors upon our college. Moreover, when at the same time we are reminded how abundantly God has enriched our people with material blessings during the short period since their immigration into this country, and how He has also made the friends of Calvin College and Seminary generously willing to give very large sums of money for new buildings, needed for Calvin’s development, such as our new science building, it makes us so thankful that like the young lady to whom I have referred, we can see doxologies everywhere: “Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.”

At the same time we are also deeply impressed by the loyalty of our people to Calvin and we wish to thank them publicly for their moral as well as for their financial support. Their splendid co-operation in sending their sons and daughters to our school in ever increasing numbers is also an encouraging stimulus to our teachers. For this faithfulness and also for the continual prayers on Calvin’s behalf we wish to thank our people and to praise our God.

But how can science teachers most appropriately praise God for His beneficent provisions for us? The answer to this question is not far to seek. Like the psalmists, we all can praise God only by extolling His attributes, such as His power, His wisdom, and His goodness, as we observe them in His word and in His works. Now it is the especial function and privilege of Christian natural science teachers that they proclaim the perfections of the Creator and the marvels of His providence, as they may be observed in our own bodies and in the material universe round about us.

Accordingly, underlying each of our science and mathematics courses is the theme:

“This is my Father’s World,
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.”

Or again:

“This is my Father’s world,
He shines in all that’s fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.”

Though there are an almost infinite number of phenomena and events which illustrate this theme, certain phenomena show forth the Creator’s praise more clearly than others. As very persuasive examples of the revelation of divine creation and providence in the material world, three readily appreciated phenomena have been selected for our brief consideration.

First, we often observe clearly purposeful relations between things or events without any close cause-and-effect connection to explain them. For example, a newborn baby has relatively much more iron in its body than is present in the body of an adult. This greater proportion of iron in the baby is plainly purposeful because the iron is needed for the production of blood during the early months of the baby’s life while its food consists entirely or mainly of milk which does not have the needed iron in it. Now, the lack of iron in the milk plainly is not the effective cause of the relatively larger iron supply of the baby, nor vice versa. It is hardly imaginable how there can be a direct, physical cause-and-effect relation between the lack of iron in the mother’s milk and the extraordinarily large quantity of iron in the baby. But such a purposeful relationship is readily and convincingly explained if we accept by faith that our world is governed by a superintending mind which can at once envision both the past and the future, i.e., a divine mind. Now, it is the delight of the Christian teacher of science to point out such purposeful relationships to his students in order that they also may see God’s wise beneficence and praise Him for it. Moreover, when it is plain to the eye of faith that God is both wise and good we should be the more ready to trust and to love Him.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JANUARY, 1949
Secondly, when we think of the myriads of vast heavenly bodies travelling through space at enormous speeds, and yet with predictable regularity, held upon their ordained paths by invisible forces which pass undiminished even through a vacuum, it seems evident that the heavens declare the glory of an omnipotent Creator and that the firmament is His handiwork, just as the psalmist tells us. Once having glimpsed the astronomical distances of the universe and the immensity of the forces generated by God to uphold the vast starry heavens, one can never again imagine the Creator to be a limited local deity from whose presence one might flee. On the contrary, one will ever keep in mind that no matter where he may go, he is everywhere in the immediate presence of the almighty and omnipresent God. Accordingly, Christian teachers and students of astronomy always stress the omnipresence and the infinite power of God. This praises our God, and it is practical teaching for it is upon such a great God that we all must depend, humbly and yet confidently, for every need.

Thirdly, let me remind you of the basic, internal co-operation of the parts of all kinds of organisms. This “all for one and one for all” principle may be clearly seen in the activities of the organs of our own bodies—a fact which the Apostle Paul used to illustrate the relation between the various gifts of the members of the church, for this principle holds true in both the natural and the spiritual realms. For our example of such mutual co-operation, let us consider the digestive system of man which is like a well-planned chemical laboratory in which the various parts and reagents are arranged in a very effective manner so that each reaction in the digestive process is preparatory for the next one, while each kind of food undergoes its regular series of complex changes. In this way the digestive process serves the body as a whole, while at the same time the other organ systems are helping each other, and each in turn also helps to maintain the digestive system. Now, it is unreasonable to believe that blind chance can produce such an intricate, orderly, interdependent series of activities. To the thoughtful Christian organic, reciprocal correlations in man reveal the wisely planned ordering of a superhuman intelligence. They exhibit the masterly mind of the divine chemist who made us. From our example of mutual interdependence and co-operation of organs and tissues we may also conclude that our Creator is a God of order and of law. Consequently, we will study His word and His works to discover His will for our conduct in order that we may obey Him in all that we do, for obedience to God’s laws praises the Law-giver.

In conclusion, it is from such God-revealing and God-praising points of view that both our students and their parents, and above all our God, require that we shall teach our science subjects. Because I am well aware that we fall far short of fulfilling this requirement, it is my prayer that our heavenly Father may graciously forgive past shortcomings. It also follows that we need to continue to strive to become more competent for our difficult, very responsible, and yet glorious task. May the difficulties and responsibilities of our duties induce both the teachers and other friends of Calvin to continue their prayers for God’s blessing upon our efforts, to the greater praise of our God, for the advancement of His church, and for both the temporal and eternal welfare of our fellow-men.

Now and Then

From the Grand Rapids Press, Wednesday, December 1, 1948: Kalamazoo—(U.P.)—Violence broke out in the Shakespeare companies’ strike Wednesday when thirty to forty carloads of men blocked entrances to the plants, hurled bricks and damaged several vehicles . . . .

The cars, bearing Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio license plates, appeared about 7 a.m. at the plants of the Shakespeare Company, maker of fishing tackle, and the subsidiary Shakespeare Products Company, maker of auto parts . . . .

Chief Hoyt said the automobiles blocked streets at the plants and occupants threw brickbats through windows of cars that attempted to enter company grounds . . . .

From Shakespeare’s As You Like It, Act IV, Scene iii, lines 38-62:

Adam: . . . I have five hundred crowns, The thirsty hire I sav’d under your father, Which I did store to be my foster nurse When service should in my old limbs lie lame And unregarded age in corners thrown. Take that, and he that doth the ravens feed, Yes, providently caters for the sparrow, Be comfort to my age! Here is the gold; All this I give you. Let me be your servant. Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty; For in my youth I never did apply Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood, Nor did not with unashable forehead woo The means of weakness and debility; Therefore my age is as a lusty winter, Frosty, but kindly. Let me go with you; I’ll do the service of a younger man In all your business and necessities.

Orlando: O good old man, how well in thee appears The constant service of the antique world, When service sweat for duty, not for meed! Thou art not for the fashion of these times, When none will sweat but for promotion, And having that do choke their service up Even with the having. It is not so with thee.

HENRY ZYLSTRA

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JANUARY, 1949
HE history of the expansion of the Church belongs to the most interesting subjects of theological reflection. Since the appearance of the well-known book of Kenneth Scott Latourette we are now equipped with a multitude of data, which enable us to obtain a beautiful survey of the development of the missionary enterprise.

As soon as we start our enquiry we are struck by the fact that not only has the performance of the missionary task undergone a certain evolution, but that the conception of the purport of this task was involved in the same process. During many centuries of its history the Church had only a very vague idea of the meaning and the extent of the missionary task. Its understanding of the commandment of the Lord was often confused and defective. Most of the time the Church was unable to grasp the significance of those wonderful words the Lord had spoken to His apostles upon one of the mountains of Galilee. And that was why the Church could not fulfil its task with the attitude of trustful surrender to the will of the heavenly Master, which was indispensable for the accomplishment of its duty.

In this article we are not going to describe the various attempts for the propagation of the gospel which have been made from the time of the first disciples until our own days. What we are going to trace is the development of the conception of the missionary task which was alive in the Church. How did the Church conceive of its obligation in the various periods of its history? With regard to this question we believe that it is possible to distinguish four stages in the history of Christianity.

The First Three Centuries

The first period is that of the first three centuries. In this period the Church was still inspired by a very vivid impression of the great commandment. The memory of the glory of Pentecost was still alive in the hearts of believers. They knew that they were expected to teach all nations, and they were heartily willing to do so. The conception of the missionary task which stimulated the activity of the Church of those days can be described as follows:
world. They were not so much interested in the problem of slavery itself, but what constantly occupied them was the question how a Christian slave had to behave. They were not embarrassed by the many cultural and philosophical and social problems of their days; their whole conception of the missionary task was much more naive than ours can be.

The Second Period

The second period was of an entirely different character. This period of the expansion of the Church was dominated by the powerful idea of a Christian empire, a kingdom of heaven in earthly form. After the conversion of emperor Constantine the Great this idea fascinated and stimulated the Christian Church. When the city of Rome, the eternal city, was captured by barbarous invaders, it was generally believed that a new Rome was going to rise upon the ruins of the destroyed palaces and temples, a Rome in which Jesus Christ would sway His sceptre. During the Middle Ages this belief exercised a considerable influence upon the spiritual, cultural, and social life of the European nations. A new empire was born, an empire which embraced almost all the peoples of the European continent. Its emperor humbly received his crown from the pope, the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth. This new political entity, the Holy Roman Empire, was regarded as the legitimate heir of all the treasures of art and wisdom which the old world had left to successors. It is perfectly clear that the impact of this idea upon the conception of the missionary task can hardly be overestimated. Wherever the idea of a Christian empire with a totalitarian Christian culture is seriously cherished, the propagation of the gospel naturally includes political elements. A theocratic kingdom with vigorous religious aspirations feels itself authorized to conquer and subject other peoples in order to make them participate in the valuable benefits of the glorious Christian culture. Therefore it is obvious that during the Middle Ages the propagation of the gospel was often more or less conceived as a missionary and, at the same time, military enterprise. The missionary task was considered to be a harmonious combination of spiritual and political elements. The conversion of a people automatically involved its incorporation in the Corpus Christianum, the Kingdom of God in its concrete and visible shape.

Medieval Missions

When we try to survey the expansion of the Church during the Middle Ages, it is not difficult to notice the confirmation of what we stated above. In the first place, it is obvious that the missionary enterprise was often closely connected with political objectives. The conversion of several tribes necessarily included their incorporation in the Christian empire. In his interesting book, The Medieval Missionary, J. Th. Addison observes that "the general tendency from the sixth century onward was for the monarch to develop from a patron to a master and for the missionary to decline from an independent initiator to an agent in the extension of royal plans." (p. 73.)

A natural consequence of this was that the missionary approach was entirely different from that of the Old Church. It was not the conversion of the individuals which was constantly aimed at, but it was the conversion of the whole community which was eagerly attempted. "Group movements to Christianity," says Addison, "were plainly characteristic of the expansion of the Church in Europe during the Middle Ages." (p. 71) And he points out that the occurrence of mass movements was quite natural in a time when "the corporate aspect of Christianity was most strongly emphasized." (p. 72)

In the third place, we have to pay attention to the fact that the missionaries of the Middle Ages did not confine their task to the mere preaching of the gospel, but that they deeply concerned themselves with the problem of cultural changes. "The monastic orders of the early Middle Ages in their missionary expansion to the pagan tribes of western Europe recognized in the environment the medium in which a Christian church and community were to be built and they accepted the task of creating a new economic and social environment." "It is important to note," says J. Merle Davis, "that the monks did not bring a program of economic and social uplift into the wilderness for its own sake, but that the culture-building activities emanated from and were organized around a Christian church." (New Buildings on Old Foundations, p. 64f.)

The attitude of the missionaries with regard to the cultural achievements of the peoples among whom they were working, was not always the same. Generally speaking we can make the statement that in the early Middle Ages, when the missionaries of the Church began to penetrate into the tribes of western Europe, they were inspired by a deep sense of the superiority of their own cultural equipment. Although anxiously looking for points of contact, they did not conceal the fact that the cultural heritage of those tribes was a very poor one, when compared with the manifold blessings the Christian empire and the holy Church were able to grant to them. Nevertheless, they constantly strove after a kind of adaptation to the religious tendencies of the tribes to whom they were preaching the gospel. Their message was, as far as it appeared to be possible, adjusted to the peculiar needs and thoughts of their hearers. This missionary policy induced a rustication of Christianity. The Christian message was adjusted to the naturalistic trends of thinking which were so very common among the population of western and northern Europe.
The Age of the Reformation

The great reformers Luther and Calvin had as yet no clear conception of the missionary task of the Church. They were inclined to display a sincere distrust with regard to human activity. The Roman Catholic Church venerated its saints, the martyrs, and missionaries. The reformers were apt to think that human achievements are comparatively worthless, and that it is only Jesus Christ who increases His Church. That was why they did not emphasize the necessity of missionary activity. It is remarkable that in the Heidelberg Catechism the "gathering of the Church" is only ascribed to the Son of God, and that what the Church itself has to do in this respect is not even mentioned.

The Protestant churches of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries commonly followed the trail of their Roman Catholic predecessors. They also believed that the missionary task is closely connected with political objectives, and that missionary activity normally has a political background. The various East India Companies were the main bodies to which the missionary task was entrusted. They were considered to be responsible for the spiritual as well as for the economic welfare of the colonial peoples. Although the churches sometimes tried to keep the missionary activity in their own hands, it was these East India Companies which appointed the missionaries and made use of them. The colonial empires were originally regarded as vehicles of Christian activity. One of the first governors-general of the Dutch East Indies was instructed to "foster the conversion of the non-Christians." The missionary task was delegated to the civil magistrate. It is not difficult to understand that behind these ideas lies the old conception of the Christian empire with its specific Christian culture. The same government which by military force incorporates the peoples of the colonies in the empire, is responsible for their conversion and their incorporation in the Church.

In consequence, the calling of the missionary who went to the colonies was seen as a comprehensive one. He was charged with the duty to convert the heathen, to make them participate in the benefits of the Christian cultural system, and to make them good and trustworthy citizens of the commonwealth. Missionary activity necessarily had a political aspect; sometimes military activity had to prepare the way for the missionary.

The Third Period

The third period of the development of the conception of the missionary task began in the 17th and 18th centuries. It was the Pietist and Methodist movements of this period which vigorously attacked the old ideas. It is not the place here to delve deeply into the motives of these influential currents. A few points are to be stressed.

In the first place, it strikes us that the Pietistic conception of the missionary task is the opposite of the more or less political conception which was prevalent in previous times. The Pietist missionary does not bother about a Christian empire, a colonial empire with a specific Christian culture. He is not deeply interested in political, social and cultural problems. The only thing he wants to do is to preach the gospel. In his eyes the content of the gospel is confined to a clear description of the way of salvation for lost sinners.

For that reason the missionary approach of these missionaries was always individualistic. They did not pay much attention to the group and to the social ties, because they saw the individuals who were in great need. They told the gospel as a message of salvation for every individual who believed in Jesus Christ.

They did not concern themselves with the social problems which inevitably arose whenever in a foreign country a Christian Church began to come into existence. The only thing that interested them was the eternal salvation of sinful creatures.

So the Pietistic conception of the missionary task was a very simple one. It was concentrated upon one central fact. All other problems were intentionally disregarded as being utterly irrelevant. It cannot be denied that in this attitude there was a strong current of deep pessimism with regard to the possibilities of human culture. This earthly realm was considered to be a world of satanic forces, a world without any future and without any hope. For the Christian there was only one possibility left, the narrow escape of turning away from this vain world, and of concentrating all his energy upon the quest for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

It is hardly necessary to say that in this conception there was no place for the political magistrates as organs of missionary activity. Even the Church was not regarded as a suitable executor of the missionary calling. It was the small circles of real believers, of pilgrims to the heavenly country, whose ardour was relied upon for the fulfilment of the divine mission.

In many respects the Pietist and Methodist movements have meant a break in the history of the expansion of the Church. The old idea of the Christian empire was wholeheartedly rejected. The political background of the missionary enterprise gradually disappeared. The cultural elements of the missionary task were intentionally neglected. The message itself was reduced to the preaching of repentance and remission in Christ's name.

The Fourth Period

The fourth period in the history of the expansion of the Church is a period of uncertainty. It became more and more clear that the Pietistic conception of the task, although there were many valuable
elements in it, was insufficient and not in accord-
ance with the will of the Lord. In many respects
our attitude is still embarrassed by vagueness, but
there are a few points which are now generally
agreed upon.

In the first place, we begin to understand the im-
mense importance of the Church. “In spite of all
its past and present failures to live up to its divine
mission, the Church is and remains the fellowship
to which our Lord has given His promises, and
through which He carries forward His purpose for
mankind.” (Findings of Section II of the Tambaran
Conference. Tambaran Series, II, p. 292) Neither
the magistracy nor circles of individual believers
are charged with the great commandment; it is the
Church which is responsible for the fulfilling of the
missionary task. For that same reason the object of
missions cannot be the conversion of individual
gentiles, but it always is, and has to be, the planting
of the Church.

In the second place, we are more than ever be-
fore convinced that missionary activity can never
be really fruitful when it has a political background.
The impetuous nationalistic movements of the last
decades have opened our eyes to the serious dan-
gers which result from too close a connection be-
tween missionary work and colonial administration.
We are commanded to call the nations to the etern­
al Kingdom of God. This fundamental truth may
never be exchanged for political objectives. The
Kingdom of heaven does not take shape in an earthy
kingdom; it can never be identified with a politi-
cal entity in this earthly sphere.

In the third place, it is becoming more and more
obvious that the message of Jesus Christ has some-
thing to do with national and political problems.
It is incorrect to confine its content to the salvation
of individual beings. The nation as a whole natu-
urally participates in the freedom Jesus Christ bestows
upon those who embrace His gospel. Whenever a
country takes root in a foreign soil, the life of that
nation will be immensely blessed by its light. It is
not only feasible but it is even necessary that the
churches in the mission fields feel themselves re-
sponsible for the life of their nations.

This means that the social, economic and cultural
problems are lying within the scope of the mission-
ary task. A missionary is not justified to regard
them as irrelevant. If he is a real missionary he
will understand that these problems demand his
full attention. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the whole
of human life. He does not only redeem our spiritu-
(al nature but He touches the whole of our exist-
ence with His purifying and sanctifying hands.

This does not mean that we are called to expound
a clear theory about a Christian culture to the non-
Christian countries. It does not involve that we
are allowed to impose our own cultural heritage
upon those who begin to believe in Jesus Christ. It
only means that Jesus Christ does not leave their
cultural achievements undisturbed. He is the great
Renewer who restores and rebuilds what has been
ruined by sinful human hearts.

In connection with this we begin to perceive that
the gospel does not isolate the individual from his
social relationships. It does not loose the social ties,
but it renews them, it makes them stronger and
purer. It would not be right if we overlooked the
enormous values of communal life, and confined
our task to the addressing of individuals. The gos-
pel has a message for every individual, but it has a
message for the community as well. “The conclu-
sion is inescapable,” says J. Waskom Pickett, “that
Christ is moving into the heart of India not along
the lonely road of the detached individual but
through the crowded thoroughfares of community-
life.” (Christ’s Way to India’s Heart, p. 41) We
gradually begin to realize that the gospel of Jesus
Christ is a gospel of wonderful blessings, both for
individuals and for communities.

Conclusion

Summarizing our conclusions, we understand that
during many centuries of its history the Church
was fascinated by the dream that the heavenly
Kingdom was incarnated in Christian states or
Christian empires, and that the propagation of it
could be served by military expeditions. The sol-
dier and the missionary sometimes went hand in
hand. We have lost this dream, and we see clearly
that the Kingdom of God will never take shape in
any human kingdom or any human cultural sys-
tem. Our conception of the missionary task is not
so naïve as that of the Church of the first centuries.
It is not so well defined as that of the Church of
the Middle Ages. It is not so restricted as that of
Pietism and Methodism in their first attacks. It is
more comprehensive, more complicated, more sober
in many respects. We know that this world is con-
tinuously upset by demonic forces which display
their disastrous influences everywhere. But we
also know that Jesus Christ is Lord; that He makes
His Kingdom come; that He gathers His holy
Church “out of the whole human race”; and that
we are the poor, imperfect instruments which it
pleases Him to use for the accomplishment of this
purpose.
"Sing a New Song"

Henry Brandt Rose

Well-AGED dogmatic definitions and long-standing ethical practices and customs are not the only stubbornly-rooted traditions. The same may be predicated of many liturgical usages, and, not the least, of the songs employed in worship. Perhaps the emotional grip which the song lays upon the soul makes the more fervent the rational defense by which its position is maintained. It is no simple matter to venture a criticism of the literary and spiritual limitations of the media by which men give expression to their deepest religious faith. Yet, Isaac Watts dared even that. But he was more than a critic. He was himself a worshipper whose own soul cried for a more Christian and more widely appropriate means of utterance. And he was gifted with both vision and ability to provide such means of expression, for himself and his fellow-worshippers through the ages, in the English Christian hymn. These are things we recall after having recently concluded the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the death of the immortal Isaac Watts.

He, more than anyone else, provided for the singing of hymns that place which it has always subsequently retained in English Protestant worship. Bernard L. Manning has said that "to Isaac Watts more than to any other man, is due the triumph of the hymn in English worship. All later hymn writers, even when they excel him, are his debtors." Watts himself said concerning the necessity for a newer type of hymnody, "We preach the Gospel, and pray in Christ's Name, and then check the aroused devotions of the Christians by giving out a song of the old dispensation."

There were at least two quite contrasted opinions among the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century concerning the singing of hymns in public worship, the composition of which did not find its definite and literal source in the Holy Scriptures. Martin Luther, who had a great regard for the Latin hymns of the Catholic Church and a love for German folk song, was in favor of having worshipping congregations sing hymns "of human composition" in the vernacular. He was himself a composer of thirty-seven hymns, and he began a tradition of hymn composition in the Lutheran Church which found perhaps its noblest expression in Paul Gerhardt (1607-76). On the other hand, John Calvin was averse to using anything in public worship except the metrical versions of the Psalms of David and probably such other songs as had their basis in passages taken directly from the Bible. He was guided in this thinking by his staunch belief in the paramount authority of God's Word and he was hostile to anything which might in any sense detract from this authority. At the Reformation, the Church in England followed the Calvinistic pattern of public praise, and down to the end of the seventeenth century it used little besides the metrical psalms.

The Hymn-Writer is Fashioned

During this period, on July 17, 1674, Isaac Watts was born into the family of a dissenting schoolmaster who lived in Southampton. His life was in no sense dramatic. He was nurtured by the deep piety and faith of a simple household over which the intolerance of the times cast a deep shadow. Non-conformity was penalized by law in England in those days, and Watts' father, like such other dissenters as John Bunyan, went to prison more than once for his convictions. Isaac was nine years old when the elder Watts began a six-months' term for his belief in the freedom to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. After his release he spent two years away from his family, in hiding in London. It is easily understood how these experiences left their mark upon the sensitive spirit of this youth. "Is this," he must have said to himself, "the price men pay to go through the doors of the church of their choice on Sunday morning?" Religion, at such a cost, must have become a very vital force in the life of Isaac Watts. The daily family altar, the reading of the Scriptures, regular attendance at public worship,—these were the valued things of life.

Isaac Watts was fourteen years of age when the revolution of 1688 finally brought freedom of worship to every Englishman. During the same year his religious training culminated in his conversion, and he joined his father's church. A family friend offered to make possible his enrollment in a university. However, this would have required attendance at chapel exercises where the Book of Common Prayer was used, and rather than compromise his religious beliefs, he refused the offer and entered an academy for young men of the free-church at Stoke-Newington, where he spent four years.

In 1702, after some years spent as assistant to the Reverend Isaac Chauncey, Minister of the Congregational Chapel at Mark Lane, London, he was installed as sole pastor of that Church. Due to ill health, however, Watts needed assistance with his pastoral work as early as 1703. But he was so deep-
ly entrenched in the affection of his people that he remained senior minister of his church until his death. About the year 1714 Watts accepted the invitation of a wealthy friend to live first at his country estate in Hertfordshire and later at Stoke-Newington, London. Here he remained until his death in 1748.

The English Hymn is Born

As has been intimated, Watts was not a strong man physically, and a deeply emotional and sensitive nature caused frequent periods of invalidism. During one of these periods, when he was twenty years of age, he wrote his first hymn. One Sunday, returning home from the Independent service, Watts complained to his father of the uncouthness of the psalms which had been sung—these were the metrical version by Sternhold and Hopkins—declaring them to be lacking in both dignity and beauty. "Try then," said his father, "whether you can produce something better." Taking up the challenge, he produced his first hymn which, in part, reads as follows:

Behold the glories of the Lamb
Amidst His Father's throne;
Prepare new honors for His Name,
And songs before unknown.

Let elders worship at His feet,
The Church adore around,
With vials full of odors sweet,
And harps of sweeter sound;

These are the prayers of all the saints,
And these the hymns they raise,
Jesus is kind to our complaints,
He loves to hear our praise.

Since we have made reference to Sternhold and Hopkins, and of Isaac Watts' complaint with respect to their version of the Psalms, it would seem in order to give at least a classic example of the work of each. The average may be illustrated by part of John Hopkins' translation of the 42nd Psalm:

Like as the hart doth pant and bray
The well-springs to obtain;
So doth my soul desire alway,
With thee, Lord, to remain.

My soul doth thirst, and would draw near,
The loving God of might;
Oh when shall I come and appear,
In presence of his sight.

And it is difficult to imagine how people could sing the following by Sternhold:

And thou' ye were as black as pots,
Your hue shall pass the dove
Whose wings and feathers seem to have
Sliver and gold above.

When in this land God shall triumph
O'er kings both high and low,
Then shall it be like Salmon hill,
As white as is the snow.

This is based upon the 68th Psalm, verses 13 and 14, which read in the Bible:

"Though ye have lain among the pots yet shall ye be as wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon."

These examples, taken from the "Old Version," leave much to be desired from the literary point of view. One authority has said, "for literary use, it must be confessed to be almost dead. The likeness to the Hebrew is that of the corpse to the living body." Another critic, hearing a parish clerk sing these psalms, expressed his views in the following epigram:

Sternhold and Hopkins had great qualms,
When they translated David's Psalms,
To make the heart right glad;
But had it been King David's fate,
To hear thee sing and them translate
By - - -, 'twould set him mad.

We must not, however, draw the conclusion that all of Watts' hymns were beautiful of subject or structure. Some were sheer doggerel, as in such lines as these:

Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For 'tis their nature to.

or,

The tulip and the butterfly
Appear in gayer coats than I;
Let me be drest fine as I will
Flies, worms, and flowers exceed me still.

Watts had a prolific career of hymn writing, having composed around seven hundred and fifty hymns in all. The best of his hymns were written by 1719. After that his inspiration seemed to fail. Watts' hymns deal with the central themes of the Christian faith, from the strictly Calvinistic point of view in which he was brought up and which he sincerely held. He emphasizes constantly the brevity, the unsatisfactoriness of human life apart from God. He dwells upon the glory of Jesus Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and present intercession, and he pictures the fate of the lost in fearsome terms. Before many years had passed Isaac Watts' hymns won widespread recognition and use. In 1744 Dr. Phillip Doddridge wrote to Watts thus:

"I congratulate you that by your sacred poetry, especially by your Psalms and your Hymns, you are leading the worship and I trust animating the devotion of myriads in our public assemblies on the Sabbath, and in their families and closets every day. This, Sir, at least so far as it relates to the service of the sanctuary, is an unparalleled favor, by which God hath been pleased to distinguish you, I may boldly say it, beyond any of His servants now upon earth."

The Missionary Interest

The vision of Isaac Watts is clearly evident in the writing of certain of his Hymns. Back in 1719, mis-
sions was not the popular subject that it is today. The world was a great deal larger and the interest of the church in preaching the gospel “to every creature” had not been aroused. The Moravian Church had not even begun its great missionary work. Yet, in that year, from the quiet retreat in the beautiful country estate of Sir Thomas Abney, Isaac Watts sent out his clarion call to confidence in the ultimate and entire victory of Jesus Christ, in the hymn:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

For him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown his head;
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on his love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his name.

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our King:
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the fond Amen!

Here is a hymn that develops in ringing, lyric tones the faith in a Christ who can bring about a “new civilization” wherein there will be unity and good will, welfare, happiness, a recognition of truth, enjoyment of all that is good, all brought about by Him who is the Almighty, the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace. This, we believe, is unparalleled Calvinism, a Calvinism needed as much, or more, in our time as it was needed in Watts’ day.

Isaac Watts did not forget, nor must we, that the Christian faith is characterized among the religions of the world as a religion of salvation. It brings men out of darkness and despair into a new realm in which dwells the light of God and of His Son Jesus; a new world of eternal values where even what seems to be an irrational truth is confidently affirmed. Thus Watts wrote of the Cross of Christ, which defies reason and tests out faith, in these meaningful words:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Watts knew of the tremendous price paid for his salvation. Calvary was to him the culmination of the dedication to God's will of the whole person. ‘'To the Greeks foolishness, to the Jews a stumbling block, but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Watts, more than any other hymn writer, broke the tradition which held the Psalms to be the only suitable and proper expression of religious song. He was no iconoclast, however. He reverenced still the singing of Psalms and made his own contribution to the more beautiful versification of them. Certain it is that he would have dissented from the nineteenth century Congregationalists who refused to sing any other hymns than those of Watts. Isaac Watts was no faddist. He was a son of the Christian ages, who in the experience of vital growth in the heritage he had received, embraced the traditions of the past, but also sought their enrichment in terms of the vision which God had vouchsafed to him. We come, through Watts, and others schooled in part by him, into a rich heritage of religious song. We ought to let no superficial modernity move us to relinquish that. But neither ought we to live only in that. Rather, living out of it, we ought to be creating in terms of our experience songs of worship which will show the heritage of the ages to be still alive and fruitful. This we may do by living faith in Him whom Watts extolled as:

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.
Is Free Enterprise Anti-Christian?

As reported in the Toronto Daily Star of September 26, 1947, the National Council of the Christian Student Movement in Canada at its annual meeting at Lake Couchiching passed the following resolution: “Because we believe the land and means of production are ultimately God-given and men should hold this property in stewardship for God, we feel free enterprise, with its emphasis on the complete right of the individual to do what he will with his property, is basically anti-Christian.”

This declaration further states that it is inspired by the concern to “stress the idea of man’s stewardship of the things God has given” that the free enterprise system has “depersonalized men by its emphasis on technology and production above the essential Christian regard for the worth of the individual”; and that “a system of economic democracy in which the land and means of production are operated by the elected representatives of the people to meet the needs of all is potentially more Christian than the present one and is, therefore, a goal toward which Christians ought to work.”

From this statement it is clear that the Canadian C.S.M. (at least its National Council) has seen fit to condemn as anti-Christian our present economic system in which the private ownership of capital and the means of production is basic. It has seen fit in the name of Christianity to repudiate the profit motive and the entire system of free enterprise. In short, it has declared itself against capitalism and in favor of some form of socialism.

What shall we say of this attack, in the name of Christianity, upon our present economic system of free enterprise?

Well, first of all, let us not lose our head. Some people at once become incensed and vituperative when statements like these are made. Why “see red” at once when a somewhat radical new proposal is made? We need light—not heat. Let us not take for granted that any proposal must be wrong because it is new, and that we must be right because ours is the old traditional view. In other words, let’s be open-minded as we weigh the issue. That is a wholesome attitude.

Before coming to grips with the argument, there is room for a few preliminary remarks to clear the ground and elucidate the issue.

For the purpose of this article we need not be too painstaking about the precise difference between Socialism and Communism. There is no agreement in the usage of these terms. Most authors distinguish Socialism from Communism in that the former is made to stand for collective ownership of the means of production only, whereas the latter is used for a collective set-up that extends also to distribution and consumption. Others use the terms interchangeably and, recognizing Karl Marx as the father of both, consider both synonyms for Marxism.

In this connection someone might raise the question whether there is such a thing as Communism. Is there a genuine Communism in existence anywhere, Russia included? A good case could be made out for the somewhat surprising statement made by Dean Inge that “Communism in Russia is a mere facade, behind which a very formidable nationalist, militarist, totalitarian State, based not on Communism but on State-capitalism, is being forged.”

But whether one accepts this statement, or whether one would prefer to subscribe to the view of Dr. D’Arcy, who in the same book says, “There is only one form of it [Communism] which is real for us; that, namely, which descends from Marx, was embodied by Lenin, and now has its seat at Moscow,” it is of no great importance for the present argument. Whether it be called Socialism, Communism, Marxism, or Collectivism, all are the sworn enemies of the system of free enterprise with its insistence upon the right of private property and the legitimacy of the profit motive. And it is this system of free enterprise which is declared anti-Christian by the C.S.M. conference mentioned above.

* * *

We are now ready to state the thesis of this article. In the face of the claim of the Canadian C.S.M. that the system of free enterprise must be displaced by a socialistic order because it is anti-Christian, we submit the following: The economic system of free enterprise, far from being anti-Christian, is


2) H. Wilson Harris (Editor), Christianity and Communism, p. 33.

3) Op. cit., p. 44.
more in harmony with the high ethical demands of the Christian religion than any collectivistic alternative, whether it be Socialism or Communism.

We believe this claim can be substantiated along three distinct lines of thought, viz., first, with a view to the right of private property; secondly, with a view to the protection of human personality; and thirdly, with a view to the preservation of liberty.

Stated differently, every collectivistic system is an attack upon 1) the right of private property, 2) the sacrednesses of personality, and 3) the enjoyment of true liberty.

Over against this we maintain that the right of private property, the sacredness of personality, and the enjoyment of true liberty are safeguarded and promoted by the economic system of free enterprise, and that on each of these scores the system of free enterprise is not anti-Christian but Christian.

I

On the score of the right of private property the system of free enterprise, far from being anti-Christian, is more in harmony with the high ethical demands of Christianity than any collectivistic alternative.

Basic to the free enterprise system is the right of private property. With the abolition of the right of private ownership of the means of production, a free economy becomes a collectivist economy.

This right of private ownership is, of course, not an absolute right. No right is absolute in human society. In the absolute sense of the word only God is the owner of all things. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." He has the absolute right to give and to take away. A human being is from this point of view only a relative owner. He owes it to God and to his fellowman to use his goods for a worthy end. In this sense he is, as over against God, a steward of his possessions and he will be called to render an account of his stewardship. But this in no wise conflicts with his right of private ownership. In fact, that right is precisely presupposed in the responsibility of stewardship. If over against man he were not owner, then over against God he could not be held accountable as a steward.

"With respect to other men, man is an owner, he has plenary control over what belongs to him. With respect to God he is always a steward, a man with an account to render." 4) This would appear to dispose of the argument contained in the C.S.M. statement that free enterprise is basically anti-Christian "because we believe the land and means of production are ultimately God-given and men should hold this property in stewardship for God."

But there is another legitimate restriction upon the exercise of this right of private ownership. It is the right and duty of the government to place certain restrictions upon the exercise of this right in case grave misuse to the detriment of human society is made of it. Government is divinely insti-

4) Emil Brunner, Justice and the Social Order, p. 149.

tuted in a sinful world not only to maintain order and punish evil, but also to curb injustice in human society. Much of our social legislation has this aim in view. The government has no power to nullify the right of any individual on this score, but that government may in given cases have to restrict the exercise of that right with a view to social justice.

The imposition of such a restriction upon the exercise of the right of private ownership is not to be confused with the cancellation of that right. In this light for instance the imposition of taxation upon excessive incomes and inheritances is to be justified. But such restriction can be exercised only upon the assumption that the right of ownership belongs to each individual and that he cannot be deprived of it. Brunner, interpreting Calvin on this subject, says: "The state certainly has the right to limit private property, but not to expropriate it." 5)

This disposes of the force of the C.S.M. statement that free enterprise, "with its emphasis on the complete right of the individual to do what he will with his property", is basically anti-Christian. The recognition of such a complete and absolute right would be anti-Christian indeed. It may well be questioned whether any intelligent person champions such a view of the right of private property. In fact, it is not unfair to say that such a view is unreal and a caricature of the right of private ownership and the system of free enterprise.

*   *   *

Recognizing these two proper restrictions upon its exercise, we now proceed to show that Scripture teaches and safeguards the right of private property.

As for the Old Testament, this right is grounded in creation and is either presupposed or explicitly recognized throughout the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the prophetic period. Abraham's buying a parcel of ground for the burial of Sarah, Jacob's varied experiences in the matter of wages with Laban, even Joseph's gradual acquisition of all the property of the Egyptians which they offer him in payment for food in days of famine—these are only a few stories from the early period proving that the recognition of the right of private property was general. This continued throughout the Mosaic and the prophetic period. The story of the dealings of king Ahab and queen Jezebel with Naboth, the Jezreelite, whose patrimony they expropriated by having him executed unjustly, is a ringing vindication of the sacredness of the right of private property in the period of the kings. (1 Kings 21.)

More eloquent than all these instances is the divine commandment to Israel through Moses: "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15) Theft is viewed as a great sin. The sixth commandment protects human life, the seventh preserves the sex relation in human marriage, and the eighth, forbidding theft, "springs from the principle of the sanc-

tity of human property."') Flowers properly begins his discussion of the eighth commandment with the sentence: "If theft be wrong, then the institution of property must be right." This is the biblical repudiation of Proudhon's notorious statement, "La propriété c'est le vol." ("Property is theft.") One must take his choice between Proudhon and Scripture, and the Christian will not hesitate long in doing so.  

As for the New Testament teaching, it is even more explicit. Of course, our Lord's primary approach to questions of wealth and property is a spiritual, not an economic one. His outstanding teaching on the subject of material possessions stresses: that wealth is a snare; that there is a great danger in riches; that we must not place too high an estimate upon it; that we should not set our heart on earthly possessions; that we must be ready to surrender all earthly goods for the excellency of the riches of Christ; that a man is not profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul in the bargain. But all such teaching in no way militates against the right of private property. In fact, it presupposes that very right. The outstanding commandments of the Decalogue, the one on property and theft specifically included, are reaffirmed by our Lord in Matthew 19:18 and Mark 10:19. Paul does the same once more in Romans 13:9. And the New Testament reaffirmation of the last commandment, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, reaffirms and reinforces this once more.  

The teaching of our Lord, especially as found in the parables, is throughout based upon the assumption and at times the explicit recognition of the inviolability of private property. Note how fully this is taught in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. The parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-12) presupposes it. So does the parable of the ten pounds (Luke 19:12-26). All these parables not only presuppose the right of private property but the right of investment. Even the parable of the rich fool condemned him for his folly in laying up treasure for himself and not being rich toward God, but it in no wise condemns him for considering his property his own (Luke 12:16-21). In the parable of Dives and Lazarus there is no justification of any form of collectivism. The rich man is condemned on two scores: first, that he only thinks of wealth and comfort and this life and fails to make provision for his future while in this life; and, second, that he fails to alleviate the want of the poor man at his door. Both were great sins, but in neither is there even a remote attack on the right of private property. In fact, the latter precisely assumes it. (Luke 16:19-31.)  

The story of the rich young ruler, contrary to much thoughtless quoting, is no scriptural encouragement for a collectivist regime. When he is told to sell all that he had and give to the poor, he is charged to do so not because that was the only economy which our Lord approved, but because this was in his particular case the only radical cure for the evil of having set his heart upon riches. This is clear from the explanation which the Lord Himself offers (Mark 10:17-25). This also explains why our Lord did not make it a demand on all His followers to surrender what they had. That Jesus recognizes the right of private property in His dealings with this rich young ruler is clear from the fact that He enjoins him to sell what he has.  

It would not be difficult to multiply passages, both from the gospels and from the epistles confirming this point. But how about the community of goods practiced in the early Jerusalem church? Was not property in this earliest of Christian communities communal rather than private? Is not this early Christian practice a severe blow to the right of private property? The answer is simple. It is nothing of the kind. Whatever form of community of goods may have obtained in the early Jerusalem church, it had nothing in common with economic communism, which is the denial of the right of private property and the compulsion for all to live in a collectivist set-up. That precisely these two elements are not found in the brotherhood of the early Jerusalem church is apparent from the following:  

1. Those who sold their possessions and brought the proceeds to the treasury of the church did so voluntarily. It is done out of charity and generosity. At most it is a voluntary form of "community of goods" practised by a small group from charitable and, possibly, ascetic motives. This set-up has nothing in common with any form of Socialism or Communism as practised or proposed in our modern day, with compulsion and expropriation as essential elements. That this was a voluntary affair in the Jerusalem church is clear, for one thing, from the fact that it was not practiced in the other early churches. It had at no time been made a requirement of following Christ, neither by Him nor by His apostles. Hence also one of the donors is mentioned by name (Acts 5:36), which would make no sense if it were a universal practice in the Jerusalem church.  

2. That the right of private ownership was fully recognized even in the Jerusalem church is clear from the statement which Peter makes in rebuking Ananias and Sapphira. Said he: "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold,
was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” (Acts 5:4) From this, and from the context it is abundantly clear that Peter rebukes Ananias, and that the latter is punished, not for any failure to surrender property, but for the sin of lying. The very words of Peter affirm the right of Ananias to keep what was his own.

What then do we have in this interesting account of the early Jerusalem church? A purely voluntary sharing on the part of the rich of their possessions with the poor, through the channel of the church treasury, so that their want might be alleviated. It was motivated partly by asceticism, partly by generosity, and as such it has been practiced again and again in later Christian communities. Usually it can succeed only, if it does succeed at all, in small communities of adherents of the same faith. When it is so practiced voluntarily by a group of believers, no one can register any objection against it on principle. And that for the simple reason that it does not do violence to the right of private property and does not in such cases impose itself upon human society, as a socialistic or communist order in any nation must and does do.10

In this light also the numerous religious communist ventures throughout the ages must be viewed. Their prevalence proves nothing for the issue before us. If these ventures demonstrate anything at all for our subject, it would be their utter impracticability and the inevitability of their ultimate collapse.11

In the face of this evidence the right of private property, which is the chief pillar supporting the system of free enterprise, must be held to be indisputably biblical and Christian, and the attack upon it as anti-Christian is wholly unwarranted.

(This article is the first of two installments. The second is to follow in next month’s issue.—Editor.)


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**From Our Correspondents**

**CHINA’S STUDENTS AND THE GOSPEL**

An Open Letter to Christian Friends in America

Imagine a city with a population of five million—the hub commercially, economically, politically, educationally, and socially of a nation comprising one-fourth of the human race. Consider also that within this city are being educated one-fourth of the college and university students of the entire nation; that these educated youths, because they comprise a mere 200,000 of the nation’s five hundred million, have an importance far out of proportion to their numbers,—twenty years hence they will be the nation’s leaders: merchants, lawyers, professors, doctors, preachers. And note well that one out of four of all these leaders will come from this city: Shanghai.

The History of China’s Students

Let us recall the history of China’s students: From early times the scholar has had the position of highest respect and prestige. His is the first of the four classes into which Chinese society has been divided. In every village the scholar’s advice is sought and followed; it was from these “literati” that officials were appointed. Since the last imperial dynasty was overthrown in 1911, however, the leadership of the students in every important movement among the awakening millions of China has been even more notable.

First, we have The Chinese Renaissance, one characteristic of which was to bring China’s written language more into conformity with its spoken language. The disparity between literary Chinese and the colloquial language has been largely responsible for the nation’s 80% illiteracy. This break with the past began to correct this condition. The student movement of May 4th, 1919, gave tremendous impetus to the Renaissance and made it nation-wide.

Secondly, we have The Nationalist Revolution. The break with the past and the criticism of everything that was traditional and unscientific resulted in a movement among the students to repudiate religion. This attack was aimed chiefly at Christianity because its aggressive evangelism was considered likely to engulf great masses of the Chinese people. Moreover, Christianity was considered to be the forerunner of Imperialism. Sun Yat-sen said that China’s condition was worse than colonial, since she was the colony of every nation with which she had made treaties. The Chinese could never achieve even the first step in their revolution until they had thrown off the yoke of unequal treaties. Again, the climax of the Revolution was reached in the May 30th movement of the students in 1925. The people became united behind them as one man. I was in a school in China at the time and the solidarity of feeling among all classes was very plain.

Between 1927, when the Nationalist armies completed their unifying sweep over China, and 1937, when Japan sought to strike a final crushing blow, the Chinese government made encouraging strides in leading its people on the road to democracy. Japan had begun its aggression in Manchuria in 1931 and it was the students again who, when the pattern was repeated in other parts of North China in 1935, launched The United Front on December 9th, 1935, thus crystallizing nation-wide sentiment against the aggressors.

The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in China

We were all thrilled ten years ago when we read of the heroic trek of the universities over thousands of miles deep into the interior of China. The hard conditions of exile and of wartime privations taught the students lessons that they never learned in their more happy academic environment. For the first time they realized their own utter insufficiency to cope with the conditions that confronted them; they looked on in wonder at the sacrificial spirit and heroic fortitude of Christian compatriots whom they had formerly despaired of as “running dogs of the imperialists.” They began to read and study the Bible. They organized Christian fellowships on their campuses for
Bible study and prayer instead of for the parties, social service and political activity that had previously been the sole concern of such groups. In the good providence of God, on July 23rd, 1945, during the last month in which the war with Japan held them concentrated in the interior of China, forty of these fellowships organized "The China All University Christian Students' Union", (or the China "IVCF") . Thus was opened a new chapter in the history of The Chinese Student Movement.

It has been my privilege in the past two years to work with almost a score of these Christian fellowships in the Shanghai area. Contrary to conditions that prevail in student circles in more favored lands, I have found that students of varying interests are equally eager to hear and receive the Christian message. Students of Economics, Politics, Law, Journalism, Education, Engineering, the Sciences, Agriculture, Medicine, Art, Music and the Liberal Arts have become devoted Christians and are keen to know Christ better and to make Him known. Preachers of the social gospel who hitherto have had the ear of these students cannot understand the work which God has done among them. They call "escapists" these students who, no longer confident of their ability to follow the example of Jesus, are deeply conscious of their need of a Divine Saviour who lives today, and have put their trust in Him. I know, however, that these young people are not escapists. They are concerned not only about their relationship, through Christ, with the living God, but also to know their life vocation and the Christian solution for the various ills that vex modern society. These problems become more acute in a land like China which is largely turning away from its own Confucian morality but has no heritage of Christian tradition to which these young Christians may appeal. They are deeply exercised to know the will of God in everything which concerns them. Without a doubt the opportunity since VJ day to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the students of China is without parallel in history.

China's Crying Need

I deeply regret that I have been unable to present this opportunity and the urgency of the need more adequately. This is the more so since this opportunity may not exist very much longer. Indeed, China is at this moment in greater peril militarily, politically, and economically than it has been in in decades. A people whose whole philosophy is the antithesis of Communism is threatened with engulfment by Communism because some have blindly chosen it as a desperate alternative. It is well for us in America to consider our responsibility in all of this. Many of the idealistic students of twenty years ago are in the Chinese government today. There was scant opportunity to give them the Gospel then. But what are we doing today for the students who are even now waiting to hear the Truth? Many of those in the government today were students in "Christian" America two decades ago. What are we doing today to give the Truth to the Chinese students now among us? It is in order personally to tell you how you may help answer this call that I am now returning to America for a few months. In the meantime let us pray that God will deliver this people from the danger that threatens them.

It is possible that the ship on which I am travelling may dock in New York as early as next Friday, December 17th. If so, it will be exactly four years to the day since my arrival in Chungking to serve with several thousands of the students of China in the war effort. At that time Japan's armies were threatening to cut the country in two, to march on Chungking and to knock China out of the war. Things had never looked more serious militarily in the whole eight years of resistance. Missionaries were being evacuated to India and people were predicting total collapse within a matter of weeks. But just when things looked blackest God intervened. That part of China experienced its first snow storm in more than half a century. (I remember it vividly because the zero ceiling and the ice on the wings of our plane caused us to make an emergency landing.) The unpreparedness of the Japanese for the unexpected cold in that latitude made them halt long enough for Chinese reinforcements to come from the north and stop their advance. That was the high tide of Japanese penetration into China. The situation is many times more serious today. It is difficult to see in what direction a solution lies. We must commit the matter to our omnipotent God.

"... He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35.)

Yours faithfully,

EUGENE W. ANDREWS.
Missionary to China
Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

On Board: ms. Grote Maersk,
approaching Panama,
December 11th, 1948.

THE CHINA PRAYER MOVEMENT

An Open Letter to the Christians of China

By Peter Chang,
Divinity Student in America,
Translation by L. T. Lyell.

Christians of China:

The present critical situation in China and throughout the world has reached a serious stage. We feel a sense of responsibility to lay the situation before you.

What is the present critical world situation?

1. Mankind is gradually losing hope for peace. In 1945 people asked, "Will San Francisco bring peace?" Two years ago it was, "Is the United Nations defunct?" Last year it was, "Is the outbreak of a third world war possible?" This year it is, "When will war break out?"

2. The rising cost of American commodities in the country where the hopes of world recovery are centered has created a serious impression.

3. On the morning of May 14th the 2,554 years extinct nation of Israel proclaimed its rebirth and thus created an explosive powder keg in Palestine.

4. America's budget for the present year devotes 83.6% of its total to items related to war.

5. Since Russia and America stand facing each other in divided with drawn swords in their hands, the relationship between the main East and West groups of powers grows daily more serious. One clash could start the conflict.

The Present Situation in China

What is the present situation in China?

1. The unprecedented civil war has in its present stage lasted for nearly three years.

2. According to April Government reports there were then 45,000,000 homeless refugees.

3. The general economic collapse means for the Chinese people not only tears, but death. At the end of March 1948 commodity prices were approximately 45,000,000 times what they were before the war at a low estimate. For in Mukden on June. 25th flour cost $40,000,000 a bag, or 20,000,000 times the pre-war price.

4. Student unrest, the rise of food prices, and food riots warn the nation that they will not struggle through without difficulty.

5. For some life is hell on earth, and on the other hand we see shameless extravagance.

6. "Like priest like people!).

7. Lawlessness abounds.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JANUARY, 1949
8. Evil desires show no restraint.
9. The smoke of war is everywhere. Blood flows in streams.
10. The people of China have reached the point of non-survival. In March a Kwangsi professor unable to stand the strain of economic conditions, went insane, climbed out on the roof and marching up and down tore up the tiles saying, “We must pull this world down”. In May a Ningpo professor’s wife, as a protest against the killing price increases hanged herself, leaving behind a letter which read, “I have no strength left to struggle with life so I am leaving this cruel, troubled world”.

Please note carefully! It is certainly not our present object to attach blame to any one group of people.

We firmly believe that the sufferings of mankind are the revelation of the wrath of God. The wrath of God is on account of man’s sin. Man’s sin proceeds from the Devil, the revelation of the wrath of God. The wrath of God is on

The Only Hope

We further believe that man’s only hope and the object of our prayers is the speedy spread of the Gospel and the return of Christ. Just because there never was a time like the present when our prayers were so urgently needed, we have decided to initiate the China Prayer Movement, a movement to include all Chinese Christians. To this end we suggest for prayer as follows:

1. **Pray for war-torn China.**

The people of China are perishing—tonight! As the picture of flowing blood presents itself to our eyes, as countless millions of our fellow countrymen on the brink of death stretch out their hands to us for salvation, we can only cry to God to raise up many more praying people like Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Wesley and Finney to contend for the Word of God, to grieve over the sins of their countrymen, to stand in the gap on behalf of the nation, and to confess their nation’s sins. Where does the hope of China lie? Pray! Pray! Pray!!!

Prayer, only prayer, is the seed of revival, the key to blessing, the way past every obstacle, and the deadly enemy of Satan. As the result of three days of prayer and fasting, Esther delivered the whole Jewish race from certain death. Through the prayers of the whole nation, America survived an economic depression and saw the great 1857 Revival when 500,000 souls were saved in that one year. A national day of prayer called by the King of England on May 26, 1940, brought England safely through her darkest hour and 300,000 soldiers were ferried back to England from Dunkirk as by a miracle. When Chinese Christians prayed earnestly, China survived the most dangerous crisis of the war in 1944. In that year the Japanese army fought its way against light resistance into Honan, Hupeh, Hunan, Kwangsi, and early in December reached Tushan in Kweichow, throwing Kweiyang and Chungking into a panic. Through the mercy of God, He did not reward us according to our iniquities. And now that brand plucked from the burning has again been cast into the fires of God’s wrath. As we consider this we can only once again lift up our hands to God and pray, “O God, have pity on us, a rebellious and broken people!”

2. **Pray for world peace.**

War has taught man nothing! After one world war a second followed twenty years later when directly or indirectly the blood of 100,000,000 people was shed in vain. We are well aware that future peace cannot be built on the sins of the past. We are equally aware that apart from Christ’s Second Coming the world will rush on to destruction. Therefore the peace for which we pray, is not eternal peace, but a temporary one. And the object of it is to spare us an opportunity to preach the Gospel: areas in which to preach and people to whom to preach.

3. **Pray for work among Chinese young people.**

This work among the young includes theological schools, work among university and high school students, Sunday schools and work among young people of every class. When we recollect how prior to the Sino-Japanese war university students rejected the Gospel, and how today there are university students in 207 universities and colleges who have received the Gospel, we take this to be a signal of the revival of the Chinese Church. A new relief force will be coming to join the offensive against Satan. All you older Christians of China, who love the young, your prayers are our life line!

4. **Pray for work among young people throughout the world.**

But for young people’s work abroad there would not be the great host of missionaries who love China. But for this host of missionaries there would be no Chinese Church. “He who drinks from the stream should remember its source”. We cannot but pray for them and ask God to protect them while we determine to hold them in regard.

5. **Pray for a great revival in the Chinese Church.**

Whenever God pours out blessings on His Church, He first lays a burden of prayer on the hearts of His children. That revival in the Chinese church is going to come is certain. But, who today is willing to pay the price of spiritual travail for such revival?

The China Prayer Movement

We have listed above “ten main themes” for prayer for the China Prayer Movement.

The China Prayer Movement is primarily a movement to pray for the end of the agony of war. This is the most important point in this manifesto. If you are so busy that you can only take one minute a day for prayer, we urge you to spend this minute in prayer for the nation. The last message of China’s greatest evangelist, Dr. John Song, to the Chinese Church was, “Our final work is the work of prayer”. This is the only resource for the world as well as China in these last days. There is absolutely no alternative.

Christians of China! Our Fatherland is pleading with us to unite to make this present hour the time to pray for war-torn China.

We must pray, because China lies on the mouth of a volcano, and the fate of any nation in such a position cannot long remain in doubt.

We must pray, because apart from prayer there is no survival.

We must pray, because our individual fate is inseparable from the fate of the nation. We should therefore pray about our own sin. The prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working. It is for us at once to start to plead for China. Because not even ten praying people were found in Sodom, the city met with divine destruction. If you do not begin to pray for China, who dares say China’s fate will not be the same? If we do not now pray with one accord the time may come when the opportunity to do so will have passed.

Finally we urge every beloved reader to pray much for the end of the war. In order that God may see fit to remove from us the fire of judgment which has already been burning for sixteen years, that our millions of perishing fellow-countrymen may have a chance of salvation, that a sense of personal responsibility for the nation’s fate may be laid on us all, that our brethren and sisters who have ceased praying for China may be stirred up again to pray, and that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ may have free course among the millions of our land.

“Oh God, do Thou Thyself move everyone in China who loves Thee and who is Thy faithful servant and child to fast and pray not just individually but in company with the whole church for war-torn China, to pray with confession until Thy wrath is turned away from us. And do Thou get glory to Thyself through the prayers of Thy children, and may Satan be put to shame. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * JANUARY, 1949
SOLID SERMONS

The twilight of life is admirably suited to reflection and meditation. The waning days of earth’s pilgrimage yield themselves to introspection and retrospection. Then the busyness of pressing duty is over and a man can survey the past and think of the future. So it is with the superannuated president and professor of Systematics of Calvin Seminary who, at this writing, is on the shady side of three-score and ten. The ten sermons under consideration which come from his hand constitute the mature reflections of a ripe Christian who characterizes the sum total of his spiritual experiences as “Riches of Divine Grace.” The backward glance over the years reveals to him nothing but the grace of God and that in such rich measure that his “cup overflows.” And the exposition of ten passages taken from the entire compass of the Scriptures is designed to extol that beneficent grace of God.

Needless to say, these sermons are solid. They have substance. Anyone who has had the privilege of “sitting at his feet” in either classroom or sanctuary, expects that. The content is strong, at times rather heavy; and the overtones of systematics with attendant proof texts are very evident. And yet theses sermons breathe a warmth and fervor that comes from intimacy of communion with the Lord. Here is a man who writes experientially. Here is a man to whom the truths of God become increasingly precious, the nearer he approximates the “borders of Canaan.” Christ is to him a living Lord. His own personal convictions may well be summed up in his definition of true faith, to-wit, “to recognize His (Jesus’) claims, to rely on His promises, to entrust oneself completely to Him, to seek salvation only on the basis of His sacrificial work, to glory in the cross, and to appropriate Him with all His spiritual blessings.”

The raison d’être of the book is twofold. One is to furnish exegetical and expository competition to prevalent topical sermonizing. The former type of preaching has largely fallen into desuetude. Topicalism reigns in the pulpit of the present day. But what is expedient, yea rather, what is highly necessary, is exploration of the deeper meaning of Scripture in the original and its unfoldment with an eye to pertinence for the present day. That, in essence, is “preaching of the Word.”

The other purpose, in the words of the author, is to “stress particular doctrinal truths which are not generally emphasized in much of the preaching of our day, though they are of the greatest importance.” Hence the polemical is conspicuously present in these pages. The Modernists are reminded in no uncertain terms that salvation is not by character but by Calvary and that the kingdom of God is primarily the rule of God in heart and life and not a “new ethical brotherhood of man.” The Pietist is reprimanded with the essentiality of dogma for a virile Christian faith. The unwholesome mystics are warned against reliance in an “inner light” apart from the Word of God. The Dispensationalists are shown from Scripture that the spiritual descendants of Abraham and not physical Israel are to share in the promises of the covenant of the grace of God. Those who stress “the immanence of God to the point of Pantheism” are urged to keep balance by holding on to the transcendence of God, and the Latitudinarians, who assume that salvation can be attained by traveling the roads of legalism, sacramentalism, evolutionism, humanism, or modernism, are reminded of the exclusiveness of the Christian way, for “there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.”

Vacant congregations who must resort to the printed page in their services will do well to use these sermons. The “reader” will read them slowly and deliberately of course because they are freighted with thought. And others of us do well to read them for edification in our private devotions. Ours is an age not calculated to promote reflection and meditation, and any aid thereto should be enthusiastically welcomed and studiously used.

JOHN H. BRATT.

SOUNDING THE ALARUM
YOUTH SPEAKS ON CALVINISM. BY the Youth and Calvinism Group. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1943. 76 pages. $0.40.

When a man is told that his house is on fire he may deplore the fact, but he will appreciate being told about it. Yet such is our native pride that we as individuals, as a church, or as a nation have a tendency to shun, if not to execute, the individual who presumes to tell us of our deficiencies and our weaknesses. It is therefore usually considered love’s labor lost for anyone to criticize or challenge the behavior or the beliefs of members of his own group. There is no quicker way of being denounced a high-brow or having one’s motives or loyalty doubted than by raising a voice of warning or protest within one’s group. It seems safe to predict that the Youth and Calvinism Group will not be greeted with applause on all sides for calling our attention to what it considers definite deficiencies in our defenses. However, in the opinion of this reviewer, wisdom would seem to dictate that the watchmen upon the walls of Zion lend their ears. It is conceivable that they will be disconcerted at what they hear, but it is unendurable and criminal negligence if they stop their ears to what this Report has to say and empty the vials of their resentment upon the bearers of the evil tidings. That would be comparable to a general who receives information from a reconnaissance unit of an enemy infiltration and turns about charging them with hobnobbing with the enemy. Or, to use another figure, the watchmen upon our spiritual battlements, into whose care the city of God has been committed, do well to investigate the warning of impending danger. The alarum has rung! To the battlements, man the guns, let every man stand in his place about the camp! In this day of investigations and spy hunts it is well for the spiritual leaders (this term is used here in a far wider sense than the ordinary one which often identifies spiritual leaders with those holding ecclesiastical office) within our Reformed fortress to ascertain the truth concerning the facts presented in the Report now under consideration.

The call to arms presented in this brochure is based chiefly upon the thesis that though truth is eternal, e.g., the “Principle of the absolute sovereignty of the personal triune God,” nevertheless the application of the truth must vary with the times. This application of the Principle is called the Program, which must meet the challenge of our times. Otherwise the Principle is no longer relevant to the present historical moment. Since the Program must be dynamic and vital in a given historical situation, it “obviously must sometimes be re-stated, developed, and modified as history progresses.” Without a Program the Principle would have no fruition.

Calvin and Abraham Kuyper, so the contention runs, faced the crises of their day with an adequate Program based upon
their Principle, but we may not rest content with what great Calvinists have done in the past. And, "it seems to us that our leaders are not carrying our Principle into a Program of fruitful action: that our Calvinism is therefore becoming dangerously formalized and thus meaningless for actual life."

After this initial statement, which represents the central thrust of their criticism, the authors call attention to the fact that there ought to be responses in our present Program to the anti-Christian challenge implicit in modern society, politics, science, literature, and education.

It is stated in this connection that if the Principle is to have existential meaning we may have to drop some of the applications made in other days. As an example of this sloughing-off process the "principle of sphere sovereignty" is mentioned as an "admirable achievement for life in the Netherlands in the 19th century," but its relevance for the existential moment is questioned.

The remaining chapters, written by different authors, contribute in various ways to the central theme. One stresses the Biblical truth that faith without works is dead, and tells us to act upon our Principle in the living Present! Another author gives a historical résumé of Calvinism in action in the field of citizenship and politics. A third calls for a Calvinistic philosophy of science. Still another deplores the shortage of real literature in our circles, and makes a plea for realism in writing. The chapter on education perhaps ranks highest in appreciative understanding of the past and for its constructive recommendations. One chapter is devoted to a criticism of unrealistic and non-existential preaching.

The last chapter, entitled, "A Road Block," deserves special attention for, as the title indicates, this is the key log in the Calvinistic log-boom. If only we could dislodge this terrible timber the great treasure of our inheritance would be released and sent floating down to the sea of life and a Calvinistic civilization would emerge. Thus runs the argument, and an appendix is added with statistical material to buttress the thesis on the basis of a questionnaire sent to a representative group of young people in the church.

It is unfortunate, in the opinion of this reviewer, that the Report hinges on such a contingency as the movie question. It is not made clear that the removal of this road block will give the Calvinistic forces access to the arsenal of the enemy and unleash the pent-up energies for Christian conquest of the world.

Furthermore, the Poll addresses itself exclusively to the thesis that: "the Church is not meeting, not satisfying, the needs of its young people." Almost unnoticed, the Protestants and Catholics are singling out our leaders in general and laying their charge at the door of the church. They are uncritically slipping into a common modern error of heaping reproaches upon the church for all the ills of society. However, this is quite in line with the scrapping of the principle of sphere sovereignty. On the other hand, the Catholic postulate of an all-inclusive sovereignty given to the Church over the state, family, society, etc., has been substituted. Since this is a review it is not necessary to rise to the defence of the church, and I doubt not that doughty defenders will be forthcoming.

Since the November election public opinion polls have been under suspicion, but we ought not to close our eyes to the evidence. Whether the conclusions are warranted is another matter. Movie attendance and the reading of trashy novels may be signs of spiritual indifference, worldly-mindedness, and intellectual inertia. To remove the ban of movie attendance may be desirable from the viewpoint of Christian liberty and Reformed church polity, but will it give Calvinism the impetus it needs to overcome the world?

In substance this Plea is not new. Articles in this same vein by Dr. Reid and the Reverend Mr. Boer have appeared in former issues of The Calvin Forum as well as popularly written appeals in The Banner (cf. Dr. J. Meeter, Dr. J. Van Bruggen in recent issues). But the uniqueness of the situation arises from the fact that men who have not yet finished their formal training feel constrained to present their Plea for imaginative leadership. The wholesale condemnations of youth are constantly in evidence. When a cry is made for response to the anti-Christian challenge implicit in modern literature et al., theology is mentioned in the same breath. But in this science our leaders have actually been meeting the challenge. Youthful exuberance rather than critical acumen or scholarship must also be credited with the readiness to blithely discard the principles of sphere sovereignty, which is just coming to its own in the philosophy of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. This is an instance in which the Program becomes the Trojan Horse by which the Troy of Principle is ultimately sacked.

The call for more realism in literature is sadly unrealistic as much as it fails to take sufficient account of the unreality (unnatural character) of sin. Reference is made to the realism of the Bible; however, Biblical Realism does not go at over sin. It presents sin as abnormal, as reprehensible and heinous in the sight of God; as that which ought not to be, that which alienates man from the source of his life. The references to the doctor and the farmer are alike unhappy. A doctor does not accept disease and gloat over it, but his great concern is rather to diagnose and get rid of it. So, too, the farmer. He does not nurture weeds and admire them, but he eradicates them as soon as he can in order that they may not impede the progress of his crop, that they may not mar the beauty of his handiwork.

But the Report tells us that we must have sin depicted in order to achieve beauty, that sin and sordidness must be portrayed if we would have true life. Ah, but surely this is a perversion of the mind at enmity with God which is being smuggled into our citadel. This is an assumption of the natural mind that life as it now is, is normal. Here is denial of the Principle! To the law and to the testimony! We need more indorrination with the Principle as stated by Calvin and Kuyper—for this is another gospel, which has no Gospel in it.

In spite of such critical comments I do not hesitate to recommend this Plea with enthusiasm. The solicitude which is voiced in this brochure and the inventory which has been taken ought to be appreciated by all true Calvinists and it may even stab some of the more complacent awake. Besides, the Report has many excellent qualities. It is well written and comes with the vigour of youth. It will be very helpful in taking account of the state of the church at year's end.

We owe the writers of this Report a word of thanks just as we would thank any messenger telling us that our house is on fire. We must not mistake this Plea with the Condition it seeks to expose. This unstinting effort of our youth shall not profit us one whit if we now proceed to confound the symptoms with the sickness itself.

Finally, attention ought to be called to a few of the admirable passages found within the brief compass of this booklet. We are admonished, e.g., to do our duty as citizens with the illustration that the principle—righteousness exaliteth a nation—may involve the ringing of doorbells. Again, we are told that Calvinism, not our political party, should give us the standards by which to judge the New Deal. In chapter three this challenging line occurs, which, to my mind, is the heart of the matter: "An analysis must be undertaken to show to the world that, granted the Communist, or totalitarian, or modern scientific view of man and society, there is ultimately no meaning to existence, and that the individual has nothing to live for." Some very fine practical suggestions are made with a view to raising the professional standard of our teachers, and there is a good criticism of abstract preaching. Many more excellent passages could be cited, but let these suffice. This will have been enough, I trust, to whet the appetite of the most surfeited soul.

HENRY VAN VLIET.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * JANUARY, 1949
Joyce and Woolf, impugns both the sense of individual identity and value are fundamentally nothing more than shifting theatres or of impressions which rise and dissolve without order or permanence. The artist, since he has no scale of values, incorporates all of experience without discrimination; he communicates everything at once without inhibition, since inhibition has no more value than nakedness. The question, therefore, is to find a form natural to the rush of unselected impression, a form which will artistically communicate everything at once. Hence Ulysses, hence, on a smaller scale, Stuas Longian.

The modern novelist's choice, therefore, consists either of reflecting impartially a naturalistically conceived order, or of imposing upon it, by means of technique, values which are, in the last analysis, merely personal. In either case, however, if the novelist shares the modern temper, he begins with a belief in a world in which man is purely accidental and in which the life of man is of no more importance than the struggle of ants on the burning log of a campfire." With a few exceptions this is the basic point of view of both the essayists and novelists in this volume.

The foregoing may suggest that the volume is painfully academic and arid. Nothing could be further from the truth. The initial chapters are, indeed, rather theoretical, but even they abound in concrete references. The specific studies are invariably penetrating, and some rise to the level of notable prose. Among the best are the essays on Joyce, the Brontës, Faulkner, Virginia Woolf, and particularly "The Turn of the Screw as a 'Black Easter'," highly ingenious and poetically developed as it is, seem convincing. On the other hand, Warren's essay on William Faulkner seems wholly right; it not only affords illumination but captures the very tone of Faulkner's work.

The volume vividly demonstrates the difficulty of arriving at sound critical principles in the art of fiction. Not only are apparently simple terms like character, plot, and narrative resistant to close definition, not only are the proper techniques of development under serious dispute, but the concept of fiction itself and its function is under warm debate. Are Aldous Huxley's concatenations of brilliant philosophical conversation fiction? Are Thomas Mann's philosophical novels fiction? Is Mrs. Woolf's dramatic rendition of consciousness as an "inescessant shower of innumerable atoms" fiction? Are Ivanhoe and Ulysses both novels? Can one get Mrs. Dalloway and Silas Marner under the same roof? Does a novel have to tell a story or is it enough to analyze the self for five-hundred pages? Does Thomas Wolfe write novels or does he simply disgorge vast blocks of fabulous experience? Mr. Allen Tate, a writer of stature, says in his article "Technique of Fiction," "as a critic I profess to know nothing;" and adds without gross malice "critics seem to know little or nothing:" I merely suggest the magnitude of fashioning a Christian esthetic on the matter of technique of fiction.

Apart from the previous rather depressing observations, one should add that the book serves several purposes well. It serves as a sharp corrective to dogmatic assertions about the cesspool of modern fiction. The field is vast and one can hardly judge fairly from the vantage point of a hasty glance at reviews and publisher's blurbs. It is merely caprice to include Betty Smith and Willa Cather in one fell condemnatory swoop. It is merely pejorative to speak of modern fiction as entirely decadent. The reader is acutely aware of the intellectual vigor that has gone into the best modern fiction. He is saddened by the tragic predicament of modern man who lives in a world denuded of objective value. In the face of the vast iron mechanism, modern man spies out his filaments of personal values, aware of their delicacy, and despairing of anything more. One is impressed once more by the consequences of loss of faith. It pervades matters of form as well as substance. Without God, and without His Word, "Whirl is King."
The spectacle resembles so many scholastics glossing the text of Aristotle.

In his literary criticism, Eliot began by regarding “poetry as poetry, and not another thing.” He held that “art may serve ends beyond itself, but . . . is not required to be aware of these ends . . . and indeed performs its function . . . much better by indifference to them.” If that sounds like an entering wedge to a philosophy of art for art’s sake, remember that there is some truth in that much-abused dictum. Art is sometimes given and made to accept all kinds of work which does not belong to it. Accordingly Eliot resented the work of those critics who “busy themselves so much with the implications of a poem . . . that the poetry becomes hardly more than a text for a discourse.” We understand him, understand him too when he cautions us to “distinguish the appreciation of poetry from theorizing about poetry.” In reaction therefore to the prophets, messiahs, and crusaders of literature (he sat under the catalyzing agency of Babitt at Harvard), Eliot felt it incumbent upon him, particularly in his early period, to argue for the integrity of poetry as poetry and not another thing. These are warnings and elucidations the Arnold and Ruskins and Paul Elmer More of criticism need. It was of such as they that Eliot was thinking when he spoke of the “temptation of any man who is interested in ideas . . . to put literature into the corner until he has cleaned up the whole world” as an “almost irresistible temptation.”

L’art pour l’art—surely Eliot is right in reminding us that if this is taken to mean that the poet like the dentist is a man with a definite job, it is the plain truth. Still, and this Eliot knew and came to know better as time went on, it is a dictum which can be acted upon only in integrated, ordered, and settled societies. Had he lived in Virgil’s, or Dante’s, or even Shakespeare’s age, Eliot might have remained content with regarding what he once called “the literary job” as a purely literary function. He might then, using the tools of comparison and analysis which he handled so admirably, have gone on commenting on “the felicity and blemish” of poetry “line by line,” and so have maintained what is in fact an ideal “critical integrity.” But in disintegrated periods such aesthetic provinciality is impossible. Eliot put his finger squarely upon this important fact in speaking of Dr. Samuel Johnson: “For Johnson poetry is still poetry, and not another thing. Had he lived a generation later, he would have been obliged to look more deeply into the foundations, and so would have been unable to leave us an example of what criticism ought to be for a civilization which, being settled, has no need, while it lasts, to enquire into the functions of its parts.”

Ours is an age, of course, which was to be distinguished for achievement because we had finally got our labor divided, and so made specialization possible. What is happening, however, is that for want of a prevailing dogma and over-ruling philosophy, the functions of the parts of our society are no longer clear, and the parts are losing significance. We see the results: ministers going from the pulpit to the rostrum as social crusaders, scientists becoming philosophers without knowing the rules of the game, and poets turning into moralists and economic reformers. Everybody is leaping the pales of his enclosure, and meddling in other people’s affairs. This, too, is a consequence of secularity and a definition of atomism.

Eliot has therefore progressed, reluctantly because of his commendable concern for the integrity of poetry, but inevitably because of the pressures of the time, from a purely aesthetic position in literary criticism to one which “perceives the contiguity and continuity” of the several provinces of life and thought. Of F. H. Bradley, he once said: “He wished only to determine how much of morality could be founded without entering into the religious question at all.” It is perhaps accurate to say that in the spirit of that utterance, Eliot has for the most part been trying to find as much critical theory securely as is possible without entering the religious question. In his later period he has, however, found it increasingly necessary to enter into that question also. Thus with a kind of flourish rare in his writings, he asked, in his Harvard lectures of 1932, “whether culture requires that we make a deliberate effort to put out of mind all our convictions and passionate beliefs about life.” So his Virginia lectures, After Strange Gods, were concerned with nothing less than the influence of the devil on modern literature, and in 1940 he published his Idea of a Christian Society. Eliot plainly does not want the needful order and integration on totalitarian or naturalistic bases. Anglo-Catholic in religion, he looks to revealed Christianity for the saving dogma, meanwhile in such books and articles as The Einheit der Europaischen Kultur and “The Christian Conception of Education” reminding Western civilization, democratic or otherwise, that it had better look to the origins and bases of its tradition. A long way removed, such concerns as these, from those simply aesthetic concerns of The Sacred Wood published in 1920. But it would seem to be the only course which intelligence in our time can take.

Such are some of the perspectives opened up by the Points of View. These comments have, however, gone behind the excerpts of that volume to the sources from which they were lifted. It remains therefore to add that most of the Eliot rights in America are owned by Harcourt, Brace, among them those to the Selected Essays and the Essays Ancient and Modern from which I have quoted freely.

HENRY ZYLSTRA.