Religion in Education versus Christian Education

What Scripture Can Tell the Scientist

The N. A. E. and Ecumenicity

The Doctrine of Infallibility Applied

William Cowper, Calvinistic Poet

Correspondence

Book Reviews

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THE CALVIN FORUM • • • FEBRUARY, 1952
William Cowper, Calvinistic Poet

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In all that has been written about the relation of Calvinism to literature, no one apparently has discovered that an eighteenth century English poet and letter-writer, William Cowper, is the only important Calvinistic man-of-letters in English literature. As such he may prove to be an instructive example of how one Calvinist embodied his religious convictions in his literary practice and content.

At the heart of all his work was the feeling that he was called to a task in life. In his most popular book, entitled The Task, he submits that

God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.

His own task was to use all the resources of poetry to propagate Calvinism. To do less, he states in a letter to the Rev. Unwin, would be "dishonourable to my religion." Yet, in order to catch the ear of all the world and not "volveth the reader" at the beginning, he strategically places the religious content toward the end of the book where his "best impressions might be made last." With whimsical humor he leads the reader on to believe that, in answer to the challenge of his lady-friend, his "task" is merely to compose a long poem celebrating the domestic charms of the lowly sofa. Then come delightful descriptions of his beloved English countryside and friendly character sketches of the common people. But his frankly didactic purpose permitted these "concessions" only to induce the reader to imbibe the religious truth that Cowper felt should "tincture" all his work. Reaching a much wider audience than many other poets of his day, Cowper not only introduced the appreciation of poetry to the poorer and middle classes of his day but also devoted his talent to advance the Kingdom of God.

To all the world he proclaims that no man can find happiness unless he acknowledges God as the sovereign ruler over the destinies of life.

Happy the man who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that chequers life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.

But such knowledge cannot be gained by "strides of human wisdom."

'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries, except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life,
That fools discover it, and stray no more.

And that illumination is a gift of God. Only
The mind indeed, enlightened from above,
Views Him in all.

Cowper made a unique contribution to the development of English thought about nature. Two divergent enthusiasms of the human spirit during his time were united by the impelling logic of his Calvinism. Rousseau had inspired men to seek a fuller life in the fellowship of mother nature, and in Cowper's time Wesley was leading men to a more intimate fellowship with God through Christ. Both lines of experience came to full expression in Cowper's life and work, not separately, but in a new and lasting synthesis—the truth of the Creator's immensity in the realm of nature.

Man views it (nature) and admires, but rest content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author.

Not so the mind that has been touched from Heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.

The deists had attempted to unite God and Nature into one concept. But Pope and Addison, devout as they were, lost the intimate fellowship of the personal God of Scripture in their synthesis when they separated the Creator from His creation. Cowper's communion with the visible forms of nature drew him to a more intimate fellowship with the God of nature. To him nature reveals the attributes of God:

... all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect His attributes who placed them there,
Fulfil the purpose, and appear designed
Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing mind.

The just Creator tends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above,
To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.

In other words, nature is a gift of God to bring men closer to Him. Here is no rationalistic attempt to place the Book of Nature beside the Scriptures as an added revelation. In one packed couplet, worthy of Alexander Pope, Cowper gives nature its proper niche in Christian thought:

Nature, employed in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of Grace.

Thanks be to God for Calvinist Cowper, who used his poetic talent, for his time and for all time,
teach the Biblical view of the relation of nature to God. It was his appointed task to check for all believers the drift of English thought from naturalism through deism to the pantheism of Wordsworth. Far from pantheistic are the following pithy lines stating again the fact of the immanence of the Creative Spirit in nature:

The Lord of all, himself through all diffus'd
Sustains, and is the life of all that lives,
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God.

Cowper was one of the few Calvinists who carry into practice the idea that Calvinism is a world-and-life-view. True, he preferred the simple life close to nature to the morally complex life of London. “God made the country but man made the town” is one of his famous lines. But he was no ascetic. He acted out the truth of Paul’s assurance that “all things are ours because we are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” Domestic and social as well as spiritual problems came under his critical eye. He castigated the foibles of his age with gentle satire and struck hard against moral perversity. Nor was his interest confined to one class, as was the poetry of Pope, Dryden, and Gray, but it embraced the whole of mankind and of human nature. Stopford Brooke declares in his Theology in the English Poets that Cowper’s religion extended indefinitely his poetic sympathy to touch upon almost every phase of English society: “on the universities and the schools, the hospitals and the prisons; on cities and villages, on the statesman, the clergyman, the lawyer, the soldier, the man of science, the critic, the writer for the Press, the pleasure seeker, the hunter, the musician, the epicure, the card-player, the ploughman, the cottager, and fifty others.” And whatever there was of cruelty, oppression and evil in the relation of man to man received his condemnation in no uncertain terms.

Incidentally, he voices the most sensible of all arguments against card-playing: one of the tricks

That idleness has ever contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,
To palliate dullness, and give time a shove.

Cowper’s genius was critical rather than creative and for that reason most of his work speaks only for his time. Most of the sixty-eight hymns he contributed to Olney Hymns are rhymed theology, but two or three, notably those that begin with the lines, “O for a closer walk with God” and “God moves in a mysterious way” are inspired lyrical creations of deep religious experience that will last for all time. “There is a fountain filled with blood” is found in most hymnals, but it can hardly be in a class with the aforementioned. The image of the first verse is very disturbing to one’s sensibilities. One visualizes a host of sinners bathing in a flood of blood. Scripture gives no warrant for such a use of the image of a fountain. In the Bible is the beautiful imagery of a fountain flowing with life-giving waters. If Cowper had taken his cue for this hymn from Biblical imagery, he would not have fancied such an absurd image as a fountain pouring forth a shower-bath of blood.

Calvinists who rate in a history of literature are rare in this world. Perhaps we should have an annotated anthology of the living part of Cowper’s work that can still speak to Calvinists today.
The Infallibility of Scripture and a Specific Application

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This is always a timely subject. In our confessional standards we read the following concerning the holy Scriptures:

We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God, and because they carry the evidence thereof in themselves (From Article V of Confession of Faith).

I

Since we believe, without doubt, “all things” contained in Scripture, it is clear that the Scriptures are regarded as our infallible guide, in faith and practice. Hence the New Testament is regarded as infallibly true concerning such matters as the right interpretation of the Old Testament, over against Judaism; and concerning the history of revelation and the authorship of the books of the Bible, over against Modernism.

At this time we wish to emphasize the infallibility of Scripture in what it expressly states concerning the authorship of biblical books or parts of books—particularly portions quoted in the New Testament from definite authors of the Old Testament.

It is clear that the infallibility of Scripture is a cardinal Reformed doctrine that is expressly vouched for in our confessional standards. If we reject this infallibility touching earthly things, why not reject it concerning the heavenly? Who can remain standing at the crossroads found here? One has to proceed one way or the other. If the New Testament is not regarded as infallible touching authorship, why should it be regarded as infallible concerning salvation?

Many, at these crossroads, have selected the wrong way, and tobogganed down. But then it is hard to come back up. The radical Kuenen holds that the critics will have to reject what the New Testament says of Old Testament authorship, if they wish to gain the fruits of their dearly bought method.

But it involves a characteristically Reformed method to maintain the infallibility of biblical statements concerning the authorship of biblical books. It represents a characteristically Reformed method, first of all, to see what an Old Testament book says concerning its own authority and to accept that as infallible. And it involves a no less characteristically Reformed method to maintain the infallibility of New Testament statements, involving the authorship of definite quotations from Old Testament authors.

II

What Reformed Old Testament scholar is there that has written on the subject whose position does not show the above method? Dr. R. D. Wilson considered textual criticism as the leading preparation for the study and the refutation of the higher criticism. Four and a half years of textual criticism with R. D. Wilson, then of Princeton, with J. A. Montgomery of Philadelphia, and with B. W. Bacon of Yale, and a decade of further study in this field, have not brought to our notice any biblical data that cannot be reconciled with a faith in the infallibility of Scripture.

New Testament passages, quoting definite words from the Old Testament as coming from a certain Old Testament writer, constitute a link in the chain of biblical evidence that such quoted Old Testament words are actually from the Old Testament author mentioned in the New Testament. Hence the chain of biblical evidence here includes references to both the Old and the New Testament.

Concerning the New Testament passages, quoting definite words from an Old Testament writer or author, the first question is now, to inquire which definite words of the Old Testament they concern. For, strictly speaking, precisely these quoted words, no more and no less, are thus primarily evidenced by the New Testament as to their authorship—though various secondary implications may follow.

But it is especially the above mentioned link, in the chain of evidence, that the Higher Critical School refuses to recognize as evidence, concerning Old Testament authorship. For the New Testament writers are, of course, centuries later than the Old Testament books—so much later that their evidence must be discarded, apart from the doctrine of an infallible inspiration, and is discarded by Driver, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others.

III

Hence, the principle, that these New Testament quotations constitute a link in the evidence stands and falls with the infallibility of the New Testament, but is all the more firmly accepted in Reformed Old Testament introductions generally.

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This principle is very clearly mantained by Dr. G. C. Aalders, of the Free University of Amsterdam, when he cites New Testament evidence concerning Pentateuchal authorship. By the Pentateuch is meant the group of Bible books from Genesis through Deuteronomy. In his commentary on Genesis, Dr. Aalders has an introduction to the Pentateuch which is of great value. On the present subject, his position, found on pages 36 and 37, may be translated as follows:

In the second place, however, we also find places where an appeal is made expressly to the authority of Moses, whether in general (John 1:46; 5:46; Hebrews 7:14), or with a definite quotation from the Pentateuch (Matt. 22:24; Mark 7:10; 15:19; Luke 20:28; Acts 3:22; Romans 10:5, 19). That, in a number of these places, the speakers are Jews does not impair the significance at all, since they let their appeal stand over against Christ, and Christ surely would have opposed that, if He had regarded their appeal as incorrect. Now, in these places, Moses is undoubtedly considered as the responsible author (zesgeman) and sometimes even expressly as the writer (Mark 12:19; Luke 20:25; John 1:46; Romans 10:5) of the Pentateuchal content coming into consideration. Strictly speaking, it is true, such do not prove more than that, in each instance (telkens) the words therein intended, from Pentateuch, are from the hand of Moses; ... All those places in which an appeal is made to the authority of Moses, whether as responsible author (zesgeman), or as writer, have, without exception, reference to places from the Pentateuch that appear in the laws or that appear in the history contemporary with Moses.

IV

This principle, of accepting as infallible New Testament statements involving the authorship of quotation from Old Testament writers, similarly guides the method of Dr. J. Ridderbos. Compare his work on De Profeet Jesaja, Part II, Chapters 40-66, page X, where his position may be translated as follows:

In the New Testament, our chapters are quoted several times, sometimes with mention of Isaiah's name. ... But also definite statements are attributed to Isaiah, namely, 40:3f., by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:4; John 1:28); Isaiah 53:4 by Matthew (Matt. 8:17), similarly Isaiah 42:1-4 (Matt. 12:17-21); Isaiah 53:1 by John (John 12:28) and by Paul (Romans 10:16); Isaiah 62:12, by Paul (Romans 10:20f.)

For ourselves, we find no liberty, by means of an accommodation-theory or something of the kind to set aside these statements as not binding; and, therefore, we think that we have to let ourselves be led by them in the question that occupies us.

On the other hand, we do not wish to infer more from them than they actually say. ... to this may be added that we are also not of the opinion that hence now all the other places of Isaiah 40-66 might be denied to Isaiah.

With the rest of the treatment of Dr. Ridderbos, here we are in accord. But the main item has been quoted above, for the real question is there covered. For Dr. Ridderbos rightly holds that New Testament passages quoting definite words from the Book of Isaiah, as coming from the prophet Isaiah, constitute a link in the chain of the biblical evidence that such quoted Old Testament words are actually from the prophet Isaiah.

Other points can be advanced to build up a cumulative argument, concerning a number of passages denied by the Higher Critics to Isaiah. But the fundamental question here is this: may appeal be made to those New Testament statements which attribute to the prophet Isaiah definite passages from the Book of Isaiah, even though these passages are disputed to Isaiah by the Higher Critics?

Is the New Testament infallible on this score? Says Dr. Ridderbos, "Wij voor ons vinden geen vrijheid ..." ("For ourselves, we find no liberty, by means of an accommodation-theory or something of the kind to set aside these statements as not binding ...") Other Reformed writers could be cited who also maintain the principle that quotations attributed to the New Testament writers to the prophet Isaiah must be held to come from Isaiah, the prophet. The excellent and recent volume of Dr. O. T. Allis, on The Unity of Isaiah has a still more detailed treatment of this New Testament material than that of Professor J. Ridderbos.

What is the main reason why the Higher Critics deny that Isaiah wrote those parts of the Book of Isaiah that are disputed by them to Isaiah? In general, these disputed parts show predictive prophecy, or are found in sections that involve prediction such as only supernatural revelation can give. (Compare Dr. George L. Robinson's article on "Isaiah" in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.) The Higher Critics do not hesitate to deny the prediction of the rise of Babylonia, as a world empire, by Isaiah. They do not believe that Cyrus was predicted by Isaiah. Compare chapters forty-four and forty-five. The Critics hold that Isaiah could not have predicted Cyrus over a hundred years ahead of his time.

How hesitatingly Franz Delitzsch yielded to the Higher Critics of his day, concerning the Book of Isaiah. Yet the position to which Delitzsch then yielded is probably not held in that way anymore by any leading Higher Critic today.

All that wish to stand on the standpoint of faith will have to be very careful with their concessions here. For the Delitzsch concession led to a variety of weak positions, as Critics and believing biblical scholars alike hold now.

How can one do justice to the infallibility of Scripture, on this score? That is the question. We hold to the above method, because of its precision. Such precision is required by the nature of the problem, and by the infallibility of Scripture.
Amsterdam
October 30, 1951.

Dear Friends of THE CALVIN Forum,

It is certainly time that I think of the pleasant duty of writing to my friends in America. At present my work schedule is so crowded that I hope you will be lenient if you do not hear from me for awhile. The last couple of months have been especially busy because I have taken leave of my congenial congregation in Groningen to accept a new position as special pastor for the prisoners in the Holgestichten of Amsterdam. I was appointed on September 1 and my work began on October 1. It was most distressing to break the ties of friendship and the delightful associations I had made in a congregation to which I had given my heartfelt attention for some five years. But I felt definitely called to accept this new work and have not since had a moment’s regret.

Have you ever been arrested or suspected of crime, whether guilty or innocent? It is always a time of greatest strain and anxiety. At this present moment as I take the noon hour to write to you hundreds of such suspected people make up my “congregation.” This morning I had a group of them in my study. What unspeakable grief fills the lives of these men and of their families and friends! And all this as the result of sin! O, how bitter is sin in every form—also the sin of those who never enter a prison. But how satisfying it is to give Christian help and advice to misdirected souls, after one has first reproved them with the holy law of God.

On the Sabbath Day I preach for these prisoners twice in two of the three buildings. In the third building, where I have part-time responsibility, there is an assistant pastor. It would be impossible for me to handle all the work without any help. Counseling these men takes much time, patience, and understanding. It puts one under an intense strain and is very tiring. This seems to me the most difficult responsibility that can be laid on a minister’s shoulders, and I continue to wonder that the Lord has seen fit to entrust it to me. This is a much different experience from racing through the United States and Canada in an auto.

In the narrowness of the cell there can be a wideness that is glorious when we experience God’s world-embracing grace. There is something that I feel the need of here and that is reading material for the prisoners. The government provides so little money for that cause. If there should be some among you who have a magazine or two that would be discarded otherwise, I should appreciate your sending them to me for my prisoners, among whom there are several who read English. Perhaps you have the Religious Digest, the Reader’s Digest, or the Missionary Monthly magazine which you publish in America that is partly written in Dutch. You would also help me and others who have this difficult task by praying for us. I know of some readers who do and it is most reassuring to me. I experience God’s nearness in this work and His blessings. I wish that you could accompany me for a day.

I am very glad to read in The Canadian Calvinist and also in Contact of the progress of the emigration churches in Canada. Do you know that this same activity prevails among the Holland emigrants in France, Australia, New Zealand, and South America? In God’s Providence much good must still come through the ancient heritage of the Reformation. Let us remind each other—sola gratia, sola fides, sola sacra scriptura.

In another letter, God willing, I hope to come back to this subject.

With friendliest greetings,

Pieter Prins, D.D.
**Book Reviews**

**SOMETHING OF THE “SHORTER CATECHIST”**


Debunking was a biographical fad in the twenties and the lives of great men were bitingly reassessed. Discretely hidden skeletons were exhumed, moral lapses uncovered, and the feet of clay made plain. The reaction was understandable. Victorian biography (unashamedly according to Carlyle) had whitened the angel and gilded the lily. The flawless men parading heavily in the Victorian biographical cakewalk were unconvincing indeed. The gilded the lily. The flawless men parading heavily in the Victorian biographical cakewalk were unconvincing indeed. When the great men died the biographer wrote the two-volume *Life and Letters,* an unshapely mass, originating in piety, executed in obtuseness, and soon embalmed in library dust. He wrote it with the tearful widow censoring in piety, executed in obtuseness, and soon embalmed in the job over his shoulder. The result was hagiology. So the new biography set out to portray real men—petty, mean, unadulterated sinners. They went too far and lost the greatness of notable men in a thicket of peccadilloes.

Robert L. Stevenson did not escape the deluge. He too had been the object of twitting adulteration. The ooze of distinguished flattery and the syrupy gush of ladies who worshipped the "dear, delicate, kind man" provoked violence in reaction. Louis was no longer the sweetish perpetrator of songs of innocence, "of speckled eggs the birdie sings." Through the "researches" of Hellman and Stewart, Stevenson became a sort of latter day Burns and wild legends made a ruthless roué of him. His character was degraded, his fine art sneered at as rhetoric; he was dismissed as an eclectic trifler. As far as his reputation went "Home they brought the warrior dead."

*Voyage to Windward* by J. C. Furnas is an admirable rebuttal of such flawed reassessment. It is a thoroughly documented, amazingly informed clarification of Stevenson's life. Vigorous, picturesque, flowing, and sound, it is a superb combination of scholarship and narrative interest.

Stevenson's character and career are good stuff for biography. His life was always tension. Throughout the length of it, he battled for breath, for freedom from pain. A sick child, an ailing adolescent, a constantly suffering man, he yet wrote imperishable, sunny books. How was that done? Here was a youth Calvinistically reared with parents who yearned over his spiritual welfare, yet turning, to the horror of his parents, to evolutionary naturalism. Why? Here was a gay young blade, sunning himself in Parisian art colonies, associating with tenuous art for art's sake extravagance, yet writing such a profoundly moral study as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* and exhibiting to the end a bit of the "shorter catechist." Why? Here was a man praising imitation and yet developing an inimitable style of his own. How did he do it? Everywhere in that brief life, much of it spent in bed with blood slowly leaking from diseased lungs, one finds movement and drama. This invalid crossed the Atlantic twice, once in steerage, crossed the United States twice, once in recking coaches, sailed thousands of miles on the Pacific, criss-crossed Europe many times, and ended his career as a semi-mythical plantation owner of Samoa. What a story!

Mr. Furnas makes the most of it without resorting to questionable fictional techniques. One gets illuminated fact rather than inspired guess. Most of the basic questions are answered and the secret of the achievement, humanly considered, proves to be the stalwart heart, the amazing courage that Louis always shows. Imperial gift and dauntless heart made the saga.

Stevenson comes alive—the gay heart in the attenuated body. Stevenson was wretched almost from birth. Small-boned and delicate, his body took savage punishment, but the story is told without recourse to gruesome detail or maudlin pity. That disease body housed a resilient spirit. There is little cringing or self-pity. Stevenson's buoyancy triumphed over the "Black Dog Melancholy." His boyish delight in pranks lasted to the end. His sense of showmanship was apparent in brilliant clothes, striking gestures, and mad antics. Loyal and sincere, he gave himself for his friends. His youthful estheticism was overcome by the enduring "shorter catechist." His graciousness was occasionally marred by an explosive temper. His code of the gentleman was, however, elastic, allowing culpable relations with women. Whatever else he was, he was courageous. If the test of first-rate biography be a life-like portrait, Furnas has written distinguished biography.

Furnas makes effective use of all the resources of biography. The arduous research, the far-ranging travels, the employment of medical and psychiatric data never clog the story. Literary criticism is kept in proportion, and the bulk of it is in an appendix, where it belongs in a biography. Letters are wisely used as are the memoirs of friends; they are never obstructively clumped into the stream of narrative but add to the pleasant flow. Furnas is at his best in the unravelling of complex tangles like Stevenson's relations with Mrs. Sitwell and W. E. Henley. Many biographers bog down in endless, fruitless conjecture about the childhood of their heroes—that almost irrecoverable wonderland—but Furnas allots it thirty pages. The author is a writer with a racy verve and power. There are delightful passages with energetic verbs and hard-hitting nouns. He has a "word-hoard" that sends university graduates scurrying to the dictionary, but he is never merely verbally pyrotechnical.

Stevenson was always something of a "shorter catechist," but of that this biographer has nothing. The story is told with brilliance, but there is no real judgment of the life. The biography is written without an implicit definition of man or of his moral framework. The one moral canon I can discover is Furnas' notion of the gentleman—and the gentleman has a lot of leeway. Louis commits indiscretions, Henley is a blackguard, Colvin is spineless, Fanny is unduly possessive, others show lack of taste; but nobody sins. Stevenson, it appears, is a particularly noble animal. To adopt such a naturalistic framework spares the biographer travail, but it obscures the true meaning of Stevenson's career. Stevenson's life is a particularly arresting example of the intertwined character of good and evil. Here, in an...
The Easy Road to Culture

NOWADAYS it seems to be the fashion among certain journalists and educators to speak patronizingly and with an air of discovery about the value of religion in education. This is perhaps partly in reaction to a situation which came to a head during the years between the two world wars when we Americans dabbled freely in educational theory and experiment. At that time the idea seems to have been to discover a foolproof formula for educating everybody, a formula involving a minimum of intelligence and application on the part of both learner and teacher. As could have been expected, some sense and more nonsense came out of it. The “Great Books” school of thought doubtless represented an advance, but it was more than counterbalanced by the ancient but ever revolutionary theory of education whereby youth advises its elders just how and what to teach. Naturally, this eventually resulted in the elders teaching nothing at all, and to the question, What should we teach? the stock-in-trade answer was, Students!

The polite language employed in expounding this revolutionary theory was somewhat as follows. Education, we were told, is impossible in the absence of a desire for education on the part of the learner, a desire invariably rooted either in some immediate need to be met or in some immediate problem to be solved. One might, of course, insist upon the mastery of certain ways and means to the end of reaching the learner’s desired goal, but one should never forget that the hard work involved in such mastery would not be forthcoming unless the learner could be induced to recognize the desirability of hard work.

Well, we all know the results in the form of mental laziness, low cultural taste, and moral indifference on the part of our easy-going citizens, whose complacent attitude toward crime, divorce, and corruption in public life was until recently something proverbial throughout the entire civilized world. We became the exception to the rule that the extension of education is correlated with a falling crime and delinquency rate. Our relaxation of standards academic and moral occurred on such a preposterously large scale that we may have drifted below the minimum necessary to insure what we like to call the democratic way of life.

For you can’t get away from the fact that a genuine desire for education presupposes a rather advanced degree of education to begin with, and that the needs and problems of the uneducated are usually on a level so low as to constitute a poor risk to any process of higher education worthy of the name. There must be vision before there can be significant felt needs and problems; that is to say, immediate needs and immediate problems will have little cultural significance—in fact, they may be quite anti-social—unless based upon a sense of tradition, a sense of history, and a sense of cultural and moral responsibility, all of which presupposes at least a liberalizing acquaintance with the moral, cultural, and religious values of a civilization. Now if education is to furnish that acquaintance, it would seem to have as a first responsibility the task of instructing, informing, inculcating, since without it—as our educational history has amply shown—immediate needs and problems will be largely confined to those of the savage, i.e., to the needs and problems arising out of bodily and material wants. There is no such thing as education without propaganda, and a liberal education is inevitably propaganda for something, whether that be the love of God or the love of truth or the love of “objectivity” or whatever else you may wish to call your final objective. As a matter of fact, there is probably no system of education, sectarian or “neutral,” which does not in the end claim to be motivated by every one of these loves, and the only question is, How well do they do the jobs they propose to do? In other words, truth, justice, objectivity, and so on are never neutral.

From about 1918 to the beginning of World War II education in America, as we all know, became increasingly identified with training for making a living—witness our flourishing business schools and departments, the primacy of the physical sciences, the gradual reduction of our colleges and state universities to glorified trade schools for farmers, mechanics, lawyers, and so on, and the growing aversion to any kind of cultural excellence for its own sake. As for the quality of the life chosen by college graduates, about the most that could be said for most of them was that they seemed to appreciate the blessings bestowed by our material

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wealth and our technology; they enjoyed more physical comforts, wasted more leisure time, and indulged in more commercialized entertainment than could possibly have been imagined by their grandfathers.

Furthermore, educational practice became such that we were in a constant crisis of experimentation with the result that meanwhile we got no education. Coincidently there occurred the phenomenal spread of the belief that the education of tomorrow, thanks to advances in pedagogical science, would largely dispense with the factors of brains, character, and hard work. In fact, there seems to have been a general optimism about everything, and it was assumed that any kind of formal schooling would eventually remove any conceivable barrier to social and economic success. The idea that higher education might properly concern such things as honor, public spirit, and a wholesome philosophy of life was simply ruled out of court. Taking for their point of departure the universal efficacy of scientific method, the colleges quietly invalidated any system of ethics, philosophy, and religion which could not prove itself a direct aid of man’s physical well-being. Incidentally, the Russians did the same thing on a more universal scale.

C. D. B.

The Roots of Our Unique Concept of Education

The present American theory of higher education as the birthright of almost everybody has its roots in part in a misunderstanding of the Jeffersonian principle of democracy in education which presumed it to involve the doctrine of the equality of natural endowment. From this it was inferred that every American citizen was endowed with the inalienable right to make himself an educational charge upon the public for almost as long as he pleased. Accordingly, our educational practice has not infrequently proceeded on the doubtful assumption that if all kinds and degrees of education are opened to all sorts and conditions of men, the naturally endowed leaders will automatically emerge. This interpretation of the Jeffersonian ideal reflected our faith in the potentialities of the average man, our faith in the power of the environment to transform the individual, and our belief that almost all differences in individual performance are due to differences in external conditions.

Perhaps the most powerful single factor responsible for this is the history of our conquest of the West, a history crowded with instances of ordinary men rising to positions of wealth, leadership, and responsibility. It is a fact for all to observe that America, although largely settled by the poor and disfranchised of western Europe, achieved within less than a century a material development the like of which the world has yet to see. The conclusion seemed obvious: given real opportunity, it can be demonstrated that all men possess the essential elements of greatness, i.e., material achievement. Now it is a significant coincidence that the foundations of the American state university system were laid at about the time that the common man was coming into his own in the winning of the West, so that faith in the potentialities of the average man was easily translated into faith in formal schooling. In fact, until very recently education in this sense was regarded as an almost infallible means of erasing any inequality and achieving any end. Only recently does it seem to have dawned on us that extending formal education to the masses is not quite identical with equalizing opportunity, as any one acquainted with the advance of industrialism, with the growth of a comparatively complex social order, and with the general loss of faith in the efficacy of political democracy can testify.

Although we Americans like to regard ourselves as a nation of political and social idealists, it is well to recall that most of our forebears came to this country from motives that were pretty well mixed, and that for every ten driven by religious and political idealism hundreds came simply to better their economic condition. It is not surprising, therefore, that the principle most characteristic of the American way of life is that of individual success, and that the good society is conceived as one which renders such success highly probable. Now we have never been fastidious with respect to our definition of success, having almost from the first been very receptive to the notion that material achievement is perhaps as good a gauge as any. Traditionally, therefore, the successful man in America is he who for various reasons, such as priority of arrival, cleverness, lucky chance, boldness, unscrupulous manipulation, and so on has attained a position of financial power.

Naturally, all this was eventually reflected in the kind of education demanded by the American public. The early responsibility of the colleges was that of keeping up the supply of clergymen and, to a minor extent, that of lawyers and physicians. The semi-professional classes connected with industry and business hardly mattered in the problems of education; in fact the idea that a business man required education would have seemed inherently absurd. With the decline of the cultural and social importance of the Protestant clergy, the advance of industrialism, and the emphasis on mass education as a necessity of political democracy,
there emerged what for want of a better name may be called the civilization of the business man, a civilization which required among other things that higher education be responsive to the lawyer-industrialist interests of the growing financial aristocracy. The movement for mass education, coming from below and dragging down the standards of secondary and higher education, on the one hand, and the pressure of industrial interests pushing up the standards of technical training, on the other, brought about a situation which has given us an impressive array of clever technicians, inventors, and specialists, but which at the same time has made America “the best half-educated country on earth.” And so today our unspoken but nevertheless actual philosophy of education concerns primarily the question of how best to train industrial, commercial, agricultural, and other specialists in order to maintain a self-perpetuating free enterprise industrialism which shall make for the highest possible material standard of living.

C. D. B.

The Predicament of the Liberal Arts Colleges

The force of the clash between this frankly materialistic philosophy and the traditional conception of a liberal education has, of course, been most severely felt in our liberal arts colleges, and the major bewilderment confronting their faculties today is the question of what really constitutes a liberal education under present conditions. And it is hardly an exaggeration to say that within the last twenty years more time has been wasted by faculty committees, associations of deans, sub-deans, and so on in coming to no significant conclusions on this problem than on all other academic problems combined. Meanwhile most college faculties forgot all about the cultivation of the inner life of the student, quietly moved the problems of morals, manners, and religion to the periphery of education, and proceeded to give the curriculum an increasingly secular emphasis. In the state universities, under the guise of neutrality and objectivity, materialism quickly occupied the field simply by default. In fact, as our entire educational system became increasingly secularized, agnosticism and even atheism became the prevailing tone in both academic and public life. And today we have gone to the extreme of over-doing the principle of the separation of church and state, with the result that Christendom stands in danger of being completely withdrawn from public to private life.

From approximately 1930 to the first rumblings of World War II some of our educators and some of our more public-spirited citizens began to view the results of all this with a coldly critical eye. Colleges, but especially universities, were accused of specialization, a sin traced to the graduate schools, which allegedly bred only specialists, who in turn appeared incapable of anything beyond merely propagating their own kind. The Ph.D. degree, so it was said, seemed to be not much more than a badge of dullness, the recipients of it being so narrowly specialized that they invariably reduced their undergraduate victims to a checkerboard of unrelated courses. Half-hearted attempts to remedy this had apparently resulted only in a futile tinkering with requirements, a useless renaming of courses of study, and an army of deans, committees, and secretaries.

And what, by the way, had been the results of all this upon the student? What kind of a product had the colleges been putting out? A compilation of the jeremiads which appeared in print during the decade 1925-1935 would constitute a major piece of research. Attention was called to the fact that the better universities had been compelled to don the classical tradition because the entering students lacked the necessary cultural background; as a consequence they failed in the proper learning as such. The decay in academic life was shown by the fact that most college graduates did not choose to make their lives different from those who had remained at home. They were lacking in mental vigor, narrow in their interests, and low in cultural taste. They appeared to regard such things as moral sensitiveness and duty and civic honor as altogether other-worldly and metaphysical. Four years of college did not seem to affect either interest—or lack of it—in intellectual and cultural pursuits or their understanding of the major problems of life. Despite vastly improved facilities, college graduates were probably inferior to their grandfathers in character, ideals, and common sense; and their chief emphasis appeared to be on wealth, position, and pleasure.1

1 Curiously, the proposed remedies for all this were either vague or, if at all definite, of a purely external nature. A discussion of this will occupy some of our attention in the next number.

C. D. B.
Among the followers of John Calvin one frequently meets the idea that Calvinism is the finest interpretation of the truth. But that is not a claim unique among the Calvinists. Any individual who is aware of his position and has regard for his convictions is of necessity compelled to feel, if not to say, some such thing. For if he is not convinced of that, why then does he continue to ally himself with the group? The very group consciousness carries with it something of the idea of excellence, of worthwhileness, and probably of superiority.

Nonetheless the Calvinist makes the claim, probably more frequently and with a little more justification than some others. For he has not only a group consciousness which is genuine and stirs him, but traditionally also it is he who insists that one must know what he believes and stands for, and be able to give an account of his convictions. The Calvinist prides himself on giving intellectual as well as emotional and volitional content a place in his spiritual life. He sees that life well-grounded, being rooted in and being an expression of the whole man. It satisfies him because it takes in all of him, and in turn requires his all.

But he also takes pride in his Calvinism for another reason. It is spoken of as the finest interpretation also because it has such a wide and inclusive scope. His truth or conception of it concerns itself not only with himself. It is not a matter of the One in that sense. The Calvinist is definitely concerned too about the All. He is interested in religion not only in its narrow, individualistic, soteriological aspect, but aims to take in all of life. That is why he is interested in culture. His concern is to have the truth applied to every domain of life. He has a world and life view. There is therefore nothing narrow, small about the real Calvinist. His view, call it his system, takes in God, man, the world, all of them looked at from the aspect of Him who is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega. Its wide sweep comprehends time and eternity, the world and the fullness thereof.

What a marvelous conception! What a wideness of view! What a height and depth! What an ideal! To rise to God's point of view which takes in the One and the All! But also how unattainable! What shortcomings! What short-sightedness! And what weakening efforts! The accomplishment is ever disappointing. The end is never realized. That, too, is part of the Calvinist's outlook. In fact his major source of pride, what he really means when he says that his is the best interpretation, is not that looking backward he sees a finished product, though he may take just pride in the accomplishments of the past. But what he means and ought to mean is exactly that in its comprehensiveness, in its starting point and in its goal, and the hopes and means of attainment, it is better than any other system. He is not fully satisfied with the past but is ever striving enthusiastically and zealously for a more perfect realization. His reach is always beyond his grasp.

The Task

I hope that what I have said is somewhat satisfactory as a description of the Calvinistic ideal. My chief interest, however, is not in giving an adequate description of that ideal. The reader can probably add to it, even correct it here and there. But I hope the main thrust is clear and acceptable. My concern in writing on this subject is not to picture to you the content of that ideal. We all are pretty well agreed on the main lines. But I am concerned about how to perpetuate, to pass on that ideal. How can that world and life view in all its beauty, strength, and fullness be passed on to the next generation? How can it be made alive and kept so for them so that they too shall have a passionate zeal for it and its realization? Why that concern? If we are alive to it, will it not perpetuate itself? I suppose it will if we are really alive. But that would require a description of the state of being alive. And yet one can apparently be alive and not be able to transmit that life to others. Perhaps one could be captious and say that such an individual is not really alive. Possibly so. At any rate, somewhere between the state of being alive and its perpetuation in others there comes the question of methodology. For although the giving of life on the Calvinistic front finally rests in and is determined by God in his grace, the human agency does enter in. That manifests itself too in the covenantal line. But there too there appears to be no continuous perpetuation.

Why not? Is the question to be answered by the statement that that is the way it always has been? By saying, that is the way it was in the Old Testament dispensation, and that is the way God has ordained it? That is the fact. But why should it be so? Why is it that the holy zeal and the marvelous insight of the fathers is not passed on to the children and their children? Why is it that a movement often lasts only about one hundred years so that by the third generation the form may still be there but the substance has gone? Just look into church history and see the facts. And look into recent history and consider the world about us. For some reason or other the glorious Kuyperian age, as also the Hodge-Warfield era, was not perpetuated. Apparently then the system does not of its own accord, necessarily and inevitably, perpetuate itself. Why? I shall try in the future to analyze the situation more fully. Until then, reflect on whether there are some dangers as well as advantages in system.

Ralph Stob
**Self-Denial and Consecration**

ABOUT a decade ago Simone Weil, a Jewish French woman with strong Roman Catholic sympathies, died. The legacy she left to this world consisted of a bulky diary which revealed that her life had been spent in meditation and self-renunciation. It was recently published, characterized as a spiritual autobiography, and called *Waiting for God*. Since the appearance of this volume the Christian world has been wondering whether she can properly be classified as a saint. Upon a closer examination of the discussion one realizes that her claim to sainthood rests upon the measure of her self-denial. A casual survey of history indicates that religious leaders have almost invariably regarded sainthood and self-denial as an inseparable pair. Call the pronounced saints of history to appear for testimony, and they will testify almost to a man that their chief claim to their spiritual pre-eminence is found in their self-renunciation. This standard of measuring sainthood is suggested by Jesus when he instructed his disciples that they must deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow Him. Now there followed a long list of noble men and women who have voluntarily deprived themselves of the comforts of life, have starved themselves nigh unto death, have tortured their bodies and souls, and have withdrawn themselves from human fellowship. This philosophy of Christian living is based upon the assumption of the meritoriousness of good works and a misinterpretation of the character of the Master's requirement of self-denial. It is thought of in terms of negations. Jesus Himself practiced what he required of His followers, but he certainly did not live a life of series of self-negations. The forgotten positive side of self-denial is complete self-consecration. The demands of denying one's relatives and the comforts of life are called for only when the principle and practice of complete consecration necessitate them. Sainthood does not call for a nobody, passive, recoiling, surrendering; but a somebody active, militant, aggressive. There is evident need of rethinking of the concept of sainthood on the part of religious leaders. H. S.

**Militant Theology**

RECENTLY a worthwhile and well-written article appeared in *The Reformed Journal*. It was labelled "A Progressive Theology." It should be read by every Reformed theologian who realizes that there appears to be something anemic about Reformed theology and theologians. The author quite correctly fears that Reformed theology has suffered severely at the hands of the Fundamentalists, Liberalists and the spokesmen of Dialecticism. He informs us that our only defense against these intruders is "the constant repudiation of the comfortable but fatal attitude that our theological task is finished." Well said!

Calvinism is both defensive and offensive. I fear that Reformed theologians have been stressing the defensive aspect of their task at the expense of the militant offensive task. And unfortunately this is characteristic of the most vocal among us. At each new onslaught against Reformed thinking, we have retreated to the citadel of Scripture-citations from which we hurled our defensive missives. This usually satisfied the Bible-loving Christians but failed to thrust back the assault. It made us feel smugly safe. We failed to meet them on their grounds with weapons with which we could give an effective account of the faith we cherish. We felt that by withdrawing to our own little circle of thought we could and were holding our own. But the opposition kept up its attacks upon our fortress. And even though we are not willing to admit it boldly we have yielded, however imperceptibly. We have won little and lost a great deal. We have refused to go out and fight, except that here and there a few of our brave men have gone out on ineffective skirmishes. But we have refused to go out and fight as the church of the Reformation did. We have fought a bit, but it was not "a good fight." We have not sallied forth, having forged new weapons and using effectively those now at our command. We have not gone far beyond the method of hurling texts which the enemy too often picked up and hurled back at us and which exploded in our faces.

Calvinism was born a militant theology. But where is the fight now? Have we arrived at the position that we have constructed a fortress in which we are eternally secure in our position? Are we letting our weapons of warfare rust? Have we given serious thought to the necessity of remodeling our old weapons and of forging new ones to meet the opposition that has not been content to hide with a sense of security? Or is it true that the spirit of militant Christianity has departed because of an alleged, dead, cold orthodoxy? Have we been deprived of any and all enthusiasm to battle because we seem to be committed to the idea of the primacy of the intellect? Do we need a richer measure of emotionalism to inspire us to go out and win? Is it our function to insist that this is God's warfare and that it is ours to stand on the sidelines and praise Him when the enemy has received a devastating blow? Have we forgotten that in the
militant program against error, God uses sanctified hearts and minds? Let us then be progressive—militantly progressive. We are called upon to engage in effective modern warfare. Let us go "all out" in complete preparation for this holy warfare of greatest moment—a warfare before which the battles of Korea fade into insignificance.

H. S.

Scriptural Truths and Scientific Thought

I.

Formal Definition of Science

GENUINE science is first theoretical and practical knowledge which is verified as far as it is possible to do so—"verified," that is, because scientific knowledge pretends to be valid. Genuíne science is secondly theoretical and practical knowledge which is systematic as far as possible. An unsystematic collection of verified facts or truths is insufficient to constitute science. "Systematization" is necessary because the objects and data of science are connected and cohesive. Genuíne science is, therefore, as far as possible verified and systematic knowledge. "As far as possible," that is, because verification and systematization are only possible within limits, limits determined by the finite and law-bound nature of man, limits determined by the stage of development of scientific thought, and limits determined by human defective-ness ultimately due to his corrupt nature.

This formal definition of genuine science may perhaps be acceptable to all scientists. It is wide enough to include all genuine attempts at constructing science, however much these attempts and their results may diverge and conflict. It does not jeopardize genuine scientific activity on account of the use of principles and methods not universally accepted; and it thus gives genuine freedom to scientific conscience. This definition is narrow enough to exclude naive, prescientific, i.e. unverified and unsystematic knowledge, as well as knowledge based on demonstrable prejudices. Here, however, it must be stated that necessary presuppositions of science, presuppositions based on sufficient reason, are not prejudices.

Genuine Science Not Identified with True Science

A formal definition of genuine science must be distinguished from a definition of true science. A universally acceptable definition of true science is impossible on account of the difference of fundamental viewpoints and principles of the different scientific schools and tendencies. Each of these formulates a definition of true science of its own. Calvinism, too, is obliged deliberately to form a conception of true science of its own, and such a definition will not only refer to our created universe, the general revelation of God, but also to His special revelation, the Holy Scriptures, and the light they shed on created reality.

Between a universally acceptable, formal definition of genuine science and the diverse definitions of true science, an intermediate definition is possible, viz., a "material" definition of genuine science explicitly stating what the objects of science are. One extreme "material" definition of genuine science restricts science as such to objects which can be counted, weighed, and measured. Genuine science accordingly includes the natural sciences (e.g. physics, chemistry, botany, zoology) and perhaps also the quasi-natural sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology and economics). This definition, however, excludes from the venerable temple of science inter alia: theology, philosophy and the cultural sciences (e.g. ethics, politics, history, jurisprudence, aesthetics, logic, education). This positivistic restriction of genuine science to countable, weighable, and measurable facts is arbitrary and to a definite extent self-contradictory. For first, what are all the systems of verified knowledge, ostracized from the positivistic temple of science, to be called? They are not arts, because an art is an efficiency to do. Secondly, not only countable, weighable, and measurable objects can be verified and systematized. The objection that opinions on and theories of objects which are not counted, weighed, and measured necessarily diverge is unwarranted, because difference of opinion and of theory is also present in the natural sciences; and this difference does not make, as far as possible, verified and systematized knowledge unscientific.

Thirdly, even the natural and the quasi-natural sciences presuppose and make frequent use of principles which as such are not countable, weighable, and measurable as the principles, for instance, of logic, of number, of mechanism, of structure, of
determinism, of causality, of function, of energy, of uniformity of nature, of matter, of life, of teleology, of consciousness, of individuality, of sociability, and so forth; and it seems rather inconsequential to use such principles scientifically, but to deny to verified and systematic knowledge of such principles the honored name of science.

Calvin's Definition of Genuine Science

The other extreme, material definition of genuine science, is defended by Calvinism. According to Calvinism genuine science is verified and systematic knowledge of anything that is humanly knowable. We acknowledge as genuine sciences the natural and the cultural sciences, philosophy, and even theology. There is no reason whatever to exclude from genuine science the verified and systematic knowledge of, for instance, history or literature or the criticism of art, however difficult verification and systematization in these sciences may be. Surely such difficulty is no reason for disqualifying the sciences concerned. Theology again does not invent its doctrine but conscientiously verifies and systematizes its tenets with the help of the exegetical and other methods, and has all the characteristics of a genuine science. Of course, many scientists will refuse to acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures should be considered as a genuine source of scientific knowledge. We are mainly concerned here, however, with our own position. Whoever holds that the Holy Scriptures constitute a trustworthy revelation of the Creator of heaven and of earth Himself, cannot escape the consequence that the Holy Scriptures do form a genuine source of verifiable and systematizable knowledge, and that theology is accordingly a genuine science. Genuine science therefore is as far as possible verified and systematic knowledge of the revelation of God and of our created reality as totality as well as of anything and everything of and within this reality.

Subdivisions Of Science

We may divide science into theology, philosophy, and the special sciences, and the latter again into natural and cultural special sciences, and again into theoretical, empirical, and applied special sciences. *Theology* is the science of the revealed truths of God Himself and of the immediate dependence on God of created reality as a whole and in all its realms, entities, and events. *Philosophy* is the science of the totality of created reality and of the place of each unique realm, entity, and event within this created whole. *A Special Science* is the science of an original and irreducible realm within our created reality in its particularity. *All* these sciences should interact, the one borrowing from the other truths of which it is in need but which it cannot discover or verify in its own field of research, and again the one lending to the other truths of which the other is in need, but which the former can discover and verify in its own field. This *universal* interaction is necessary, because although every science has an appropriate field in which it alone discovers, verifies, and formulates authoritatively, no science is sufficient in itself, the field of the one depending on and being related to the fields of the other, and truth being a fundamentally coherent unity. All scientists acknowledge the necessity of interaction between, for instance, mathematics and physics, biology and chemistry, psychology and sociology, politics and ethics, but we demand a universal interaction between all special sciences mutually, between the special sciences and philosophy, and deliberately also between theology and philosophy as well as between theology and the special sciences. *Christian (or Reformed) Science*—not to be confused with the religious movement called "Christian Science"—we call a science which acknowledges this principle of universal interaction and which deliberately furthers also interaction between theology and all the other sciences. This demand is tantamount to the statement that not only is theology a science, but also that the theologian discovers and verifies in his field of research *inter alia* truths of which all the other sciences are in need, and which they cannot discover nor verify in their own fields of research. In other words theology offers to all the other sciences new, essential, and verified information, and the other sciences would be genuinely unscientific in rejecting such information, because no scientist may deliberately refuse any new information which has an essential bearing on his own investigations, but which he cannot discover nor verify in his specific field of research.

Fundamental Questions Which Concern Every Science

This new light which the Holy Scriptures shed on created reality and which the theologian investigates may concern particular facts as, for instance, the fact of the deluge, or it may concern general and fundamental principles. We limit our discussion to the latter, viz., to the fundamental, general principles, which theology discovers and verifies and of which the other sciences are in need. **Fundamental problems** which concern every science and the answers to which determine scientific activity and evaluation of its results are, *inter alia*:

1. *Is valid science possible, and in what sense and why?*
2. *What is the aim or end of science?*
3. *What is the nature of the subject of scientific activity, and of the scientist; and what is*
the influence (e.g., limitations) of the nature of the scientist on science and on its validity?
4. What is the fundamental nature of the object of scientific investigation?
5. What is the nature and extent of scientific sovereignty and dependence and of scientific freedom and service?

Whatever the non-theological sciences may answer on these points (their answers are necessarily insufficient), they cannot discover or verify the fundamental and ultimate answers given by theology—answers which concern the immediate relation between God and our universe and the unique light which the Holy Scriptures shed on our created universe, answers which on account of their ultimate nature are of profound significance to all sciences.

Fundamental Principles Revealed by Scripture

The Holy Scriptures reveal in the case of each of these questions several fundamental principles of essential significance to all scientific activity, principles which all the non-theological sciences should borrow from theology and should use as religious guiding principles in their respective domains, the borrowing and use of which give these sciences a definitely Christian character. This we will illustrate only in the case of two of the several principles which a theological answer to the fourth question elicits, this question being: What is the fundamental nature of the object of scientific investigation?

The first principle we wish to discuss in this connection is the principle of ultimate diversity of and within created reality.

We observe around and within us quantitative, qualitative, modal, functional, structural, essential and relational differences, distinctions between colors and sounds, life and matter, time and space, thought and perception, morality and art, human and animal being, facts and principles, and so forth. Many of these distinctions are relative, reducible, and explicable, e.g., those which have come into being by development or those deducible from other distinctions. But do ultimate, irreducible and, therefore, inexplicable distinctions (quantitative and qualitative) within our created reality exist—distinctions which accordingly find their origin in the creative will and wisdom of God? In short, do ultimate distinctions exist? Is there in our universe an ultimate diversity?

Consequences of Rejecting Ultimate Distinctions in Creation

The answer to this question is an a priori principle of science. Should the answer be No, science should deliberately seek to explain all differences according to some one or other universal principle of continuity, i.e., should see in a consistent generalization its fundamental, formal task. Should the answer be in the affirmative, science should reject a universal principle of continuity and should primarily and deliberately seek ultimate, irreducible, and inexplicable distinctions and their relations. But can philosophy and the special sciences give in their respective fields a verified and conclusive answer to this ultimate problem? The history of the sciences proves that philosophy and the special sciences generally and simply take the negative answer to this question as self-evident, and endeavor theoretically to reduce the distinctions concerned to some one or other universal (i.e., cosmical, creational) principle. Philosophic materialism, for instance, reduces the distinctions of matter, life, mind, and spirit to matter; biological evolutionism explains the differences between species, plants, animals, and human beings as variations within a universal evolutionary process; Freudian physioanalysts reduce the distinctions of religion, morality, art, and so on to the workings of the sex and death drives. They all do so because unity of reality, or of any realm within reality, seems to demand continuity and thus excludes the possibility of ultimate distinctions. Scientists either explicitly admit this or they implicitly and uncritically surrender themselves to this position by simply following the lead of a favored method or principle.

An example of the former is the admission of Prof. D. S. M. Watson, F.R.S., who stated in 1929 during the sitting of the British Society for the Advancement of Science at Cape Town, that biologists accept evolution not because it can be perceived or proved, but because they cannot accept the only alternative, viz., creation. This is tantamount to stating that biologists reject a priori the possibility of ultimate and irreducible distinctions within our universe and intend to explain all difference in their field of research by means of evolutionary process.

As an example of the latter case we will confine ourselves to the viewpoint that the scientific method, i.e., the empirical, inductive, and experimental method, is the fundamental method of science. I do not wish to minimize the significance of this method nor the wonderful discoveries achieved by its use. Our point is: What is implied when only this method is followed? By this method the scientist gathers facts, preferably causally related, compares and distinguishes them, discovers analogies, which suggest an hypothesis, deduces from an hypothesis corollaries, and verifies this hypothesis and its corollaries, if possible by the help of experiments; the verification, if successful, leads to a formulation of a theory, and when further corroborated by empirical investigations, leads to the formulation of a gen-
eral law. The essence of this method is the discovery of agreement which can be generalized and become a law of nature. This means that the inductive method does not seek ultimate distinctions and therefore cannot find them. Distinctions discovered are subordinated to the general agreement established. Should a crucial instance disprove an hypothesis, this instance is not used to discover an ultimate distinction, but only leads to the inception of another hypothesis which promises a more successful generalization, i.e., a more successful annihilation of all would-be ultimate distinctions. Whoever now considers this method to be the fundamental method of science therefore commits himself implicitly to the principle that ultimate distinctions do not exist and that all distinctions should be subordinated to the general principle of causal continuity.

The Christian Answer to the Questions of Ultimate Distinctions

Philosophers and special scientists should, before committing themselves explicitly or implicitly to this principle, critically investigate its validity. But they are not able in their respective domains to give a conclusively verified answer to the question whether ultimate distinctions do or do not exist within reality. This is so because all distinctions allow themselves to be explained or reasoned away, notwithstanding the fact that they sometimes offer alarming resistance in the form of antinomies. And yet an uncritical but deliberate surrender to the principle of universal continuity is scientifically unwarranted. The Christian philosopher and the Christian special scientist cannot but consult the special revelation of God, i.e., borrow truths from the theologian, who alone has the scientific authority to state what the light is which the Scriptures shed on our created universe. The final and conclusive answer to our problem only theology can discover and verify because it is the science of the revelation of God. The distinct light the Scriptures shed on the problem in question is that God did create within our universe an ultimate, irreducible, and scientifically inexplicable diversity. This is a definite and clear answer. This answer reveals several of the ultimate distinctions within our created universe, as for instance, the essential difference between human and animal being. It is for philosophy and the special sciences to follow the lead this answer gives, i.e., to borrow this guiding principle from theology, and deliberately and primarily to seek and discover in their respective fields the ultimate distinctions as well as their relations, because they are connected and cohere in many ways, truth being a unity.

Our main contention now is that theology, by conclusively verifying the truth that ultimate distinctions do exist in our created universe, offers definite and new information which all the other sciences cannot discover nor conclusively verify in their respective fields of research—that this answer concerns the a priori basis of all these sciences and that the acceptance or rejection of this answer fundamentally determines the outline of the theories construed. This answer furthermore implies that the Christian philosopher and the Christian special scientist should primarily seek in their respective fields ultimate distinctions and their relations before endeavoring to explain and to generalize. Valid generalization is limited by the ultimate distinctions, and the inexplicability of ultimate distinctions constitutes a definite limit to scientific activity. Science therefore should penetrate into the secrets of reality until it discloses the inexplicable, thus revealing the greatness of Him who created this wonderful universe of ours. The coherent diversity of the diverse laws of nature, of the diverse norms of culture, and of the divine commandments should be disclosed without annihilating this ultimate diversity by means of universal deductions or excessive generalizations and extrapolations. These theoretically impoverish the grandeur and richness of the variegated diversity, token of the polypoikile sophia tou Theou, of the multi-colored wisdom of God. Science should disclose the related ultimate diversity instead of theoretically impoverishing created reality, for instance, instead of monotonously generalizing from the sexual urge to religious devotion, from the amoeba to the human personality, from the idea to absolute reality, or even from the electron to God. It does make a decisive difference to science, to its methods used, to its explanations elaborated, and to its theories constructed whether science does or does not reckon with the light the Scriptures shed on created reality; and that definitely means that a Christian (or Reformed) science has right of existence and should be vigorously promoted by all Christian (or Reformed) scientists.

In passing, it may be observed that the rejection of ultimate distinctions within created reality is the fundamental cause of the breaking up of science into schools and tendencies, each school or tendency favoring an ultimate distinction within our universe as the key to and solution of all problems, as the panacea for all difficulties. Professor Dooyeweerd's description of the divine irony functioning in the apostatic philosophy may be used here as well: whoever wishes to explain away ultimate distinctions may use any of the many ultimate distinctions for this purpose; whoever rejects the divinely originated ultimate distinctions finds himself involved in a confused combat between false generalizations.

1 In other words, scientific explanations should not attempt anything that implies the destruction of individuality.
Science and Philosophy Require an Absolute, Self-Sufficient Basis

The second principle which we wish to discuss as an answer to the fourth question, viz. what is the fundamental nature of the object of scientific research, is the principle of self-insufficiency, or created reality and of all its realms, entities, and events. This principle is intimately related with the principle of ultimate distinctions already discussed.

Science is in need of a firm and sufficient basis. Scientific activity is not the mere play of theoretical imagination. It intends to be valid, and this implies that its basis should be firm and sufficient. Philosophers may find this steadfast foundation in reason, or in experience, in idea or in matter, in will or in life; special scientists may find it in countable, weighable, and measurable causally-related facts or in energy, in heredity or in evolution, in unconscious drives, in instincts, in "Gestalt" (structure) or in spiritual functions, and so forth; but a sufficient and immutable basis to which they can recur ever and anon and upon which they can build the lofty structures of scientific theory they must have.

Where and how are philosophers and special scientists to find their respective firm and sufficient basis? The ultimate distinctions are firm and immutable enough, but which of them should be chosen? Is, furthermore, not each of them characterized by self-insufficiency? Philosophers and special scientists who reject the light the Scriptures shed on created reality will have to find their respective basis within this reality, and they will have to attribute self-sufficiency to it or to an ultimate distinction within it, notwithstanding that creation and all its distinctions are characterized by an inherent self-insufficiency. They either do so explicitly or they surrender themselves implicitly to this position by simply restricting their scientific activities to some ultimate distinction or other. Materialists avow that matter, idealists that the idea, vitalists that life, evolutionists that evolution, "Gestalt"-psychologists that "Gestalt," relativists that the principle of relativity, individualists that the individual, socialists that some social unity or other, is the self-sufficient, immutable, and explanatory basis of the field of research concerned. How do they know that to be so? Can they conclusively verify their respective contentions in their respective domains? The fundamental conflict of schools and of tendencies seems to refute this. Furthermore, how does man come to know of the self-sufficient, the absolute, considering that he himself and all his theoretical and practical functions are inherently and essentially self-insufficient? How can he, who fundamentally is a self-insufficient being, know of the self-sufficient, the absolute? He cannot perceive self-sufficiency or absoluteness by means of the senses. He cannot perceive it by intuition, because it is not given to his self-insufficient intuitions. He cannot deduce or induce it from the data he perceives or grasps intuitively, because all such data are self-insufficient. Even more, he will not be able to know of its self-insufficiency, unless he has some notion of what absoluteness and self-sufficiency is.

Science and Philosophy Cannot Know What Absoluteness Is

Absoluteness or self-sufficiency belong to the sphere of the perceptually and intuitively invisible. The access to this sphere is only possible by means of religious faith in the revelation of the Absolute and the All-sufficient. The Absolute reveals itself to nothing but man's religious function. Only as a religious being can man know of the all-sufficient and absolute reality. But this means that philosophers and special scientists should have recourse to theology to borrow conclusively verified knowledge of what truly the Absolute and the All-sufficient is; they cannot discover nor conclusively verify this in their respective fields of research. Philosophers and special scientists may be under the impression that their knowledge of the Self-sufficient and Absolute is given them by logical insight or by logical reasoning, or that the idea of the absolute is innate; but it should stand to reason that the source of their knowledge of the absolute and all-sufficient can be nothing but their religious function which alone comes into contact with the special and general revelation of the Absolute, of God Himself. It is by virtue of his religious function that man can reason about the absolute and can discern created reality and everything within it to be inherently and essentially self-insufficient; or that he can—even erroneously—attribute absoluteness and self-sufficiency to created reality.

The Holy Scriptures clearly indicate the radical difference between God Who is absolutely all-sufficient and absolutely independent of all He has created and our self-insufficient creation which is fundamentally and wholly dependent upon Him. They reveal clearly that whoever attributes the said divine qualities to creation or to something within creation deifies and idolizes it. To him the first three commandments apply as well as the admonitions of St. John: "Little children, keep yourself from idols," and we may add, "even from theological and scientific idols." Do not philosophy and the special sciences explicitly or implicitly commit themselves to deification and idolization when they seek their respective firm, immutable, and self-sufficient bases within created reality? Do not the -isms of materialism, idealism, utilitarianism, positivism, evolutionism, structuralism, individualism, socialism, and so forth express different forms of theoretical or scientific deifications or idolatries?
How Christian Thought Avoids Schools and Tendencies

The Christian philosopher and the Christian special scientist will have to avoid such deifications and idolatries from the start and may not identify them with such -ismic views. They will acknowledge at the outset, i.e. a priori, the self-insufficiency of our universe as a whole and of all its parts in its dependence on God, and will furthermore acknowledge a double self-insufficiency of the ultimate distinctions within created reality (a) given in their dependence upon the Absolute and Self-sufficient and (b) given in their relatedness to and therefore dependence on each other. They can thus a priori avoid the division of science into schools and tendencies only because they need not seek their self-sufficient basis within created reality, but can find it transcendentally in the creative will and wisdom of God and can acknowledge created reality in its self-insufficiency, unity, and coherent ultimate diversity. But it is only his religious faith that makes this possible a faith that reveals the limitations and self-insufficiency of science itself.

Summary

The point of issue now is that the philosopher and the special scientists determine in their respective fields of research what the firm and sufficient basis of their respective scientific investigations is and that they explicitly determine this at the start or do so implicitly by the methods to which they confine themselves, because this decision is an a priori decision for all science; but the respective fields of philosophy and of the special sciences, respectively, offer no disclosure or verification of such a basis, and the discovery and conclusive verification of the self-sufficient, objective basis of all science is only possible in the field of theological research. It does make a decisive difference to science, its methods used, its explanations elaborated, and its theories constructed, whether science does or does not take into account the light the Scriptures shed on our created universe—and does or does not use this light as a guiding principle. This again means that a Christian (or Reformed) science, which borrows from the start the theological truths of a thorough self-insufficiency of created reality and deliberately avoids all theoretical idols and all defying -isms, has a right of existence and should be vigorously promoted by all Christian (or Reformed) scientists.

Answer to Objections

In the cases of two of the many principles, viz., the principles of ultimate diversity and the principle of self-insufficiency disclosed in answer to the fourth question concerning the object of scientific research, it has been pointed out what the significance of Scriptural truths for scientific thought is and should be. The objection may and will be raised that Christian philosophy and Christian special sciences, which on these points acknowledge the lead of the queen of sciences (i.e. of theology), become ancilae theologiae, thus making these sciences fundamentally appendages of theology. Our answer to this objection will be that each of the sciences concerned has its own specific field of research where it alone can authoritatively verify its results, and that a free interaction between all sciences in which each in its turn takes the necessary lead does not make the one subservient to another, and finally that a free interaction with theology saves the other sciences from becoming appendages of theology. Further I will raise the counter-objection, viz., that sciences which reject the lead of theology on points which theology alone can authoritatively and conclusively verify, must take over a function that belongs to theology and thus fundamentally themselves become theologies. It is theology and theology alone that can deliver the other sciences from seeking theoretically the absolute and the self-sufficient, i.e., God or an idol within their respective fields, i.e. from all their -ismic idolatries. Science does need a firm and self-sufficient basis, does need God or a theoretical idol and by refusing the help of theology finds its idol within its own particular domain and accordingly becomes essentially a form of theology. This fact is not refuted by the argument that scientists eagerly change their fundamental principles when, e.g., the adopted principles do not give the expected satisfaction, because an eager change of idols will not free them from their scientific idolatries. There is only one way to deliver the Christian philosopher and the Christian special scientist from such idolatries, i.e., from theologizing and that is a conversion to Christianity which is not ashamed of but proud of and grateful for the use it may make of the Scriptural truths in scientific thought. We must always keep in mind that the ultimate basis of all human activity is not only an a priori, but a religious a priori basis, man being at core a religious being; and that not only a Christian (or Reformed) science but every science as such is based on a religious a priori foundation. “Religion” in its narrow sense is divine worship. “Religious” in its wide sense is the relation of anything to the absolute Source and Ground of all existence, and this absolute Source and Ground is, according to the Scriptures, God, Creator of heaven and earth. Scientific thought as such must either accept or reject the light the Scriptures shed on our created universe; and the rejection as well as the acceptance thereof is a religious act determining the attitude of science to the ultimate Source and Ground of all existence. The idea of a religiously neutral science is at core a self-contradictory one. Whoever as a philosopher or as a special scientist maintains that ultimate dis-
The N.A.E. Must Linger With Us

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For a few years the writer of this article has observed some ecumenical implications in the acts of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. The Synod of 1951 supplies us with data, especially in the decision to withdraw from the National Association of Evangelicals.

In passing we read that the Synod of 1951 again spoke in the ecumenical language of love and compassion. This language touches the hearts of believers of all continents and needs no dictionary to be understood. It surpasses the benefits of an extensive education. The love of Christ must unite us all, especially as expressed in compassion. Our Synod approved of the requests of its committees to send material and spiritual relief to Korea and as far as possible to Hungary. Today the most humble and devout mother is engaged in ecumenicity—even though she might be confused by that word—the moment she sacrifices a good and treasured piece of garment for some naked child in Korea or elsewhere. There seems to be no difficulty in arousing believers to share with those visited by grief or poverty.

Negro evangelism, representation to a major assembly in Japan, an urgent cry to send missionaries to several continents, appointment of delegates to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1953, and of study committees to report on findings of the Ecumenical Synod of 1949, all indicate that gradually our denomination is sailing into ecumenical channels even though it may not be conscious of it. These acts of Synod of 1951 as well as others will gradually condition our denomination to become more ecumenically conscious.

No Clear Ecumenicity Today

One of the great questions that challenged the attention of Synod was to remain or not to remain in the N.A.E. And it further implies that we cannot return except we prove from God’s word that the decision of 1951 was unbiblical or unless the N.A.E. should change its complexion in the meantime.

Reading the Acts of Synod of 1951 is a confusing chore. For example, the point was made (perhaps at Synod, especially since the report of a majority committee of 1949 looms high in this controversy) that the basis of fellowship in the N.A.E. has caused us to be “reduced to a ‘Common Denominator’ witness. Thus we have compromised and thus we are compromising.” (Reformed Journal, May, 1951, p. 3)

At the very same synod the following significant minutes of one of its committees was received as information: “At the annual board meeting of 1951 a motion prevailed to approve the constitution of the Sudan United Mission with a clarifying statement of Rev. Harry R. Boer.” When we refer to the Agenda, p. 179, we behold a constitution substantially the same as that of the N.A.E. If the witness of that organization reduces the Christian church in America to a ‘common denominator witness” in the United States, why should it not do so in Africa? A big body of salt water between two continents does not dissolve principles.

Another example of the need for clarification is evidenced by the fact that our church has adopted two streams of ecumenicity. Let us call them Reformed and General Ecumenicity. In Reformed Ecumenicity again two streams flow together: Ecumenical Synods and Interchurch Correspondence. The Report to Synod of 1944 (Acts, p. 340) indicates our responsibility toward churches not of the Reformed faith. It naturally suggests that we begin correspondence with churches of kindred faith. It further suggests, but leaves unanswered as to mode of procedure, that other churches are also in our orbit of responsibility. It hints that the “prickly problem of the so-called pluriformity of the churches” (p. 339) was involved. On the other hand, an entirely new committee had been appointed by Synod a few years ago to study the Biblical principles governing this General Ecumenicity. A surface judgment of their report indicates that this committee operated under the supposition that this
General Ecumenicity was unrelated to the report of 1944. Apart from the merits or demerits of these reports, we believe that this criticism is entirely justifiable; both reports should have been discussed or at least considered together. Ecumenicity is after all a new chapter in the doctrine of the church, and must be thought out seriously. One could aver that these reports cover different areas but that would imply that ecumenicity is not a unified whole with different facets. In our Reformed ecclesiology is there room for correspondence, synods or associations, or both?

We are out of the N.A.E. We may not return to its fold immediately. That would be very unwise. What is more dangerous, however, is that because these reports cover different areas but that our ecclesiology is not a unified whole with different facets. In our Reformed ecclesiology is there room for correspondence, synods or associations, or both?

The same report indicates that it does not feel the need of this cooperation too much, which we believe is an over simplification of the situation, but it does not deny the right thus to organize. It will always remain a mooted question where differences in doctrine end and joint cooperation begins. The point, we take it, is clear that our ecclesiology is not clear.

Quo Vadis?

Article 151, p. 79 of the Acts of Synod covers hours of debate, tense moments, a bit of hysteria about the hysteria created at an N.A.E. convention when the Mac Arthur case came up, years of postponement of final decision with this terse statement: “After lengthy discussion Synod decides to terminate the membership of the Christian Reformed Church in the N.A.E. by majority vote. Rev. M. Monsma and Elder R. Post are appointed to draw up a letter informing the N.A.E. of this decision” (cf. Art. 168—which must be printer’s mistake—JTH).

Almost military in its brevity, this is one of Synod’s most momentous decisions, in fact one of the most momentous decisions of the Christian Reformed Church—and that is all that is said!

Beyond this the future church historian will seek in vain for anything official; no report was adopted, none can be referred to officially. The Christians on the mission fields seeking for affiliation either in the N.A.E. or the A.C.C.C. will be left in the dark. Elders and deacons who receive a copy of the Acts simply have to swallow this decision a bit synodically. No reasons given. Even the letter authorized by Synod is not in the Acts of Synod.

Synod has lost its golden opportunity to be a witnessing body and by implication to tell the world what basic doctrinal statement controlled its decisions. It would have given the world a basis for future consideration of the doctrine of the church. Synod, no doubt, in all its mass of labors forgot that our corresponding churches receive a copy of the Acts. What can they do with a decision like that? Would it not be logical if such a church would say: If membership is wrong for one church, it is wrong for all? And if we know some of the basic errors, we can set things in motion to correct them. In this hour a great synod would have become a greater one had it given the world a Biblically substantiated defence.

Our first duty is one of introspection. We have left a group of Christians, and officially the world—not only the Orthodox, but also the Modernists—does not know our Biblical reasons for doing so. The specific introspective question is: What do we mean by fundamentalism? According to Modernists, we Calvinists are Fundamentalists. Historically the term does not imply all the vagaries and connotations that we have given it. It simply means that the Bible is the foundation of our faith. The trouble is that there can be no official statement of what fundamentalism is from the very nature of the so-called Fundamentalist churches. Fundamentalism knows no denominational barriers. Is fundamental-
ism the denial of the lordship of Christ in all areas? The difficulty is that the N.A.E. interfered with the Truman-Mac Arthur affair—a political area. On the other hand, the *Fundamentals*, published in the early part of the century, encouraged the idea that denominational distinctiveness is perhaps not too relevant compared with the fundamentals of our faith.

All those who by conviction have desired to withdraw from the N.A.E. must work for a positive Reformed Ecumenicity. The Ecumenical Synods are a step in the right direction, but that does not cover the area. Has there been greater effort for a Reformed ecumenicity since the Synod of 1951?

Our Synod did not make any overtures to the N.A.E. to be in that organization on a cooperative basis. No doubt we will be benefited by the N.A.E. We believe they have done a good work in a necessary anti-Roman encroachment. It does seem a little beneath our traditional pride, and somewhat inconsistent, just to accept their benefits.

A solution has been preferred that local congregations join with the N.A.E. should they feel constrained to do so. This remark from a generous soul should be counter-acted. This would bring fundamentalism and its baby “independentism” right into our churches. It would upset the right consistory-synod relationship. And if one consistory may do so in this matter, what is there to prevent another consistory in another matter?

We must remember that we cannot escape facing the N.A.E. anew. Perhaps some dissatisfied consistory may do so. Our delegates to the Ecumenical Synod of 1953 will have to. Now they may not express only their personal opinion. If they do, their opinion with that of the Ecumenical Synod will be reviewed by our Synod for approval of some kind. The point is that we must and shall face this new element in Reformed ecclesiology—our relationship to others—and that must begin everywhere: Catechism, Lord’s Day XXI, Reformed Doctrine in high school and college, dogmatics in the seminary. God never allows us just to step out.

We must face the weaknesses of the N.A.E. Some of these need no reenumeration here, but one that our church has never faced is the question of membership. Is an association or a council of churches the ideal? A point in favor of an association is that we are helping those in need of our support in denominations hostile to a true Biblical faith. An argument against a council is that only denominations may join in full membership although others may have advisory courtesies. As far as representation is concerned we believe that the N.A.E. is not employing the proper method.

It is possible that a member of some lone independent church can represent us at the International Association. We often wondered why our denomination never contested that method. But the method is inherent in the mode of organization. We believe it should be corrected before we return. Never should there be vicarious representation of denominations. We should face the question: What has the pluriformity (to use a Dutch term) of churches to teach us?

We should realize that the N.A.E. is not the main channel or even perhaps the most important channel of alleged fundamentalist-infiltration in our circles. Such infiltration can come to us through the uncritical adoption of certain hymns—a confusion of jazzy hymns played with spiritual exaltation—through a demand for a certain type of preaching, through an apologetic fear to use the Heidelberg catechism, through a fear to appreciate the revelation of nature under the control of our Lord, through favorite radio messages with an Arminian appeal. Fundamentalism can enter our circles through teachers with no definite philosophy of Christian education or through members who have not been taught to see the difference in our mode of worship. This deeper fear, however, does not hide the possibility that members of our church will say: If we can be in an association such as the N.A.E., we cannot be so far apart.

The N.A.E. could also be self-critical. It could ask this question: What do we mean by fundamentalism? Does it mean dispensationalism to us? If so, are we committed to a denial of the kingship of Christ in all areas? Is not a cooperative organization adequate?

It is conceivable that the N.A.E. may feel duty bound for the sake of truth to investigate possible charges of the Christian Reformed Church. Perhaps it may feel that it will be able to go unhampered on its course should it travel without us. Perhaps the N.A.E. may return criticisms of Calvinism, and that would be a blessing for us since a true friend is an honest friend. They may ask: What is Calvinism?

The big problem remains. Do we want to live our ecumenical life to the full? We might sit down together and talk this matter over. If our ways must part, then they must, but in the meantime we have been enriched by deeper study of the Bible and by speaking to hearts that love the Lord. And when the day comes that dire necessity will throw us into each other’s arms for mutual support we shall face each other as fellow soldiers in the same battle—questioning only the great military strategy of the battle. The N.A.E. must linger with us to write today’s new chapter in the doctrine of the church.
unredeemed man, we find the highest valor and spectacular gifts combined with moral lapse and commitment to evolutionary universalism. The biographer must judge both and that Furnas does not do.

Stevenson came from a Calvinistic home but Furnas does not understand the tension which his unbelief aroused there. He crassly interprets that tension as an inevitable conflict between personalities; if it had not developed a religious release, it would have been political. The father saw a crumbling house, he saw the termites at the pillars of the temple; everything was going. Furnas talks about Victorian sensibilities and personality conflicts. Stevenson always had a residual Calvinistic moral sense; he could not escape the shorter catechism. That element of his nature is poorly handled in an otherwise distinguished biography.

**THE WORLD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**HERLEEFD VERLEDEN,** by A. Sizzo; J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1951, pp. 195.

**PAULUS EN DE ANTIKEE CULTUURWERELD,** by G. J. D. Aalders; J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1951, pp. 171.

Both works deal with and cast light on the world of the New Testament. The one by Sizzo, the sub-title of which can be translated “Sketches from the daily life of 2,000 years ago,” aims to be and is of the generally popular kind. Confessedly it is neither exhaustive nor does it aim at an evaluation of that life, although the author does inject an observation here and there. It is descriptive in character and gives a general picture of how the people of that time lived. The material is taken from such works as Milligan’s *Selections From the Greek Papyri,* and Deissmann’s *Light From the Ancient East* (*Licht vom Osten*) and pretends to no originality. The author has taken the materials ready to hand and has arranged them under the heading of Marriage and Divorce, Foundlings, The Primary School, The Gymnasium (as an educational institution), Parents and Children, Family Life, Social Life, Taxes, Current Events of a General Character, and some specifically religious, Christian Documents, and Life in a Small City.

The material is interestingly arranged, affords very pleasant reading, and gives a very good picture of life as it was then lived. Frans Lammers has made an even dozen of very lively drawings illustrative of the text.

The work by Aalders is of a different character. The title indicates that. It deals specifically with one individual and his place in that world. It is therefore much more limited in the territory it covers and restricts itself even then to some subjects in the field of the human spirit. There are five chapters with the headings, The Jewish Diaspora, Religion, Paul’s Contact with the Religion of his Time, Paul and Philosophy, Paul and Literature. Under all the headings the material is selected and is well ordered and presented in an interesting and clear manner. The book makes good reading.

There is room for improvement in both the content and the printing. As to the first a criticism can be made that though the work is informative, there is not sufficient evaluation and criticism. As Sizzo’s work is descriptive of how the people then lived, this work is too largely merely descriptive of the ideas held in the field of religion and philosophy. One would like to see more of what was Paul’s reaction to and evaluation of the tenets of that pagan world. We have a picture before us of what that world of religion and philosophy looked like but not enough of how Paul felt and thought in that world. Some years ago I read a work on Ancient Philosophy by T. Hoeskstra, then professor at Kampen, and there too, although it gave a fairly accurate picture of what the various individuals and schools taught, there was very little of a real evaluation of their positions. From that point of view the team Dooyeweerd-Vollenhoven is doing a magnificent job. Too much of so-called Christian scholarship manifests the same weakness as the work of Aalders, who, to be sure, does make his position clear by a statement here and there, but the bulk of the material is a statement of what the situation was.

There are a few typographical errors. The “f” has dropped out of Phrygian, p. 82; there is an extra “i” in “mogelyheid,” p. 84; “ryk” has become “tyk,” p. 84; “intakt” has become “in takt,” p. 114; “neer” has become “meer,” p. 129; the “Stephani” has become “Stepani,” p. 148.

**ISAIAH**


Dr. O. T. Allis has taught Semitics and Old Testament Interpretation at both Princeton Seminary and Westminster Seminary. His students rise up and call him blessed. He is a champion of orthodoxy.

There are many parts of this illustrious “study in prophecy” that can be enjoyed by the general reader of *The Calvin Forum.* All parts can be read by the diligent reader. The book will greatly reward one’s diligence.

The chapter on “Prophecy According to the Bible” is an accurate and edifying account, enjoyable, for the general reader, while the chapter on “Prophecy According to the Critics” might challenge the attention of the more ambitious student. Furthermore, the chapter on “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah” will interest the curious reader, while the chapter on “The Prophecies Regarding Cyrus” will appeal to the historically minded.

Again, the meditative reader will be able to enrich himself with the chapters on “The Servant of the Lord” and “Who is the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53?” On the other hand, the theologically inclined Bible student will find treasures from deep mines in the chapters on “The Prophetical Poem Celebrating the Transcendence of the Lord God of Israel” and on “The Basic Issue.”

For our ministers, this work is not only a book of abiding value, but its orientation is recent, for instance, when it deals with form-criticism.

We have products of original research, particularly, in the chapters on “The Prophecies Regarding Cyrus,” and on “The Propychtical Poem Celebrating the Transcendence of the Lord, God of Israel.” These two chapters show how the Cyrus poem touches first the past, then the present, and then the future, while only the futurist lines include the reference to Cyrus. The poetic structure gives beautiful climactic emphasis to the futurist Cyrus-lines. In any introduction to the Book of Isaiah, these two chapters of Dr. Allis are not only of capital importance, but they produce evidence which any Biblical-believing scholar will need to respect.

It might be presumed that the chapter on “The Basic Issue” would be so technically isalogical that it would have no interest for the general reader. But this is not the case. It is a most interesting chapter on the question, “whether
there is any close and vital connection between the Old Testament and the New, whether the great historic events of which we read in the Gospels can really be said to be the fulfillment of predictions recorded in the Old Testament."

Here faith comes into a direct conflict with modernistic unbelief. The treatment is very satisfactory from the standpoint of faith in the Scriptures. Many writers of all schools of thought are treated. As Dr. Geerhardus Vos had done before, the writer exposes the scholars of an "intermediate position" that "use such words as 'prediction' and 'fulfillment' while at the same time advocating a theory of prophecy which tends to empty both words of their true meaning."

There is still another matter of considerable importance that receives a very thorough treatment from the author. It is concerned with the New Testament quotations from the Book of Isaiah. What bearing do they have on the unity of the Book of Isaiah? The author stresses this unity of the book over against various higher critical theories dividing the book into several books from different authors and from different times. As has been intimated he not only contributes splendid material on the Cyrus prophecies and on the servant-prophecies in the book of Isaiah, but he also utilizes the New Testament quotations very effectively.

Here again the author presents carefully considered and well organized Biblical evidence. He takes a decisive position with the Bible-believing school of thought, for which we are grateful. This gratitude is all the greater because of the importance of the matter. Its importance would really deserve considerable elaboration.

We hope the author will continue to enrich the theological world with such splendid works as his thoughtful and thought provoking volumes on "The Unity of Isaiah," and "The Five Books of Moses."

MARTIN J. WYNGAARDEN:

CHILDREN'S BOOKS


This book is a companion in format and type of content to the one entitled, Can You Tell Me. The two volumes together form a handsome two-volume. Both display a smooth, rich physical make-up with clear type and many appealing photographs of real children arranged in modern mood throughout from cover to cover.

The book comes highly recommended. Its content, consisting of "simple answers to puzzling questions" speaks for itself. It is written in a direct, dynamic, expository style. It answers thirty-nine questions which are classified in five different groupings. Sampling the content, one finds answers to queries like the following: What is the sky?, Why is the sky blue?, What are lightning and thunder?, Why do some people have different-colored skin?, Are the white people the best?, What is electricity?, What makes an airplane fly?, How does steam make things go?, What is my shadow?, What happens to wood when it burns?, Who wrote the Bible?, Who are God's people?, What does the Bible tell us about being afraid?, What does the Bible tell us about Jesus' love?, What does the Bible tell us about Sunday?, How can I help to tell others about God?, Where was Jesus before he was born?, Did Jesus play when he was a child?, Did Jesus have to eat and sleep?, What is "communion?, Where is Jesus now?, and many more.

It seems impossible that there would be anyone responsible for the training of a child who would not be keenly interested in reading the intelligently simplified and Biblically sound expositions given to the above questions.

HELEN VAN LAAR:


The Savior walks among the children in this book. One senses His interest when the eight-year old Cherry tells Him about her dread which He changes into joy by sending her "five, fuzzy, little kittens" for her birthday. Again, one is aware of His loving care for Norman with his peculiar problem of jealousy, for "Itchy" Aine in the misery of her heartbreak, for John and Joe lost in the deep ravine, for Gordon Fisk when menaced by two school bullies. The warmth and sincerity emanating from many of the stories suggest that these tales have been personal experiences of the writers. But it is disappointing that in those narratives where one might expect the deepest warmth of appreciation and wonder—there one finds it the least. The last statement has reference to the five Bible discourses incorporated within the thirty-two stories which compose the volume. Two of them are merely barren accounts without atmosphere, hurried and ineffective. To another is added imaginary by-play of doubtful permissibility. There seems to be a lack of realization that when one walks the past of Bible History, he is treading upon sacred ground, every part being suffused with the direct dealings of God Himself. However, in spite of imperfection, the book achieves to a great measure, in its content, what the compiler meant it to do, namely, to magnify the Saviour.

Another disappointment is the style, the form, the vessels, if you will, in which the content is offered in order to glorify Him. With but a few exceptions these vessels are merely utilitarian, some awry and others broken in form. In a piece of literature which is being advertised as a story one may expect a general conformity to the accepted structure of such type of writing. At any rate, one may look for unity, coherence, and emphasis. But those essentials of proper form are lacking in several cases. For instance, the title "The Price of Disobedience" has nothing to do with the first part of the story which is but a succession of unrelated happenings, sweet but irrelevant. The result is a misshapen form. Other anecdotes have digressive ideas inserted which break the form completely.

And why must literature dedicated to God so often lack the glow of metaphor, the sparkle of simile, the charm of tonal music, and the flowing line of rhythmic movement?

Let us by all means have more Christian stories published for children—stories glorifying the Saviour. But let us make our offerings in vessels of precious beauty, modeled and finished with loving concern. For the Saviour is a great King!

HELEN VAN LAAR.

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