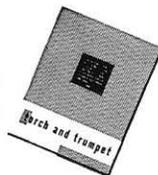


torch and trumpet

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TORCH and TRUMPET

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May We Shoot to Kill?

BY HENRY R. VAN TIL

The problem of war brings us face to face with God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Although there are some who would have us believe that God has abdicated or, at least, that he is in eclipse when this ghastly evil comes upon the world, the Word of God leaves no doubt that war vindicates the sovereignty of the God of all the earth. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6) "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things" (Isa. 45:7).

"Come, behold the works of Jehovah,
What desolations he hath made in the earth.
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariot in the fire.
Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth"

(Ps. 46:8-10).

If it be granted, however, that war leaves the sovereignty of our God intact, or that it expresses his sovereign rule over all the nations, what, then, is my duty as a Christian with respect to the waging of war? This question ought to be divided into two parts: How am I to think of war? Is it right for me to go to war? What is to be my attitude in time of war? And, in the second place, What am I to do as a Christian soldier? How shall I wage war and keep the law of God at the same time? How can I who am called to kill my fellow-men lie down in peace and sleep?

These are some of the questions that come to mind to which I would invite all serious-minded Christians to give their attention with me. No blanket judgment will do.

Human Reason Not Our Guide

As in every other question, the Calvinist does not depend upon human

experience or the light of reason to chart a way, but he goes directly to the divine light of the Word. If history and reason are in accord with the Word it is well, if not, they must be discounted. If the pacifist tells us that all war is wrong because it involves bloodshed and that it is an unmitigated evil because of the train of human suffering which it inevitably produces, we shall listen respectfully, but we are not impressed. The pacifist is usually a humanist, for whom there is no higher value than human personality. The secret, underlying assumption of all pacifistic talk is simply this, that the world exists for man and ought to be run for the sole benefit of man. To say that all war is from the devil, because war is an evil resulting from sin and the devil was the instigator of sin, is true if we place this in its proper framework, namely, that God planned and created the devil and also sends the evils of war.

On the other hand, merely because the Bible gives us a record of many wars that took place during Bible times does not validate them as such, nor does it mean that it is legitimate for us to engage in war. We also have a record in the Scriptures of many of

The series of articles on "The Christian and the War," begun in this issue, is presented in an attempt to help Christian parents and young people who are facing the very real issue of a Christian's duties in war time. Other articles in this series will include "The Christian Soldier in the Conduct of War," also by Professor Van Til, and a third article, "God and the War," written by Professor John Murray of Westminster Seminary.

the sins of the saints, but these are not given for our emulation. The question is simply this: What is normative in Scripture? Although the Bible gives us a record of Noah's drunkenness and Abraham's lies and Moses' anger and David's adultery, it does not sanction these but rather condemns them as heinous sins in the sight of the Lord.

The Bible Does Not Condemn All War

Over against this stands the fact that the Bible, though it often mentions war, never condemns war as such or those that engage in war. As a matter of fact, war is never forbidden or prohibited. God on occasion calls his people to engage in war, and some of the greatest warriors of the Old Testament lived the closest to God. Abraham, who on occasion waged war with great success (Gen. 14), is called the friend of God. David, who confesses that God taught his fingers to war and who through many wars and conquests strengthened himself in God, is called a man after God's own heart. Moses and Joshua, to mention no more, were confidants of the Lord and were mighty leaders in battle.

War, in the Bible, is represented as achieving the justice of God. He uses wars to achieve his holy designs, and for this purpose he has committed the power of the sword to the government. It is the duty of the God-instituted governments to punish the evildoer, "for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:4,5). The State has received the monopoly of the power of the sword from God for the purpose of executing the justice of God. There are some who would restrict this power of the sword to the punishment of evildoers within the territorial limits of the cultural unity which comprises the State, but most Reformed exegetes see no principal difference between the police power and the power to wage war against external bandits or international gangsters (cf. Prof. Haitjema of Groningen, Prof. Grosheide of the Free University, and Calvin in *The Institutes*).

In this connection it may be well to point out that not only does the Old Testament not forbid participation in war, but neither does the New Testament ever infer that it is sinful for the saint to participate in war. Our

Lord himself did not condemn the soldiers with whom he came into contact, but commended one for his great faith (Matt. 8:5 ff.). John the Baptist did not turn the soldiers away nor did he command them to give up their profession when they would be converted. Peter, coming to the house of Cornelius, captain of the Italian band, did not command this devout man in the service of Caesar to give up his commission. As a matter of fact, Jesus tells his disciples that they must be soldiers of Caesar, for the sword belongs to the kingdoms of this world (Peter is told to put his sword back into the scabbard, that it is useless in the spiritual warfare, and Pilate is told that if Christ's kingdom were of this earth his servants would have fought for him), and they must give unto Caesar the things that are rightfully his.

Is All Killing Murder?

But, someone remonstrates, as far as my personal responsibility is concerned the law of God says: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod. 20:13). And that law is inviolate and binding upon all men.

It is indeed always wrong for me as an individual to kill my neighbor or fellow-man. "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). Certainly it must be clear to all of us that this prohibition must be taken in its context and must therefore be taken in a relative rather than an absolute sense. There are certain religious groups that take the injunction "Thou shalt not kill" in the absolute sense that it is wrong to kill any living thing, and so they only eat vegetables and would not harm a snake or a tiger. Others, less absolutely (pacifists); say that it means that we may never, under any circumstances, take the life of another man; hence a Christian may not go to war.

But what, then, are we going to do with the rest of Scripture? It is true that God by a special command forbade killing the first murderer, but after the flood, when God gave his commandments about the sacredness of man's life because of his creation in God's image, this "rider" is attached: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The same law of Sinai that forbids murder commands the government to put the Sabbath-breaker and other violators of

the Mosaic law to death. And the same Paul who exhorts us not to avenge ourselves tells us that the government does not carry the sword in vain, which, if it means anything at all, tells us that the evildoer is to be executed by the sword.

God's Justice Pre-eminent

In consequence, Calvinism has always accepted capital punishment as in accord with the Scriptures because the majesty and justice of God is of greater importance than the life of a murderer. Murder is blasphemy against the Creator and *lese-majeste* (an affront to the dignity of the Lawgiver) and as such is punishable by death. To kill the murderer is not murder in turn, but is a judicial killing. We call it an execution. The hangman is not guilty of murder, nor is the FBI agent who shot Dillinger in line of duty to protect the citizens. The same applies to our boys fighting in Korea at the present moment. They are simply agents of a God-instituted government for the punishment of the evildoers (North Koreans).

But what of the principle underlying this interpretation? We believe that the prohibition against killing is directed to men as private individuals. That is a law written in men's hearts as well as being given in the Decalogue. However, the command to kill the murderer is directed to mankind as a corporate entity — "by man shall his blood be shed" — and the command to kill the lawbreaker is given to the government in its official capacity and was to be consummated after having ascertained the crime as fact. God in his sovereign wisdom did not choose to punish every murderer from heaven directly, nor did he entrust the maintenance of justice to private individuals; but he delegated this authority to the civil government, which is founded on the power of the sword and achieves its end by executing justice.

Our *Belgic Confession* says that God has instituted governments "to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. For this purpose He has invested the magistracy with the sword for the punishment of evildoers and for the protection of them that do well" (Art. XXXVI). And Calvin observes that "princes are armed, not only to restrain the crimes of private individuals by judicial punishments, but

also to defend the territories committed to their charge by going to war against any hostile aggression: and the Holy Spirit, in many passages of Scripture, declares such wars to be lawful."¹

Sermon on the Mount — The Law of the Kingdom

Since, then, it is the government's responsibility to execute the laws and to maintain righteousness by force if necessary, it is not reprehensible, it is not murder, if the policeman, the guardsman, the soldier or the executioner kills a human being under orders from his government. The question of "conscientious objection" to war is not real for the Calvinist. It could only have relevance for an Anabaptist, who believes all government to be evil and of antichrist, or for a modernist, who, in his humanism, has no regard for the law of God and for whom man's happiness is the highest good.

But what of nonresistance as proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount? "The Sermon on the Mount is a favorite portion of Scripture referred to as evidence that it is wrong for a Christian to wage war. In it Jesus is describing to the multitude the proper conduct in the kingdom of God. He very definitely preaches the doctrine of nonresistance."² As Dr. H. Henry Meeter intimates in the passage quoted, Jesus is here outlining the proper conduct for citizens of the kingdom in their relationship to one another. It is a gross misinterpretation of the Christian ethic to apply this law of the kingdom of heaven to civil governments, or even to the relationship of the saint to all men on all occasions. Nonresistance as a corporate obligation would negate the power of the sword and would make us all the prey of violent men who fear not God.

No, indeed, the meek shall not inherit the earth here and now, as some modernists would have us believe. The poor in spirit shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and the meek shall inherit the earth in which peace and righteousness dwell — but only because our Prince of Peace shall have destroyed his enemies by the breath of his mouth and shall have turned the wicked upside down and shall have consumed them out of the earth.

1. John Calvin, *The Institutes*, Vol. II, Bk. IV, chap. 20, par. 11.

2. H. Henry Meeter, *Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, 1939), p. 207.

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Unto Him that Loveth Us

BY LEONARD GREENWAY

(Conclusion of meditation begun in the August issue)

"Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5, 6).

"Loosed from our sins by his blood." Loosed from the *penalty* of our sins. Loosed from their *power*.

This is real freedom! "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for me.

Freedom is a much abused word. Christians cannot afford to mishandle the term. The liberty we have in Christ is not the abandonment of restraint. It is not release from responsibility. Strange as it may sound, our freedom lies in a bondservice, a *totalitarian* service. The Savior who loosed us is our Lord! The secret of his liberty lies in submission to his sovereignty. It is not enough to ask, "Freedom from what?" We must also ask, "Freedom for what?" And the answer is: "He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15).

Spiritual Freedom, A Matter of the Heart

This spiritual freedom is not in our circumstances but in our hearts. Liberty in the Lord is not an external condition. Christ sets the heart free so that under any circumstances, whether in sickness or in health, in poverty or in prosperity, the man is free. Paul in bonds was a good deal more free than King Agrippa upon the throne. Madame Guyon in prison was gloriously free. That is why she could write:

A little bird I am
Shut from the fields of air:
Yet in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there:
Well pleased a prisoner to be
Because, my God, it pleases Thee.

My cage confines me round,
Abroad I cannot fly,
But though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of my soul.

Oh, it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose Providence is love:
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind.

"Loosed from our sins by his blood." But this is not all. The redemptive design of our Savior's mission includes our advancement to a state of great dignity. "He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father." Here the promise of Exodus 19:6, originally applied to Israel, is given wider application to all believers. The Israel of the Old Testament broadens into the Church of the New. What was once a narrow, racial channel issues in the ocean of a new humanity in Christ.

Spiritual Service, a Living Sacrifice

The New Testament is replete with references to our high dignity and great responsibility as a royal priesthood: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name" (Heb. 13:15). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service" (Rom. 12:1).

It is a highly spiritual service to which we are consecrated. And the consecration is real, not merely nominal. We have "an anointing from the Holy One" (1 John 2:20). True, we are not called away from the common duties and occupations of our daily life. The blood-royal of heaven have earthly tasks to perform. We are placed in the same relations with unbelievers, engaged in the same employments, busy with them in the market places, associating with them in the business of life. Yet, in these common functions we are taught to *act for God*. Our association with the world is never to be *identification* with the world. Always there must be a difference, not necessarily an external one, as in garb or in fashion—though on occasion there may need to be—but a difference in character and in nature.

Called to a Spiritual Kingdom

The believer is a child of the Most High. He is one with Christ, the Lord of glory. He is "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). It is a spiritual kingdom to which he belongs and in which he has his royal honors. Here he fights the good fight of faith, clad in the whole armor of God. He witnesses for truth, repels the aggressions of temptation, and walks at liberty because he loves God's commandments. In ruling his spirit, he is better than he that taketh a city. He serves God and him only, for even in what he does for man he is the servant of God. He has an amplitude of possessions, for though he may be poor in this world's goods he is in the best sense rich. God's favor rests upon him, God's image is restored within him, and as a prince he has power with God and prevails. Moreover, as priest he is admitted to intimate communion with God. Far superior are his privileges over those of the high priest of old who could enter the most holy place but once each year. The royal priest of the New Covenant has access at all times into the holiest by a new and living way (cf. Heb. 10:20).

It remains for eternity to unfold the full measure of our exalted position as God's adopted children. For the present, the glory of our character is veiled. Hence the apostle writes, "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Col. 3:3, 4).

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The Stars Tell Time

BY JOHN DE VRIES

In our last article we asked, among other things, "When did God call the universe into being?" We pointed out that there was some disagreement among Christians on that score and that a number of them were inclined to accept the erroneous chronology of Bishop Ussher. A careful study of Scripture bears out the fact that Ussher is wrong, as does a study of scientific discoveries. In this article we shall concentrate on the contributions which the science of astronomy has made to the solution of this problem. We shall refer only incidentally to the matter of dating the earth, since we have written several articles on this subject elsewhere. In our next article we plan to discuss the newest available method for dating fossils and its implications for us.

Have you ever looked at the stars on a clear, quiet evening — really looked at them? Contrary to some romantic notions, this can be done best when one is alone. Each pin-point of light represents a flaming sun distantly removed from us. Although we can only see about 3,000 of these with the naked eye, astronomers have estimated that there are billions of these light-giving objects scattered throughout space.

Facts by Inference

The ancients regarded the sun, moon, and stars as gods to be feared; we see them as the handiwork of a Creator-God whom we fear. Due to the discoveries of the astronomers, men have outgrown the strange imaginations and the fascinating tales which have always been associated with the stars. When we look at the stars today we do so in the light of the facts which have been discovered. For example, we no longer believe, as the ancients did, that the stars are a few hundred feet above the earth, for we know now that their distances are immense.

We realize, of course, that we must speak with caution when we refer to

the "facts of astronomy," since almost all of the evidence is inferential. This means that we cannot travel to some star or planet to study it at first hand. We are forced to stay on the earth and, by means of the telescope, spectroscope, and camera, examine these bodies so distant from us, to discover where they are, how they move, and the kind of matter of which they are composed. When it comes down to "actual facts," how little we really know, for instance, of even our nearest neighbor, the moon. We must confess at the outset that when we seek an answer to the question of the origin and age of the universe, we enter a region which is full of doubt and is necessarily of a highly speculative nature. Nor are we unmindful of the fact that at times the imagination of some scientists has run riot, leading them to proclaim some rather fantastic nonsense.

It is well that we are aware of the limitations under which we study a subject. One must be careful, however, not to go to the other extreme and say that such knowledge has no real value. Newton's law of universal gravitation is one of the greatest scientific facts ever discovered. By means of this, man is able to calculate the masses of the earth, moon, and sun and also to explain the paths along which these, and other bodies, travel through space. Newton's laws of motion were discovered and verified in terms of movements on the earth. Later on it was discovered that the heavenly bodies move according to these same laws. No one questions the validity of these laws today if they are applied within their proper limits. There are, and have been throughout the ages, many cautious astronomers who have kept their feet on the ground. Their discoveries are worth considering.

All Evidence in One Direction

A strong argument for believing that the universe is very old is based on the fact that all scientific evidence points in this one direction. One cannot help

asking the question why God would place so much evidence in the world suggesting that the universe is old if that were not true. The size of the answer is the same whether one studies the earth's crust or the stellar universe. Did God place this evidence all about us to confuse us, or to teach us something concerning his greatness? If we believe that he created a cosmos and not a chaos, let us believe it all the way through and study the beautiful steps which can be found in his plan.

One reason for believing the universe to be extremely old is that it takes such a long time for the light emanating from the stars to reach the earth. Astronomers photograph, as a matter of routine, stars which are millions of light-years away from us. By a light-year is meant the distance light will travel in one year. Light travels 186,000 miles per second. Since we are concerned here primarily with time and not distance, we shall not stray afield to wonder at the distances the stars are away from us.

How can we settle the problem we face here? What picture do we have of creation if it took place only some thousands of years ago? Did God then create beams of light from billions of stars, some reaching the earth and others stretching out to the other stars? We must believe this if we do not want to accept the idea that it took millions of years for the light to reach the earth after God had created the stars. Some stars are only a few light-years away, others are thousands and some are millions. Since the velocity of light is one of the few basic quantities in nature, it hardly seems reasonable to suppose that God created billions of light beams of various lengths to give the illusion of an old universe. Such a theory is difficult to fit into a picture of an orderly creation, even though we are ready to admit that an almighty God could have done so.

Attempting the Impossible

Another way to escape the dilemma is that taken by Frank L. Marsh, a Seventh-Day Adventist and a strong contender for Ussher's chronology. He praises the work of the scientists regarding the stars, admits that they were created millions of years ago, and then has God creating our solar system some 6,000 years ago and placing it in its present position in the universe. He admits that one must accept these immense time periods for light to travel

from star to star and declares the wonders of a science that has shown this to us.

It strikes us that Marsh attempts to do the impossible by his system of reasoning. The Bible does not speak of two creations separated by millions of years. And one wonders how it is possible for Christians of Reformed persuasion to accept this view, as some do. It is not unusual to receive letters with the admonition to accept the "plain teaching of Scripture" and referring to the example set by the Seventh-Day Adventists. It seems to us that those who refuse to accept the scientific evidence mentioned above should be willing, and able, to prove that such astronomical measurements are in error and, further, offer some evidence which would point to a much younger universe. The length of time it takes for the light from the distant stars to reach the earth is one reason, then, for believing that they were created ages ago.

Various Methods — One Answer

The remainder of the evidence from astronomy is difficult to present to those having a limited background in science. It may be well to say a few words about each one, however, so that the reader can sense that there are several different methods, all of which give answers of the same order of magnitude.

The work which has been done on the age of the moon also leads us to believe that the universe is old. The age of the moon is estimated to be four billion years, an age compatible with that suggested for the earth. You may say, but how is it possible to compute the age of the moon when we can't even get there to study it? This is done on the basis of the tidal forces acting between the earth and the moon. These forces tend to slow down the motion of both bodies. This results in an increase in the distance between them. The assumption on which these age calculations are based is that at one time the moon was very close to the earth. Although we do not know how close this was at the beginning, the maximum age of the moon is suggested by these calculations.

A similar value is obtained from the eccentricity of the orbit of the planet Mercury. This method is also based

on the tidal hypothesis of the origin of the earth. The man who developed this theory estimated the age of the solar system to be about five billion years. We may add, parenthetically, that the solar system is considered to be younger than some of the other stellar systems.

What the Spectrum Tells Us

Scientists have also examined meteorites, which fall to the earth from out of space, to determine their age. Uranium is found in some of these, and on the basis of their uranium content they are estimated to be about two billion years old.

Another method, extremely difficult to express in simple language, is based on the velocities of galaxies, or Milky Ways. We all know that ordinary white light can be divided into the colors of the rainbow. If we pass such light through a prism it separates into these various colors because certain parts of it travel faster than do others. Nearly everyone has seen such rainbow colors at some time or other, possibly from a raindrop or a piece of ordinary glass. If we photograph this light by means of an instrument called the spectroscope, we find that it is broken up into a definite pattern of lines. This pattern varies with the source of the light. If the source of light is moving away from us the lines move farther toward the red end of the spectrum, and if it approaches us the lines are shifted toward the violet end. Nearly all spectra of galaxies have the lines shifted toward the red end of the

spectrum, indicating that these bodies are moving away from us. If we assume that they originated in one place, then it would take about two or three billion years for them to reach their present position. Although an assumption is again involved, it is interesting to note that the assumptions underlying these methods are not all the same, but vary. Yet the different methods give the same type of answer.

The above may be a bit difficult for the average reader to understand. This is unavoidable since so much of scientific work involves complicated mathematics, and, if one really wishes to fully comprehend it all, he must be willing to pay the price of sweating through the mathematics involved.

We Must Use Results of Experiment!

What attitude must the average individual take toward such scientific work? He can ignore it completely or say that he refuses to believe it because scientists so often change their minds on matters. Such an attitude gets one nowhere, however. If we are really concerned with the problem of origins, we must do something with these experimental results.

One thing which the nonscientist can do is to realize that, although these methods differ in their approach to the problem, they give us answers of the same order of magnitude. This should strike us as being very significant. We have an analogy in the case

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"Let us be often viewing and ruminating on the holiness of God, especially as discovered in Christ. It is by a believing meditation on him, that we are "changed into the same image" (2 Cor. 3:18). We can think often of nothing that is excellent in the world, but it draws our faculties to some kind of suitable operation; and why should not such an excellent idea of the holiness of God in Christ perfect our understandings, and awaken all the powers of our souls to be formed to actions worthy of him? A painter employed in limning some excellent piece, has not only his pattern before his eyes, but his eye frequently upon the pattern, to pos-

sess his fancy to draw forth an exact resemblance. He that would express the image of God, must imprint upon his mind the purity of his nature; cherish it in his thoughts, that the excellent beauty of it may pass from his understanding to his affection, and from his affections to his practise. How can we arise to conformity to God in Christ, whose most holy nature we seldom glance upon, and more rarely sink our souls into the depths of it by meditation! Be frequent in the meditation of the holiness of God."—Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God*, Vol. II, p. 205.

What is Reformed Piety?

BY ALEXANDER C. DE JONG

EDWARD HEEREMA

JOHN H. PIERSMA

The word "piety" has had an unfortunate history. It has picked up many evil associations in its lifetime. So suspect has this perfectly worthy word become that we are almost afraid to use it. People may think of religious sham when they read this word. They think of phrases like "pious fraud" and "false piety" when this word is mentioned. With a frown the reader or hearer calls to mind words like "pietism" or "pietistic," and he will have none of it.

This is regrettable. But we will not argue with this unfortunate history. If the word "godliness" is preferred, we are happy to accept it in place of the word piety. Our title could be "What Is True Godliness?" It could also be "What Is the Christian Life?"

We will not quibble in this matter. We have a more serious concern. What are the marks of the Christian's walk with God? That is our concern. And we want to be contemporaneous. We are not living in some delightful yesterday. Our life as Christians is here and now, in today's world with today's tensions, today's pitfalls, today's challenges. At the same time our desire to be contemporaneous may not take our eyes from God's eternal and changeless standard of righteousness, God's moral law, God's sufficient Word.

Our problem must be refined a bit more. Not all who call themselves Christian think alike, either on points of doctrine or on points of Christian practice and life. We are committed to a specific and distinctive doctrinal point of view. We are Calvinists. We are Reformed in our outlook.

Does this doctrinal point of view carry with it a distinctive approach to the question of the Christian life? Do we have the true piety—in principle—in practice? Do our principles accord with the Word of God? Do they lead to godly living? What is Reformed piety?

We face a complex question. We are not looking for ready and easy answers. We do not want *merely* traditional answers. We do not care for answers that stem more from social custom than from thorough and open-hearted study of God's infallible guide for faith and life.

In order that we may open up this large question in this initial article, we shall present a number of instances of conduct found among Christians. Then we shall ask a few pertinent questions about each of these illustrations taken from real life. By this presentation of illustrations taken from real life, we hope we may stir our readers to think seriously upon a theme that ought always to be one of great concern to the child of God. We would add that we present these illustrations factually, though altered in some details for obvious reasons, and without prejudice so far as personal salvation is concerned.

"Saintly" Lady

The lady we are talking about had gained a considerable reputation for godliness. She was regarded as being deeply pious. Even ministers came to her to be inspired by her pious talk and conduct. This woman would never say, "It is raining." She regarded this

manner of speech as dishonoring to God. She would rather say, "God is sending rain today."

On such a rainy day this woman would meet a friend of hers on the street. The friend would be carrying an umbrella. The pious soul would say to her umbrella-carrying friend, "Don't you believe God will take care of you? Why are you carrying that umbrella? Look, I'm not carrying one."

One day the door to the house of the pious soul remained shut. It did not open for two days. Neighbors guessed something was wrong. They made their way into the house and found that the "saintly" woman had committed suicide.

Was this "pious" lady really pious? (We are not here entering into the question of suicide in the case of a professing Christian.) Was there something wrong with her celebrated "piety"? Did it violate some principle of true godliness? If so, what principle(s) did it violate?

The "Magnanimous" Spirit

The local congregation is being stirred by a debate. There is a piece of property adjacent to the church that certain ones in the congregation want to buy. They are the boosters in the church. They want it to grow. They want a big church. But there is another group in the church who object to the purchase of this piece of property. They know that interest in this piece of ground first developed after a Mr. Moneyman in the church had been approached by a realtor friend of his regarding it. It is also well known that the real-estate agent had had difficulty disposing of the parcel of ground. Hence the opposition group feels that the primary interest of those wishing to buy the ground did not rise from a genuine concern for the furtherance of the Church of Jesus Christ. They feel, therefore, that the honor of the Head of the Church is at stake in this matter.

"Man would make himself the rule of God, and give laws to his Creator, in striving against his law; disapproving of his methods of government in the world; in impatience in our particular concerns; envying the gifts and prosperity of others; corrupting the material or ends of prayer and praise; bold interpretations of the judgments of God in the world; suiting interpretations of Scripture with our own minds and humors; falling off from God after some fair compliances, when his will grates upon us, and crosseth ours."—*Stephen Charnock.*

One Sunday, while the debate is still raging at a high pitch, the church has a visiting minister in the pulpit. He is known as a man who gets along well with everybody. It is also said of him that he isn't too fussy about fine points of Christian doctrine. He inevitably hears about the debate. His opinion is asked. In his most suave and gracious manner he suggests that possibly the opposition group "ought to be magnanimous" toward the other group in this matter. After all, the church was bound to grow in time, and this piece of property might stand them in good stead.

What are we to think of the advice of the visiting pastor? Is concern for the spiritual integrity of the church of less importance than a spirit of magnanimity toward fellow-men? Is this sound godliness?

The Holy Spirit at Work?

John is rather sure that he is a good Christian. Others are not so sure. He sits in judgment on other Christians very readily. He is always sure that he is right. His ideas on points of Scripture interpretation must not be questioned. He insists that the Holy Spirit guides him at all times. He says his conduct is not governed by the Ten Commandments. As a Christian he says he is through with the Ten Commandments. If you ask him how he knows he is doing wrong in any instance, he says the Holy Spirit convicts him of sin.

Is John's piety sound? He thinks it is. Is it? If it is not sound, what principle or principles of godliness does it violate?

Beautiful Christian Life?

A young woman who is not well adjusted to life is speaking to her pastor about a friend of hers. She is speaking in enthusiastic terms.

She says, "I have a friend who is a wonderful Christian. She lives a most beautiful Christian life. Do you know what she does? I think it's just wonderful. She reads the Bible and prays almost all of the time. I have always admired her so much and have often wished that I could live a beautiful life like that. Don't you think that's a wonderfully spiritual life? She's a real Christian, don't you think?"

The pastor replies as follows: "Please do not misunderstand me as I try to answer your questions. Naturally, I be-

lieve in much Bible reading and in much prayer. Please do not think I am going to say anything against either of these necessary practices. But I do not think a person who is able to get around and who is able to perform some useful service, be it ever so humble, has a right to spend all or almost all of her time reading the Bible and in prayer. There is much work to be done. Sick people must be cared for. Poor people need help. The Red Cross needs women to fold bandages. Some bedridden soul very much wants company. The hospitals are literally crying for help of all kinds. God requires of us that we be busy in works of love and mercy. He requires of us that all things must be done for his glory. Really, I don't think your friend leads a fine Christian life at all. As a matter of fact, I think it is a very poor Christian life."

Shall we agree with the girl's estimate of her friend? Or shall we concur in the pastor's judgment? For what reasons of principle do we accept the one opinion in this matter and reject the other?

Calvin Van Holland

Calvin Van Holland has always had high and worthy objectives in life. He is generally regarded as a successful business man. He entered business with the determination to glorify God in it. He would make all of life part and parcel of the Kingdom of God. Sometimes one got the impression that Calvin spoke of these high ideals a bit too easily. But his sincere determination seemed beyond question. He definitely seemed to have the real thing, the best and highest possible motivation in life.

But something seemed subtly to go wrong. More and more Calvin became wrapped up in his business. Even as he still insisted that he would conquer this area of life for God and for his Christ, he was letting business matters interfere with responsibilities in the home and in the church. Luncheon dates with business associates, trips, conventions, and deals were taking more and more of his time and attention. There were even increasingly persistent rumors to the effect that his growing financial strength was gained by ethical short-cuts in his dealings. Yes, he was even traveling on Sunday now and then in order to be on hand for an attractive business deal on Saturday or Monday. All the while he was giving generously to Kingdom causes.

What is wrong with Calvin Van Holland? His objectives were high enough and sound enough. But the devil has subtle ways of perverting the best. Possibly he was not humble enough before the grandeur of the objective he had chosen for his life. Possibly awareness of the natural depravity of his own soul had lost its keen edge. What went wrong here? Did the conqueror become the conquered? Calvin Van Holland is a man to think about.

Living by God's Will

"He's going to make such a fine minister." Comments like these were often made about Philip. He was very sincere. He had high ideals. "Serious-minded" was a term frequently applied to him.

Philip was a college student. He planned to enter the ministry. He was indeed very serious-minded. He definitely wanted his life to be guided by God's will at every step. He wanted to be sure that he was always keeping the will of God.

This is how Philip thought about this important matter. Philip was sure that in every decision he had to make there was only one possible choice that was good in God's sight. If he had to choose between a blue suit or a brown one, he wanted to be sure to choose the one that God willed he should choose. The other alternative would be contrary to God's will. If he should buy a car and the choice lay between a Plymouth and a Chevrolet, one choice would be in harmony with God's will and the other contrary to it. In every instance he would pray earnestly to discover what God's choice was for him. He would also be guided by what he would consider to be the indications of God's providence.

Thus Philip lived. Every decision was for him a grim choice between what God willed and what God forbade. No decision was for him a choice between two things that might be equally good before God, with the determining factor resting in human convenience or preference.

What shall we think of Philip's piety? It does seem to have certain marks of spirituality. Yet, is it true spirituality? Is it a healthy piety? If it is not a true spirituality, and if it is not a healthy piety, at what point does it go wrong? Is not the desire to be

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The Pause for Praise

BY FREDERICK W. VAN HOUTEN

"And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who hath not forsaken his loving-kindness and his truth toward my master: as for me, Jehovah hath led me in the way to the house of my master's brethren."

(Gen. 24:27).

"God has been good to me! I never knew his love was so wonderful and his mercy so great."

I was surprised to hear these words from an elderly man who had been bedfast all winter with a heart condition. Now it was late spring and he was just beginning to walk about. It seemed to me at the time that he did not have very much for which to be thankful. He had survived the illness, but his heart was still in poor condition. A man nearing the three-score mark, he obviously would not live long.

Why, then, these words of praise? This man was a Christian! Therefore he was grateful. Saved by grace and loving the Lord, he was ready even at that time to pause for praise.

What led our national forebears to pause for praise? Was it an abundance of grain and food? The harvest had been poor that first year, and many were concerned about how they were going to survive the long, hard winter. Was it comfort and luxury in their homes? To ask the question is to answer it, for they wondered how to safeguard their children from the rigors of the New England weather. Was it the fact that they could gather now at the end of their first season with their families intact? One look at the graveyard so near emphasized the stark reality of the fact that death already had entered most homes. Was it the sense of security? They knew not when hostile Indians would steal upon them with the dread tomahawk.

What was it then that impelled them?—They appreciated their liberty, they rejoiced to be in a new land with great opportunities. Above all, they

recognized God in their lives and trusted in him for all things; therefore the pause for praise!

"Rejoice in the Lord!"

Abraham's servant was a God-fearing man. We know at least that much about him. His mission was a difficult one, and he could well wonder how he would ever succeed. However, he began his difficult task by looking to God in prayer, and we marvel at the providence of the Almighty in leading this noble servant directly to Rebekah. How he prospered in obeying Abraham's mandate! And when everything had turned out just as he had prayed, while he was waiting for confirmation by a good reception at the house of Bethuel, as Rebekah ran swiftly to her father, came the pause for praise. How easy it would have been to ascribe this to "chance"! How common it would have been to forget divine providence, now that the event had transpired. But the servant was a God-fearing man. There came the pause for praise.

While languishing in prison and facing almost certain death, the Apostle Paul counseled his beloved spiritual children to "rejoice in the Lord." Such counsel must have meant a lot to them as it came from the famed inmate of a Roman prison. It was not like having someone say glibly, "O cheer up, it's not so bad; every cloud has a silver lining." The same Apostle urged the Ephesians to the high plane of true spirituality when he wrote, "Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." We learn from Paul that gratitude is characteristically the Christian attitude. It is the typical expression of those who know religion, not as a dispensable diversion, but as a personally experienced reality.

Since genuine gratitude is limited to the God-fearing, we do well to lay the groundwork for that kind of gratefulness. Circumstances in the world today are appalling, and a superficial thinker might find it very difficult to be thank-

ful. Yet some are thankful for even a little, while others complain and grumble when they have so much. Wherein lies the difference? Scripture exhorts us continually to be grateful as it counsels us how to live the Christian life. Abraham's servant had no trouble being thankful; there was both petition and praise in his mouth because God was in his heart.

"Jehovah Hath Led Me . . ."

Let us look at the underlying factors in the life and task of Abraham's servant. The old patriarch, in the performance of his paternal duty, sent his trusted servant to find a wife for Isaac. A new nation must be formed and the covenant of grace perpetuated. It would not have been difficult to find a wife for the young man; there were many fair daughters of the land available. But the servant had explicit instructions from father Abraham to confine the search to the patriarch's own kindred. A serious task indeed!

These were not the standards of the Canaanites, and they are not the standards of many today. Why go to all that trouble, one might ask. But the reason lay in the fact that God's honor was at stake for Abraham and his servant. God's cause was the issue.

We learn from this story the serious obligation we have as promoters of God's cause. We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world, deliberately maintaining the spiritual antithesis, and keeping distinct the "seed of the woman" from the "seed of the serpent." Abraham had a birthright, so did Isaac, and so have we. This is the way along which God leads us. When all was over the servant said in the words of our meditation, "Jehovah hath led me in the way . . ." When we also walk in that way we will receive God's blessed favor.

Holy Writ does not tell us the servant's name, but for a little while he is a major character in the drama of Scripture, a man with an important charge. Much depends upon him as the human instrument for the building of Israel. His task is that of losing himself for a higher responsibility and helping to preserve the covenant line in the family which Isaac was to establish. God grant us likewise a passion for faithfulness in our guardianship of the next generation. In building his Church, let us give heed to our high calling in Christ Jesus, forgetting all

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Absolute Truth and the Hearts of Men

BY EDWARD HEEREMA

"Psychologism"—that is the name of an ever treacherous pitfall referred to in our previous article. When we slip into this pitfall, we lose truth in the maze of human experience. This pitfall can be avoided only by insisting upon the absolute, sovereign character of God-given truth. Only in this way can we hold before troubled mankind a hope and reality that is not caught in the subtle entanglements of human feeling and emotion.

In all pastoral dealings with men, this insistence upon the sovereignty of truth is of first importance. God's glorious and changeless truth is of the greatest practical value to men when the high position of the truth *above* the practical needs of men is recognized and honored.

However, this recognition of the high position of truth does not yet settle this whole problem. There is another side to this question of the relationship between absolute truth and the hearts of men. The case of the Rev. Paul B. Bright will help us to see this other side.

Unsuccessful Pastor

The Rev. Paul B. Bright is a good thinker. He is known as an unfailingly logical theologian. And by all standards he is definitely a soundly orthodox preacher. To those with some training, or at least some real interest in theology, it is a genuine pleasure to listen to his well-constructed and theologically true sermons. His writings, too, always hew unflatteringly to a clean doctrinal line.

For these reasons Mr. Bright should be held in high esteem, especially in a day when preachers with a sound sense of theological exactness are almost as scarce as statesmen in Washington, D.C. Yet, Mr. Bright has not been a successful pastor. This is not said because he failed to receive calls to the largest churches in the denomination. Rather, his lack of success is apparent from conversations with

people who have had him as their pastor. His clear thinking was always appreciated, especially by those who did some reading and studying. But there seemed to be a gap between his sound preaching and the hearts of the people. Unfortunately, some people got the notion that doctrinally exact preaching is always distant and abstract. This unfortunate and wholly unwarranted notion made his ministry difficult at times. But it was a fact that for some reason his preaching failed to get under the skin of his hearers. He just didn't seem to be sensitive to the manner in which his preaching and pastoral work should enrich the lives of his people.

Was there possibly something in Mr. Bright's own personality that made it impossible for him to have vital contact (*rapprochement*) with the inner lives of his people? Did some deep-seated social maladjustment cause him to seek asylum and prestige in logical perfection, just as a maladjusted student may sometimes seek asylum and prestige in academic perfection as a substitute for social effectiveness?

Psychologist C. G. Jung tells of sending a questionnaire to a number of European clergymen concerning the relationship between theology and the mental health of the people. One reply struck Jung. It said, "Theology has nothing to do with the treatment of human beings."

The Rev. Mr. Bright would no doubt have subscribed to that statement. And in a sense he would be right. As we have tried to point out in the previous article, truth must not be considered first of all in relation to man's needs and feelings.

This point deserves to be made quite plain. To see it clearly we can well look at a practice among clergymen that has become quite prevalent. Many ministers have preached on a series of themes like the following: "The Conquest of Fear," "The Secret of Inner

Strength," "The Key to Inner Peace," "The Truly Integrated Personality," "How to Find Happiness," and similar themes. Men who preach on themes such as these deserve credit for trying to make the Word of God pertinent and vital. But there is a real danger in such preaching. A sermon may not become a psychological discourse. The sermon may not subtly suggest that the Word of God exists primarily to give man psychological poise and stability. Such an impression would violate the important principle developed in the previous article. What is more, such an impression plays close to the egocentricity and self-centeredness that is of the very nature of twisted states of mind.

In other words, true preaching will always dwell on the solid foundation of truth on which an orderly psychological house must be built. For instance, a clear and live sermon on the providence of God will generally do more solid good toward building inner supports against fear than will a sermon on the subject "The Conquest of Fear." To be sure, this is only a general observation and is subject to exception. But we must insist that preaching and pastoral work which concentrate overmuch on the states of mind of the creature will often fail to give the creature just that which he needs to make him strong. Man's strength lies in God. Let God and his glorious perfections and works be preached and ever held before men. Let those who ceaselessly clamor for more "practical" sermons bear this very practical point in mind. And let this point also stick with that minister who has become enamored of the newer psychological emphasis in pastoral work.

The Other Side of the Coin

Boys used to refer to the two sides of a coin as "heads" and "tails." Possibly they still do. Our problem of the relation between sovereign truth and psychological states of men is like a coin. What we have stressed so far is the "heads" side of the coin. It is the

more important side. He who works with the souls of men must recognize and love the truth of God in all of its transcendent purity and richness of meaning.

But there is another side to this coin. And just as the two sides of a coin are inseparable, so this second side of our question is inseparable from the first side. This absolute truth that must be recognized for what it is in all of its beauty and meaning is administered in preaching and pastoral work to living beings who are image-bearers of God. Can this Word of God be effectively administered without some knowledge of these living beings and of the manner in which that Word enters into their inward parts?

By our question we mean to indicate that in all pastoral work there should be some very real understanding of the psychological processes of men. The Word is not administered to stones and trees. It is administered to dynamic beings — men, women, and children. Every personality to whom the Word of life is applied is a lively community of attitudes, prejudices, longings, regrets, heartaches, joys, sorrows, complexes, emotional and intellectual and cultural patterns, laughter and tears. Some of these elements that make up the personality are common to all men. Others are highly individual. In a sense all people are alike. All have the marks of sinful creatures. Yet, in another very real sense, there are no two people alike. They are as finely dissimilar as the well-known snowflakes.

The "heads" of our coin says, "Preach the Word." The "tails" of our coin says, "Know the hearts of your people." The God-ordained shepherd of souls must not *first of all* concern himself with the psychological states of men: At the same time, he cannot avoid concerning himself with the inner states of the souls of men if he would be a true shepherd of the souls of men.

Yes, it may be said that any use of the Word of God in preaching or pastoral work that ignores the hearts of the hearers is defective. Why do we say that? We say that for several reasons.

First of all, there are many passages in Scripture that point to the well-being of the inner man as a very real part of God's work with men. We shall quote just a few of these passages.

Psalm 27:1 — "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Isaiah 26:3 — "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Philippians 4:6-7 — "Be careful (anxious, R. V.) for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

II Timothy 1:7 — "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (discipline, R. V.).

The Sound Theologian

In the second place, a theologian who ignores the states of mind of men is really not a good theologian. Why do we say that? We make that statement for this reason. The theologian is concerned with truth. Truth is a matter of God's revelation. God's revelation to man has two inter-related aspects. God has revealed himself to man by his special revelation. That is his Word, his written Word as given to prophets and apostles, and Jesus Christ the living Word. God also reveals himself to man by a general revelation.

And where is this general revelation found? General revelation, says Professor Louis Berkhof, "consists in an embodiment of the divine thought in the phenomena of nature, and in the general constitution of the human mind, and in the facts of experience and history."¹ Professor Berkhof further makes clear that general and

1. *Manual of Reformed Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1933), pp. 26ff.

The goodness of God is seen in afflictions and persecutions . . . It is a kindness to prevent a man from falling down a precipice, though it be with a violent blow, that lays him flat upon the ground at some distance from the edge of it. By afflictions he often snaps asunder those chains which fettered us, and quells those passions which ravaged us: he sharpens our faith, and quickens our prayers; he brings us in the secret chambers of our own heart, which we had little mind before to visit by a self-examination." — *Stephen Charnock*.

special revelation are necessary to each other if either is to be properly understood.

If this solid theologian is correct here (and the writer has no doubt that he is), then he is simply saying that the Word of God cannot be truly understood apart from an understanding of the psychological processes of men. A theology that ignores the facts of man's inner being and of the experience and history of that being is an unsound theology. Any preaching of the Word that ignores these things is an unsound preaching of the gospel. Pastoral work that seeks to apply the Word of life without some understanding of the dynamic being to whom it is applied is poor pastoral work. Indeed, it is seriously defective pastoral work—though not as defective as a psychological approach without theology.

Mind and Heart

A third reason why it is so necessary for him who esteems the sovereign truth of God to give due consideration to the psychological processes of men lies in a proper understanding of what we call the "mind" of man. Altogether too commonly the mind is conceived of as some kind of separate place where truth enters and abides without interference from any outside source. The mind is thought of as a kind of clean and polished receptacle, and all that has to be done is to place neat packages of truth into it.

If this notion were correct, then our only concern would be to make our statements of truth as logically correct as we possibly can, and the waiting mind will receive them. In that case, mental hospitals would be for the care of people with a poor sense of logic and for heretics.

Even a little reflection on life tells us that such is not the case. The mind is not a receptacle separate from the rest of the personality. All the feelings, yearnings, prejudices, attitudes, and deeper needs of the person affect the mind. It is doubtful, for instance, that there is a mind that is free from the strong need for security which characterizes the personality of man. The personality of man is a unity. It has no separable parts or sections or functions. For this reason, even the most refined intellectual operations of men are influenced by their deeper feelings. For this reason, too, the soul or spirit of man as he is in this world cannot be thought of apart from the bodily functions of the personality.

In other words, the truth which must be clearly understood and clearly presented must be applied to men, that is, to the totality of their experience. Everything that enters into man's life, everything that makes him what he is, affects the response to truth, yes, enters into the very character of that response. This is just another way of saying that the truth which expresses the mind of God is for the hearts of men, the image-bearers of God. The response to God's sovereign truth is not a merely intellectual operation. It is a response of the heart. All elements of man's being center here. The heart is intimately connected with the reins. Man's "thoughts and intents" are of the heart. Out of the heart are the issues of life.

This makes the matter of response to God's Word a far more complex matter than it would be if this response were simply a matter of giving assent to good logic. Man's heart-life is one. Everything that has played a significant part in an individual's life affects the heart-life. If the heart-life has been marked by serious emotional injuries and deep loneliness from youngest years, that fact will have important bearing on the response of such a person to the presentation of the Word of God. Presentation of the Word of God and of the claims of Christ in such an instance must be governed by care that the gospel shall not become a temporary emotional prop rather than the tremendous spiritual reality by which "all things become new."

The writer of this article has had dealings with several profoundly distraught people who had "accepted Christ" in response to presentations of the gospel that were not governed as we have here pointed out such presentations should be governed. The sequel to such a response often is that after a period of great spiritual elation at having found a wonderfully simple answer to life's crying needs, the "saved" individual lapses into a deeper distress than he had before this experience. Because the evangelistic answer to his heart's cry had promised so much so easily, and because the "decision" to "accept Christ" did not actually touch the deeper recesses of his personality, the loss of what he had superficially thought was so wonderfully real leaves him with a deeper disillusionment than he ever suffered before. For this and kindred reasons the writer of this article is vigorously opposed to the type of psychological

pressures often employed in evangelistic meetings today. Such pressures often constitute a betrayal of deeply troubled and sincerely searching hearts.

Two Final Thrusts

This whole important subject is so fascinating that there is reluctance to leave it. There are so many facets deserving of careful study. But we must leave this large matter with just two final observations.

In the first place, we would point out that there is no little danger that our line of argument will be misunderstood or forgotten in one detail. A possible reaction to this article is the feel-

ing that we have minimized the need for careful thinking in preaching and in all pastoral work. The reader must not forget the "heads" of our coin. A clear understanding of the truth of God is of first importance in all work with the souls of men. It is very doubtful, for instance, whether the "winning of souls" to peace in Christ by messages that show little theological or logical discernment is the legitimate or telling way to bring men into the Kingdom. From the start, our plea has been that in all work with the souls of men we be intelligently and relentlessly theological.

In the second place, we would point out our belief that new and grand possibilities for the effectual preaching and application of the gospel lie before those who are committed to sound theology. In some respects those committed to this sound theology have not been sound enough. They have not integrated special with general revelation in the manner that Professor Berkhof suggests. Let men preach the Word with all intelligence and faithfulness and in harmony with its grandeur. But let them preach and apply it in awareness of the inner forces at work in those to whom it is administered. Why should the devil's emissaries be allowed to exploit the area of general revelation to the enslavement of men? Why should not the messengers of light and peace and freedom exploit this area for the glory of God and for the benefaction of men?

This calls for no trimming of our doctrine. This calls for no sermons reduced to essays in psychology or for pastoral work reduced to psycho-religious quackery. On the contrary, an administration of the changeless truth of God, taught and guided by a penetrating understanding of the deeper characters of men, will bring greater glory to the truth and greater luster and power to its presentation. Then there will be no "cloudy doctrinal" sermons. Then there will be no mechanical prayers or routine Scripture readings with the sick and the distressed and anguished of heart. Then the Word of life will be fresh and vivid — because God's Word is integrated with the wondrous and fascinating totality of throbbing life and experience. Such lustrous, dynamic, and doctrinally sound ministry of the Word is always the need of the hour.

Complete in Christ

Complete in Christ! O blissful sound,
Let saints with wonder tell;
'Tis full redemption wrought by blood
That saves from sin and hell.

Complete in Christ! 'tis wondrous grace,
In God's electing love,
That gave the Church a hiding-place,
And sealed the same by blood.

Complete in Christ! are all the heirs,
Their names are writ above;
The price was paid on Calv'ry's hill,
In sweet atoning love.

Complete in Christ! 'tis heaven on earth
To feel the same within;
When unctuous power attends the word,
The saints rejoice therein.

Then let the Church now sing the song,
In strains of noblest joy;
And in the land of sweet repose,
Where bliss shall never cloy.

Author Unknown

1. See article entitled "Psychological Aspects of Political Systems" by Harry B. Friedgood in the *American Scientist* of July 1951, pp. 432-440.

The Value of Religion

BY JOHANNES G. VOS

NOTE: This is the third in a series of articles on common contemporary viewpoints which are contrary to orthodox Christianity.

More than twenty years ago, before I became a Covenanter, I heard my pastor preach a sermon in which he advocated support of the foreign missionary enterprise on the ground that it furthers American foreign trade. I have always remembered it as a particularly plain-spoken example of the viewpoint which advocates religion for reasons which, if not purely selfish, are at any rate merely human. The matter is seldom so badly stated, but the idea that religion should be supported and promoted because of its value, either to the individual or to the community, is extremely widespread today. The essence of this viewpoint is that it regards religion as *a means to a human end*: we are to be religious in order to achieve a human purpose. This may not be a *selfish purpose*; it may be a *social purpose*, and hence, from the standpoint of the individual person, unselfish; but it is a merely *human purpose*. The background of this view, its undisclosed (and often unrealized) major premise, is the notion that *the chief end of man lies within humanity*, that is, that the supreme purpose of human life is man's own welfare.

A Prevalent Assumption

The viewpoint under discussion is so common today that multitudes of church members and large numbers of ministers take it for granted as an unquestionable axiom of religion. That religion is to be professed, practiced and promoted because of its value to humanity—to the individual and to society—seems to them to be self-evident. This prevalent assumption is reflected today in a multitude of ways. Probably very few today would venture to advocate foreign missions to further American foreign trade; that argument was offered back in the nineteen-twenties. But we meet what is

essentially the same viewpoint in subtler forms. It has often been urged that we must send Christianity to Germany, Japan, etc., in order to guard against a recrudescence of militarism and a third world war. Thus religion is to be promoted for its value in ensuring international peace and security. Again, business firms in many American cities have published striking advertisements in newspapers urging readers to attend church and support religion. This appears very encouraging as a recognition, on the part of the business world, of the importance of religion. But when such advertisements are examined carefully it will be found in most instances that religion is being advocated *for its human value*; that is, for the benefits that it is expected to bring to individuals and to society.

Man for God—or God for Man?

Those who advocate the support of religion for its “values,” moreover, almost never speak of the real, primary benefits of the Christian religion, such as forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the wrath of God and eternal punishment, joy in the Holy Spirit, a hope that maketh not ashamed, and an inheritance of eternal glory. On the contrary, the benefits for the sake of which people are told to be religious are often at best only secondary by-products of Christianity, such as a happy home life, the attainment of personal poise and balance, the preservation of democracy and civil liberty, the solution of personal, social and economic problems, the furtherance of human “brotherhood,” and so forth. In short, what is advocated is religion for the sake of human welfare. The stress is usually on *religion* rather than on *God*; when God is mentioned, he is regarded solely from the standpoint of human welfare: the question in mind is not “How is man to glorify God?” but rather, “How can God meet man's needs?”

This type of religious thought is so common today that a person does not need to search for it. It is impossible

to walk around in the religious world without bumping into it. It forms the tacit major premise of some of the most influential pulpits and religious books and periodicals of our day. It has become so common that it is accepted as valid without question by the masses, and multitudes of church members have never had any other idea of religion than that it exists primarily for the purpose of promoting human welfare.

An Element of Truth

The viewpoint under discussion could never have become so prevalent if it were simply and wholly false. Downright and total falsehoods seldom gain wide and lasting acceptance. It is the half-truths, and subtle mixtures of truth and error, that do the most damage, and are hardest to detect and dispose of. Like other serious religious fallacies of our day, the notion of “the value of religion” contains a certain element of truth, from which it derives its plausibility. For religion does have a value; indeed, it has supreme value, both for the individual and for society.

But it is the paradox, or apparent contradiction, of religion that its real values accrue only to those who do not profess and practice it because of its values. Those who are “religious” because of expected benefits, personal or social, inevitably miss the real benefits of religion. On the other hand, those who are religious for a higher reason than self or humanity, will reap genuine benefits both in time and in eternity.

The Word of God tells us that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (I Tim. 4:8), but it also states that those who suppose “that godliness is a way of gain” are “men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth” (I Tim. 6:5, A.R.V.). Godliness brings true gain, but if we seek it for the sake of gain, then it is not true godliness.

A Subtle Error

The difference between the scriptural idea of the value of religion and the modern humanistic idea is brought out by the teaching of our Savior concerning the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven is portrayed as the “treasure hid in a field,” and again as the “pearl of great price,” to be gained only by the sacrifice of all other assets (Matt. 13:44, 46). In the Bible the ex-

pressions "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are equivalent. While the phrase "the kingdom of God" is today a common element in the vocabulary of humanistic religion, we should realize that in the Bible the emphasis is on its being the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of God" means the supremacy of God in the three spheres of saving power, of righteousness, and of blessedness. Thus to possess "the kingdom" is to possess God as one's own God, to be in a covenant relation to God as his child, to have God for one's everlasting portion. Thus to possess "the kingdom of God" is to possess the treasure of all treasures, the value of all values, beside which all else in time and eternity is worth nothing whatever. In this sense it is true that religion has value for the truly religious person. But this is very different from the sense in which "religious values" are commonly spoken of today.

The common contemporary notion of the value of religion is based on the assumption, often unconsciously held, that religion exists for the sake of human welfare, and therefore that God exists for the sake of man. The Bible truth of the value of religion, on the other hand, proceeds from the opposite principle, namely that religion exists for the sake of glorifying God, and therefore that man exists for the sake of God. This is just another way of saying that modern religious thought does not take the doctrine of creation seriously; it either denies creation in the interest of an evolutionary scheme, or else while holding creation, still fails to regard man as really a creature and therefore as existing not for himself but for God. Modern religious thought tends to regard God and man as mutually correlative, just as the terms "husband" and "wife," or "parent" and "child," are correlative, the one implying the other and having no existence apart from the other. Such a view of God and man cannot do justice to the Bible truth that man was created by God and therefore exists for God's purposes and glory.

Religion an End in Itself

Religion is not a means to an end; it is itself the supreme end of human life. Religion does not have a purpose; it is itself the purpose for which everything human exists. Religion does not exist for the sake of its "values" to human life; it is itself the reason why there is a human race at all. All of

which is only another way of saying that man exists for God, not God for man. God is to be sought, known, loved and served for his own sake, not for the sake of "values" which may accrue to man—not even for the sake of the genuine values which become part of the heritage of the truly religious person. We should realize that to the truly religious person the only "value" of religion which constitutes a reason for being religious is God himself, and that even man's enjoyment of God exists for God's sake.

Viewed in this light, it will be seen that a great deal of present day emphasis on "religion" is really *irreligious*. We are dealing here, of course, only with the biblical idea of religion, not with modern man-centered concepts of religion. According to the teaching of the Bible, any view which regards man as existing for his own sake is basically *irreligious*. A man may go to church; he may read the Bible, pray, and have family worship in his home; he may contribute liberally to home and foreign missions; but if he regards religion as existing for the sake of human welfare, he is an *irreligious* person; more, such a person is really (though unconsciously) an idolater, for in his basic philosophy of life Creator and creature have changed places; he regards God from the standpoint of human welfare, instead of regarding man from the standpoint of the divine glory. A great deal of contemporary American religion, with its many organizations and its busy activities, is at bottom only the idolatry of man-worship, for it takes for granted that religion exists for its values to humanity—that is to say, that God exists for man.

Some Scripture Statements

Besides the Scripture texts that have been cited, we may note God's Word to Abram, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1); here we see that God himself is the real reason for religion, far above and beyond any blessings that men can receive from God. All through the Bible we find the same emphasis on the divine glory as the great reason for religion, and therefore the great reason for human existence, and for everything connected with it. "Doth Job fear God for nought?" (Job 1:9) was Satan's insinuating suggestion that Job was religious for selfish reasons; the Book of Job shows that Satan was wrong, and that Job loved God for his own sake.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Ps. 73:25, 26). "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). "For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. 11:36). Perhaps most striking of all is the majestic presentation of the transcendence of Jehovah in the 40th chapter of Isaiah (vs. 12-31). How miserably false is the man-centered "religion" of our day in the light of this revelation of the living God: "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity" (vs. 17). Again, we read: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). The consistent teaching of the whole Bible is that man exists for God, which implies that religion does not exist for the sake of its "values" to human individuals or to human society.

Statements of Our Church Standards

The classic first question of the *Shorter Catechism* will immediately come to mind: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." Here at the very beginning of the Catechism which multitudes of people have memorized, all humanistic views of the value of religion are cut off at the root. The Westminster Divines well understood the Bible's philosophy of life. The answer cited above is a masterpiece of clear, concise statement. Note that man has one chief end, not two; therefore to enjoy God forever is not a second purpose of human life alongside the first. Glorifying God and enjoying God go together as the chief end of man. But note that glorifying God is mentioned first and enjoying God afterwards. Thus enjoying God, or consummate human happiness, is subordinate to glorifying God. Here again we are face to face with the paradox of religion: the person who seeks first to glorify God, will also truly enjoy God. The person who loves and serves God for his own sake will also attain true happiness. For true happiness, the enjoyment of God, is attained only by those who seek first of all to glorify God. The person who

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Christian Communism, or Christian Charity?

BY HENRY R. VAN TIL

Among the many popular misconceptions of historic Christianity there is the vague notion that originally Christianity was communistic in its intent and practice. Hence we often hear the "community of goods" of Acts 2:44 and 4:32, which was purely local, voluntary, temporary, and occasional, referred to as "Christian Communism." For an orthodox believer such talk sounds blasphemous and, at the very least, is to be interpreted as irresponsible. Such identification belongs only in the camp of Stanley Jones and all those who would bring the Kingdom of God upon earth by a totalitarianism religiously motivated and based upon the perfectibility of human nature.

It is my purpose in this article to point out the incompatibility of the term "Christian" with the idea of "Communism." If we use both terms in their historic sense, we shall find that they are an utter contradiction to each other. The adjective "Christian" negates the noun "Communism" at practically every point. Certainly the facts reveal that it is doing despite to the Spirit of God to call the experiment of Christian charity in the early church at Jerusalem Communism.

A Spiritual Brotherhood

Consider, first of all, that the facts and transactions recorded by Luke in chapters 2:43-47 and 4:32-5:6 of Acts are presented as the results of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. It was a Spirit-filled community in which the believers were of one heart and mind. As a result, no one said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. These people, who called God their Father, had been made conscious of their spiritual brotherhood by the indwelling Spirit of God who testified with their spirits that they were the sons of God.

This Christian community was not an involuntary association of atheistic and agnostic nihilists who denied all truth and morality, who wanted to

revolutionize the society of their day by instilling class hatred. There is no battle cry by Peter to unite all the proletarians of Jerusalem so that they may take away the houses and lands of the rich by force and thus establish a classless society, a Utopia of plenty. This company of men and women that "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" was not godless in the sense that Marx, Lenin, and Stalin are godless and atheistic. They did not believe with Marx that "man is the Supreme Being for man," and that "religion is the opiate for the people." Their leaders did not order them to give up their means of production and draft them as so many dumb, driven cattle or as cogs in the communal machine.

Community of Goods Not Practiced by All

This "having all things common" was practiced only in Jerusalem for a short time and not by all. A few of the exceptions mentioned include Mary, the mother of Mark, who continued to own her spacious and commodious home and held it available for a meeting place. Then there is Barnabas who is cited as being especially generous for selling a field. And, finally, there is Ananias and Sapphira who are assured by Peter that they were under no compulsion to sell and, having sold, they did not have to give all the proceeds if they did not so desire. The selling of the land was merely incidental to the punishment they received for having lied against the Holy Spirit. Their iniquity had nothing to do with communal ownership, but consisted of misrepresentation to the apostles.

In speaking of this passage in Acts, the learned and eminent New Testament authority of the Free University in Amsterdam, Prof. Dr. F. W. Grosheide, observes that it has often been deduced from these verses (Acts 4:32ff.) that the early Jerusalem congregation practiced a kind of com-

munist. However, if we look at it correctly, what is described for us here has nothing in common with what later passes under the name of Communism. Indeed, there is no mention of a bringing together and dividing of a common possession, not even of a common operation of a communal possession. We ought to note first of all that the members of the congregation remained the personal owners of their possession and, when they chose, voluntarily sold and brought the money to the apostles for distribution. Personal ownership remained intact. This is clear from Peter's statement that both the land and the proceeds were completely in Ananias' power. What we have here is a special form of diaconal care, a form which arose under the first impulse of the outpouring of the Spirit, which was an expression of the first love of the Church of Christ. Hence there was always money when the poor came to the apostles.

Caring for the Poor a Voluntary Act

But two striking matters ought to be observed. In the first place, this method of caring for the poor soon ran into difficulties (Acts 6:1), and later Paul admonished the saints among the Gentiles to regular contribution for the poor in Jerusalem. Secondly, this method was never prescribed. Paul indeed commanded a completely different method of caring for the poor (II Cor. 8, 9). Moreover, even in Jerusalem there was no command. Caring for the poor was a completely voluntary act and therefore not communism.¹

At this point someone may want to run to a dictionary and cite the definition of Webster's Collegiate that communism is "any system of social organization in which goods are held in common." But even so the definition does not apply. The goods mentioned in Acts 2 and 4 were not held in common but remained private property and were never subject to the will of the community. Only when Spirit-filled men saw the need of fellow-saints, they were moved to sell that which was their own and give it to the poor through the authorities in the church.

Communism Not Revolutionary Enough

But Communism as it has developed historically is the exact opposite. The

¹ This is a free translation of the treatment of the author in his commentary on Acts, pp. 97, 98.

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"Be Ye Separate"

BY JACOB W. F. UITVLUGT

"Overture 1812" is Tchaikovsky's stirring musical picture of Napoleon's triumphant march into, and his inglorious retreat from Russia. The fiery music of the "Marseillaise" inspires the soldiers as they march to Moscow. *Alons enfants de la patrie, le jour de gloire est arrive*. Bravely, confident of victory, they enter the city: the trap. Then: the fire! Hasty retreat, flight, defeat, rout, disaster . . . *Sauve qui peut!* Now and then a brave bugler tries to sound the rallying tune, *Alons enfants*, but the notes begin to waver, the bugle-hand is unsteady, the bugler's heart unsure, the bugle's sound uncertain. As the noise and confusion increase, the battle cry grows fainter and fainter. The spirit is beaten. Disaster is inevitable.

Isolation Is Our Strength!

Nowadays, when I hear somebody sound the once-famous battle cry of that all-but-forgotten general-without-an-army of a century ago, I cannot help but think of the dying notes of the "Marseillaise" in "Overture 1812" and the ignominious defeat of those once invincible French legions. And, thinking, I compare *Alons enfants de la patrie* with *In ons isolement ligt onze kracht* and "Napoleon" with "Groen."

"Isolation is our strength." Clear and strong, that battle cry rallied the few faithful round the banner of Van Prinsterer. Against overwhelming odds that ridiculous general led his followers to victory after victory. Groen died and Kuyper took command. On to Moscow! Into Moscow! Victory! The city is ours! Victoriously we have entered the enemy's stronghold. We have captured the capital of the world. And now to the spoils!

What was it? *Gelijkstelling*. Equal rights.

Oh, what a terrible thing! But what rejoicing! Listen to the voice of the victors: "We have now won equal rights."

Equal rights with what? With whom?

Equal rights with *unbelievers!*

What demons had beguiled those stout, loyal hearts into believing that "equal rights with unbelievers" was a great victory? Oh, what a fall there was!

A Principle That Moves to Action

In the flush of triumph, in the strength of equal rights, it was hard to maintain isolation. Soon it became impossible. And what became of the battle cry? It became a beautiful, pithy saying; one of many, something like Caesar's *Veni, Vidi, Vici*.

To Groen, "Isolation is our strength" had not been a mere battle cry; it had been his leitmotif, his principle. That principle motivated his action. Motivated by that principle, action is synonymous with victory. Groen did not wear his armor only when he faced his enemies; he went to bed with it; he got up with it. He wore it from the time he put it on till he died. He was buried in it. The scriptural principle of "isolation" means ceaseless war against the world's lusty legions of unbelievers. It cannot mean anything else. For those legions are never conquered, unless Jesus lied. Those legions are always our enemies, unless Jesus lied. Those legions must always be opposed, unless Jesus lied. Groen's words stated a principle that is true as long as this world stands, unless God is not true.

Battle Cry — Or Museum Piece?

But with us, "isolation" is no longer a battle cry; it is no longer accepted and treated as a principle. Rather, it is treated as a museum piece; as the good sword of some famous medieval knight. It is admired, but not used. It is only for show. Many of our people have never heard it. Some of our leaders hardly know who said it. Some, if they want to quote it, must look it up be-

fore they dare use it. Or they may blunder into ascribing it to "the great Dr. Kuyper," or to "the mighty Bavinck." And it is used as with tongue-in-cheek, as if to say, "Of course, we don't use that obsolete idea now, but in its day it was a marvelous slogan; it did the trick." What a fall!

Well, what is the matter with us? What demons have beguiled our thinking? Do we not need isolation? How does our position in the world differ from that of Groen and his followers? Is the world around us changed from hating to loving God and his Cause? Are the unbelievers now our friends instead of our foes? Did our Lord Jesus tell us that we should fight for equal-rights-with-unbelievers and that he would give us the victory? Did he tell us to defeat the world and that we should make peace with her?

Or are we perhaps stronger, spiritually, than our forefathers? Are we better armed? Are we such a mighty, massive force that the foe trembles at the very thought of us? Can we now afford to mingle with them and chum with them? What peculiar charm protects us that Groen and his people did not possess?

It is not my intention, nor am I prepared to show instances where our church is denying or neglecting the divine command that we be "separate." I am only pressing the button that rings the alarm. I do believe that there is very real danger, but it is up to our experts to assess the danger and to direct the attack.

Understanding Our Terms

It is time that we restudy the meaning of "isolation." We must try to understand what Groen meant by it. Citing instances and pointing out cases will do no good unless we first understand and agree about a clear-cut definition of isolation. Then we must test that meaning by going to the Scriptures. In its light we shall see light and not walk in darkness. Only then shall we be able to see cases and evaluate them.

Essentially, the world of Groen was no different from ours. His world was dominated by liberals; so is ours. Christians were forced into a corner then; so are they now. Education then was to make good liberals of the youth; the same attempts are being made today, though the agencies used may dif-

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The Authority of Scripture

BY CORNELIUS VAN TIL

The difference between a Reformed and an Evangelical method of approach to unbelievers is our main concern in these articles. Our contention has been that the very nature of Reformed theology requires a distinct approach in the matter of its defense. Let us again discuss this question, this time in relation to the central problem of biblical authority.

How will the Evangelical or Conservative urge upon the unbeliever the idea of accepting the Bible as the Word of God? He will, of course, tell the unbeliever that his eternal weal or woe is involved. "Christ died for your sins, and you must accept him as your Savior or you will be eternally lost," says Mr. Grey, the Conservative, to Mr. Black, the unbeliever.

Rational Probability

"But how can anyone know anything about the 'Beyond'?" asks Mr. Black.

"Well, of course," replies Mr. Grey, "if you want absolute certainty such as one gets in geometry, Christianity does not offer it. We offer you only 'rational probability.' Christianity, as I said in effect a moment ago when I spoke of the death of Christ, 'is founded on historical facts, which, by their very nature, cannot be demonstrated with geometric certainty. All judgments of historical particulars are at the mercy of the complexity of the time-space universe . . . If the scientist cannot rise above rational probability in his empirical investigation, why should the Christian claim more?'¹ And what is true of the death of Christ," adds Mr. Grey, "is, of course, also true of his resurrection. But this only shows that 'the Christian is in possession of a world-view which is making a sincere effort to come to grips with actual history.'"²

Gobble-de-Gook

By speaking thus, Mr. Grey seeks for a point of contact with Mr. Black. For

¹ Edward John Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948), p. 113.

² *Idem*, p. 114.

Mr. Black, history is something that floats on an infinitely extended and bottomless ocean of Chance. Therefore he can say that *anything* may happen. Who knows but the death and resurrection of Jesus as the Son of God might issue from this womb of Chance? Such events would have an equal chance of happening with "snarks, boojums, splinth, and gobble-de-gook." God himself may live in this realm of Chance. He is then "wholly other" than ourselves. And his revelation in history would then be wholly unique.

Now the Evangelical does not challenge this underlying philosophy of Chance as it controls the unbeliever's conception of history. He is so anxious to have the unbeliever accept the possibility of God's existence and the *fact* of the resurrection of Christ that, if necessary, he will exchange his own philosophy of fact for that of the unbeliever. Anxious to be genuinely "empirical" like the unbeliever, he will throw all the facts of Christianity into the bottomless pit of Chance. Or, rather, he will throw all these facts at the unbeliever, and the unbeliever throws them over his back into the bottomless pit of Chance.

Of course, this is the last thing that such men as Wilbur Smith, Edward J. Carnell, and J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., want to do. But in failing to challenge the philosophy of Chance that underlies the unbeliever's notion of "fact," they are in effect accepting it.

This approach of Mr. Grey is unavoidable if one holds to an Arminian theology. The Arminian view of man's free will implies that "possibility" is above God. But a "possibility" that is above God is the same thing as Chance. A God surrounded by Chance cannot speak with authority. He would be speaking into a vacuum. His voice could not be heard. And if God were surrounded by Chance, then human beings would be too. They would live in a vacuum, unable to hear either

their own voices or those of others. Thus the whole of history, including all of its facts, would be without meaning.

It is this that the Reformed Christian, Mr. White, would tell Mr. Black. In the very act of presenting the resurrection of Christ, or in the very act of presenting any other fact of historic Christianity, Mr. White would be presenting it as authoritatively interpreted in the Bible. He would argue that unless Mr. Black is willing to set the facts of history in the framework of the meaning authoritatively ascribed to them in the Bible, he will make gobble-de-gook of history.

Nobody Knows

If history were what Mr. Black assumes that it is, then *anything* might happen and then *nobody* would know what may happen. No one thing would then be more likely to happen than any other thing. David Hume, the great skeptic, has effectively argued that if you allow any room for Chance in your thought, then you no longer have the right to speak of probabilities. Whirl would be king. No one hypothesis would have any more relevance to facts than any other hypothesis. Did God raise Christ from the dead? Perchance he did. Did Jupiter do it? Perchance he did. What is Truth? Nobody knows. Such would be the picture of the universe if Mr. Black were right.

No comfort can be taken from the assurance of the Conservative that, since Christianity makes no higher claim than that of rational probability, "the system of Christianity can be refuted only by probability. Perhaps our loss is gain."¹ How could one ever argue that there is a greater probability for the truth of Christianity than for the truth of its opposite if the very meaning of the word probability rests upon the idea of Chance? On this basis nature and history would be no more than a series of pointer readings pointing into the blank.

But You Are Wrong

In assuming his philosophy of Chance and thus virtually saying that *nobody knows* what is back of the common objects of daily observation, Mr. Black also virtually says that the Christian view of things is wrong.

If I assert that there is a black cat in the closet, and you assert that nobody knows what is in the closet, you

¹ *Idem*, p. 115, note.

have virtually told me that I am wrong in my hypothesis. So when I tell Mr. Black that God exists, and he responds very graciously by saying that perhaps I am right since nobody knows what is in the "Beyond," he is virtually saying that I am wrong in my "hypothesis." He is obviously thinking of such a God as could comfortably live in the realm of Chance. But the God of Scripture cannot live in the realm of Chance.

Mr. Black's response when confronted with the claims of God and his Christ, is essentially this: Nobody knows, but nevertheless your hypothesis is certainly wrong and mine is certainly right. Nobody knows whether God exists, but God certainly does not exist and Chance certainly does exist.

When Mr. Black thus virtually makes his universal negative assertion, saying in effect that God *cannot* possibly exist and that Christianity *cannot* possibly be true, he must surely be standing on something very solid. Is it on solid rock that he stands? No, he stands on water! He stands on his own "experience." But this experience, by his own assumption, rests again on Chance. Thus, standing on Chance, he swings the "logician's postulate" and modestly asserts what cannot be in the "Beyond," of which he said before that nothing can be said.

The Law of Noncontradiction

Of course, what Mr. Black is doing appears very reasonable to himself. "Surely," he says, if questioned at all on the subject, "a rational man must have systematic coherence in his experience. Therefore he cannot accept as true anything that is not in accord with the law of noncontradiction. So long as you leave your God in the realm of the 'Beyond,' in the realm of the indeterminate, you may worship him by yourself alone. But so soon as you claim that your God has revealed himself in creation, in providence, or in your Scripture, so soon I shall put that revelation to a test by the principle of rational coherence.

"And by that test none of your doctrines are acceptable. All of them are contradictory. No rational man can accept any of them. If your God is eternal, then he falls outside of my experience and lives in the realm of the 'Beyond,' of the unknowable. But if he is to have anything to do with the world, then he must himself be wholly within the world. I must un-

derstand your God throughout if I am to speak intelligently of any relationship that he sustains to my world and to myself. Your idea that God is both eternal and unchangeable and yet sustains such relationships to the world as are involved in your doctrine of creation and providence, is flatly contradictory.

"For me to accept your God," continues Mr. Black, "you must do to him what Karl Barth has done to him, namely, strip him of all the attributes that orthodox theology has assigned to him, and thus enable him to turn into the opposite of himself. With that sort of God I have a principle of unity that brings all my experience into harmony. And that God is wholly within the universe. If you offer me such a God and offer him as the simplest hypothesis with which I may, as a goal, seek to order my experience as it comes to me from the womb of Chance, then the law of noncontradiction will be satisfied. As a rational man I can settle for nothing less."

Rationalism and Determinism

All this amounts to saying that Mr. Black, the lover of a Chance philosophy, the indeterminist, is at the same

time an out-and-out determinist or fatalist. It is to say that Mr. Black, the irrationalist, who said that nobody knows what is in the "Beyond," is at the same time a flaming rationalist. For him only that *can* be which—so he thinks—he can exhaustively determine by logic must be. He may at first grant that anything may exist, but when he says this he at the same time says in effect that nothing can exist and have meaning for man but that which man himself can exhaustively know. Therefore, for Mr. Black, the God of Christianity *cannot* exist. For him the doctrine of creation *cannot* be true. There *could* be no revelation of God to man through nature and history. There *can* be no such thing as the resurrection of Christ.

Strangely enough, when Mr. Black thus says that God cannot exist and that the resurrection of Christ cannot be a fact, and when he also says that God may very well exist and that the resurrection of Christ may very well be a fact, he is not inconsistent with himself. For he must, to be true to his method, contradict himself in every statement that he makes about any

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One Day at a Time

One day at a time with its failures
and fears,
With its hurts and mistakes, with its
weakness and tears,
With its portion of pain and its bur-
den of care;
One day at a time we must meet
and must bear.

One day at a time to be patient and
strong,
To be calm under trial and sweet
under wrong;
Then its toiling shall pass and its
sorrow shall cease;
It shall darken and die, and the
night shall bring peace.

One day at a time—but the day is
so long,
And the heart is not brave, and the
soul is not strong;
Oh Thou pitiful Christ be Thou
near all the way;
Give courage and patience and
strength for the day.

Swift cometh His answer so clear
and so sweet:
"Yea I will be with thee, thy
troubles to meet;
I will not forget thee, nor fail thee,
nor grieve;
I will not forsake thee, I never will
leave."

Not yesterday's load we are called to
bear.
Not the morrow's uncertain and
shadowy care;
Why should we look forward or
back with dismay?
Our needs, as our mercies, are but
for the day.

One day at a time and the day is His
day;
He hath numbered its hours, though
they haste or delay,
His grace is sufficient, we walk not
alone;
As the day, so the strength, that He
giveth His own.

—Author Unknown

A Calvinistic University in America

BY NED B. STONEHOUSE

In the last issue I introduced the discussion of the movement for a Calvinistic University in America by undertaking a fairly broad analysis of the present historical situation. An attempt was made to assess elements of strength and weakness as a background for realistic thinking concerning the attainment of this goal. The particular advantage of building upon foundations already laid, and of seeking the fulfillment of the aspirations held especially by Christian Reformed people, was emphasized. On the other hand, it was suggested that solid reasons exist for concluding that a distinctively ecclesiastical approach is far from ideal and is actually beset with serious obstacles. To the consideration of these and certain broader matters I now turn.

Needed: A Reformed Faculty

In view of the prominence given to the practical aspects of the subject, one or two practical disadvantages may be mentioned first. If the university in view is to be founded, it will be desirable and even necessary to achieve the co-operation of Reformed people, and especially of Reformed men to staff the university. If the men for a university faculty or faculties can be found, there is a considerable prospect of success. Unless the men are available or can be forthcoming, it will be unfortunate to begin.

On the question as to the men available, judgments will differ. But few will have the boldness to say that even a small faculty of university caliber is at hand or assured. And there should be agreement that our university must recruit the strongest possible faculties, regardless of ecclesiastical affiliation. If in advance one should virtually restrict the choice of faculty members to a single denomination, even if it is a denomination of the general strength of the Christian Reformed Church, there is peril that the strongest possible institution will not be erected. Could we therefore afford,

even if we could confine ourselves to the practical consequences, to establish an essentially denominational university?

There is, however, the more basic question of principle, and we should be able to agree that principle must be determinative of practice. The Free University of Amsterdam, as its very name intimates, is not an ecclesiastical institution, and the principle that has guided the establishment and course of that institution, would seem to be fully as capable of application in America. The consideration, moreover, that the Calvinistic Christian School movement has been founded on the principle of free, parent-controlled management rather than that of ecclesiastical government, is evidence that this principle has been accepted and acted upon in a successful fashion in the United States.

Church or Society Control?

On the other hand, Calvin College remains under ecclesiastical control, and every one knows that this different approach is bound up with the historical fact that the College developed gradually from an institution concerned with preparatory work for theological study, as well as with the distinctively theological disciplines. From

"We ought greatly to mourn for the public abominations of the world, and of the land of our nativity, wherein we live . . . 'Rivers of waters,' saith the Psalmist, 'run down mine eyes because men keep not thy law.' Horrible profanation of the name of God, horrible abominations, which our eyes have seen, and our ears heard, and yet our hearts have been unaffected with them! Do you think this is a frame of heart God requireth of us in such a season — to be regardless of all, and not to mourn for the public abominations of the land?" — *John Owen*.

time to time there have been proposals to conform the management of Calvin College to the principle which comes to expression in the Christian School movement as a whole and in the Free University. Few will disagree that the basic reason this has not succeeded is because of seemingly insurmountable obstacles of a practical nature. Nevertheless, from time to time one hears expressions to the effect that there is no real objection in principle to ecclesiastically controlled education of the college and university level. Occasionally Kuyper or Bavinck is quoted to show that, however valid free Christian education may be, there can be no doubt that the Church, at least under special circumstances, may undertake and control Christian education on the higher levels.

Regardless of one's present judgments on this issue, there can be no question that the issue is one of immense importance in theory and practice, and that it will be wholesome for all concerned to evaluate the subject as clearly and fundamentally as possible. We should certainly deplore the development of a merely pragmatic attitude toward issues of this kind, for this is the worst kind of treason to Christ. A philosophy determined largely by practical ends will never bring into being a Christian university worthy of the name. Accordingly, we must seek to sift out genuine principles from principles which only appear so, and to guide our program of action by a devout concern to avoid, at any cost, a compromise with the truth.

We Need a Free University!

Though I would not be prepared to insist dogmatically that the Church under special circumstances may not undertake some rather extraordinary measures, it is my conviction that we shall be on incomparably stronger ground if we hold to the line that we must envision a free university. In evaluating this point of principle, it is essential to come to grips with the teaching of the Scriptures concerning

the Kingdom of God and the Church. In my judgment, the evidence demands both that we shall not isolate the Church from the Kingdom and that we shall not simply identify the two. Though men sometimes loosely set Church and Kingdom over against each other, it is evident that the Church is comprehended in the Kingdom as a vital and central manifestation of the Kingdom of God. The interests of the Kingdom will be advanced only as members of Christ's body, in obedience to Christ and through the grace of Christ, pray and work for its fullest manifestation.

On the other hand, it is a great mistake to restrict the Kingdom of God to the Church. To assign to the Church the prerogative or responsibility for discharging all of the activities which pertain to the manifestation of the rule of God among men, is to assign to the Church a more inclusive place than is warranted by the Scriptures.

Among Reformed men there has been widespread recognition of the validity of the principle of sphere-sovereignty, a principle that Abraham Kuyper asserted emphatically at the time of the establishment of the Free University. This involves the acknowledgment, among other things, of the distinction between the responsibilities of the family and the Church. But even if there remained doubt as to the ultimacy of the present formulations of the principle of sphere-sovereignty, we should be deeply concerned to avoid assigning a kind of spiritual monopoly to the institution of the Church, as the Roman Church has done. There is general agreement that the Reformed conception of the relation of Church and State, however difficult it may be to formulate it in detail in a completely satisfying way, requires us to uphold, not only the proper freedom of the Church as over against the State, but also the proper freedom of the State in its own sphere. Can Reformed Christians, apart from a distressing compromise with principle, fail likewise to maintain and cherish the special liberties of the family?

Safety in Church Control?

The Church has its own specific tasks to perform in connection with the proclamation of the gospel, the maintenance of ecclesiastical government and discipline, and the conduct of worship. No doubt it will necessarily also be called upon to exercise various

functions incidental to the discharge of its central tasks. But if in addition to, and alongside of, the fulfilment of the specific work which it has been established to perform, it also engages in various extraordinary tasks such as the conduct of scientific research and the training of doctors and lawyers, it would trespass beyond its proper field. It might easily become delinquent in discharging the specific mandate of Christ if it is occupied unnecessarily with other tasks. Hence, the principle that education of a comprehensive character shall be free from church control is supported not only by a sober estimate of the specific and restricted sphere of the Church, but also by the urgent summons to insure that the Church shall not fail to be absorbed with the fulfilment of its peculiar mission in the world.

There are those who appear to hold that there is a measure of safety in church control of education which may be jeopardized if such institutions are free. If this meant only that there would not be a thriving development of the Kingdom of God apart from spiritual strength and alertness in the Church, we should certainly agree. But no concrete institution, a denomination no less than an educational society, is secure unless its members are devoted to the truth and are vigilant in exposing and thwarting the enemies of the truth. A denomination may drift away from the faith and carry with it its own educational institutions, as ecclesiastical developments in this country have often demonstrated. And educational institutions may undermine the vitals of the Church. Accordingly, we must not misread and oversimplify the lessons of history. Not the Church alone, and not its members merely as individuals, will give assurance of fidelity to the Christian faith and practice. This can be given only as the Church is on fire to fulfil its mission, and as individual believers are aroused to do all for the honor of the King, both within and without the Church.

A Workable Plan

Our general conclusion on church and education is therefore quite definite so far as principle is concerned. On procedure the matter is much less clear. I do not presume to advise the Christian Reformed Church as to the government of Calvin College. It is indeed difficult to conceive of a development of a Calvinistic University in the present situation which would not

work in close conjunction with this College. It may perhaps prove feasible, even if Calvin College remains under church control, to work out a plan whereby it would practically serve as the undergraduate college to the university development. As to this and other possibilities, I have expressed my views somewhat more fully in an article appearing in the September issue of *The Reformed Journal*. My main concern here, however, is to urge that, whatever practical measures may seem wise, it would be highly advantageous to establish the university, at least so far as graduate work is concerned, as a free institution controlled by a society of Reformed Christians.

In concentrating attention largely upon the Free University, Westminster Seminary, the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin College, and the National Union of Christian Schools, my purpose is not to slight or exclude any other institution or group. As has been emphasized, it will be essential to achieve the widest possible co-operation of Reformed men and institutions. We may not overlook any resources, especially in man power, that may be available. The discussion of the situation in concrete and specific terms has been dictated, however, by the determination to avoid vague generalities and to face as forthrightly as possible various concrete aspects of the present situation.

The Christian University Association

On the background of these evaluations, expression may be given to judgments as to the possible place of the Christian University Association in these developments. This Association has in view as its goal the establishment of a Free Reformed University "maintaining high standards of scholarship, founded upon and adhering to the Christian system of truth and way of life as set forth in the Reformed standards." As the supreme standard the Association acknowledges the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the "Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice." The Constitution of the Association further states that "the institution shall provide training and conduct research through competent Christian scholars whose intelligent understanding of, and devotion to, the Christian faith will supply the true basis for, and the proper integration of, knowledge in the various fields of

learning. Through such training and research it will endeavor to equip men and women to bring the Christian faith in all its elements and implications effectually to bear upon the whole of life and upon every sphere of human vocation." And as a Declaration it has adopted the following formulation of principles:

"In accordance with the position set forth in the Basis and in pursuance of the design set forth in the Purpose, the Association declares as follows:

A Statement of Principles

"The standpoint of the Association is that of consistent Christian theism. The triune God and he alone is self-existent and self-sufficient. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. Of him and through him and to him are all things. He is the source of all truth. Hence the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. All true knowledge in men is based upon, and is oriented to, the revelation God has been pleased to give of his mind and will. God has left the imprints of his glory upon all his works in creation and providence. But because of the fall of man and his consequent depravity, man is in need of a knowledge to enable him to glorify God as Lord and Savior which the revelation of God in nature does not provide.

"The special and completed revelation of his mind and will, adequate to meet this need of fallen man, God has deposited in the Holy Scriptures, his

infallible Word. It follows that, even though in virtue of creation in the image of God and the non-saving operations of the Holy Spirit men receive knowledge, in a certain sense, apart from the illumination derived from the Scriptures, yet in any department of reality knowledge is true in the fullest sense only if it is illumined by, and is faithful to, the Holy Scriptures, the inspired Word of truth.

"An institution of higher learning that will have as its objective the knowledge of the truth and the glory of God must insure that the principles that underlie and guide the studies in every department shall be derived from the Scriptures. Each department of the institution to be established and promoted by this Association, therefore, shall rest upon, and conduct its work in accordance with, the presuppositions of the Christian faith and shall subject its whole procedure as well as its conclusions to the scrutiny and direction of the full-orbed revelation of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments."

The Association's Setbacks Do Not Indicate Defeat

This Association has indeed suffered setbacks and defeats of a very discouraging nature. Our failures could be recalled, but to do so would be of doubtful utility. It may be stated, however, that among the reasons for lack of success a few years ago was the consideration that, in attempting to secure co-

operation of representatives of many groups, the movement became inclusive of viewpoints irreconcilable, as other members came to see, with the distinctively Reformed position stated in the Constitution.

Nevertheless, the movement should not be entirely discounted. As noted above, it fashioned a constitution which contains basic principles that are vital to any Reformed university that may be established in the future. Moreover, though various persons who appeared to stand together at the beginning faced the unhappy experience of parting from one another because of differences of viewpoint concerning the nature and position of a university, there were several members of different denominations who continued to stand together in a fellowship of thought and high purpose which has become all the more meaningful and precious because it has weathered storms of controversy regarding various profound issues.

That the Association has survived in spite of its many disappointments can be explained only in terms of a profound sense of commitment to a divine mandate which "bids men everywhere to think His thoughts after Him, to exercise dominion over all things according to His will, and to consecrate themselves and all things unto Him." Because of these factors there remains a possibility that the Association may yet be able to achieve its goal.

(Continued on page 32)

The Preacher

He held the lamp of truth that day
So low that none could miss the
way;
And yet so high, to bring in sight
That picture fair—the world's great
Light—
That gazing up, the lamp between,
The hand that held it scarce was
seen.

He held the pitcher, stooping low
To lips of little ones below;
Then raised it to the weary saint,
And bade him drink when sick and
faint;
They drank—the pitcher thus be-
tween,
The hand that held it scarce was
seen.

He blew the trumpet soft and clear,
That trembling sinners need not
fear:
And then, with louder note and bold
To raze the walls of Satan's hold.
The trumpet coming thus between,
The hand that held it scarce was
seen.

But when the Captain says, "Well
done,
Thou good and faithful servant—
come!
Lay down the trumpet—leave the
camp,"
These weary hands will then be seen
Clasped in those pierced ones—
naught between.

—Author Unknown

From the Letterbox

Mr. Editor:

Having read Henry R. Van Til's article, "Testing the Teachers," in the August-September issue of *Torch and Trumpet*, I feel constrained to respond, since I am the author of the review which is particularly under fire. I should like to call attention to the following particulars.

Professor Van Til's question, "Whose judgment shall I accept?" is facetious. He knew whose judgment he would accept long before the last three reviews mentioned were published, as is evident from his letter to *The Banner*, January 26, 1951. This conclusion was apparently reached without having read Calhoun's book itself, since he says, "This review saves me a lot of time and money." Unfortunately, I did not have the advantage of having read either Vos's review or Van Til's comments on the same before submitting my review. My review was written during the first week in January, although not published until March.

Concerning my review itself, Van Til's suggestion that it contains no adequate warning is erroneous. Of the five paragraphs in the review, the two longest are distinctly critical, mentioning besides the strictures which Van Til cites, the fact that human sin is underestimated and that the book is completely faulty with respect to special revelation. Two shorter paragraphs seek to express the stimulating qualities of the book. The fifth is a brief summation of both attitudes.

Although there are many fine exhortations and admonitions in Van Til's article—I admit I have much to learn about reviewing books—let us beware of the consequences of accepting his attitude. Must we assume that there is no truth intermixed with error? If so, much of the history of the Christian Church will have to be rewritten. Must we assume that the Christian Church today has said the last word on everything which is good for society,

has developed its heritage to the last degree, has completed its task of evaluating and applying the Word? Can we now stand static and declare that our times present no new challenge to us? If so, this is the first age in which the Church has had this privilege. Granting—and I do grant—that Calhoun does not speak the language of the regenerated Christian, must we assume that God's common grace cannot speak to us through him, and must we declare all attempts to recognize a message to be utterly contraband?

If I were reviewing a child's book, I would write as for children. For adults, I refer to the last sentence of my review, "But if it cannot be read with discrimination, it should not be read at all." The only way an adult could gain the totally wrong impression against which Van Til warns would be by stopping after the first two paragraphs of the review. If that sin makes the reviewer remiss in his duty as a watchman on the walls of Zion, then—not otherwise—I must beg pardon.

I have enjoyed reading the other reviews of the book, and find in them no more disagreement than is usually to be expected in various reviews of the same book. I have also enjoyed and been stimulated by Van Til's article, and expect to profit from it in the future. But let me say no more, lest once again I be accused of double talk.

J. H. Kromminga

REPLY

Mr. Editor:

After I have carefully reread the review of Dr. Kromminga, I am confirmed in my original judgment. Even the critical paragraphs referred to by brother Kromminga in his letter do not sound a clear note of warning, but are measured statements of evaluation. Paragraph three, for example, begins: "There are, however, definite shortcomings which make it impossible to

lend wholehearted approval to the thesis and its development . . . Discussion may obviate some of the difficulties" (italics added). Also paragraph four, which is referred to as one of the longer critical paragraphs, begins: "We must repeat, there is much here that has genuine value. There is an understanding of general revelation and its witness concerning God which is refreshing and challenging. Christian thought will do well to pursue this understanding with might and main."¹ These lines constitute two-fifths of the critical paragraph.

My reply would be that since Calhoun has no personal God, since for him God is part of the universe, since Calhoun has wiped out the distinction between Creator and creation, his concept of general revelation cannot possibly be refreshing and challenging to a Calvinist, but totally misleading and false. I am frank to confess that I have no enthusiasm for such contributions. Besides, I do not believe for a moment that Calhoun is making a great discovery when he says that Christianity is basically social rather than individual. There is no such antithesis in Scripture.

I find a basic difference of interpretation between Dr. Kromminga and myself. He speaks of *obviating difficulties by discussion* (some, of course, cannot be obviated that way), but to me there are not only a few difficulties. Rather, this book is heretical from cover to cover. The central thesis is wrong, its central idea of God is radically unsound.² For that reason it seems to me that Dr. Kromminga's review suffers from intellectualism, that is, an intellectual analysis in which the whole of the Christian personality is not mobilized against evil. This is a basic issue in the churches today.

Dr. Kromminga is afraid of accepting the consequences of my *attitude*, and I am concerned about his *lack of attitude* and seeming unwillingness to take a strong stand against men of Calhoun's conviction, although Kromminga grants now "that Calhoun does not speak the language of a regenerated Christian." And that is exactly the point! We must warn God's people against false teachers! We must say to them that this teacher is not of God! That is biblical language.

1. cf. *The Banner*, March 2, 1951, p. 271.

2. cf. *Blue Banner of Faith and Life*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 42.

(Continued on page 26)

Here I Stand!

(A Series of Lessons on the 37 Articles of The Confession of Faith,
A Reformed Creed usually called The Belgic Confession.)

BY JOHN H. PIERSMA

Lesson 9

Article XI

The Holy Spirit is True and Eternal God

We believe and confess also that the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son; and therefore neither is made, created, nor begotten but only proceeds from both; who in order is the third person of the Holy Trinity; of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son; and therefore is the true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

Scripture References:

John 15:26; Galatians 4:6 (The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father).

John 20:22 (The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son).

Acts 5:3, 4; II Peter 1:21 (The Holy Spirit is God).

John 14:26; I Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:30 (The Holy Spirit is a person).

Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:16 (We are to be led by and to walk in the Spirit).

Genesis 1:2; Numbers 11:17, 25, 26, 29; Psalm 51:11 (Old Testament references to the Holy Spirit).

I John 5:16; Matthew 12:31, 32; Hebrews 6:4-6; (The unpardonable sin).

Questions:

1. Why is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit especially precious for God's people?

Because it explains the way in which we become partakers of the salvation Christ merited and obtained for us. With respect to our salvation, as well as to creation, "the Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son" (Article

VIII, *Belgic Confession*). Lord's Day 20 of the Heidelberg Catechism explains this beautifully when it asks: "What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit? First, that He is true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son; second, that He is also given me, to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits, to comfort me, and to abide with me forever."

2. But is the Holy Spirit actually co-equal with the Father and the Son?

Absolutely. Although it is true that the Holy Spirit functions as the instrument by whom God works all things, nevertheless, he is not subordinate to the first and second persons in the Trinity. This is obviously the plain teaching of the Bible. Notice again Acts 5:3, 4, which we read together a few moments ago. To Ananias the apostle Peter says: "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The unmistakable implication of these words is that the Holy Spirit is God. I Corinthians 3:16 and 17 teaches the same truth when it says, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye."

You can see from this text that to say that the Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit is the same as saying that God dwells in the Church, and this again is the same as saying that the Holy Spirit dwells in her, for the Spirit is God. Certainly the *Belgic Confession* is correct when it declares that the Holy Spirit is "of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son; and therefore is the true and

eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us."

3. What does the *Belgic Confession* mean when it states that the Holy Spirit is of "the same . . . majesty and glory with the Father and the Son?"

These terms mean that the Bible ascribes the same divine attributes, works, and honor to the Holy Spirit as it does to the Father and the Son. For example: Psalm 139:7 teaches that the Holy Spirit is *omnipresent* (that is, the presence of God is everywhere) when it asks, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" In addition, the Holy Spirit is *almighty*: "but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will" (I Cor. 12:11). Genesis 1:2 ascribes the work of creation to the Holy Spirit, as does Psalm 33:6, "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." (Here "breath" is to be understood as Spirit; so, for example, the King James Version translates this text.) Divine honor is accorded to the Holy Spirit whenever we baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All of this adds up to mean that the Holy Spirit is truly God.

4. Is it important that we believe in the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit?

Yes, for unless the Holy Spirit is a person, he is not God; in fact, as a "he" he does not exist! It is very important for Christians today to be very careful at this point. Today's so-called "modernist" loves to speak of the "spirit of God," but by this he means merely an all-pervasive, vague power. In this sense "spirit" is used to indicate the same sort of thing that we mean when we speak of "school spirit" or "the spirit of

America." Over against this God-destroying heresy we must, at all costs, insist upon the biblical doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit. Thus he is said to have a will (I Cor. 12:11); he is called by personal names (John 14:16); and in the baptismal formula he is mentioned without qualification in connection with the Father and the Son.

5. In what sense is the Holy Spirit the "third" person?

The Holy Spirit is third "in order," not in rank. That is why he is called Spirit, which means literally, the "breath" of God. It is obvious that the name Holy Spirit does not denote his essence, for the Father and the Son are also spirit. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). We must understand that the name Spirit denotes the third person of the Trinity in his relation to the Father and to the Son. Just as the names Father and Son are expressive of the personal properties of the first and second persons of the Trinity respectively, so the name Spirit denotes the personal property of the third person. The Holy Spirit is "spirited" or "breathed" forth from the Father and the Son.

6. What does the adjective "holy" mean when used to denote the Spirit?

It indicates that perfect devotion and consecration which is so wonderfully characteristic of the Holy Spirit. Out of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, the three Persons of the Holy Trinity live an eternal life of friendship and love. In himself God is our Covenant God. And when that perfectly consecrated Spirit is sent into our hearts, and takes residence there, we experience the joys of covenant-fellowship with the living God. Thus the word of our Lord is realized: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one" (John 17:23).

7. What is the range of activities ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible?

The works of the Holy Spirit cover both nature and grace, cre-

ation and "re-creation" (*her-shepping*) or redemption. Here is a summary of the works of the Spirit:

a. *In creation:*

- (1) The Spirit is the author of life (Gen. 1:3; Job 26:13; Ps. 104:30).
- (2) The Spirit is the author of the general inspiration and qualification of men, such as that required for works of art, science, etc. (Exod. 28:3; 31:2, 3, 6; 35:35; I Sam. 11:6; 16:13, 14).

b. *In redemption:*

- (1) The inspiration of the Bible (II Pet. 1:21).
 - (2) The preparation and qualification of Christ, our Savior. The Holy Spirit prepared a body for Christ (Luke 1:35; Heb. 10:5-7). The Holy Spirit anointed Christ at the time of his baptism, indicating his ordination and qualification for holy office (Luke 3:22).
 - (3) The maintenance and the enlargement of the Church. In the New Testament the Spirit, as result and reward of the saving work of Christ, comes out of heaven to dwell in the Church (Acts 2:1-4; Eph. 2:22; I Cor. 3:16). This fact is one reason why all the work of Christ, including missions, must proceed from the Church.
 - (4) The guidance and the comforting of the believers (Rom. 8:4, 14-17; John 15:26).
8. One hears a great deal about the Spirit's guidance these days. Just how does the Spirit guide believers?

Only through the Word! Read in this connection John 16:13, 14. Notice from this passage that the Spirit "shall not speak from himself." He takes out of Christ whatever he speaks. Since there is no Christ other than the Christ of the Scriptures, this means that the Spirit of Christ never witnesses without the revelation of Christ in the Bible. This condemns all false mysticism, such as is found in recent Buchmanism and in other spiritist movements, which despises the Word as a "dead letter" and prefers to live by an "inner

light" which comes by way of a direct testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart apart from the Scriptures.

9. Can we have a living contact with the Scriptures without the Spirit?

No. Without the Spirit the Scriptures are dead. Spirit and Word are never to be separated. There is no access to the Word of God, to the Christ of the Scriptures, except through or in the Spirit.

10. What is the unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Spirit?

The unpardonable sin or the sin against the Holy Spirit is committed by those who are reared in the circle of the Covenant, who temporarily and historically know the things of God and his Kingdom, but who fall away to serve the world. The subsequent hardening of their hearts then comes to expression in a blaspheming of the Holy Spirit, that is, attributing to the devil that which they know is of the Spirit. This sin carries with it such a terrible spiritual hardening that pardon is impossible. (Be sure to read carefully the three passages cited above dealing with this sin.)

11. Isn't it a most tormenting thought that perhaps we may be guilty of the unpardonable sin?

We must remember that the sin against the Holy Spirit is not an incidental or a single sin. It is rather a process whereby we are hardened beyond possibility of pardon. Those who are guilty of this sin are, therefore, never tormented by feelings of remorse or guilt except it be a "sorrow of the world" (II Cor. 7:11). To be genuinely concerned about sin is not characteristic of those who are guilty of the unpardonable sin, and is therefore unmistakable proof of our salvation.

Lesson 10

Article XII

The Creation of All Things,
Especially the Angels

We believe that the Father by the Word, that is, by His Son, has created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and

all creatures, when it seemed good unto Him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that He also still upholds and governs them by His eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God.

He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect; some of whom are fallen from that excellency in which God created them into everlasting perdition, and the others have by the grace of God remained steadfast and continued in their first state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and every good thing; to the utmost of their power as murderers watching to ruin the Church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are, therefore, by their own wickedness adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments.

Therefore we reject and abhor the error of the Sadducees, who deny the existence of spirits and angels; and that of the Manichees, who assert that the devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked of their own nature, without having been corrupted.

Scripture References:

Genesis 1 (The biblical account of the creation of the world).

John 1:3 (The Father by the Word created all things).

Revelation 4:11 (Creation took place "when it seemed good unto him").

Colossians 1:16; Psalm 19:1, 2 (Creation is designed to serve the Creator).

Hebrews 11:3 (God of nothing created the world).

Nehemiah 9:6 (God created the angels).

Hebrews 1:14 (The angels are ministering spirits).

Jude 6 (Fallen angels and their destiny).

Questions:

1. What are the contents of Article 12?

Article 12 expresses the biblical doctrine of creation, including the creation of heaven and earth, men

and angels. It stresses the fact that all things were made for the service of the Creator. To glorify God is indeed the creature's prime purpose.

2. How did God create all things?

The Confession here stresses, first of all, that God the Father created the universe by the Word, that is, by his Son. Repeatedly Genesis 1 teaches that the different groups of created things came into existence by way of God's speech, for we read over and over: "And God said." John 1:3 teaches that the Son of God as the Word created all things. Evidently the Bible means by all of this that we are to see in the Son, as the Word, the full and perfect reflection of the Father. In creation, the Father brings to expression through the Word his own glory by means of the visible creation.

3. How can creation be defined?

The best definition possible is that found in Hebrews 11:3: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear." Believers often say that creation is "to make something out of nothing." Strictly speaking, this is impossible; if it is meant, however, to indicate that God made the universe without the use of pre-existent material, it is perfectly correct.

4. What can we learn from the doctrine of creation as to the nature of our God?

First, that God is absolutely independent of the world. He is a triune God, completely self-sufficient, and therefore he does not need the world at all. Second, that God is an almighty being who possesses infinite supernatural power by which he can do anything which does not contradict his own nature. The created world is a mighty display of God's infinite power and wisdom.

5. When was the world created?

The Confession states in this article that God created the heavens and the earth "when it seemed good unto him." This means that the origin came at that point when

God thought it best to begin. All we can say, therefore, is that God created all things "in the beginning," although we are not told when the "beginning" was. Consistent with its character as a Christian confession of faith, the *Belgic Confession* here stresses the wisdom and the sovereignty of the Creator, with which we must always willingly comply.

6. Where did the idea originate that the world was created about 6000 years ago?

Archbishop Ussher (died 1656) made an elaborate study of the chronology of the Old Testament, with the result that he claimed the year 4004 B.C. as the time of creation. His conclusions were incorporated into the margin of the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible after his death. Consequently, for countless individuals these dates came to be accepted as virtually inspired and infallible.

7. What should we think of Ussher's chronology today?

We must not forget that Ussher's calculations are not a part of the inspired text, but are merely human opinion, which may or may not be reliable. Fact is that Ussher's method for calculating the time of the origin of the world has been shown to be impossible. His method is based upon the assumption that the biblical genealogies (cf. I Chron. 1, 2, 3) are complete *with no links omitted*. It has been shown, however, that whole generations are sometimes omitted; for example, a grandson is spoken of as a son, etc. Therefore we cannot accurately calculate the date of the creation from the biblical genealogies. About all that Ussher's work does show is that the earth is at least 6000 years old. It may, of course, be much older than that.

8. Is it possible that the earth is actually millions or billions of years old?

Although there is difference of opinion as to the length of the days of the creation week as recorded in Genesis 1, nevertheless, the Bible nowhere gives the impression that such enormous figures are to be thought of in this connection. We must remember that these figures usually have

their origin with evolutionists who feel that they need such large amounts of time in order to account for the supposed development of things from the single cell to the complex forms of life existing today. Such thinkers consider the biblical doctrine of creation utterly untenable, and are therefore out of sympathy with the Christian faith.

9. What does it mean that God created all things "good"?

The Genesis 1 account stresses the fact that God saw upon review that everything created "was very good" (cf. verse 31). This means that all things were completely free from evil of any kind, both moral evil and physical evil. God, the Holy One, could rightfully enjoy his creation! This implies that present-day evil is an *abnormality*. It is actually alien to the universe as God created it.

10. Why are things created as they are?

The shape and form of the several creatures made by God is designed so that God's service can be best performed. We may say again that the Bible and Article XII of the Confession emphasize that creation's purpose is the praise of the Creator. This gives meaning and dignity to human existence, for example, because it implies the idea of "office." The doctrine of creation means that man, the pinnacle of God's creation, "fits" into the pattern of God's world so that he can be useful and thus delight himself in the glory of God as revealed everywhere!

11. How must we think of the angels?

(1) We must think of them as creatures with distinct properties and with a distinct task, that is, "to be his messengers and to serve his elect." (2) Angels are spirits without any bodies. (3) The angels form a great host of individual beings, not organically related nor descended from a common ancestor, such as Adam, who is the first father of us all. (4) The angels are interested in us, for good or for ill (Read Matt. 18:10; I Pet. 5:8; I Pet. 1:12).

12. What was the difference between the fall of the wicked angels into sin and the fall of the human race into sin?

(1) In the case of the human race the sin of one man (Rom. 5:12) brought about the fall of the whole race. In the case of the angels, each one must have sinned individually and fallen by his own personal act. (See question 11 [3].) (2) While the entire human race fell through one man, only part of the angels fell into sin.

13. Is the opposition of the fallen angels active today?

Yes. It is always our duty as Christians to be alert to the wiles of the Evil One and his cohorts. Believers and the Church are the special objects of his hateful, spiteful activity. Certainly we can never afford to be naive with respect to the reality of the devil and his influence in this present world, of which he is chief. Sometimes modern Christians talk and act as if there were no dangers whatsoever of which to be afraid. As a consequence, the devil rejoices, because then he has full opportunity to practice his trade as chief murderer of the Church and its members. If we knew that a notorious "killer" were running loose in our neighborhood, we would take every precaution to protect ourselves and our dear ones from him. We ought to do no less spiritually with respect to the fallen angels!

"We see many every day keep up a profession of the Christian religion, but such a profession as will not provoke the world. Now, this is to be ashamed of the Gospel, to be ashamed of the power and glory of it, to be ashamed of the Author of it. No man can put Jesus Christ to greater shame, than by professing the Gospel without showing the power of it." — *John Owen*.

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"From the Letterbox"

(Continued from page 21)

I fail to find any great concern in the Bible to salvage some of the truth intertwined with error. But there is great concern that we should be on our guard against error. Hence I would not say that God's common grace speaks to us through Calhoun *et al* (cf. Dr. Kromminga's reply). Such identification of common grace and general revelation is extremely dangerous, to say the least. But I would say that God's special revelation warns us against Calhoun as one who expresses the spirit of antichrist whom we are to abhor and to oppose with might and main.

Henry R. Van Til

"The Pause for Praise"

(Continued from page 8)

factors which seek to draw us aside. Guarding God's glory and promoting his praise is a blessed task.

"I Will Remember Thy Wonders of Old"

Another factor in this story is God's providence. Prayer and diligent devotion to duty leads to confidence in that providence. God answered the petition of the trusting servant so surprisingly that the very first young lady he met was God's choice for Isaac. However, it was in the path of obedience, in the realization of a high purpose, that God blessed him. As it is expressed in the Authorized Version, "I being in the way, the Lord led me . . ." Since the servant was obedient to God in this manner, it was easy for him to be grateful.

Many are dubious about God's providence today. War and rumors of war have made men weary. Communism seems to be making steady advance in the hearts of sin-sick men everywhere. There is reason to fear Communism right here in America. The depraved, sinful heart of man is by nature receptive to that diabolical system with its materialism, secularism, and atheism. Defeat at the hands of the Soviet, or even the dire economic effects of such a war regardless of victory, would furnish real opportunity for complete success to this sinister force.

What, then, are we going to do?

We can go to Asaph's 77th Psalm for instruction. He, too, questioned God's remembrance, kindness, fidelity, and grace. But then he spoke these words:

"But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

I will make mention of the deeds of Jehovah;

For I will remember thy wonders of old.

I will meditate also upon all thy work,

And muse on thy doings.

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary:

Who is a great god like unto God?

Thou art the God that doest wonders:

Thou hast made known thy strength among the peoples.

Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people."

Certainly it is necessary with the Church of all ages to look forward in hope, joining in the fervent prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" But this attitude alone is not enough. Asaph also turned back in his mind to remember past blessings and deliverances. Doing this, he gained courage for the future.

Think of the way that God has led us in the past! What a glorious history the Christian Church boasts! But the same God rules in the heavens *today!* It is still his prerogative to place on earthly thrones whomsoever he will. Let us not forget that he has always redeemed his people, and that he remains faithful even in the midst of our

"The most illiterate Christian, if he can read the English Bible, and will take the care to read it in a careful manner, will not only attain all the practical knowledge which is necessary to salvation, but by God's blessing he will become learned in everything relating to his religion to such a degree that he will not be liable to be misled, either by the refuted arguments or the false assertions of those who endeavor to engraft their own opinions upon the oracles of God." — *Horsley*.

unfaithfulness. Let us recapture the diligence, the zeal, the consecration, the vision of the early Church! Let us with them give him the pre-eminence in our lives. In that way we too will find it possible to praise for praise.

"For Thine is the Glory"

Notice how Abraham's servant takes time to pour out his heart in gratitude to God. It is easy to see him there by the well, humbly praying as Rebekah eagerly dashes homeward to tell of the things that have just happened. How easy it would have been for this servant to take these things for granted, or to refuse to share in the joy of this wonderful blessing. He might, like us, have used this time to envy others, say, wealthy Abraham and his privileged son.

However, nothing like that enters his mind! On the contrary, he loses himself in his duty, identifying himself with God's covenantal program, consecrating his life to the glory of God. No doubt there were many things that he failed to understand. It must have been difficult for him to be reconciled to God's ways in view of the fact that he occupied merely a servant's position. But by God's grace he serves as a model servant of God as well as Abraham, ever true to the charge which God had assigned him. He soon fades out of the biblical picture. We hear no more of him after Isaac and Rebekah meet. But we do hear more of Isaac, of Jacob, of Israel, of God's covenant with his people, of his Church throughout the ages, and of his praise sung forever by legions of redeemed.

"Chosen in Him"

In spite of all the difficult circumstances in our world today, all perplexing events in our individual lives, all pacifying voices from complacent church members, all taunts from unbelievers, God's Church is marching on to the day of consummation. Because we are "chosen in him from before the foundation of the world," we do and shall march in that heavenly company. Yes, there is work to do here below in identifying ourselves with God's program, in following the Christ whose "blood-red banner streams afar." This is our charge! This is God's way for us! Then we can be thankful in all things, for gratitude is the true expression of the redeemed heart.

My only comfort in life and death is "that I, with body and soul . . . am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, wherefore by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto Him."

This is our basis for constant gratitude! For the day will come when we, too, shall join the redeemed round about the throne in that heavenly doxology: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

"May We Shoot to Kill?"

(Continued from page 2)

There is, therefore, no real conflict between the Sermon on the Mount and Romans 13, since the former refers to our action as individuals in the Kingdom of Heaven, which is a reality here and now; and the latter refers to our corporate action as members of a State in a world of sin. War is the legitimate exercise of the power of the sword by a divinely instituted government for the maintenance of justice. It is, however, to be used not as policy or as a necessary moment in the development of the nation, but as an extreme remedy. We may never seek to annihilate the enemy or demand unconditional surrender in order to make a commercial nation into a cow pasture (a la Morgenthau and Roosevelt), but we must strive for a just peace in which the rightful interests of all are insured.

A Corporate Responsibility

The question of whether a war is justifiable happily is not the responsibility of the individual Christian. Neither, on the other hand, is it within the province of the chief executive to decide the issue. This question ought to be decided by the conscience of the nation as a whole and, more particularly, by its representatives in Congress. No individual can ever take responsi-

bility, and no Christian may refuse military service, on the ground that he finds the war presently in progress to be unjustifiable. The question of obeying God rather than man is irrelevant and does not apply in this instance. As part of the nation, the church and the saints, in their capacity as citizens, will certainly pass judgment on any given war. It may be necessary on some occasion to testify against the government's decision, but in the meantime the individual Christian is bound to give unto Caesar what is his due—taxes, honor, and military service.

In conclusion, then, war is a stern reality in a world of sin. It is the rightful function of government in the pursuit of justice. War, as such, is not prohibited by Scripture nor contradicted by divine legislation directed to the individual. The law of God and the ethic of the New Testament do not prohibit the violence and killing in war, but they prescribe rigidly concerning the conduct of war. That, however, demands separate consideration in a following issue.

More, My God, of Thee

Less, less of self each day,
And more, my God of Thee;
Oh keep me in Thy way
However rough it be.

Less of the flesh each day,
Less of the world and sin;
More of Thy love, I pray,
More of Thyself within.

Riper and riper now,
Each hour let me become;
Less fond of things below,
More fit for such a home.

More moulded to Thy will,
Lord, let Thy servant be;
Higher and higher still—
Nearer and nearer Thee.

Author Unknown

Proclaimer of the Truth

The church has no more important task than that of preaching the Word of God.

There are those who would have the Word preached by individuals rather than the church. There have been in the past, and there are today, evangelists and other preachers so-called who have never been ordained to the ministry or sent out by the church. That too savors of Anabaptistic individualism. No one has the right to say that God will not bless the labors of such men, but that their position is far from ideal may be asserted without hesitation. All Christians must witness for their Lord, but the preaching of the truth of special revelation is the official task of the church. For but one bit of scriptural proof, were not Paul and Barnabas sent out as missionaries by the church at Antioch with the laying on of hands, and did not that church send them out at the express command of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3)?

How stupendous a task is preaching! Not only isolated portions of the Bible but "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) must be declared. Preaching involves both explanation of the Word of God and its application. And the Word must be applied, not merely to the needs of the individual hearers, but also to all those social and political problems that have religious import. The truth of God must be proclaimed to all men: to those who are rich and to those who are poor, to rulers and subjects, to rich and poor, to the learned and the ignorant, to the cultured and the uncultured, to men of every race, nation and language. That stupendous task the exalted Christ has committed to His church. And on its performance hangs the salvation of the world.

R. B. Kuiper
in *The Presbyterian Guardian*

"Unto Him That Loveth Us"

(Continued from page 3)

Obliged to Holy Gratitude

It is the natural fruit of faith, and also its evidence, to be much engaged in contemplating the love of the Redeemer, and in regarding with holy gratitude the benefits we have received and yet expect at his hands. And while we thus meditate on his love, and on our honors and privileges as his people, our hearts burn within us and our lips speak forth his praise. So John, in the text of this devotional meditation, considering the love of Christ in loosing his people from their sins, and in making them a royal priesthood, cries out in the name of the Church Universal, "to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

These words express the joy which the believer feels in the glory to which Christ has already been exalted, and his longing to see him universally glorified. "God . . . raised him from the dead, and gave him glory" (1 Pet. 1:21). We cannot err in the way of excess in acknowledging the pre-eminence of our Savior. It is declared to be the will of God "that all . . . honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (John 5:23). Again, it is written: "Let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1:6). To him be the glory!

The spirit of faith is invariably a spirit of such devotion. Have you ever observed that a good part of the Holy Scriptures consists in the expression of devout feelings? The prophets and apostles were not satisfied with reasoning out the truth, establishing it by arguments and illustrating it by examples, but they continually gave utterance to corresponding emotions of soul. Let no one say that this represents only the surface of religion. The fact is that this represents the deeper aspect of faith so long as these emotions and enthusiasms are regulated by the truth.

The Need for Holy Enthusiasm

In many academic circles religious enthusiasm is taboo. One sometimes finds this to be so where he least expects it, namely, in Christian schools, colleges, and seminaries. Young people whose hearts are warm with love

for Christ and his kingdom are astonished and disappointed by the "deep-freeze" handling of truth—God's truth—in the classrooms. The *intelligentsia* can be so cold. Everything for the head; nothing for the heart. Warfield, in 1912, decried the *Christless Christianity* of his times. In our day we must lament the *heartless Christianity*. Perhaps the two are related. Listen to the angels! It is not intelligence only, but more eminently *devotion* that distinguishes their spiritual exercises. These high orders, in all their gradations, continually express their devout ardor in terms like these: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

We need more of this in our homes, our churches, and our Christian schools. So often it appears that we are averse to the cultivation of devotional feelings. Our thoughts are not occupied as they should be with the glory of the Savior. His character and grace should be frequent subjects of our meditation. Our hearts should muse while our minds are being stimulated, till the fire burns within us and our tongues exclaim: "To him be glory for ever."

Does someone call that fundamentalism? Call it what you please, my friend. It is genuinely scriptural. Paul was such a fundamentalist. He was not a cold-blooded logic-chopper. Far from it! A burning zeal consumed him. To the learned that confronted him, wherever he preached or lectured, he had something more to offer than a desiccated cluster of juiceless categories. A man of unusual intellect, a dialectician and theologian, he was also a man of deep feeling. His theology had warmth. His reasoning was suffused with emotion. This is observable even in his epistle to the Romans, the most severely logical form of reasoning he has left us.

The Joy of Personal Submission

"To him be the glory and the dominion." Yes, dominion, too. This is an acknowledgment of his right to reign, a profession of our personal submission to him, and an aspiration after the universal establishment of his kingdom. To praise him thus is a most personal matter. For if we say, "To him be dominion," we must be sure that we ourselves submit to him. Otherwise our words will condemn us.

We must submit to the dominion of his grace, placing all our confidence in it. We must submit to the dominion of all his laws, in all their extent and spirituality. His laws are holy, just, and good. They are the transcript of his character. We see the excellence of them all, and while painfully aware that we fall far short of their perfection, we would not have one of them altered.

"To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

"The Stars Tell Time"

(Continued from page 5)

of the particles present in one cubic centimeter of water, which amounts to about fifteen small drops. Scientists tell us that it would take 150,000 years to count these if all the people in the world, about 2,341,000,000 of us, were to count them at the rate of four per second and work day in and day out, twenty-four hours a day. This obviously cannot be done, but scientists accept the number since the same value is obtained by using about a dozen different and independent methods. So, too, with age determinations. All methods point to approximately the same-sized answer. The nonscientist should be willing to concede that there is some validity to such measurements.

Greater Light on Genesis

Another reason for placing some trust in these numbers is that we can explain so many features of the earth's crust better in terms of an old earth. This in no way minimizes the fact of creation nor does it force one to compromise with the evolutionist. In fact, it enables us to interpret Genesis better, which is, of course, our chief aim.

The Bible tells us that the earth was once without form, and void, and that darkness was upon the face of the deep. This statement was challenged in times past by certain scientists, but science now has made discoveries which help us to explain the truth of this verse. Dark nebulae, or cloud-like, gaseous bodies, have been found, and no better description of them can be given than that found in Genesis

1:2. Such bodies can be very hot, although not hot enough to give off light. As our earth cooled, some of the water vapor collected to form the liquid water of our oceans and seas. This explains Genesis 1:7, where we read that God divided the waters which were under the firmament (or space) from those above it. Here we obviously have a description of the forming of the oceans and the retaining of heavy clouds higher up. This was followed by the clouds breaking up and the appearance of the sun and moon and the determining of the seasons. There is much geological evidence that the climate of the earth was once warm from pole to pole and that originally there were no seasons. This could have been the case when the earth was warm enough to keep a good bit of its moisture in the vapor state. As the earth cooled, the clouds cleared away, the rays of the sun were no longer diffused (scattered in all directions) but became localized, developing different temperature zones.

It is possible to continue at great length in an attempt to show how the acceptance of the theory of an old earth aids us in interpreting Genesis better. We shall have occasion to do a bit more of this in other articles which are being contemplated. A little has been presented in an attempt to show that God was active in all the creative operations. He did not set the worlds in motion and leave them to themselves, but the God who gives or withholds rain today according to his good pleasure, did the same in ages gone by. The more one learns about the beauty and orderliness of the creative processes, the more one is inclined to say, "When I consider thy heavens . . . what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

"What Is Reformed Piety?"

(Continued from page 7)

controlled by God's will wholly praiseworthy? Then where did Philip's piety err?

Five Marks

In conclusion we present five marks of what we believe to be true piety or true godliness. These five marks will be further developed in subsequent articles. They are here presented only in summary.

1. True piety or godliness is governed throughout by an *objective rule and standard*, namely, the changeless moral law of God. True piety is first of all a piety of *law*. Human convenience, desire, pleasure — all such must bow before this all-important factor. True piety is marked by an overwhelming sense of the awful, majestic holiness of God the Law-giver.

2. True piety is *inward, spiritual*. It is the expression of a regenerated heart. It is not externalistic. Central in true godliness is the heart of man in redeemed fellowship with his God and Savior through the inner working of the Holy Spirit. This central element in the godly life may not be encrusted and choked by a load of external things and merely social customs.

3. True piety is *free* — because governed alone by God's altogether perfect law and because true piety is inward and spiritual in its essence. In short, in true piety the liberty of the sons of God comes to expression. True piety is not a matter of legalistic coercion. It is a matter of a genuinely free love of that law which is "holy, and just, and good."

4. True piety expresses itself *in rapport with life* in God's world. True godliness is not a matter of separation or isolation from life. True piety is marked by *naturalness*, not by an artificial "spirituality" gained at the expense of splitting the spiritual apart from the natural in life. There is no escapism in Reformed piety. It is a piety, not of escape or isolation, but of heart-searching challenge.

5. True piety is *positive*, not negative. Godliness is not first of all a matter of what one does not do, but rather of what one does for God and his glorious Kingdom. The negative form of expression of some of the Ten Commandments does not discredit this point. Profound positive principles of life are involved in the "Thou shalt not" of the Decalogue. True piety is not a matter of pinched negation. It is rather a positive living for Christ and his Kingdom in every aspect of life (See Matt. 25:31-46).

(To be continued)

"The Value of Religion"

(Continued from page 13)

seeks happiness *in itself*, apart from the supreme aim of glorifying God, will never find it. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

All our church standards set forth the same view. Mention may be made of the *Confession of Faith*, II. 2, "God . . . is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom and to whom are all things . . . To him is due from angels and men and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them." Parallel to this are the statements of the *Testimony*, I. 3 and II. 3.

Where Do We Stand?

The scriptural view of religion as a pure, unselfish devotion to God for his own sake constitutes an ideal that we, with our sin-corrupted nature, cannot attain to in the present life. Needless to say, the person who has not been born again cannot attain to it at all; he does not even recognize it as the true ideal; he still thinks of religion as existing for the sake of its "values" to the individual and to society. But even the redeemed, who have been born again of the Holy Spirit and have believed on Christ as their Savior, can attain to this ideal, during the present life, only in a partial and preliminary fashion. In facing this ideal, every Christian must at once be convicted in his conscience of falling far short of a perfect religious devotion to God. That is inseparable from our present, imperfectly sanctified state. Only in the state of glory will we be able fully to glorify and enjoy God for his own sake, without the selfishness and mixed motives which impair our devotions and service here on earth.

But to admit that the ideal cannot be attained in the present life does not mean that we may stop trying to attain it. We are to press toward the goal, to strive toward the ideal of pure religious devotion to God. Two things are important: first, that we recognize the true ideal, and that means also to discern the falsity of the humanistic view of "the value of religion," to realize that much that is called "religion"

today is at bottom irreligious; and secondly, to strive, humbly, sincerely and patiently, day by day, to attain the purpose of our existence by glorifying and enjoying God our Creator and Redeemer.

"Christian Communism, or Christian Charity?"

(Continued from page 14)

spiritual fathers of Communism were not inspired by the Spirit of Christ, but were of the antichrist. They rejected God and Christ and Christian love. They tried to destroy religion and filled men's hearts with hatred for their fellow-men. The Communist Utopia is not the Kingdom of God, its classless society is a snare and a delusion for which men are asked to scrape and sacrifice and die. The Communists do not propose a revolution by regeneration of the individual, but by the violent overthrow of the ruling classes. Communism fails to recognize the total depravity of the human race and the fact that the heart of man is desperately wicked. It seeks rather to reorganize society by its collectivistic economy. However, it fails because it is not revolutionary enough: it does not propose to revolutionize the revolutionist who is in need of a new heart; it does not believe in the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All this is common knowledge for which I need not advert to any sources on Communism, especially since I hope to deal with this matter in some detail in future issues. But the very thought of bringing Communism, with its historic meaning and all that the term implies today, into juxtaposition with Christianity, to name them in the same breath as blood brothers, is sacrilege! What concord hath Christ with Belial? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?

Let us indeed practice Christian charity! Let him that hath two coats give to him that hath none, and let him that hath abundance give to him that hath not—but let us not call that Communism. That would be comparable to the Scribes who said that

Christ cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Let us not sin against the Holy Spirit of God by identifying his work with the monstrous caricature and travesty of Christian love called "Communism"!

Man by nature would annihilate God and deify himself; the Gospel glorifies God and annihilates man."—*Stephen Charnock.*

"Be Ye Separate"

(Continued from page 15)

fer. The school is not the only instrument that molds characters! Groen saw this danger largely in the instrument of the State schools; we may see it in other agencies if we are not blind. The foe is not less active, nor less clever, nor yet less vicious than he was in Groen's time. Groen's famous call-to-arms was, "In our corner we are safe! In our corner we are strong. In our corner we may be the kind of parents God wants us to be. In our corner we shall be able to do what God wants us to do. Nowhere but in our corner can we be God's covenant people!"

Isolation, a Divine Appointment

Do we understand that it is not the liberals who have forced us into this corner, but that it is God himself who has provided this place of safety for us? In this place he will nourish us. In this place we may be sore pressed, but not overcome (read Rev. 12:14).

How then must we be isolated? As Church we must be content to be in our divinely appointed corner. There our main business is to worship and to glorify our God. From this corner as base we have duties to perform towards the world outside: preach, teach. If we do not maintain our isolation while making these contacts with the world, our power is lost. As individuals we must be insulated. Only then can we venture forth into the world in safety. Only then can we be a power for good. When rats gnaw through the insulation of an electric wire, the bare copper may shine like gold for a little while, but a short circuit will soon stop the flow of energy.

The picture is very clear, I believe. As Christians we are "in the world but not of the world." This is as true today as it ever was and ever will be. As wind and weather soon tarnish the bright copper, so the bright spirit of an uninsulated Christian will soon be dulled by worldly contact and then be short-circuited.

But Church and individuals, properly isolated and insulated, can "turn the world upside down."

"He that does righteousness is born of God" (I John 2:29). A Christian is in real measure a holy person. He seeks to live according to God's Word and to avoid the things God hates. He trusts Christ as his Savior, wishes to obey his commands—to follow him. He is not perfect—none will tell you that sooner than himself. He finds sin within him constantly warring against grace and trying to draw him away from God. But in spite of all shortcomings, the average bent and bias of his way is holy—in doings, tastes, habits. Like a ship beating up against a contrary wind, the general course of his life is in one direction—toward God and for God. Such are amongst the number of those of whom God's Son spake when he said: "All the Father giveth me shall come to me." Not for anything good in us—but because God works in those sinners he has chosen to save "both to will and to do of his good pleasure," to learn his gospel; to believe it; to repent of sin and to follow Christ (Adapted from Bishop Ryle as in "Knots Untied.")

It is written: "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." Now Christ hung upon the cross, therefore he fell under that curse. But it is certain that he did not suffer that punishment on his own account. It follows, therefore, either that he was crucified in vain, or that our curse (the penalty due us for our sins from God) was laid upon him, in order that he—who believe on him—might be delivered from it."

"The Authority of Scripture"

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fact whatsoever. If he does not, then he would deny either his philosophy of Chance or his philosophy of Fate. According to him, every fact that he meets has in it the two ingredients: that of Chance and that of Fate, that of the wholly unknown and that of the wholly known. Thus man makes the tools of thought, which the Creator has given him in order therewith to think God's thoughts after him on a created level, into the means by which he makes sure that God cannot exist, and therefore certainly cannot reveal himself.

When Mr. White meets Mr. Black he will make this issue plain. He will tell Mr. Black that his methodology cannot make any fact or any group of facts intelligible to himself. Hear him as he speaks to the unbeliever:

"On your basis, Mr. Black, no fact can be identified by distinguishing it from any other fact. For all facts would be changing into their opposites all the time. All would be gobble-de-gook. At the same time, nothing could change at all; all would be one block of ice. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? He clearly has. I know you cannot see this even though it is perfectly clear. I know you have taken out your own eyes. Hence your inability to see is at the same time unwillingness to see. Pray God for forgiveness and repent."

Mr. Grey on Logic

But what will be the approach of the Conservative, Mr. Grey, on this question of logic? He will do the same sort of thing that we saw him do with respect to the question of facts. Mr. Grey will again try to please Mr. Black by saying that, of course, he will justify his appeal to the authority of the Bible by showing that the very idea of such an appeal, as well as the content of the Bible, are fully in accord with the demands of logic.

"You are quite right in holding that nothing meaningful can be said without presupposing the validity of the law of noncontradiction," says Mr. Grey.¹ "The conservative ardently defends a system of authority."² But "without reason to canvass the evidence of a

given authority, how can one segregate a right authority from a wrong one? . . . Without systematic consistency to aid us, it appears that all we can do is to draw straws, count noses, flip coins to choose an authority. Once we do apply the law of contradiction, we are no longer appealing to *ipse dixit* authority, but to coherent truth."¹ "The Scriptures tell us to test the spirits (I John 4:1). This can be done by applying the canons of truth. God cannot lie. His authority, therefore, and coherent truth are coincident at every point. Truth, not blind authority, saves us from being blind followers of the blind."²

"Bring on your revelations," continues Mr. Grey. "Let them make peace with the law of contradiction and the facts of history, and they will deserve a rational man's assent."³ "Any theology which rejects Aristotle's fourth book of the *Metaphysics* is big with the elements of its own destruction."⁴ "If Paul were teaching that the crucified Christ were objectively foolish, in the sense that he cannot be rationally categorized, then he would have pointed to the insane and the demented as incarnations of truth."⁵

Mr. Black's Reaction

"Well," says Mr. Black, "this is great news indeed. I knew that the modernists were willing with us to start from human experience as the final reference point in all research. I knew that they were willing with us to start with Chance as the source of facts, in order then to manufacture such facts of nature and of history as the law of noncontradiction, based on Chance, will allow. I also knew that the new modernist, Karl Barth, is willing to make over his God so that he can change into the opposite of himself, in order that thus he may satisfy both our irrationalist philosophy of Chance and our rationalist philosophy of logic. But I did not know that there were any orthodox people who were willing to do such a thing. But you have surprised me before. You were willing to throw your resurrection into the realm of Chance in order to have me accept it. So I really should have expected that you would also be willing to make the law of noncontradiction rest upon man himself instead of upon God."

1 *Idem*, p. 72.

2 *Idem*, p. 73.

3 *Idem*, p. 178.

4 *Idem*, p. 78.

5 *Idem*, p. 85.

"And I am extremely happy that not only the Arminian Fundamentalists but also you less extreme or moderate Calvinists, like Buswell and Carnell, are now willing to test your own revelation by a principle that is wholly independent of that revelation. It is now only a matter of time and you will see that you have to come over on our side altogether."

"I do not like the regular Calvinists. But they are certainly quite right from their own point of view. Mr. White claims that I am a creature of God. He says that all facts are made by God and controlled by the providence of God. He says that all men have sinned against God in Adam their representative. He adds that therefore I am spiritually blind and morally perverse. He says all this and more on the basis of the absolute authority of Scripture. He would interpret me, my facts, and my logic in terms of the authority of that Scripture. He says I need this authority. He says I need *nothing but* this authority. His Scripture, he claims, is sufficient and final. And the whole thing, he claims, is clear."

"Now all this looks like plain historic Protestantism to me. I can intellectually understand the Calvinist on this matter of authority. I cannot understand you. You seem to me to want to have your cake and eat it. If you believe in scriptural authority, then why not explain all things, man, fact, and logic in terms of it? If you want with us to live by your own authority, by the experience of the human race, then why not have done with the Bible as absolute authority? It then, at best, gives you the authority of the expert."

"In your idea of the rational man who tests all things by the facts of history and by the law of noncontradiction, you have certainly made a point of contact with us. If you carry this through, you will indeed succeed in achieving complete coincidence between your ideas and ours. And, with us, you will have achieved complete coincidence between the ideas of man and the ideas of God. But the reason for this coincidence of your ideas with ours, and for the coincidence of man's ideas with God's, is that you then have a God and a Christ who are identical with man."

"Do you not think, Mr. Grey, that this is too great a price for you to pay? I am sure that you do not thus mean to

1 Cf. Carnell, *Op. Cit.*, p. 57.

2 *Idem*, p. 71.

drag down your God into the universe. I am sure that you do not thus mean to crucify your Christ afresh. But why then halt between two opinions? I do not believe Christianity, but, if I did, I think I would stand with Mr. White."

"A Calvinistic University"

(Continued from page 20)

Nevertheless, if I may venture to express what appears to be the prevailing viewpoint, we are taking new account of the situation which now exists and in which a Calvinistic Christian University must be brought into existence. This particular Association is not regarded as possessing certain prior rights in the field. If the Association can be utilized toward the accomplishment of its great end, that would be gratifying. In that case, however, it is not vital that the governing board of the university or the trustees of the Association should include necessarily the present members of the Board. Nor do we regard the constitution of the Association, in spite of our zeal for its main provisions, as an instrument that needs to be perpetuated in every detail. Finally, we do not think this Association itself is indispensable. Our devout concern is that, within or without the structure of this organization, the essential ideals and principles of the Association should be maintained and should find historical realization. To the realization of that goal we meanwhile continue to dedicate our best efforts.

General Conclusions

Finally, I desire to sum up certain broad conclusions which appear to be essential to realize the goal of establishing a Free Reformed University in America.

1. It will be necessary, first of all, in the spirit of Christian good will, to seek to secure the fullest possible co-operation of the distinctively Reformed forces in this land and even beyond our borders. Such co-operation will be required particularly with a view to the formation of competent, discerning and faithful faculties.

2. The university movement must make it unmistakably clear that it has in view nothing short of an out-and-out Reformed institution with a clear-cut educational philosophy, including the basic elements of the Purpose and

Declaration of the present Association. A mere synthesis of Reformed and non-Reformed, or of Christian and pagan, perspectives will not measure up to the requirements.

3. If the university movement is to succeed, it must be able to arouse a considerable company of God's people to support the cause because they believe in it and are persuaded that it is their cause. God's people may well come to share the conviction that nothing short of a comprehensive system of Christian education, including of necessity instruction and research on the very highest academic level and preparing men for the learned professions and other vocations, is not a luxury, but a necessity grounded in the Christian faith.

Pray and Work!

4. Such a movement, characterized by profound commitment to the Reformed faith, and commanding the prayerful support of Calvinistic people of every vocation, can be expected to prosper only as there is a humble supplication of God for a powerful upsurge of Christian faith and life. More than human calculations and co-operation are demanded. We must pray and work, not merely that nonbelievers may be converted and that non-Reformed churches and men may become Reformed. Among us who are perhaps proud of our Reformed name and heritage and present progress, there must also be a profound concern for genuine spiritual revival and reformation and a new dedication of our lives and fortunes to the end that the kingship of Christ may be freshly acknowledged in word and deed.

As we turn back to God, to the Bible, to the foundational principles of our faith, we may discover, as God's people have often in times past, that the resources available for the accomplishment of God's will far surpass their earlier calculating estimates. In such a faith and spirit we shall not mind beginning in as small, and apparently as insignificant, a way as our principles dictate. But we shall surely be enabled to make a real beginning in dependence upon the indispensable blessing of almighty God.

"Men 'do evil with both hands earnestly,' but do good with one hand faintly; no life in the heart, nor any diligence in the hand."—*Stephen Charnock.*

Testing the Spirit

II. Hence we readily understand that it is incumbent on us diligently to read and attend to the Scripture, if we would receive any advantage or satisfaction from the Spirit of God; (thus also Peter commends those who studiously attended to the doctrine of the prophets, which yet might be supposed to have retired after the light of the Gospel was risen;) but, on the contrary, that if any spirit, neglecting the wisdom of the word of God, obtrude on us another doctrine, he ought justly to be suspected of vanity and falsehood. For, as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, what authority will the Spirit have with us, unless we can distinguish him by the most certain criterion? We find him clearly designated, indeed, in the word of the Lord; but these unhappy men are fondly bent on delusion, even to their own destruction, seeking a spirit rather from themselves than from him. But they plead, that it is unworthy of the Spirit of God, to whom all things ought to be subject, to be made subject to the Scripture; as though it were ignominious to the Holy Spirit to be every where equal and uniform, in all things invariably consistent with himself. If he were to be conformed to the rules of men, or of angels, or of any other beings, I grant he might then be considered as degraded, or even reduced to a state of servitude; but while he is compared with himself, and considered in himself, who will assert that he is thereby injured? This is bringing him to the test of examination. I confess it is. But it is the way which he has chosen for the confirmation of his majesty among us. We ought to be satisfied, as soon as he communicates himself to us. But, lest the spirit of Satan should insinuate himself under his name, he chooses to be recognized by us from his image, which he hath impressed in the Scriptures. He is the author of the Scriptures: he cannot be mutable and inconsistent with himself. He must therefore perpetually remain such as he has there discovered himself to be. This is not disgraceful to him; unless we esteem it honourable for him to alter and degenerate from himself.

John Calvin in *The Institutes*, Bk. I, Chap. ii, Par. 2.