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## God's Calendar and Ours

Henry Schultze

THE concept of *time* has almost from the very dawn of history been a matter of interest and study. In recent years the discussion about time has been revived. This is particularly true among the theologians. Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Martin Werner have given the discussion tremendous impetus. In recent years the young people of the Netherlands, particularly those of Calvinistic persuasion, have given considerable space to it in their publications. In our own Reformed circles it has been discussed in the *Calvin Forum* and in the *Reformed Journal*. Now at this time as the Christmas season approaches with its reference to "the fulness of time," we are called upon to give the problem of time some consideration and to point out in a devotional way some of its practical implications.

Our method of reckoning time is not that of God. The Greeks regarded time as cyclical in character. Time in their estimation has no point of beginning nor a goal or end toward which it moves and in which it terminates. It moves in an eternally circular course in which events keep recurring. Hence, redemption is to find release from this circle of time and thus be liberated from that in which one is enslaved. (Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time*, p. 52). However, this conception, which may strike us as a bit ridiculous at first glance has, nevertheless, I think, left its impress upon our thinking. We speak of history repeating itself. Indeed, it has even been felt in Christian thinking. Students have asserted that the history of Israel has been repeated in the experience of the Messiah and is repeated again in every Christian's life. In general this conception of time has been rejected. However similar recurrent events may seem to be, they are distinct. There is no simple repetition. Even if time did manifest itself after a cyclical fashion, each succeeding cycle would be modified by its predecessor and would therefore represent a different cycle with characteristics distinctly its own.

Cullmann has quite correctly pointed out that in the Bible one finds in distinction from the cyclical conception of time that which he calls the linear. Time begins at certain points or events (e.g., the

creation) and moves forward toward some goal or consummation. The history of the world is moving toward an end or goal to be realized in the "fulness of time." This is still undetermined in the mind of men. It is still divinely hidden. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not even the angels in heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36). However, men do have time indications created by their own thinking. They deliberately set an historical point of time departure from which they count forward and at times even backward.

The Jews regarded it possible to set or fix the time of creation as a point of departure. And they dated that day the beginning of the first year, so that we are according to their reckoning now living approximately in the year 6000. This may be very wide of the mark. We have admittedly no accurate means of calculation. This system has been referred to as the Jewish Calendar. There is also the Diocletian Calendar, which was used among the Christians for some time. In this calendar time was figured from the Diocletian persecutions and was called so many years after the Martyrdom. In the O. T. time seems to be quite frequently from the beginning of the reign of some kings, for example, the prophecy of Zechariah in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius. Even in our own United States the president's proclamation uses both the Christian Calendar and that which numbers the years from the founding of the United States Republic. Such systems call for a constantly new initiation, for new points of departure. The present Dionysian (Christian) Calendar has put an end to this revision of the calendar with its ever recurring new points of de-

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parture. It establishes a middle point from which time can be reckoned backward and forward. The middle point was placed at the birth of Christ so that we today have our B.C. and A.D. (Before Christ and *Anno Domini*). From our point of view there was the highest justification for placing the coming of Christ in the very center of the historical process. The system is unacceptable to the Jews. They too have a central point, but it is still in the future just before the After-Consummation period. Christians place the center of history in the middle of the period commonly referred to as between Creation and Consummation. With this arrangement Cullmann agrees. (A. M. Hunter, *Interpreting The New Testament*, p. 132).

Dionysius Exiguus, an abbot of Rome, is credited with the discovery of the Christian Calendar. Therefore it is often referred to as the Dionysian Calendar. He published his calendar in 525 A.D. But he made a serious mistake that has never been corrected. That was partly due to the fact that the exact year of Christ's birth is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain. The fact is that many of the early church fathers discouraged the observance of Christ's birth because its observance stressed the humanity of Jesus at the expense of His divinity. This issue of Christ's two natures was bitterly debated in early church history. The kind of calendar in current use in the early Christian era was the Roman calendar. It reckoned time from the founding of the city of Rome. (It was initialed A.U.C. (*Ab urbe Condita*)). Dionysius had to fit his proposal into the Roman system. Somewhere in Roman history Christ was born at 754 A.U.C., declared Dionysius. However a little investigation soon revealed the fact that Jesus was born even before the death of Herod which can be dated at about 749 or 751 A.U.C. Christ's birth will have to be placed at least five years earlier. We are therefore nearer 1960 today than 1956. It is in a way later than we think. We have not become disturbed about his calendar nor about his error. His was and is after all a human calendar and not divine. And to err is human. God has not been interested in giving us the exact day and year of any event. With Him a thousand years are but as a day. But we want an answer to our eternal "when." It seems almost as important to man as to determine the "what." We have become and are interested in the chronological sequences of events. We see casual events out of which the particular event we are interested in seems to develop or grow. We have found a

scriptural reference to the "when" of Christ's birth. It is called the Fullness of Time (Gal. 4:4). Then we proceeded to define the phrase in terms of character of the period in which Christ appeared. Most scholars find universals about that time. They have discovered a universal hunger for spiritual values, a universal language, a universal peace, a universal rule under the Romans, and other items that seem to make the time about right for the coming of a message that must be brought to a hungry people, in a language well nigh universally understood, and at a time when travel was comparatively safe, and when they could depend upon the protective rule of a benevolent sovereign. It is, however, obvious that such conditions, however suspicious, had very little to do with the coming of Christ. All this was a fortunate occurrence of incidents arranged by the wisdom and power of God. But it is quite possible to find other historical situations equally opportune, when judged by human standards, for the coming of the Messiah.

Plato brushed the truth when he regarded the course of events as a moving image of eternity. He connected time with heavenly determinations. But Aristotle, who is regarded as a man of science, related time and space as many do today. The schoolmen pick up this reference and developed it into a system which taught that time was discrete for angels and continuous for man, because man who is also matter, and matter is causally connected. And this ideal causal connection prevails today. Each succeeding series of events is pushed ahead, as it were, by its predecessor. The past determines the future, but that may be quite distinct from the Biblical conception, because the future lies in its bosom.

Turning to the Bible, we find that events are not pushed ahead but drawn or pulled ahead toward the realization of a predetermined good. The doctrine of predetermination posits that the events are determined in heaven and not on this earth with its interplay of causes and effects. It is true God may use secondary causes to bring about an event but even these are the results of a determined plan.

This conception is clearly expressed in the gospels. The so-called *hina* (purpose) clauses repeatedly occur expressing the idea that an event transpires to fulfill prophecy which is expressive of a divine plan. In Matthew's Gospel this approach is made with noticeable frequency. Not only the main events but even many details are presented as taking place

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in order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet. There seems to have been nothing on earth, neither men or even the course of events, that brought Christ into the world, that precipitated the incarnation. This was solely God's prerogative. He controlled not only the events but also the time and also the concomitant and the near concomitant occurrences. And it too frequently is our tendency to identify these occurrences with the causes.

It is in the light of some such a conception that a Christian must interpret the phrase that the Son of God appeared when the *pleroma* (fulness) of time arrived. This fulness of time is not to be reckoned according to man's calendar but according to God's. It is because of the adoption of man's standard of determining time that we have gone astray in setting the date of Christ's birth. We use the materialistic cause-and-effect method and search for all the possible causes at the beginning of the first century A.D. which might have projected Jesus into the world. The very fact that Christ was brought miraculously into this world should have cautioned us to move very circumspectly. The fulness of time cannot mean that there were a number or even a series of events that came to a climax in ushering Jesus into the world. Christ's coming was in accord with a divine plan. The time in God's calendar was irrevocably set. The event was not pushed forward from behind, but it was drawn forward from in front. It and the associated events took place in order that it might be fulfilled what God decreed, even to the minutest details. Lenski and others in effect

have correctly commented that "what God saw and counted as the fulness of time . . . is too difficult for us to say because His judgments and thought are too unsearchable." It is the condition of being full as regards time, but it is God's time.

Christ came on God's eternal calendar. Indeed, He came for the purpose of realizing on earth God's heavenly wrought plan. He was drawn to the incarnation by heaven's plan and not pushed to it by events that took place on earth.

This position is radically opposed to our usual conception of measuring events in this world. Yet we vainly persist in placing the temporary setting of the birth of Jesus in terms of man's calendar. We have bungled badly, as is now quite generally conceded.

This approach brings God into a very important place in our Christmas observances. It will focus our attention on the eternal plan back of the Babe in a manger at Bethlehem. We shall see something of the love and grace of God in ushering His only begotten Son into this recalcitrant world. We shall be able to see something of wisdom and glory of the plan of redemption. The divine power in bringing to realization His chronological schedule will not escape us. Instead of gazing fondly and sympathetically at the manger with its many details, we shall be able to lift our eyes to the Father back of it. We shall then join the angels who saw something of the fulness of the significance of the event and of the significance of the event and broke forth in rapturously singing "Glory to God in the highest (Luke 2:14).

## Thou Shalt Not Steal

John E. Meester

### I

THE Eighth Commandment involves an assumption. It simply assumes the right of private property. In this Commandment, to quote the Heidelberg Catechism, God forbids all wicked tricks and devices whereby we aim to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbor."

John Calvin begins his discussion in the *Institutes* as follows: "The end of this precept is that, as injustice is an abomination to God, every man may possess what belongs to him" (I, p. 367).

Charles Hodge puts it this way: "The Commandment forbids all violations of the rights of property. The right of property in an object is the right to its exclusive possession and use. The foundation of the right of private property is the will of God. By this is meant: (1) God has so constituted man that he desires and needs this right of the exclusive pos-

session and use of certain things; (2) Having made man a social being, he has made the right of property essential to the healthful development of human society . . . . This doctrine of the divine right of property is the only security for the individual and for society" (*Systematic Theology III*, p. 421).

### II

But what has been accepted for ages may be challenged. The French socialist, Proudhon, wrote a book on the subject, *What is Property?* And his famous but also infamous reply was: "Property is theft."

One of the earliest English writers on the subject of Socialism (Robert Owen) shocked the Christian world by his declaration that religion, private property, and indissoluble marriage constitute the devil's trinity. Property on this view is the will not of God, but of the devil!

But the classic proponent of this view is Karl Marx. "The history of all past society is the history of the struggle between classes." Class struggle, he says, is the key to a right understanding of history. History has to do with food and clothing, lies in the realm of the physical rather than the spiritual. All talk about the so-called higher values of life — God, the soul and immortality — is only a smokescreen to keep from view the real needs of man and the real issues of history. The material and the economic aspects of civilization are basic; and all other phases, the cultural, the intellectual, the spiritual, must be interpreted in terms of the material and the economic. It is up to the workingmen of all lands to wake up to this truth, and to unite hands and hearts in a crusade against all institutions and interests that blind the eyes of men to the naked truth of life and history. All the existent organizations of society, such as the Church, the State, religion, morality, patriotism, reflect a misinterpretation of history in the interest of the privileged classes. They must therefore be overthrown and repudiated and that by force. The Church, the State, the family, and private property on this view are just so many inventions of the ruling classes of all lands to throttle and stifle the rights of the laboring classes.

### III

What I have said so far highlights the fact that there are today two main interpretations of life and history and destiny: and they are locked in mortal combat.

The one is evolutionistic, economic, materialistic, and atheistic. The other, with all its shortcomings, is spiritual, theistic, and teleological.

These conflicting ideologies have to do with things; with property; with material values. They constitute deep, basic, right-down-to-the-heart-of-the-matter interpretations of the Eighth Commandment.

No one can evade this issue. Each of us must ask himself where he stands in this battle of the ages as it comes to expression in an area where all human beings meet — the realm of the physical and the tangible, the things of earth and time, our food and clothes and dwelling places. We need to be reminded over and over, therefore, of the Christian presuppositions that lie back of the Eighth Commandment.

First, the Christian begins with God. He begins not with the denial of God's existence, but with the affirmation of God's being and God's right as Creator and Sovereign. God as Creator and Sovereign is the possessor of Heaven and Earth. He is the Owner of all things, of all the physical material values of the universe. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

Second, God the Creator, Lord of all, has made man in his own image. In this context this means that some reflection of this divine ownership and

sovereignty should be seen in man. The Bible accordingly begins with a creation in which man is charged by God to subdue the earth and to have dominion over it. The Psalmist puts it this way: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? For Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands."

This delegated sovereignty and derivative ownership on the part of man may be designated stewardship. The sovereignty of God then has as its counterpart the stewardship of man. In the realm of things, as in the realm of the spirit, you and I are responsible to God. In acquiring and administering the tangible values of earth we are to be guided by the will of him who created them. We should therefore make it our purpose not to do anything that is contrary to the will of God, or unworthy of ourselves as image-bearers of God, in the acquisition or administration of property.

We are stewards, trustees, administrators under God, for God, to God's honor and glory! And, may I add, if this be true by virtue of creation and providence, how much the more is it imperative for us by virtue of redemption and regeneration!

Third, stewardship implies responsibility to God as Creator and Redeemer; but it also involves, more than the Church has recognized, social responsibility. In working out the practical implications of his stewardship the Christian, beginning with the right of private property, should pray for and implement a greater sensitivity to the needs of his fellow-man, not only here but throughout the world. What I am trying to say is this: in the large framework of Biblical teaching about God and man, sovereignty and stewardship, the Christian must try to work out both the individual implications and the social implications of the Eighth Commandment.

### IV

I am going to develop briefly this third principle, then, along two lines.

On the one hand the property rights of the individual must be maintained. Nowhere in the Bible do we find these rights abrogated: not in the Mosaic era, not in the time of the prophets, not in the early days of the Christian Church. To illustrate, Ahab was king of Israel. But Naboth was the owner of the vineyard, and the decision to sell or not to sell rested with him. The so-called communism of the early Church was entirely voluntary; not compulsory. And its background was the exact opposite of what you see in Marxist Communism: its background was the precedence in value of the spiritual over the material, the love of God overflowing into the life of man.

As for the teaching and example of our Lord, it is true he was born in poverty. During the days of his ministry he had no place to lay his head. And at the end he was crucified outside the city wall as an outcast. Nevertheless the parables of our Lord

(and sixteen out of thirty-eight deal with man's attitude toward money) "reveal a genuine sympathy with the ownership and production of wealth, and a keen appreciation of the mutual obligations of servants and masters, laborers and lords" (Henry C. Link, *The Return to Religion*, p. 136).

The positive teaching of the Eighth Commandment, for the individual, may be put this way: earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can. Work! Work to have and to give!

In 1918 Professor B. K. Kuiper wrote a book on the future of the Christian Reformed Church. In it he says that the challenge before us is this: to maintain and apply a Bible-believing, Christ-honoring, and God-glorifying faith in an age of secularism and indifference. We believe in God. We believe what the Bible teaches us concerning God and man. We rejoice in the redeeming work of Christ and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. We desire to be used as channels and instruments to propagate God's truth and to communicate the joy of salvation to the world about us. Therefore we need workers, ministers, missionaries; but we need also nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers, administrators. Therefore we need buildings, new churches, new schools, bigger and better facilities for our educational and philanthropic programs. We need books, periodicals, a developing radio ministry. All of which costs money. What our people should do therefore, and now I quote, is apply themselves with all the energy at their command to earning more money.

Are you shocked?

Don't be shocked, he adds. This is not practical materialism; on the contrary it is practical idealism.

Work! Work to have and to give!

On the other hand, the Christian must develop a greater awareness of and concern about the social problem, the social implications of the Eighth Commandment.

As far back as 1891, Dr. A. Kuyper gave a paper, "Christianity and the Class Struggle" before a Christian Social Congress. In it he says, quoting the German philosopher Fichte, "Christianity conceals in its womb a much greater treasure of rejuvenation than you surmise. Until now it has exerted its power only on the individual and only indirectly on the State. But anyone who, as believer or as unbeliever, has been able to spy out its secret dynamic, must grant that Christianity can exert a wonderful organizing power on society also; and not till this power breaks through will the religion of the Cross shine

before the whole world in all the depths of its conceptions and all the wealth of the blessings which it brings."

He then goes on to predict that unless Christian people wake up to the actualities of our contemporary situation, our civilization will perish — it could be, he says — through the growing power of Russia or of China!

So in conclusion let us remind ourselves of the full sweep of the Bible as to our social responsibilities. Abraham was called out of a corrupt civilization involving tyranny and oppression to start a new nation and people. Moses led a mass migration of Hebrew slaves out of bondage to freedom, opportunity, stewardship, where the law of the land was to be the Decalogue, love for one's fellow-man rooted in one's love for God. Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah, were men of passion outraged at the sins, corruptions, oppressions, injustices of God's people: flaming exponents of a social justice from whom all reformers since, including Karl Marx, have received inspiration! Not only that — the Bible satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart and the deepest desires of inspired prophets. It presents to us a leader and a new order.

That leader is Jesus Christ who frees us from the tyranny and selfishness of sin, and opens up for us once more the deep meaning of the Decalogue (including the Eighth Commandment) as love for man based upon love for God.

That new order is the Kingdom of God, foreshadowed in the Old Testament and partly realized in the New Testament era, the Kingdom of God which brings together male and female, bondman and freeman, capital and labor, in a new unity and a new devotion and a new dedication. This is the true totalitarianism for which we must pray . . . and work . . . and witness . . . and sacrifice!

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# Must We Rethink Christian Education?\*

Cornelius Jaarsma

## PART II

### The Whole Person as Subject

THE scriptural anthropology which we have tried to set forth as a basis for educational theory and practice leads us to a third primary consideration in our discussion. We have said that man as religious being constitutes a two-fold unity. He is a unity in the full context of life. He is not merely a unity in the organic relationship of spirit in the mental-physical or soul-body relationship. He is also a unity in his relationship to that in his environment with which he identifies himself, which constitutes a part of integral living.

Perhaps I can make this point clear by referring to man in his original state as God created him. God created a perfect man in a perfect creation. Man was perfect in the harmonious relationship of spirit as the principle of life to every facet of his being, both soul and body, mental and physical. In his very being he was representational of God to creation. He was placed in a perfect creation equally harmonious in all its relationships. Man was given dominion over creation as he represented God to creation. But he also represented creation before God. He identified himself with the perfections of creation in his representational function before God. The perfect man in a perfect creation experienced a unity of the total organism in the unity of life.

Now for appropriate terminology to express the two-fold unity of man. The unity of the organism, spirit organically united in the soul-body relationships, we shall call person. One is a person in the organic unity of his being. The unity of the organism in the context of life we shall call personality. The person extends himself in his functions into his environment and identifies himself with certain areas of it. He comes to like certain foods. He identifies himself with them largely through his physiological functions. He enjoys certain social activities. He identifies himself with them largely through social-emotional functions of his being. He concentrates on an area of scientific research. He identifies himself with his conquest in his knowing function while the social prestige and emotional contentment too play a large part. In his personality the person extends himself into his environment in his physiological, in his social-emotional, and in his knowing functions. A child is a person at birth and develops into a personality as he in the process of living identifies himself with certain areas of activity.

What has sin done to the unity which character-

ized the perfect man in a perfect creation? As already indicated with reference to the religious nature of man, the two-fold unity was badly distorted but the principle of unity is maintained. Only to the degree that man can develop and maintain the original two-fold unity can he function meaningfully. Because the original principle of unity abides, the goal of education is clear. It is nothing less than the norm set by God Himself when he created a perfect man in a perfect creation; a man truly representational of God to creation and of creation to God. God still says, "Be ye perfect as I am perfect," and "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

The goal of education is the forming of perfect personality. But in this sense only the child in Christ is educable, for he is perfect in Christ. The righteousness of Christ is imparted to him in regeneration. And now a righteousness of life becomes possible. We know the original perfection will not be attained in this life, but education can achieve greater righteousness when it in its total program nurtures the youth in Christ in the fear of the Lord.

And because the principle of unity still obtains, by the Grace of God, a more peripheral unity can be achieved by education in the unregenerated person. A forming of personality can take place in the non-Christian. Daily observation demonstrates the effectiveness of this education in the lives of men. The non-Christian may exemplify in his personality a graciousness, finesse, and even moral principle that makes him a good neighbor and a good citizen. He too, according to Romans 1, knows God but holds down this knowledge in unrighteousness. Not being right with God, his present righteousness is that of the religious man living in idolatry. To a degree he can be formed as a personality. His two-fold unity can be realized to a degree.

This principle of unity of person and personality points up several related fundamental, elemental considerations in educational theory and practice. I shall mention only three, as pertinent to this discussion.

First of all this unity calls for a distinction among functions, but not a classification of powers or faculties. Dichotomy or trichotomy may prove fascinating and even helpful theological discussion, but they furnish no ground for psychological and educational thinking. Psychologies of the past which treated certain aspects of the mental life of man as entities, or nearly so, failed to comprehend the nature of the unity of the person and his personality. To speak of the will or of the intellect, or of the mind as a something in man is misleading scientifically, to say the

\* This concludes an article by Dr. Jaarsma, part I of which appeared in the November, 1955, number.

least. For example, we speak of a setting sun but wouldn't think of using this expression as scientific language in astronomy. Likewise, to speak of the will conveys significant meaning in daily communication, but we don't study the will as entity or faculty in psychology. Willing is a significant totality of the total person which involves many functions. Willing as a function of the total person in his personality cannot be understood independently of social-emotional and knowing functions. For understanding a person we must distinguish among functions, for it is not given to us to grasp the whole concurrently. In this too we can know only in part. But in making such distinctions we must always remember that the whole is prior to the functions we distinguish, and we must not lose sight of the whole. In education we are always forming the whole person into a personality. We are never training the intellect or the mind, so to speak.

Another consideration follows which is elemental in the understanding of education. The whole person in his two-fold unity is a self-determining being who learns by acceptance. The person identifies himself with that which he can accept in the context of his life, into his community, that with which he can feel united. Learning is the process in which a person in his felt needs understands an object of knowledge as satisfying his needs and consummating them, and accepts the object in his goal-seeking activity. The person learns what he is impelled from within to seek; he learns the consummation of his motivation.

The implications of this principle of education are many or varied. Just to mention one. There is no learning as acceptance without felt needs, no learning without motivation. Felt needs are both inherent, as for example, affection, and acquired as for example, reading skills. But they must be felt by the learner as needs to motivate him to self-determined action. Furthermore, felt needs are not their own norms. One needs affection, but of the right kind, the kind that forms him as perfect personality in a perfect creation. For example, a child must develop independence as an individual to attain to this goal. When affection is experienced by him as indulgence and permissiveness, he fails to realize independence, or true freedom. What constitutes the right kind of affection on various levels of child development is an important educational question.

I mention a third elemental consideration under the heading of personal unity, or the whole person as subject. The Bible clearly teaches us that truth understood and accepted makes us what we should be. We read in John 8:31, 32, "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Verse 32 must not be quoted without verse 31, and the two verses must be interpreted in the light of the context. (It would be amusing if it were not clear evidence of spiritual blindness when we

see verse 32 quoted on the title page of a secular book.) Scripture relates wisdom and prudence to knowledge and acceptance of truth. There is a body of truth which man gathers from God's Word and God's works. For example, the perfect man in a perfect creation named the animals according to their natures. He read truth in God's creation and exercised his task accordingly. All truth is God's truth, the Self-disclosure of God. It is by truth that perfect personality is formed, that the person is formed into a perfect personality. One abides in truth when he accepts truth for what it really is, God's self-revelation. It is by abiding in truth that one becomes truly free, formed as the perfect personality in a perfect creation.

Again the educational implications are several. Let me mention this one. What subject matter shall we teach in the second grade? That which can disclose truth to a child on his level, in his readiness for acceptance in his very heart. Only as truth-seeking motivates him can it form him, for only thus does he learn. Ideals, attitudes, knowledges, habits, and skills are learning outcomes at various levels of child development have this as criterion that they make a child truth conscious. For wisdom and prudence are had only in the acceptance of truth.

### **Distinction Between Education and Higher Learning**

We hear said among us that education is of one piece. Rightly understood, this statement is true, and a very important one. Education has one goal on all levels, namely the forming of the perfect personality in a perfect creation. In a sense this statement may be equated with Dewey's slogan, education is life, namely, that the forming of personality continues throughout our life-span. But Dewey meant much more by this statement. He meant too that education takes place in the full context of life and only to the degree that life in its fulness is reproduced in the school can education take place. Of course, Dewey meant life in its fulness as lived on a child's level of development. The statement that education is of one piece would not take issue with Dewey when he says that the whole person is involved in the educative process. Education is of one piece in this sense too. It always forms the whole person, never a function of him in isolation from other functions. But when Dewey insists that the school reproduce the fullness of living in the classroom, many who believe that education is of one piece demur.

I am raising a question which reaches far beyond this discussion. Hence, I do not appraise every aspect of the Dewey dictum. But one phase of the question must be considered as elemental to our topic.

Much misunderstanding arises, I think, from our failure to make a distinction between education and higher learning. We speak of both as education. Our English word education is derived from the Latin *educare* (not *educere*). It means to nurture or bring up. The Dutch use the word *opvoeden*,

and the Germans *erziehen*. Whom do we bring up or nurture? The immature, that is those who have not reached a stage of development at which they can think and act independently in the responsibilities of life. Learning beyond this stage constitutes *opleiding* (higher learning) in the Dutch language. The word *oefening* (training) is also used for more technical learning. When we think of education as of one piece from the kindergarten to the university we are apt to make the mistake of confusing bringing up and higher learning. There are God-ordained ways of child development disclosed to us in the study of childhood which must be observed in the education of children. When a youth enters upon later adolescence, these ways no longer apply. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things." When we think of education as transmitting subject matter in smaller or larger, simpler or more complex doses, we make the serious mistake of interpreting education of a child in terms of adult learning. The ways of childhood determine how he learns. Not the logical systems of adult learning.

### **The Place of the School**

I must refer to one more elemental consideration in our discussion. It has to do with the place of the school. Without going into a lengthy discussion it may be asserted that the school is the institution where subject matter is organized for learning purposes. Now, taking the purpose of all education to be the forming of personality, and recognizing learning to be the process by which truth is disclosed to a child's understanding for acceptance in the totality of his life, the place of the school is almost obvious. It takes our culture and civilization in the form of subject matter organized for learning and uses it as a medium in which a child realizes his personality potential. I use the word medium advisedly. Subject matter is no end in itself educationally speaking. Mastery of subject matter can never constitute a final, ultimate educational objective, though mastery is involved in the learning process as a directional process goal. It is in relation to subject matter that a child achieves ideals, attitudes, knowledges, habits, and skills which make truth effective in his life. Subject matter appropriate for a child at a given level of readiness that discloses truth to his understanding is authentic subject matter for learning. It is the function of the school to provide authentic subject matter as a medium in which a child forms his personality, a perfect man in a perfect creation.

\* \* \* \*

Must we reexamine Christian educational thinking? In the light of what we have said under the heading of foundational or elemental considerations, it seems the answer is readily forthcoming. The recent contributions to educational theory and prac-

tice from the fields of psychology, sociology, and psychotherapy and the recent studies in education per se call for appraisal with reference to their pertinence in Christian education. Only the child in Christ is truly educable and only education which discloses truth of Christ is true education. This is beyond debate. But Christian education has no monopoly on facts and techniques of the sciences. In God's grace many pertinent facts and techniques are brought to light in non-Christian spheres. Of these we must avail ourselves to make Christian education what it can and should be.

### **What the School Should Try to Accomplish in Modern Time**

Let me venture to point out two areas of educational theory and practice in which the basic considerations of which we spoke can lead us to productive appraisal.

The first is the area of objectives. Several times we have stated that the objective of education is the forming of personality. This holds for all educational agencies, home, church, school, and all allied agencies. A child as religious being must be formed into a perfect man in a perfect creation. This is always the goal because man must be restored to his representative position as a creature of God created in His image. But for each agency this objective must be formulated according to the medium the agency provides. So the church provides the medium of special revelation, the living Word as recorded in the Bible, and the historically developed doctrines of the Christian Church. The school provides the medium of culture and civilization, past and present. Each must formulate its objectives according to the educational medium it provides. How, then, must the school state its objectives that in the medium of culture and civilization, authentic subject matter, a child may be formed into a personality?

Let me first of all state them for both elementary and secondary levels in a very general way. Think of the objectives in the form of three concentric circles. Within the innermost circle we write this objective: Know God in His Self-revelation and cultivate God-centered thinking, feeling, and willing that proceed from a heart living out of the Word of God. The Bible is central not merely as a book of sacred history or religious doctrine, but as a fountain to which the learner turns for direction in the totality of life. A Christian life-and-world view issues forth out of the living Word. In the middle circle I would write as objective: Understand, appraise, and accept life as a rational, moral, social, esthetic, free, and responsible person in his three-fold office as prophet-priest-king. The school is called upon to seek as learning outcomes those ideals, attitudes, understandings, knowledges, habits, and skills which attain this goal in every learner according to the

capacity with which God has endowed him in his person. In the outer circle I would write: Effectual service as a fruit of accepted stewardship. Learning to live out of the fountain of the Word and attaining to the ideals, attitudes, understandings, knowledges, habits, and skills that make the acceptance of life according to the Word possible, a child must put this to work in service with the feeling of responsibility that characterizes a faithful steward.

These are total-personality objectives to be attained in the medium of a subject matter curriculum. They apply in the kindergarten, in the third grade, in the sixth grade, in the ninth grade, and in the twelfth grade. But they apply in terms of levels of readiness of the total personality at a given period of child development. For example. When we are studying or working in the area of arithmetic in the fifth grade, we are conscious of a *God-related* motivation, seek true ideas and good workmanship in knowledges and skills, and practice helpfulness to, and cooperation with our peers. Every learning situation is a spiritual-moral and social-emotional activity as well as an intellectual one. A child is being formed and forms himself in his total personality in every undertaking which has purpose for him on his level of development.

I shall try to break down these general objectives in terms of more specific areas of child development, the period of childhood to which the elementary school roughly corresponds, and the period of adolescence to which the secondary school (junior and senior high schools) corresponds. I can take time only to state them. Elsewhere I have worked them out in a little more detail.

For the elementary school or childhood period we might state these concentric objectives as follows:

1. Cultivate understanding of and love for God's grace as made known in the Bible.
2. Develop understanding and mastery of the elementary knowledges and tools of our culture for acceptable service to God and man.
3. Cultivate understanding of and practice in human relations motivated by the love of God in Christ.
4. Development of the aesthetic phases of life according to moral and spiritual values.
5. Self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-discipline for mental and physical well-being.

For the secondary school or adolescent period of child development these same concentric objectives are stated differently, not merely for variation, but because the objectives themselves find a different application. Again, mere statement of them must suffice at this time.

1. Cultivate understanding of and personal response to the Self-revelation of God in His Word and in Christ Jesus with a view to conscious choice for the service of the Lord according to His Word.

2. Develop understanding and mastery of a common core of the cultural product, appraisal of, and appreciation for its values in the light of God's Word.

3. Exploration of individual aptitudes and extension of opportunity for personal development in keeping with aptitudes and potential interests.

4. Cultivation of a positive line of action in the total personality, that is character, in keeping with right understanding of true values and the cultivation of leadership to advance these values in the lives of others.

5. Development of cooperation by challenging initiative, encouraging participation, and providing opportunity for personal responsibility.

6. Develop consciousness of a divine claim upon one's life for service by personal, academic, and vocational guidance.

7. Self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-discipline in the growing responsibilities of life.

Of all these more specific objectives for the two levels of child development it must be said that on their own levels each applies to all areas of learning. For example, mathematics is justified in the Christian high school to the degree that it seeks to realize all of the objectives stated. To be sure, all subjects do not realize every one to the same degree, nor in the same way necessarily. But they do constitute the rationale of every area of learning.

### **Curriculum Design to Accomplish These Objectives**

This leads to another area of educational theory and practice that needs constructive appraisal according to the elemental considerations we discussed earlier. It is the area of curriculum. Let me say immediately that I make a distinction between curriculum and course of study. The curriculum includes the total educational medium of the school. Everything that takes place in the school program must be educational in character, that is, have its rationale in the objectives I stated. Whatever does not contribute to the realization of these objectives for all learners, does not belong in the Christian school. And to the degree that each contributes to the objectives must it receive emphasis in budget expense, building program, and teaching personnel. Let this be our guide as we appraise our program. The course of study includes the selection of specific instructional areas of the organized cultural product. Mathematics is a part of the course of study. Of the curriculum too. But the camera club as an outgrowth of the physics class, or athletics as an outgrowth of physical education and hygiene are not part of the course of study. They are not organized bodies of cultural product constituting authentic subject matter. Yet they may have a place in the school curriculum when they find their rationale in the objectives stated.

May I suggest four concepts of curriculum design for the Christian school which, I think, follow from what we have said thus far?

First, the concept of commitment, or self-surrender to the truth. We have seen that all learning is heart

commitment to truth. Therefore, learning is truth-centered. Only as truth enters a child's life, his total personality, is he truly learning. Conforming to a pattern with inner hostility, be it conscious or unconscious, is not true learning. Let us not fool ourselves. A child learns only what he accepts in his heart. Truth enters life through the understanding of the total personality. Truth, therefore, is liberating. Education is liberating when it leads to heart commitment to truth. Areas of learning in the Christian school must be truth-centered, bring children into living contact with and help them understand truth on their level of readiness.

Second, the concept of optimum development. Every child is called upon to make the most possible of his endowment and opportunity. This is his responsibility to the God Who created him and Who redeems him in Christ. Notice, I do not say maximum ability. Perhaps this may sound questionable to you. For do we not seek the perfect man in a perfect creation? But we also live in a world in which the two-fold unity we spoke of earlier is never wholly restored in all functions of the person. We strive for perfection, but perfectionism in a world of broken functions will make for anxieties and tensions which defeat our very purpose. We seek the greatest possible development of every child allowing for limitations in a broken world of sin.

Third, the concept of pacing. We have emphasized this concept in other connections in our discussion under needs, readiness, and motivation. In organizing the learning areas and process we must take account of a child's needs and capacity for meeting these needs, his ability to consummate them with a degree of satisfaction, and his capacity for goal-seeking based on needs and readiness. This is all too briefly stated for those not schooled in psychology and education, I know. Let me put it this way. God has ordained ways of child development as He has ordained other processes of laws of creation. We must know those ways and obey them as divine ordinances lest we reap the results of running counter to them. God may overrule our errors in guiding child development, and in His grace He does. But to be workmen well approved we should understand His ordained ways and heed them.

Finally, there is the concept of continuity. The concept follows from what we have said of the unity of person and personality. Learning as heart surrender to truth takes place in the fullness of life. Learning and living go together. To the extent that a child knows and feels the object of learning as an integral part of his total life does he learn it. He may memorize a poem or Bible text. He may conform to it in his behavior. Yet he may be rejecting it inwardly. Having been changed only peripherally in his functions, but not having accepted the change in his heart, he may some day throw it off as foreign to him. A certain amount of abstracting and fractionalizing of learning is necessary in a formally organized learning program. But psychologically

speaking a child learns by living. Therefore, even in abstracting and fractionizing he must function as a total personality, as in-life.

None of these four concepts apply individually, or independently. They apply in relation to one another. For example. We learn by living. But the concept of pacing makes this mean one thing in the kindergarten. Here all discrete subject matter areas are excluded. On the other hand, in tenth grade history we set up a well-organized course in historical facts, processes, and principles. However, even the latter must live in the youth's total personality to accomplish the forming of him.

## Conclusion

Christian schools arose in a period when educational theory and practice was beginning to launch out for itself as a child of theology and philosophy. When it left the parental roof as an independent area of research, it was regarded with suspicion by both parents. They felt that once from under the control of their protecting and directing custody, education would kick over the traces and go its own sweet way without regard for norms and controls fostered by them in the past. This is precisely what happened and had its culmination in the educational philosophy of John Dewey who reduced all philosophy to educational theory and dismissed vehemently all theology as of obstructive influence in education.

Christian education, suspicious of the trends of educational research, in so far as it did develop a theory and practice educationally conscious, held close to the parental custody. But Christian education could not remain indifferent to the process of educational research and the contributions of psychological research to education. The man in the Netherlands who understood what was in the offing was Dr. Herman Bavinck. As theologian primarily, but also a philosopher in his own right, he set himself toward the end of his life to give the maturing science the guidance he thought it needed. Christian teachers looked to him for leadership. But Bavinck was a theologian-philosopher, and though a student of psychology, did not fully comprehend what was happening in this area of research. The invitation to Dr. Jan Waterink to join the Free University at Amsterdam was a recognition of Christian education as an independent field of study and a challenge to it to launch out independently to achieve a better grasp of the problems, and seek solutions.

In our country we, in our Christian schools, have been caught between an intellectualistic tradition and pragmatic revolution in education, not ready to renounce the former, and surely not ready to adopt the latter. Our classrooms are today predominantly the former toned down by the influence of the latter with an earnest desire to have *Christian* education, which is neither of the two.

I have tried to state, very inadequately, the direction genuine Christian educational theory and prac-

tice must take, as I see it. Christian education is a field of research and practice which must be allowed the privilege of maturity if it is going to do for our Christian schools what needs to be done. Other areas of study make vital contributions, both normatively and technically, but they have no right to dictate the program. Christian education will pro-

ceed responsibly in the Christian community when it is permitted its maturity. It is the responsibility of all areas of learning to appraise its functioning in the totality of Christian thought and life, and students of Christian education will welcome constructive criticism.

## CORRESPONDENCE

John H. Bratt, Th.D.  
The Foreign Editor  
*The Calvin Forum*  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Dear Dr. Bratt,

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Dehiwala, Ceylon  
18 August, 1955

A great event is in the making in South-East Asia. It is the Buddha Jayanti. The Buddha Jayanti celebrations are being organized to commemorate the 2500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha. The anniversary falls on the Full Moon Day of May, 1956. The center of activities may well take place in Colombo, Ceylon, the headquarters of the Reformed witness here.

### A RESURGENT BUDDHISM

The tradition preserved in the Buddhist countries specifies that the teachings of the Buddha will last five thousand years and that the 2500th year will be a significant turning point in the history of Buddhism. The tradition further records that at this time the doctrines of the Buddha will be known throughout the world and that it will witness an unprecedented spiritual re-awakening.

The Buddha Jayanti is essentially a celebration in honor of the Buddha who is one of the greatest men in history, if not the greatest, according to The Right Honourable Sir John Kotelawala, Prime Minister of Ceylon. The sacrifices the Buddha made for the sake of humanity, his career as a philosopher and religious teacher, and his doctrines of universal love, non-violence, and equanimity are all well known. During his life-time and during the last 2500 years many millions of people have looked at his teachings for inspiration and guidance. Numerous generations of Asians have come under the benign influence of his doctrines. The art and architecture and the literature of practically all the countries in Asia have, at some time or other, been moulded by the principles of Buddhism. The monks, who are the followers of Buddha, have been serving Asia throughout history as its cultural leaders. The contribution which Buddhism has made to the spiritual and cultural advancement of humanity is an accepted fact by laymen. And the promise it holds for the future is still more significant. Therefore the Buddha Jayanti will be an occasion not only to evaluate the benefits rendered to humanity by the Buddha and his teachings, but also to speculate on how his lofty ideals can be utilized to bring peace and harmony to our troubled world.

The Buddha Jayanti, it is maintained, is bound to bring about a change in the way of life of the Buddhists and the Hindus who pay homage to the Buddha either as the founder

of their faith or as the incarnation of their great god Visnu. It is suggested that a strong movement to ensure the spiritual regeneration of the Buddhists and Hindus, who together form nearly one half of the world's population should be launched in connection with the Buddha Jayanti. At present, such a movement is being organized in Ceylon; and similar efforts, it is known, are being made in other Buddhist countries. A combined effort, the leaders stress, made by all Buddhist countries will no doubt give better and more lasting results. The spiritual unity of a formidable sector of the world's population will exert an enormous influence on the rest of mankind. The Buddha Jayanti is being used as the ideal occasion for the followers of the Buddha to announce to the world that the true object of life is to "do good, shun evil and cleanse the inmost thought" and to draw the attention of the warring world to the lofty teachings of the Master who has taught humanity the way out of misery and suffering.

The Programme for the Buddha Jayanti is in the making in Ceylon. A Buddhist Council consisting of members of both the Sangha and the laity has been set up to make representations to the Government on all matters pertaining to the Buddha Jayanti and to undertake all activities in connection with the Buddha Jayanti. The Government of Ceylon has decided to co-operate with the Buddhist public, which form 65 per cent of the population, by granting a large sum of money to the Buddhist Council. Besides organizing the movement to usher in a spiritual awakening in the Island, the Council has commenced the translation of the Buddhist Canon (Scriptures — The Tripitaka) into Sinhalese, and the compilation of an Encyclopaedia on Buddhism in English and a general Encyclopaedia in Sinhalese. Arrangements are also being made to publish a number of souvenirs, brochures and books on the life and teachings of the Buddha, and the history of Buddhism. The historic Temple of the Tooth in Kandy (75 miles inland from Colombo) is being reconstructed with a view to restore it to its pristine glory. Besides putting up a number of memorial buildings, the Council will assist in the restoration of the Mahiyangana Stupa which stands at a spot visited by the Buddha and the construction of a Hall of Residence for Buddhist monks at the University of Ceylon in Peradeniya. A special library called the Buddha Jayanti Library, which will be a repository of valuable books on world religions, will also be established at the University. Financial assistance will be given to the Vidyalkara Pirivena of Kelaniya (a seat of Oriental learning) to hold a Sangayana as a part of its activities in connection with the revision of the sacred part of its activities in connection with the revision of the sacred Scriptures.

This Pirivena will also compile a Concordance of sacred texts. In February 1957, the Council will hold an international Buddhist conference in Colombo, Ceylon, and will organize an exhibition of Buddhist art wherein all Buddhist countries will be represented. The Council is also considering a proposal to establish a seat of Buddhist learning of university standard where Buddhism and allied subjects will be taught, besides providing facilities to meditate. In addition Ceylon is making arrangements to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the landing of Vijaya and the founding of the kingdom of Lanka (Ceylon), which coincides with the Buddha Jayanti.

Government leaders are urging that the Buddha Jayanti be an integral part of their scheme to ensure world peace. They confess that they, who have been subject to foreign domination and have therefore remained poor and underdeveloped, have neither the means nor the strength to maintain peace by warfare. And even if they did, the rich religious heritage, they maintain, to which they are heirs prevents them from adopting such a course of action, whose failure has been proved beyond any doubt.

The Buddhist's solution to the problem of war is the message of Universal Love which the Enlightened One has taught. "He should not commit any slight wrong," the Buddha stated, "such that otherwise men might censure; may all things be happy and secure; may their hearts be wholesome. Let none deceive another nor despise any person whatsoever in any place. In anger or ill-will let him not wish any harm to another. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings. Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world — above, below, and across — without any obstruction, without any enmity" (*The Metta Sutta*). It is this doctrine of love that Buddhists believe can save the world from the destruction wrought by nuclear weapons. This alone, they confess, can bring harmony to the world which is torn asunder by greed, hatred, and ignorance. To disseminate this doctrine in the world is their responsibility; and they confess it is not an easy task. But then comfort is found in what the Buddha expounded:

"Easy to do are things that are bad and not beneficial to self;

"But very, very hard to do indeed is that which is beneficial and good" (*Dhammapada*, 163).

#### THE EVANGELICAL PROTEST

In this context the Church of Christ would witness. And, praise God, there is a Church in Ceylon. Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, the Salvation Army, Lutherans, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, and Reformed Christians are firmly established in Ceylon. The National Christian Council of Ceylon has challenged the Government in regard to giving support to the Buddhist religious celebration in May, 1956. As a consequence the amount of support has decreased. The arguments re the relationship of Church and State and in turn the State and Buddhism are being discussed. Some Church leaders are fearful. Others inquire, "What ought we to do?" One evangelical preacher answered, "Preach the Gospel like it has never been preached before."

The appearance of the Final Number of *The Old Paths*, Vol. 25, nos. 2, 3, 4 gives evidence as to how the Reformed Church is preparing herself. Mr. H. H. Collette, the editor, writes in part as follows:

"Those who remember the first issue of this magazine twenty-five years ago in January, 1931, will be able to recollect the circumstances that existed in our beloved Reformed Church at that time. The General Consistory of that day revealed its indifferent attitude to the veracity of the Scriptures, by failing to support a resolution brought up by one of our ministers against the action of the National Christian Council in publishing a Sinhalese commentary on the book of Genesis, that was saturated with the destructive criticism of the Bible. This commentary was being used by preachers of Buddhism to present Christianity as ridiculing its own Scriptures. At the same time our Church Paper *The Herald*, had gotten into the hands of a modernist editor and was sadly neglecting the education of our people in the life and doctrines of our Reformed faith. A small group of church members, zealous of our Reformed heritage, and grieved at the course things were taking, resolved to stem this tendency and supported the late Mr. C. A. Woutersz in his endeavour to publish a magazine to set forth what the Reformed Church really stood for. As a result *The Old Paths* appeared as a monthly magazine in the interests of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon to hold up before her people the Reformed faith and life view."

"Our Church in Ceylon in the last few years has largely returned to its Reformed Tradition and we feel that the object, with which *The Old Paths* began to be published, has to a great degree been achieved. In view of this evidence we are now inclined, to agree that the time has arrived when the *Church Herald* alone can well fulfill the objects of a Church Paper. More specially, that in its present set-up there is the assurance that our people are fed upon the true doctrines of the Word, and presented with the outlook of Reformed faith and practice."

"Although we regret the break of the association with our readers for the past twenty five years; yet, we are glad of the circumstances that permit us to cease publication of *The Old Paths*. The Church has once again struck the trail of the old paths, and we rejoice in observing the guiding hand of our Gracious God on this magazine, during the period it has been privileged to serve the Church and the Cause of Christ."

"When we took up our pen a quarter of a century ago in this ministry of the printed page, we did it in the assurance that we were called of God to this task, and carried it on with prayer and submission to His will for us in this work. We lay aside our pen with the same assurance that in the changed conditions today, in our midst, our mission has been accomplished, and that further continuance of the publication of this magazine would be an unnecessary duplication of this sphere of our church's work."

"We invite our readers to join with us in continuing to intercede with God for our beloved Dutch Reformed Church in this Island. That in faithfulness to her heritage she shall bear increasing witness to the Scripture truths committed to her keeping.

Yours, in The Faith,  
H. H. Collette, Editor"

Buddha Jayanti and the 2500th Anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha fall on the Full Moon Day of May, 1956. An unprecedented Buddhist Spiritual re-awakening in predicted. Pray that the Church of Christ may be faithful. "You shall be my witnesses" Acts 1:8.

Cordially,  
John Van Ens.

# Book Reviews

George T. Purves, CHRISTIANITY IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House; 1955). xx and 343 pages. \$3.00.

DR. Purves, one-time professor of New Testament at Princeton Seminary, has written a book describing the development of the Christian Church down to the end of the period covered by the New Testament. This volume, now made available to modern readers, accomplishes very effectively the task of bridging the gap between revelation and the later history of the Christian Church. The style is lucid and very readable. The position with respect to critical problems is soundly conservative, although it does not, of course, touch on problems which have been raised since Dr. Purves' time. Both laymen and ministers will find this book a very illuminating commentary on the New Testament by virtue of its reconstruction of the expansion and organization of the early Church. It provides also a fine example of the manner in which a man may be historically scientific while maintaining due respect for revelation and the supernatural.

J. H. KROMMINGA  
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Spykman, Gordon J., ATTRITION AND CONTRITION AT THE COUNCIL OF TRENT. (Kampen: Kok; 1955). 270 pages.

This is a thesis written as part of the requirements for gaining a Th. D. degree at the Free University of Amsterdam. It is a book of exceptional merit. It supplies plain evidence that the author is capable of performing labors which require painstaking precision, such as is the mark of genuine scholarship.

The title might lead one to expect that the book deals with a question which can be of interest only to professional theologians who are interested in the hairsplitting distinctions of scholasticism. However, right at the beginning the author makes it clear that he is wrestling with a question which should be of vital interest to everybody, namely the question how sinners can get right with God.

The author shows that the Roman Catholic theologians have not always given exactly the same answer to this question. Some maintained that men could be sure of gaining acceptance with God if they sought forgiveness of sins in the sacrament of penance from the motive of attrition, that is, fear of divine punishment. Others held that contrition, a sorrow for sin which involved love for God was an indispensable requirement on the part of man if he was to obtain forgiveness. The Council of Trent counted among its members men who strongly de-

fended these divergent views. However, this council succeeded in making pronouncements on this question which satisfied both factions, pronouncements so vague that each faction could henceforth claim that their view is the authoritative doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, but at the same time pronouncements which condemned as heretical the Reformation doctrines of justification by faith alone and salvation by unadulterated grace.

This book makes it abundantly clear that the official Roman Catholic doctrine contains various elements which are at sharp variance with the Gospel proclaimed by men like Luther and Calvin. We mention the following: (1) that penance is a divinely ordained sacrament indispensable for salvation; (2) That the sacraments work *ex opera operato*, that is mechanically; 3) that the sacraments are indeed vehicles by which the Church transmits grace to men; 4) that a duly ordained priest does not merely declare to a penitent that his sins are forgiven but actually makes him a partaker of forgiveness with the *absolvo* pronouncement.

We are given in this volume besides the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrament of penance also a very good presentation of the views of Luther and of Calvin on the place of sorrow for sin in the Biblical way of salvation. The author shows that though Luther and Calvin differed somewhat in their emphases, yet they were heartily at one in teaching justification *sola fide* and salvation *sola gratia*.

It goes without saying that we heartily recommend this splendid dogma-historical study.

HERMAN KUIPER  
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Bethell, S.L., ESSAYS ON LITERARY CRITICISM AND THE ENGLISH TRADITION. (London: Denis Dobson Ltd., 1948). 99 pages. 6/0.

Bethell, S. L., THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. (London: Denis Dobson Ltd., 1951). 160 pages. 7/5.

THE first of these two books counts eight essays which, according to the prefatory note, first appeared in the *New English Weekly* during the winter and spring of 1945-46; it addresses itself, first of all, to the problem of the principles of literary criticism and then goes on to show how these principles can be applied by the critic.

It is Mr. Bethell's conviction that literary criticism necessarily is — and should be acknowledged as such — theological in character, that a purely

aesthetic judgment is a chimera. In saying this he is well aware of the unwillingness of many to admit this. In defense of his position he is careful to outline what he conceives to be the task of the critic: the critical work is not finished until an ethical or theological verdict has been given; a work of art is the outcome of the creator's conversation with the eternal and it is the critic's duty to evaluate this insight.

However, in order to give such a verdict the critic has to measure the artist's work against his own standard of values: "For, if criticism implies an assessment of value," says Mr. Bethell, "how can it be divorced from theological considerations?" Granted the validity of this argument, it follows of course that, since the Christian values are true, a Christian critic will do a better job evaluating a book than, for example, a Marxist. This is, indeed, a very wholesome view, it seems to me. For if literature is the result of an experience of life in its fulness, and if, further, it is to be morally significant and relevant to human life, the degree of its sensitive understanding of human experience has to be determined. Any reader who knows T. S. Eliot will find that in many respects Mr. Bethell follows out his suggestions.

In the part of the book devoted to the application of this principle, Mr. Bethell attempts, by a careful analysis of each work as a whole, content and form constituting one reality and one human experience, to get at the 'dogma,' the largely unconscious assumptions underlying the works, and to evaluate them in the light of his own values derived from Christian orthodoxy. His characterizations of certain periods and writers are, to say the least, very provocative and will certainly sharpen the watchfulness of future readers of our English classics.

In the second book Mr. Bethell, following the same method, proposes to examine in detail what Eliot in his essays on the Metaphysical Poets observed and designated as a *dissociation of sensibility*. The year 1660, the year of the Restoration, is frequently taken as the beginning of a new era: the Age of Reason. This obviously leads one to wonder about the characteristic of the age between Shakespeare's death and the arrival of a new 'climate of opinion.' Mr. Bethell presents a close analysis of the 'dogmas' of the Elizabethan and pre-Restoration times by means of an examination of the changes in the meaning of crucial words *life faith* and *reason*. In this way he shows, as Professor Willey has done in his book *The Seventeenth Century Background*, though with a somewhat different emphasis, how gradually this change in meaning came about: Reason, so far from expressing man's whole consciousness in the presence of the external world, was narrowed down to a mathematically exact faculty sharply contrasted with imagination and feeling; faith, so far from being regarded as a reasonable assent to divinely revealed truths became privately cherished sentimentality. This, then appears to be the content of Eliot's utterance, according to Mr. Bethell. Although he

analyzes only the seventeenth century in this book he does draw some historical lines down to the present day. The following utterances may give an idea of how enlightening Mr. Bethell's insights may be. Of Wordsworth and Coleridge, for example, he says that in them "the romantic movement is a stumbling, yet more than half-conscious effort of the old organic mind to assert itself against the disenchanting and decisive force of scientific reason." And he goes on to say that "in our day the process of recovery has continued in the work of Mr. Eliot . . ."

Bethell's study is another proof that in order to be a good writer, critic or historian a man must have real religiously oriented convictions. Moreover, his historical study might contribute to showing our present world, sick with nuclear physics and psychological 'cases,' that a civilization without religious convictions is culturally dead, and cannot be otherwise.

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Müller, Jacob J., *THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS AND TO PHILEMON*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans; 1955). 200 pp. \$3.50.

THIS is the sixth volume of the New International Commentary on the New Testament, which is appearing under the general editorship of Prof. N. B. Stonehouse of the Westminster Seminary of Philadelphia. Dr. Müller occupies the chair of New Testament in the Seminary at Stellenbosch in South Africa. He was appointed to his present position in 1945. His doctoral thesis at the Free University concerned itself with some phases of the kenotic theory. Since this theory is based on the Pauline passage in Philippians 2, which is the distinctive contribution of this Epistle, the author has received some preparation for wrestling with this admittedly difficult problem. Dr. Müller has also prepared a topical and practical commentary on the first six epistles of Paul. It would appear therefore that the author is admirably fitted to the task assigned him in the preparation of this new commentary. To this conclusion the work before us bears ample testimony.

The introductory materials are not extensive. They are to the point and adequate. The chief objections to the Pauline authorship of this epistle, such as the alleged anachronisms, traces of gnosticism, evidences of imitation and theological variations with other Pauline writing are dismissed with the dispatch which is their due.

The integrity of the Epistle has long been questioned. Scholars have, they thought, detected two letters combined. They have called attention to the natural division between the first part ending with 3:1 and the rest, to the sharp difference in the tone of these two sections, to the obvious conclusion in 2:1, and to Polycarp's reference to the *letters* of Paul to the Philippians. These points are not denied by

the author, but he feels quite correctly that another and better explanation can be found for them than that of surrendering the integrity of the Epistle. Here the author falls in line with the best orthodox scholarship of today.

There has been and still is considerable discussion as to the place in which this Epistle was written. There can be no doubt but what it was written in prison. But during which imprisonment? Have we any record of the particular incarceration during which Paul wrote the four prison-epistles? The principal theories that have developed in the study of this problem are three. They are the Caesarean theory, the Ephesian theory, and the Roman theory. Reuss and Meyer have argued for Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea as the place and time of this composition. Duncan and Henshaw insist that it was during the assumed Ephesian imprisonment. Almost all orthodox scholars agree that the Epistle was written during the imprisonment at Rome. The argumentation for each of these positions is ingenious. But there appears to be nothing conclusive. Müller does not give the problem too much space, possibly assuming that it has been settled.

Paul was interested in promoting by means of this letter the spiritual life of a congregation that he had learned to appreciate and love. He was not primarily interested in theology, but in promoting joyous Christian fellowship among the readers and between them and himself. This spirit of Paul has been caught by Dr. Müller and reflected in his commentary. The work is characterized by simplicity, clarity, and practicality. The author does not permit his theological interests to drive him into an extended discussion about some theological theme. He does, however, add a valuable note to the discussion of the kenotic theory, which is required in an interpretation of Philippians 2. Paul introduced this passage, which constitutes the chief characteristic of this Epistle and touches the fundamental nature of the Incarnation, for the practical purpose of illustrating the type of mind he urged the readers to possess. Dr. Müller introduces the main kenotic theories and offers pointed criticism of each. A satisfactory solution of the *kenosis* is not offered. This can hardly be expected since the "self-emptying" remains a stupendous miracle and refuses to be reduced to a simple understandable proposition.

The author sounds a strong confessional note which plays a very dominant part in his discussion of these doctrinal issues which Paul raises in his attempt to promote Christian living. This type of interpretation smacks of "confessional" interpretation. One finds illustration of it again in the discussion of Phil. 2:13 where divine sovereignty appears as conflicting with human responsibility. An author never will escape his fundamental convictions, and they settle many a problem for him. Müller is a scholar committed to the Reformed Confessions, and does not and cannot hide his coloring. This is noted not as a

criticism but as an indication of his consistent orthodoxy.

The commentary on *Philemon* is a worthy companion to the one with which it is joined. The introduction is adequate, yet one could wish that a more elaborate discussion of the authenticity had been added. Scholars have raised questions about it which can hardly be dismissed with a "It is only stubborn and prejudiced tendency-criticism which can doubt its genuineness." The sociological significance of slavery is clearly set forth. It is a problem which calls for attention in both our own country and in South Africa. Slavery in some forms is still with us. The author affirms that the condition of slavery is not incompatible with Christianity and can be sanctified by Christian faith (verse 16).

This volume will appeal as a commentary to orthodoxy in general. It manifests the work of a scholar who is thoroughly acquainted with the field. It reveals an exegete who strains to get at the intent of St. Paul and to present the meaning in understandable form. It presents a minister who correctly stresses the practical spirit exhibited by Paul. It is, in short, a worthy member of the New International Commentary on the New Testament.

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Isaacs, J., *THE BACKGROUND OF MODERN POETRY*. (London: G. Bell and Sons; 1951). 94 pages. 8s 6d.

CONTEMPORARY poetry is to many people, even to those who enjoy reading poetry, little more than words put in such a way as to cover up ideas, or a foolish attempt to get the reader's admiration by perplexing him. And much modern poetry does seem to cover up ideas and to perplex readers. But this fact, though irritating, does not necessarily discredit the worth of the poetry. Modern poets use new methods because they think they can add depth and richness to their poetry. Appreciation of modern poetry therefore means getting used to some new ways of writing.

Mr. Isaacs in his short book attempts to clarify some of the difficulties in poetic craftsmanship. He is dealing with the background of modern poetry, with what lies behind the poetry, the materials available to a poet. His concern is not with movements, or with the thought or intellectual tenor in modern poetry, nor with versification, but with poetic devices and their use. Two important devices he finds are the symbol and the image. His discussions of these go a good way towards explaining some difficult modern poetry.

In his analysis of various aspects Isaacs uses the historical method. Problems of today are set in the light of problems which former ages had. The object of this is to show that our age does not have a unique situation, but that every age has its poetic difficulties. Modern devices are also seen in their historic de-

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velopment. The symbol and image are not instantaneous creations of the twentieth century — they have a history. Isaacs traces them from their origins, and his work is enlightening as well as interesting.

This method also gives form to the chapter on Poetry and Science. We would expect that today, if at any time, science would be best incorporated into poetry. But according to Isaacs, modern poetry does not live up to these expectations. He discriminates several ways of using scientific data in poetry — creatively assimilative, allusive, purely descriptive — and his examination shows that science has now become one among many sources of poetic “imagery and feeling.”

Mr. Isaacs regards T. S. Eliot as the apex of modern

poets and one chapter is devoted entirely to him. This chapter, however, is quite sparse. Much of it is taken up by historical data about Eliot's early years, which, though valuable in itself, is not anticipated in this type of book. And much of the discussion of Eliot's art is covered by quotation, implications often being left to the reader. We would expect Eliot's craftsmanship to be more completely related to the materials of the earlier chapters. Isaacs sees Eliot's main device to be allusiveness and the incorporation of lines of other poets.

The area which this book covers is small and by no means exhausts modern poetry. It deals only with some technical devices, rather than with content or versification, but it is a brief, readable, and convincing assessment of this one area. Being based on broadcast talks, it is a simple statement of an involved subject. Mr. Isaacs writes a direct and often colloquial language, but wide scholarship and erudition shine through.

Clarence Walhout  
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### Error

The undersigned deeply regrets his oversight of the substitution of the word *majority* for the word *minority* in Dr. Amry Vandenbosch's letter published in the November issue. The Boers constitute a “very small minority” rather than majority of the population of the Union of South Africa.

Earl Strikwerda

