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**"Marian Year":
A Protestant View**

Wonders of the Stars

Christian Colleges Evaluated

Caricature

The Calvinistic Critic

Eve

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Mary, the Mother of Jesus

A Protestant Point of View Concerning the "Marian Year"

Stephen Benko
Woodmont, Connecticut

"THE MARIAN YEAR".

POPE PIUS XII declared the current year, 1954, to be "Marian Year." The direct motive of this decision was the plan to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception" of Mary, the mother of Jesus. However, this celebration is connected with the newest Roman Catholic doctrine of the "Assumption of Mary" announced only a few years ago, because these two doctrines are inherently connected with each other. The Roman Catholic church all over the world had already made extensive propaganda for the "Marian year." In order to inform the evangelical Christians of this propaganda (which becomes every day bigger and more intensive) it seems to be quite necessary to give a short account of our Protestant belief concerning Mary. For easier understanding we shall divided the problem into two groups: 1.) How did the cult of St. Mary develop in the Roman Catholic church during the past centuries? and 2.) What is our opinion about the present Roman Catholic Mary-doctrines and Mary-cult?

1.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

We have positive proof that the Early Christian Church did not know anything about this cult. The first mention of Mary can be found towards the end of the 2nd century in the form of a phantastic legend about her birth (in the so called *Proto-Evangelium of James*). Justin Martyr (died 165 AD) was the first to compare Mary and Eve, the two prominent women-figures in the Bible. Following him Irenaeus (died 202 AD) says that the disobedience of the "virgin Eve" has been made good by the obedience of the "virgin Mary." Behind this statement is the thought that the similarity and difference between Eve and Mary lies in the attitudes which their reaction to the approach of God brought about. Eve was disobedient to the word of God, she ate from the fruit which she was not supposed to eat. Thus sin entered the world. Mary was obedient to God; she accepted Jesus' conception from the Holy Spirit in her womb and acting so the process of redemption started in the world. *Proto-Evangelium of James* and *Odes of Solomon* mention the legend that Mary remained virgin in her whole life. Against this legend one of the greatest authorities of the ancient times, Tertullian (died 222 AD) raises his voice and teaches that Mary and Joseph lived in a normal marriage relationship. This is, by the way, also Irenaeus'

opinion. The first known Mary-picture also originates from the 2nd century. It is a painting in the Priscilla catacomb in Rome and shows Mary with the child Jesus.

THE INFLUENCE OF PAGANISM.

Thus the Christian church functioned at least 150 years without even mentioning the name of Mary. Only after the middle of the second century begin to appear the legends about Mary, but the church was, of course, far from making a cult of it. However, this marks the very beginnings of today's Roman Catholic Mary-cult. Why did the Christian church neglect the admonition of her Lord (Luke 11:28) and how did she come on this fateful way? It is certain that in this respect the influence of Greek-Roman pagan religions on Christianity played a great role. In these polytheistic religions, besides the male gods the female goddesses are always present. In the goddesses (like "Artemis; Athene; The Parthenos; etc.) the primitive pagan imagination personified great human qualities like virginity, womanliness and maternity. Heathens converted into the Christian church brought these ideas with them and all the imagined qualities of their goddesses were transferred to the most eminent women-figure of Christianity, Mary. Thus the former heathens regained their lost goddesses in the person of Mary.

The Roman Catholic "patron saints" are in fact christianized forms of old pagan gods. In polytheism everything had its own god: sea, war, hunting, smithcraft, etc. After the same fashion developed in Roman Catholicism the gallery of "patron saints" for seamen, soldiers, hunters, blacksmiths, and in modern times, for cyclists, drivers, etc.

This kinship to pagan cults explains why the cult of Mary developed so fast after *Constantine the Great* guaranteed freedom of worship for Christians (313 AD), the consequence of which was the influx of a great number of heathens into the church. The *Synod of Nicea* (325 AD) pronounced the "homousios"—doctrine (Christ is of the same substance as God) and the simple popular belief concluded that, when Jesus Christ=God, then Mary really carried in her womb the living God. In accordance with this belief Athanasius (died 373 AD) calls Mary "God-bearer," and this expression was officially adopted by the *Synod of Ephesus* (431) ("Theotokos"). Of course, these events did not happen without difficulties; many people objected and wanted to call Mary merely "man-bearer" or at the most "Christ-bearer" ("anthropotokos" and "Christotokos").

These speculations originated from the fact that Jesus' miraculous conception came about without the cooperation of a human father. The fact that Mary conceived a child and still remained a virgin has been extended into the legend that Mary was virgin before, remained virgin during and after the birth of Jesus ("ante partum, in partu, post partum"). Mary conceived without sin—otherwise she would not have been able to bear the sinless Jesus who is God. But in order to be able to conceive and bear without sin, it was necessary for Mary to be free from sin. Mary *must have been* free from any sins—so concluded the popular imagination—she must have been free also from the original sin which is everybody's lot. But for Mary herself, in order to be free from the original sin, it was necessary to have been conceived free of sin ("immaculata conceptio"). It was thought logical that Mary was able to conceive and bear God in a sinless state only because she was free from sin from her conception on. Mary was more than just a woman; she was more than just a human being. She was different from everybody else—not yet a goddess but certainly not merely a woman.

THE RESISTANCE OF SOBER CHRISTIANS.

From the 5th century on the Mary cult becomes more and more popular. She appears more frequently on paintings; people start to name churches after her; they start to pray to her as to an intercessor. The famous preacher Chrysostomus (died 430 AD), however, did not want to know anything like these things. He was whole-heartedly against this re-paganizing development. He does not call Mary either "God bearer" or "Christ-bearer." (This is why Roman Catholic theologians do not favor Chrysostom.) Helvidius declared as the most natural thing that after the birth of Jesus Mary and Joseph had several other children. (Hieronymus in 383 AD wrote a book against this statement entitled: "Adversus Helvidium.") Ambrosius (died 397 AD) does not utter a word about the exemption from the original sin of Mary in spite of the fact that this great bishop of Mailand honored the mother of Jesus beyond measure. Augustinus (died 430 AD) is also among those who do not teach the sinless conception of Mary. Fulgentius (died 533 AD) bishop of Ruspe, definitely denied the truth of this sinless conception. Yet, ideas like the above mentioned ones gained more and more ground among the simple Christians. Gregory (died 594 AD), bishop of Tours, first mentions a phantastic legend according to which Mary, after her death and miraculous resurrection (similar to the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ), ascended to heaven. In the whole Christian literature this is the first written testimony to the existence of this legend—about 500 years after Mary's death. Nobody seems to have been even aware of it before. But apart from this, Bishop Gregory is not the type of man whom we could be-

lieve in everything without reservation. We know that his education was incomplete and that he was a naive person without the talent of sober judgment. His eight books entitled *Miracles* are collections of the most phantastic "miracles" and wholly impossible heroic deeds of several martyrs, which Gregory accepts without any sign of suspicion.

THE MIDDLE AGES.

The spiritual climate of the Middle Ages was favorable for the development of the Mary-cult. The simple believer, who had been told that God is an angry Lord always ready to send the sinner into hell, wanted to flee to the protection of the tender-hearted and loving Mary. Monks, who despised women and would not even look at them wanted to rest "on the heavenly breasts" of Mary. The art was overflowed with mariological elements: Mary with the child Jesus, Mary as "mater dolorosa" at the cross, etc. The rosary became popular; poems and hymns were written for the honor of the "God-mother." And the stories of miracles performed by Mary started as responses to prayers addressed to her. Mary became the paragon of perfect motherhood, but at the same time she was also the personifier of complete virginity, innocence and goodness. God's anger blazed up because of the sins of men but the perfect beauty of the Virgin Mary appeased this anger and changed it into love:

Ave Virgo, quae furorem
Conditoris in amorem
Tua forma convertisti,
Votis iram extinxisti . . .

In this way Mary got an active role in the progress of redemption. Now, Mary stands right beside Jesus and she is of the same rank with him. Jesus is Son of God—but Mary is the mother of Jesus, the mother of God. Jesus died for mankind—but if Mary would not have borne Jesus, then He could not have died at all. Jesus gave, once, satisfaction to God with His blood—but Mary reconciles God constantly with her beauty. Who redeemed the world? The question has not been raised in this contrasting form, but it seems that Mary has in the redemption at least as big a role as Jesus himself.

The holiday of the "Immaculate Conception" was celebrated first in 1140 A.D. in Lyon, France. Bernhard of Clairvaux (died 1109 AD) protested, and declared that this holiday is in contradiction to "the practice of the church, the tradition, and reason." Thomas Aquinas (died 1274 AD), who is considered by the Roman Catholic church as her greatest teacher, also firmly opposed this doctrine. Another authority in the field of theology during the Middle Ages, Bonaventura (died 1274 AD) taught that Mary was under sin just as much as any other human. Then came the so called "speculative theology," whose most prominent representative, Duns Scotus (died 1308 AD) thought that the conception of

Mary without sin is possible because of the reactionary power of Christ's death.

"SPECULATION" — BASIS OF THE NEW DOCTRINES.

In this trend of thought there were three opposing elements: popular belief, Biblical theology and speculation. The popular belief favored the Mary-cult because in it it could best live out its primitive pagan inclinations. The Church long ago hid from the people the idea of a loving God and His redeeming Christ and replaced it with the prospect of damnation and hell. Popular belief, with a natural instinct for redemption and salvation, tried to produce something to offset the anger of God and the judgment of Christ. This counter-poise was easily found in the mother of Jesus, the benevolent mediatrix, the Blessed Virgin. Biblical theology, of course, could not accept anything like this, not only because (as it was told by Bernhard of Clairvaux) it found every one of these ideas to be in contradiction to the practice of the Church, to tradition and to reason, but also because the Mary-cult contradicts the essence of the Gospels. But the Mary-cult already existed in practice, and therefore (as so many times during church-history) the decisive question emerged: in the relation of practice and theory which one should yield to the other? In this case the same thing happened as so many times before during the church-history, that theology, a little belated, did its best to construct a theoretical foundation for an already existing practice. One could not take the Bible as a basis because there is no reference in it to the Marian cult. One could not refer to tradition because the Mary-cult does not have any background in tradition either (the first mention of "immaculate conception" was made 250 years, assumption of Mary 500 years, after Mary's death!) Therefore Duns Scotus used the new method of theology to solve the question, and he tried to create a theoretical basis for the Mary-cult by means of speculation. Roman Catholic theology up until now uses exclusively this method while discussing the Mary-problem. Thus, Roman Catholic theology in proving the Mary doctrines relies solely on "logical deductions" without and contrary to the teachings of the Bible and traditions.

THE NEW RELIGION IS BORN.

The question of the "Immaculate Conception" brought about the most interesting and most significant inner strife in the church of the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas (who objected to the new dogma) belonged to the Dominican order and thus the Dominican order was always against the "Immaculate Conception." Therefore its great rival, the Franciscan order, stood up for the dogma and adopted it as its favorite doctrine. The dispute between these two great orders became more and more ardent until Pope Sixtus IV (died 1484 AD) prohibited the entire discussion, but without deciding the question in

favor of one or the other. The problem has not been settled by the *Synod of Trident* either (1546, *sessio V*). It simply left the decrees of Sixtus IV untouched. In the program of the Reformation there was no place for the discussion of this problem, but the Mary-cult soon found industrious propagators among the members of the Jesuit order. It was mostly because of their work that the discussion finally and officially was decided on December 8, 1854, when in St. Peter's cathedral in Rome Pope Pius IX proclaimed the new doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church about the immaculate conception of Mary. In commemoration of this occasion the present pope declared the current year as "Marian year."

The doctrine of "Immaculate Conception" teaches that Mary in the very first moment of her conception remained free from original sin. This makes her a distinct person from every other human being, and it was only as the result of further "logical conclusions" that the pope, on November 1, 1950 pronounced a new doctrine according to which Mary did not remain in the grave after her death, but shortly after her burial arose, left the grave and was lifted up to heaven. With this doctrine, the re-paganizing development of the Roman Catholic church has been accomplished, for Mary is now officially being mentioned as the "Queen of Heavens," *Regina Coelis*.

2.

Considering all this, what is our standpoint, and what should be our attitude toward the whole Mary-problem?

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Our standpoint is that of the Bible. The New Testament does not speak much about Mary. Her figure retires behind her son, Jesus, and after the four Gospels soon completely disappears. Apart from the Christmas stories her name is being mentioned only three times in the Gospels, in St. Mark 6,3; St. Matthew 13, 55, where the Pharisees mention her as the mother of Jesus; and in Acts 1, 14, where she was seen with the Apostles and with several other women in Jerusalem after the ascension of Christ. Reading the New Testament we are under the impression that Mary did not understand the activities of Jesus, at least while He was on the earth. At the wedding of Cana, Jesus admonishes her in a very firm tone and reminds her of His heavenly mission (St. John 1, 4). But Mary was unable to understand the consequences of this mission and was willing to consider the activities of her son as of a demoniac origin (St. Mark 3, 21; 3, 31; etc.). Perhaps she was ashamed of the fact that her son attracted a great deal of attention and wanted to withdraw him from the crowd (St. Mark 3, 31). Therefore, Jesus, spiritually speaking, separated Himself from His mother when—pointing at the multitude around Himself—He said: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister and mother." (St.

Matthew 12, 50; St. Mark 3, 35; St. Luke 8, 21). It happened only once during the life of Jesus that somebody, seeing the glory of Jesus, wanted to conclude something from this in favor of Mary; Jesus at once reacted, and rejected the attempt at its very beginnings. After one of Jesus' sermons a certain woman in the crowd cried out: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the paps which you had sucked!" Jesus immediately answers: "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it!" With these words Jesus himself rejected any possibility of a Mary-cult. Mary herself joined the community of believers probably after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

This is about all what we know about Mary from the pages of the New Testament. The Apostle Paul's and the other books of the Bible do not even mention her.

ARE THE R. C. DOCTRINES ABOUT MARY TRUE?

It is a proven fact that the Roman Catholic doctrine that Mary became free from original sin in the moment of her conception is not mentioned in the Bible, and that during the first few centuries nobody even thought of it. The same is true of the second R. C. doctrine that Mary remained virgin all her life. The Bible does not teach it; on the contrary, on the ground of the Gospels we can assert with certainty that after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph had several other children. This fact was known by the greatest authorities of the early Christian church. About the newest R. C. doctrine of the assumption of Mary we can undoubtedly declare that it is simply not true. There is no witness who could say that Mary rose after death, that she came out of the grave, and that she was lifted up to heaven. Nobody saw this "fact" and nobody even knows of it, or heard of it for 500 long years. If this legend, or at least part of it, were true, it could not have remained "in secret" for 500 years, and the entire Christian literature would not have been silent about it. One cannot make an actual fact of something which really did not happen merely by solemnly declaring it as a "doctrine."

Roman Catholic theology asserts that the Mary doctrines are results of "logical conclusions." One of these arguments, for example, runs as follows: Since Mary gave birth to Jesus in a sinless state, then, in order to be able to bear Jesus without sin, she herself must have been conceived without sin. If Mary was conceived without sin (which is a logical prerequisite of the sinless birth of Jesus), then it is quite illogical to assume that her body remained in the grave—because death is the punishment of the original sin from which Mary was free. Consequently, to be logical, one has to believe that the corpse of Mary did not remain in the grave but was lifted to heaven. The following is another "logical conclusion." Jesus' body is of Mary's flesh because He was born of her. Consequently, Mary's body could not

rot in the grave, just as Jesus' body did not see corruption. This absurd idea has been developed by a Roman Catholic theologian so far as to say that in the host at the Holy Communion the believers take and eat Mary's as well as Jesus' flesh. Needless to say all R. C. doctrines are in sharp contradiction to each other. I.e., if Mary was perfectly sinless why did she have to die at all?—since death is the punishment of sin. Thus, Mary was either not sinless or she did not die or she was not raised bodily to heaven; but all three together make a theological impossibility. Besides, where is it written that whatever the Roman Catholic theologians find "logical" is also logical for God? The Mary-doctrines are results of very human logic, and this is exactly what cannot be accepted as a basis for a doctrine. The essence of a doctrine is the revelation of God and not the logic of men. R. C. theology asserts that the sinless conception of Mary is a preliminary condition for the sinless conception of Jesus. But this is an error, and exactly the opposite is the truth. The reason for the divine nature of Jesus is not the sinlessness of Mary but the very fact that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. If the doctrine of the sinlessness of Mary, her super-human nature, were true, it would then shake one of our chief convictions at its very foundations, i.e., that Jesus was also a real human being because he was born of man, of Mary.

THE MARY-CULT IN PRACTICE.

As to the practical side of the Mary cult, it is a remarkable eruption of naïve paganism and primitive superstition. Pagan imagination is inexhaustible in producing ever new miracles, appearances and relics of Mary. Once, some milk of Mary's breast was exhibited in Rome; the eyes of Mary-statues blinked or wept. Not long ago in the American press appeared the news of such a miracle: in Entrevaux, France, the broken finger of a statue of Mary's mother, St. Anne, began to bleed (AP. *New Haven Journal Courier*, Dec. 30, 1953, first page). One could not count all these and similar "miracles." The great number of them can be explained by the fact that they can be manufactured very easily. For instance, the truth came to light about a weeping Mary-statue in Hungary when somebody discovered that behind her eyelids some salted onions were placed which, of course, produced considerable moisture which rolled down on her stone face like "tears." But all these are old tricks. During the great Dominican—Franciscan controversy, the Dominicans wished to prove by heavenly signs that Mary was conceived in sin, and therefore they made a painting of Mary as she was weeping. They also made her appear in person. The fraud was discovered and the Pope ordered four Dominicans to be burnt at the stake in Berne, Switzerland. In recent days we hear about the appearances of Mary, mostly in connection with Lourdes, which is still a famous place of pilgrimage—as if God would not be present and could

not hear and answer prayers in San Francisco or Tokyo just as well as in a small town in South France.

It is obvious that the Mary-cult in its present form and practice is a false teaching and a serious error committed by the Roman Catholic church. Let us see now, briefly, what is our Protestant opinion of Mary.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

We honor Mary as the mother of Jesus but we do not worship her as God. We honor her because she was elected by God that through her as a means Christ may enter in a human form. Not as if God would not have been able to appear in human form in several other ways—but because this was the will of God. Not that Mary has borne God, but God has chosen her as a means and not as a goal. Not as if Mary would have been more suitable for this purpose than any other women, because Mary needed the grace of God just the same as anybody else. "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God" said the angel (St. Luke 1, 30). And who would need grace if not a sinner? A sinner, who in herself has no merits and who in herself is totally unsuitable to be a tool in God's hands, but who is what she is only through the grace of God. Mary is not a grace-giver, who would appease the wrath of God, but God is the one who shows mercy and Mary is a receiver of this grace. In the birth of Jesus she

has a perfectly passive role: the initiative is not hers, she does not will, she does not accomplish, she does not create and does not redeem. Mary is only a receiver, something happens to her, she merely submits herself to the will of God; therefore she thus replied: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." (St. Luke 1:38). This is Mary for us: not a weeping statue of stone, not a half-goddess, not *regina coelis*, "Queen of Heavens," but the humble servant of God, who found mercy before Him and became the mother of Jesus.

THE YEAR OF THE LORD.

The followers of Christ, the Christians, count the years from the birth of their Lord: "Anno Domini . . ." "In this and this year of the Lord"—say Christians everywhere since nineteen hundred years ago. And with this they do not only say that since the birth of Jesus as many years have passed, but they also affirm that this present year—like all in the past and future—is the Lord's own, stands under His power, and serves His purposes. Pope Pius XII took the year 1954 out of this straight line of years and declared it "Marian Year." We Protestant Christians do not accept this "declaration" and now more firmly than ever we confess that there is no other Mediator between God and man except Jesus Christ, who is the *only* Redeemer of the world: He was, He shall be, and He is now "Anno Domini 1954" "—In this 1954th year of our Lord."

Wonders of the Universe of Stars

Peter G. Berkhout
Paterson, New Jersey

YOU may wonder why we selected this subject for our speech. Some of you may remember that two years ago we gave an illustrated talk on "A Half-Hour with Antony Van Leeuwenhoek or the Delights of a Microscopist." We then stated our belief that our Rotary Clubs should pay more attention to pure science. This is an effort in the same direction.* I have been unable to find anyone who remembers that a talk on astronomy was ever given to this club. It is also about time that we state something about man's place in the Universe.

You should not expect of me that I speak with authority on this subject. I am only an amateur. That may be a blessing in disguise. Suppose a man with

* This article was delivered before the Paterson Rotary Club in February, 1954. This should be kept in mind when one reads about such items as that the constellation of Orion was conspicuous in the sky.

That the field of astronomy is developing rapidly at present is evidenced by the fact that just within the last year astronomers have come to realize that the distances in the universe for the distant stars and nebulae have to be doubled. Thus the Great Nebula in Andromeda, instead of being 776,000 L. Y. away is actually 1,600,000 L. Y. removed from us.

the mind of an Einstein should speak to you on this subject?

The stars have aroused my interest since childhood, when I thought that those "patinas of bright gold," as Shakespeare called them, were the diamond heads of the golden nails in the floor of heaven. During our college days we retained our interest in the stars. We happened to be working on a golf-course near Grand Rapids, Michigan, during the summer-vacations. Sometimes we had to work nights, during the hot, dry spells, to move the sprinklers on the greens. The foreman said to us: "You are quite studious. Why don't you take something along to study? You might get lonesome here." I can imagine that many of you would have been playing solitaire there at night. However, I have never been much interested in cards and I believe that there is a great deal of truth in what Schopenhauer says, that the playing of cards is a declaration of intellectual bankruptcy.

At any rate, I had just studied John Ball's *The Story of the Heavens* and Camille Flammarion's

Popular Astronomy. But I had great difficulty in visualizing much of what I read, such as, the belt of the ecliptic, the signs of the zodiac and many of the constellations. So I took with me a revolving chart of the sky, a pair of binoculars and a text-book on astronomy. That is the way I learned something about the sky. How inspiring it was to watch the majestic sweep of the constellations during the night!

Shortly after that I wrote a series of articles on astronomy in the *Young Calvinist*, a paper for young people. Time and again I meet people who remember me from those articles. Thus, within the last month I received an inquiry from a college and seminary-president about the time and the paper in which I had written them. I hope that our talk of this noon may stimulate you and that you in turn may stimulate your children or grand-children.

I

Emerson has said so well:

If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore: and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The question may be asked why we should study astronomy at all. Just as simple is the question why we should not study it. Since time immemorial mankind has been interested in the stars. Astronomy is the oldest science.

The term, astronomy, should not be confused with astrology. At one time the two terms were synonymous. Astrology is now that pseudo-science which treats of the influence of the stars upon the course of human affairs and in foretelling the future. Astronomy is the science that concerns itself with the study of the heavenly bodies and the laws that govern them. Astrology is pure fiction and untruth.

I can list only half a dozen reasons why we should study the stars.

In the first place, it is a pleasant and useful pastime.

In the second place, we see in them some of the greatest wonders of nature. The great philosopher Kant has these memorable words written upon his statue in Königsberg, and they are his own:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect upon them;—the starry heavens above, and the moral law within.

Thirdly, the study of the stars will keep us from morbidity in our thinking and from narrow-mindedness. Many people are like the Duke of Alva. In his day, about 1570, Halley's Comet must have made one of its appearances. Someone asked Alva whether he had seen that new star. To this he replied that he was so busy down below here (killing Dutchmen, Catholic and Protestant) that he did not have time to look up. To relieve the Jews from morbidity in

their thinking the prophet Isaiah counseled them to lift up their eyes on high and to behold Him who created the stars and guides them in their paths.

Fourthly, the study of the starry heavens also stimulates the mind. In 1560 Tycho Brahe, then a youth of 14 in Denmark, was amazed that astronomers could predict a sun-eclipse years in advance, which occurred at the predicted minute. He also was struck with amazement at the appearance of a new star in the constellation of the Swan. By it his mind was turned to astronomy, and he became one of the immortals among astronomers. Nearly all the great philosophers were astronomers. Kant's first book was on astronomy. In fact a theory has been named after him—the Kant-Laplace nebular hypothesis.

In the fifth place, the study of the stars has great practical value. The more one knows about astronomy the more one can use it in navigation, exploration and travel. Even the study of the sun-spots, with their cyclic appearance of 11 years, has great practical value because of their affect upon the radio-beams that guide our planes.

Finally, in the sixth place, the study of the stars enhances our respect for the Creator. It has been said that there are no atheists among the astronomers. There must indeed be few. Some of you may be surprised, but listen to the majestic words of Einstein in this connection:

The religious feeling of the scientist is one of rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.

The universe is the masterpiece of its Artificer and Creator.

II

What is the universe? It includes everything that has been created. Let us first say a few words about the solar system. It is truly magnificent. The solar system is composed of the sun and all the bodies that revolve around it. Our sun is one of the lesser stars, yet it is a huge body. It is 860,000 miles in diameter. There are a little over 500,000 minutes in the year. This means that it would take an express-train or auto, going a mile a minute, night and day, more than a year and a half to cross the "disc" of the sun and five years to go around it. The sun has nine known planets around it: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. The earth is about 93,000,000 miles from the sun. This means that it would take the same express-train, going a mile a minute, about 180 years to reach the sun. Most of the planets have moons or satellites revolving about them, of which thirty-one are known at present.

Voltaire, in his *Henriade*, gives one of the most beautiful and poetic descriptions of the solar system

that we have ever seen (translation: Franklin and Smollett):

Amidst those orbs which move by certain laws,
Known to each sage whom love of science draws,
The sun, revolving round his axle, turns,
Shines undiminished, and forever burns.
Thence spring those golden torrents, which bestow
All vital warmth and vigor as they flow.
From thence the welcome day, the year, proceeds;
Through various worlds his genial influence spreads.
The rolling planets beam with borrowed rays,
And all around reflect the solar blaze;
Attract each other, and each other shun;
And end their courses where they first begun.
Far in the void unnumbered worlds arise.
And suns unnumbered light the azure skies.
Far beyond all the God of heaven resides,
Marks every orbit, ev'ry motion guides.

The boundary of our solar system is at present the planet Pluto. The distance from the sun to the earth is called one astronomical unit. Pluto is about 40 A.S. units away from the sun. This means that if Moses in his day had started for Pluto in a vehicle going a mile a minute, he would now be saying to his passengers: "I guess we are about halfway."

Let us now go beyond the boundaries of our solar system. Our solar system belongs to what is called the galaxy. Our galaxy has the shape of a double convex-lense or a watch. Its long diameter is 100,000 light years. That means that it would take light, going 186,000 miles a second, that long to cross it. It is about 15,000 L.Y. thick and our solar system is about 30,000 L.Y. from the center of the galaxy.

Our galaxy contains billions of stars or suns. We will mention a few examples of the wonders of this galaxy. One conspicuous constellation in the winter-sky at present is Orion. The star at the right shoulder of the giant hunter is Betelgeuse. The diameter of this star was measured by Dr. Michelson, whom we knew. It is 300,000,000 miles. That of the sun is only 860,000. That means that the sun with the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and even Mars around it, could very comfortably revolve inside this star. Betelgeuse is about 30,000,000 times the size of the sun. But there are stars in what might be called our Milky Way galaxy that are even larger. Thus, Alpha Herculis is 650,000,000 miles in diameter.

Related to Orion is Sirius, the Dog Star, the most conspicuous star in the whole sky. Sirius is a double star. Its companion is derisively called "The Pup." But the remarkable thing about this "Pup" is that it is so heavy that one cubic inch of it, or one tablespoon, weighs a ton: 50,000 times as heavy as water and 5,000 times as heavy as lead. This means that it seems to have lost all its electrons and is practically completely ionized. It has the size of the earth, but the weight of the sun.

There are thousands of wonders among the stars of our galaxy. However, our Milky Way galaxy is but a small part of the universe. It is now believed that the universe contains at least a billion galaxies. Some of these are visible to us (even with the unaided eye in some cases) as nebulae. But they are

from a million to a billion light-years away from us. Our own galaxy (and we in it) is traveling at the rate of 170 miles/second in the direction of Cepheus, which is equidistant with the Big Dipper from the Pole-Star and opposite to it. Only a few weeks ago it was announced that at Mt. Palomar, with the 200 inch reflector telescope, the universe has been penetrated in that direction to a depth of 1,000,000,000 L.Y.

Paul Couderc states, in his *The Expansion of the Universe*, that it is firmly believed that the most distant galaxies we know are speeding apart and away from us with a velocity which rivals the speed of light: 186,000 miles/second. Astronomers are fairly well agreed that we are living in an expanding universe in which all conventional standards of measurements and of Euclidian geometry fail. This universe started to expand about four-billion years ago and at present, with its radio-activity, etc., "exhibits the symptoms of exuberant youth!"

I will mention one more wonder of the universe that has often captured my imagination. Some years ago scientists were receiving pictures of something that had happened on the earth three seconds before, by using the moon as target. Now, according to Einstein, a ray of light always continues to exist. Suppose, now, we picked out a star whose light takes 500 years to reach the earth. If we were able to filter out the rays of light coming to us from that star we would be able to see what happened upon this earth 1000 years ago. In other words, theoretically speaking, by filtering out the rays of light coming from or reflecting back to us from the various stars, we might be able see before our astonished eyes all that happened in the past. Tomorrow, Lincoln's Birthday, we might be able to see him deliver his Gettysburg Address. We could see, again, Napoleon marching in the shadow of pyramids. We might even be able to see Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. What wonders does this universe not treasure! Be not overenthusiastic about this last contemplation, however. Engineers have told us that though it is true, theoretically, that a ray of light continues to exist, it ultimately is dissipated to such an extent that we will never be able to devise an instrument delicate enough to pick it up again.

III

In discussing the wonders of the universe we spontaneously feel compelled to ask, "What is our place in this universe?" "From one point of view man is nothing else but a temporary chemical episode upon a celestial juvenile and cosmic dwarf—nothing else but a bit of organic scum on the outside of one of the lesser planets. A quarter of a century ago H. L. Mencken said that the human race is "nothing else but a swarm of pestiferous flies crawling upon the earth; some bad eczema on the outside of the earth; and the noblest and most courageous thing anybody can do is to commit suicide."

But that is only one side of the story. When we look at the immensity of the universe we too feel like exclaiming with the writer of Psalm 8:

When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars which thou hast established;
what is man that thou art mindful of him,
and the son of man that thou dost care for him?
Yet thou has made him little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honor.
Thou has given him dominion over the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet.

What of it that the elements of the human body may be bought at any corner drugstore for one or two dollars? We can even go a step further. All these elements may be resolved into yet simpler constituents: protons, deuterons, electrons and photons. A great artist is known by the fact that he can use simple means to produce a work of art. Think of Rembrandt with his chiaroscuro, the principle of light and shade. Think of Vermeer, who knew how to use the simple blue color with such magic effect that it is one of the reasons why his paintings are immortal.

But what must we think of the Artificer of the universe who out of stardust—protons, electron and photons, made everything that exists—the mighty orbs of Orion and the Pleiades, the beauty of a million sunsets, but also the most angelic child that upon its mother's arms asks her about Him who made the stars.

For one thing God has endowed man with a brain containing 9,200,000,000 nerve-cells. What are we doing with it on this planet? Bernard Shaw used to say that if the other planets are inhabited they must have selected the earth as their lunatic-asylum. One of our immediate objects should be to make this planet a better place to live on. I am not a pessimist. Perhaps I am a slightly discontented optimist. The great philosopher Leibnitz believed that there was much more good than evil in this world and his stock argument was that if it were not so people would not be so anxious to stay here.

Seeing then the wonderful gifts the Creator has given us round about us and in our bodies and minds, let us use them to the utmost to His glory and for the welfare of our fellowmen.

Not in vain the distance beckons,
Forward, forward, let us range.
Let the great world spin forever
Down the ringing grooves of change.
Through the shadow of the globe
We sweep ahead to heights sublime.
We the heirs of all the ages,
In the foremost files of time.
O, we see the crescent spirit
Of man's promise has not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration
Well through all his fancy yet.
And we doubt not, through the ages,
One increasing purpose runs.
And the thoughts of man are widened
With the process of the suns.

(Tennyson)

An Evaluation of Christian Colleges

T. M. Benson
Colorado Springs, Colo.

I AM assuming that those who read this paper share my appreciation for the work of our Christian colleges.*

I also assume that Christian educators really want to train for leadership. My hope is that this paper will serve to alert them to their tendency to take for granted accomplishments not actually being realized.

Finally, I assume that everyone reading this paper understands that the kind of education I am concerned with here is not for everyone. There is obviously a place for the vocational school, but the whole problem of what to do about vocationalized Christian education is outside the realm of this paper.

Some, on reading this paper, will conclude that the writer has lost faith in Christian colleges. This is partly true, but I hope that the Christian college may yet revise its conception of its mission. It must cease to think of itself as a paternal agency and become a virile dynamic and unafraid producer of leaders;

* The discussions will center almost entirely around the independent, Fundamentalist college which is the extent of my personal observations.

strong men and women of great commitment, wholesomely Christian.

I

How good are our Fundamental Christian colleges?

Somebody should try to find out, for much is at stake. We are living at the hour of Christianity's greatest trial; and greatest opportunity.

It is the day for dedicated intelligence. It is the hour for a Christian education that has a firm grasp of the meaning of things. Christian education built on emotionalism, reaction, vague ideals, outdated slogans and lost causes simply will not do. A poor education for a Christian is worse than none, if it leads to a smug satisfaction and arrogance that half-education brings.

If one can judge by their pronouncements our Christian colleges seem to be striving to be as good as average, but no better than our American colleges, most of which are pathetically inadequate. Except for a possible dozen distinctly superior American colleges most others, when compared with their

British and Continental counterparts, are giving a poor education.

Only by comparing them with each other can some Christian colleges be rated superior. Others are tragically weak; several are not colleges at all. Not one could be included in the list of better American colleges.

Most of our Christian college graduates are immature educationally, with large deficiencies in the languages, mathematics, the arts and the disciplines that go to enrich a vital, meaningful Christian experience. In many subtle ways Christian colleges foster prejudice, intolerance, pride and all the other evils that go with ignorance.

Still worse is the meager intellectual curiosity demonstrated by Christian college graduates. They seem to spend very little time improving their mind or in scholarly pursuits. This is a fatal defect and accounts, one suspects, for the dearth of Christian school writers and artists. It underlies Fundamentalism's intellectual sterility and bankruptcy.

If Christian colleges, at the core of our intellectual life, are failing us we look in vain for other centers of creative thought and energy in the various branches of Fundamentalism. We are tramping in circles at a dead end and our schools are no help to us.

Says Frank E. Gaebelein, in *Christian Education in a Democracy*,

"Nothing short of the best in higher education is demanded by the urgency of the age. The hour is past, if indeed there ever was one, when religious zeal can make up for intellectual shallowness.

"The call today is for a renaissance of evangelical scholarship. There can be no substitute for the power of Christian thought. Throughout history, God has used men with consecrated minds as well as devoted hearts. One of the most disturbing symptoms in contemporary life is the weakening hold of evangelicalism upon the best minds. America needs revival; but, because its problems are many and deep, it needs revival which combines spiritual fervor with an intellectual force, able to wrestle victoriously with unbelief."

II

One noted American educator believes that the superficiality and shoddiness of American schools is the result of concessions made to the shallowness and materialism of the American life.

In the same way it seems possible that our Christian colleges have inherited the weakness of Fundamentalism. Certainly they have been uncritical to some of Fundamentalism's excesses and errors. They have failed to insist on higher ideals when it might have caused controversy. The eagerness of Christian colleges to please and acquiesce to every element in Fundamentalism is both tragic and pathetic.

A large portion in the constituency of Christian colleges are uninformed as to the nature and purpose of education. Indeed, many of them are suspicious and afraid of liberal arts education. They quote Paul's reference to the "not many wise" to prove that education and salvation are mutually opposed to each other.

"There is, unfortunately, a feeling in some quarters today that there is something innately wrong about learning, and that to be spiritual one must be stupid. This tacit philosophy has given us in the last half century a new cult within the confines of orthodoxy; I call it the Cult of Ignorance. It equates learning with unbelief and spirituality with ignorance, and, according to it, never the twain shall meet." (A. W. Tozer in *His Magazine*.)

"Genuine liberal arts . . . is a serious effort to train men to recognize symptoms, to trace them to their fundamental causes, and to deal intelligently with the latter." Arthur E. Bestor in *Educational Wastelands*.

Because the Christian public lacks enthusiasm for Christian education, they support it very poorly. Christian colleges lack equipment, are almost without endowment, and their faculties are understaffed and underpaid. Classrooms are overcrowded, facilities inadequate, the student-faculty ratio is dangerously high. All these conditions lead to a poor educational environment.

A comparison based on the dollars invested per student in plant and equipment with some of America's better colleges and even the best of Christian colleges shows a shocking disparity. It is pointless for the Christian educator to claim that he can do a comparable job in spite of these handicaps.

But the Christian public is not solely responsible. The college have yielded to demands that they knew would reduce their academic effectiveness. This is particularly true of their attitude towards the number of students they enroll. Faced with a decision to sacrifice quality for quantity they invariably make the sacrifice. There is apparently no Christian college with a limited enrollment policy except at a point far beyond their proper capacity. Some have two and three times the number for which they can do the best job. The reasoning seems to be that the college is obligated to crowd in every possible student the constituency forces upon them. A good education has to come second to this demand.

The Christian college seems to demonstrate a lack of serious concern for the deeper meaning of education. There is no evidence that they consider their first or even their second responsibility to give a superior education. Occupied as they are to guard the school's spiritual tradition and then with the ceaseless demands to accept more and more students they find the excellence of their academic program has to be a neglected consideration and indeed an impossible one.

Perhaps this is the way it has to be but our Christian colleges ought to be more frank about saying so. The Christian public has been led to believe, by the pronouncements and advertising, that the education given in the Christian college is something superior. This is not the truth and, with the present trends, conditions are certain to get worse.

No one can deny the dedication and general competence of many of the teachers in Christian colleges, but taken as a group they are not exceptional.

There are a number of reasons for this, some obvious and some complex. First of all the Christian college has so many peculiar requirements and standards that very few Christian scholars can get by them. Many of these safeguards are necessary but some simply contribute to mediocrity and narrowness of the Christian college.

Then when the applicant has passed through this "needle's eye" he is confronted with a financial arrangement that proves impossible for a great many. Teachers in Christian colleges often find it necessary to supplement their income and this is usually at the expense of their academic and mental development.

Most Christian colleges are without a salary scale based on experience and training. Rather they prefer to make the salary arrangement a matter of individual bargaining and this contributes to poor morale and a weakened teaching program.

Still another discouraging prospect for the applicant for the teaching staff of a Christian college is the insecurity and lack of tenure. A college professor about to be discharged for nebulous reasons and without a hearing from a Christian college asked about the matter of his tenure. He was told by a trustee that "tenure here means you stay as long as we want you to." Most non-Christian colleges have a very rigid and honorable policy of faculty tenure to protect the teacher from dismissal without cause and without a hearing.

Not only are teachers in Christian colleges underpaid and without security. The sabbatical leaves and the other devices for assuring intellectual growth are almost unknown among Christian colleges. Only a very limited number of teachers ever get to educational conferences and their economic status prohibits adequate contact with the books and journals of their field.

A direct fruit of this condition is the negligible quantity of scholarly production of the part of the faculties at Christian colleges. Christian colleges are not producing nor does their administration give much emphasis to the need of it. And even if they should do so they would be disappointed because their overworked and intellectually starved faculty is incapable of doing anything meritorious.

Christian colleges are poorly prepared to deal with teaching incompetence. It is discovered slowly and when it is there is great reluctance to deal with it decisively.

It is quite possible that weak teachers at Christian colleges, and there are many, are there because of poor teacher recruiting methods. In dealing with a teaching applicant the administration is so preoccupied with his academic attainments, his spiritual status and his doctrinal views that he overlooks the obvious question: can he teach? This may seem like a sweeping accusation but it can be proved. Too often an impressive school record and a "name" school degree are sufficient to assure a position at a

Christian school if the candidate can accept the school's doctrinal standards.

Yet another weakness is the tendency to "inbreeding" by hiring large numbers of alumni for the teaching staff. One prominent college has more than fifty per cent alumni-faculty.

III

What can be said of the trustee boards of Christian colleges? They are usually men with a great concern for and interest in the life of the college. Mostly, however, they have been selected because of success in some field other than education, and it is not uncommon for a large percentage of the board of a Christian college to be without a college education themselves. Some very strange things have happened when some strong board members sought to impose their prejudices and peculiar theological ideas on a school. Often they succeed. Often, too, they take it upon themselves to interfere with the academic life of the school and personally to subject faculty members to pressure.

The pressure applied by the Christian public has forced Christian colleges in the direction of vocationalism, triviality and mediocrity. The colleges give little resistance to these demands and only a few feeble voices are raised to point out the need for excellence and superiority in our Christian colleges.

"When . . . schools began to drop the 'academic subjects,' Latin, foreign languages, etc.—the pressure to do so had usually been exerted by the 'practical' men in the school boards, not by the educators. . . . This does not clear the educators of all blame. But the most serious charge that can be brought against them is that, instead of exerting educational leadership, they followed too closely the climate of public opinion." (Fred M. Hechinger in *Saturday Review*.)

Our Christian colleges appear to be seeking shortcuts to popularity. Schools are using their opposition to modernism, evolution, socialism, New Dealism as surefire formulas to attract the backing of Fundamentalists. One is proclaiming its independence of all educational standards as a basis for gaining support.

The net result is to make Christian colleges negative, obscurantist and defeatist. Perhaps it accounts for the negligible contribution they make to the scholarship, art and culture of our times.

Because the Christian public has no burden for education, Christian colleges are poorly endowed and the support is grudgingly given. Many Fundamentalist stewards frankly say that they have no intention of wasting their giving in anything as ethereal and potentially as dangerous as college education. Then, too, Christian colleges are dependent on people, many of whom are non-college graduates and therefore are without sufficient background to judge the value of education. Many of these people send their children to college, not from conviction of the inherent value of education, but rather because they regard a college degree as necessary for earn-

ing a living. These are the people that want their children to return from college unchanged by the experience.

It has been charged that our American schools do not teach a student to think. Even more it can be said of our Christian colleges. In fact, they apparently do not want their students to think of anything but what is handed to them for memorization. The student who shows some tendency to break from the mold, to think independently, to express ideas that conflict with what he is expected to think is the radical, the misfit, the mischief maker. Those who learn the "right answer," never rebel or question, are the desirable students and become the "loyal alumni."

This passion for conformity in the Christian college extends to the faculty as well. The faculty member who demonstrates independence and individualism, who is provocative, soon finds he is under the hostile observation of his colleagues. Strong teachers have been literally hounded from Christian colleges by administrators and faculties who preferred the calm atmosphere of status quo.

Another factor that has contributed to the weakness of the Christian college has been its surrender to the demand for vocational education. They offer, for credit, such trivia as typing, car repairing, camping, and movie making. None have had the courage to provide these things as extra-curriculars and to insist on studies that would build standards of intelligent judgment, discrimination, discernment—those instruments that produce a rational, moral basis for Christian experience and citizenship. It is principles, not rote-learned facts and crammed data that this generation must have.

The net result of all this is that many highly qualified Christian teachers refuse to consider a teaching position in Christian colleges. A first-rate university could be established by bringing together the increasing number of Christian teachers who tried their hand at a Christian college assignment only to give it up because of finances, frustration and disappointment.

IV

"After the first world war, Fundamentalism lost much of its driving force, its authority, and its dignity, and became increasingly querulous, negative, and histrionic.

The Fundamentalists were eased out of the colleges and lost control of most of the theological schools; those which they retained, or founded, lack prestige and good students." (H. S. Commager in *The American Mind*.)

Is it important that our Christian colleges be characterized by excellence? For the Christian college nothing less than the very peak of performance should be the ideal. It is shameful that they should be rated as mediocre and slovenly.

What academic distinction by a good American college should not be emulated and improved upon by our Christian colleges? What excellence could a non-evangelical college have that was not a worthy standard for the Christian college?

Our Christian colleges should search their conscience to decide whether building programs, large enrollments, sideshows, and even revivals are not being used as a facade to divert attention from their failure to provide the best possible education.

Let them ask themselves whether they are maintaining "bomb shelters" for Christian young people in a hostile educational world. Whatever merit this attitude may have in protecting certain weak and easily-led young people, it is not the way to train and produce strong Christian leaders.

The Christian public must be taught to apply the same energy and generosity to the support of Christian education that they have demonstrated in their support of missions and evangelism. Indeed they need to be convinced that unless they strengthen their educational institutions their missionaries, ministers and evangelists will be unfit for their responsibility.

For the glory of God the Christian college must dedicate itself to the restoration of the strength and character that evangelicalism once held.

To do so they will have to pursue relentlessly the deeper purposes of education. And for Christian education no purpose is more urgent than the need to combine God-given intelligence and personal holiness, thus bringing together passion and a sanctified insight.

This is a plea for a sane, intelligent, disciplined education for leadership. The cause of Jesus Christ has never been so desperately in need of it. Why should our Christian colleges aim at anything less?



Caricature

Edwin H. Palmer
Spring Lake, Michigan

WE are all familiar with the political cartoons that distort a person's features by grotesque and ludicrous exaggeration. The same effect can be had in writing as in cartoons.

Rome, for example, often makes a caricature of the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith. It does this by asserting that the righteousness of Christ is external to the believer, that the believer can not have it as his own, and therefore that justification by faith is a fictive, make-believe, unreal justification. They forget, however, that Reformed theology also maintains the important doctrine of the mystical union with Christ, without which justification is not to be had. Therefore, they usually polemicize not against the Reformed view of justification by faith, but a caricature of that view.

In a similar fashion, it is to be feared that much of what has recently been written concerning the views of Dr. C. Van Til is also a caricature. A straw man that does not exist is often set up and then the attack proceeds. But what is torn down is not the truth, but rather a caricature of the truth—not the original views, but the straw man.

I

This has recently been demonstrated by three writings of one author.¹ Because he has set forth so many of what I believe to be caricatures of Van Til's views, it would be practically impossible to refute them all. Therefore I should like to mention just one which is very important and in which many other doctrines are involved, namely, the so-called "absolute ethical antithesis."

This author makes the distinction between absolute depravity and total depravity and asserts that Van Til believes in absolute depravity as opposed to the Reformed conception of total depravity. He says in his major work, *General Revelation and Common Grace* (p. 236), "Reformed theology distinguishes between *total* and *absolute* depravity. The Devil is *absolutely* depraved; 'natural' man is *totally* depraved. Since 'natural' man is totally but not absolutely depraved he can still possess a reflection of God's ethical qualities. In other words, there is not an absolute ethical antithesis between God and man as Van Til asserts." Speaking in the same vein in an article in *Torch and Trumpet* (p. 15), the author states, "The theory of 'absolute ethical antithesis' ex-

cludes common grace, because if it were true, there could be no virtue whatsoever left in natural man. The antithesis between God and natural man must therefore be called *principial* and *not absolute*." And then even after Van Til had carefully refuted this caricature of his view in *A Letter on Common Grace*,² the author still implies that Van Til holds to absolute depravity and not to total depravity. He says that "Van Til's absolute ethical antithesis logically excludes all civil righteousness in the natural man" (*The Calvin Forum*, May, 1954, p. 196). Further, the author says that if there is an absolute ethical antithesis then there is an absolute logical antithesis between God and "natural" man. "This absolute logical antithesis between God and 'natural' man is plainly implied in Van Til's epistemology when he says that epistemologically the Christian has nothing in common with the non-Christian. Then the break between God and 'natural' man is complete—ethically, logically and aesthetically. Then logical thinking, ethical morality and aesthetic feeling in 'natural' man is ruled out" (*General Revelation and Common Grace*, p. 233). And in *The Calvin Forum* article (p. 198), he contrasts Van Til's views of logic with the Reformed view. According to him Van Til denies the "common logic" that both the believer and unbeliever have, but "according to Reformed epistemology," he says, "there is but one *logic* for the believer and unbeliever. Man's formal reasoning has not been obliterated because of sin" (p. 198).

II

Now I believe that a careful and objective analysis of Van Til's views will not yield the evaluation that this author has given. I believe, in fact, that he has basically misunderstood Van Til's views and therefore proceeds to a great extent to attack a caricature and not Van Til's views themselves. I hope that the following will make that clearer.

For example, when the author says that Van Til asserts that both the believer and unbeliever have nothing in common, and then on that basis says that "logical thinking . . . in 'natural' man is ruled out," he has simply ripped one statement out of context, completely disregarded the other sentence in the same paragraph, and forced his own interpretation on this sentence. For in that same paragraph where Van Til says, "Metaphysically both parties [i.e., be-

¹ Masselink, W., *General Revelation and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids, 1953); "The New 'Common Grace' Issue" in *Torch and Trumpet* (Feb.-March, 1954), pp. 15-20; and "New Views of Common Grace in the Light of Historic Reformed Theology" in *The Calvin Forum* (May, 1954), pp. 194-204.

² For a clear, unambiguous refutation of this and other caricatures, this is an excellent, 66-page pamphlet that should not be neglected by anyone who wants to understand Van Til thoroughly. A copy may be obtained for 50¢ from Lewis J. Grotenhuis, Belvidere Road, Phillipsburg, N. J.

liever and unbeliever] have all things in common, while epistemologically they have nothing in common" (*Common Grace*, p. 5), he has also made it unequivocally and unambiguously clear what he means by "epistemologically they have nothing in common." For Van Til is not talking here about all types of thinking. He is not denying the knowledge that a three-year old has of his red ball nor the knowledge that the non-Christian grocery man has about the oranges and bananas which he is selling. For Van Til is speaking specifically about the situation in which "both parties, the believer and the non-believer, are epistemologically self-conscious and as such engaged in the interpretative enterprise." Now a three-year old is not epistemologically self-conscious, nor as such engaged in the interpretative enterprise. He may in his own way understand "yes" and "no," one, two, and three, red and green, but it can not be said that he understands the philosophy that is involved in this knowledge which he has. Certainly the non-Christian radio man may understand the radio and its logical and technical processes better than a Christian, or the non-Christian grocery man may know his products better than the Christian one. Van Til never denies that, and, as we shall see, often asserts it. But what he does deny is that when the non-Christian radio man and the non-Christian grocery man are analyzing their products from a philosophical point of view; when they realize the tremendous implications in their knowledge, which can be so naïvely overlooked; in other words, when they are "epistemologically self-conscious and as such engaged in the interpretative enterprise," then, and only then, do they have nothing in common epistemologically. It is exactly because this distinction is made between the knowledge of a person who is "epistemologically self-conscious and as such is engaged in the interpretative enterprise," and the knowledge of a person who is not so engaged that Van Til can again and again attribute to the non-Christian "logical thinking," even though this author, who caricatures Van Til's view, denies it. Thus when the author says that Van Til teaches that the believer and unbeliever have nothing in common epistemologically and therefore concludes that Van Til denies "logical thinking" on the part of the natural man, he has torn this statement out of its immediate context, where Van Til distinguishes clearly between these two types of knowledge. Van Til has not left the word "epistemologically" unqualified, but has qualified it purposely and specifically with the phrase "self-conscious and as such engaged in the interpretative enterprise." Naturally, if this is left out, an entirely different meaning may be gained, and a caricature may be set forth.

Not only do we have this unequivocal statement of Van Til in his book *Common Grace*, but also in his *Letter on Common Grace*, where, in denying the author's false accusation on this very point, Van Til again reaffirms his views. Listen to this unambiguous

paragraph in which Van Til comments on the author's caricature: "My statement that epistemologically Christians and non-Christians 'have nothing in common' is meant to hold only to the extent that men are *self-consciously engaged in the interpretative enterprise*. Why did Dr. Masselink, in presenting my views, omit this obviously all-important qualification?" (*A Letter on Common Grace*, p. 5).

III

Now to turn for a moment to the author's assertion that Van Til teaches absolutes depravity instead of total depravity. This is also contrary to fact, because nowhere does Van Til hold that natural man is as depraved as possible, or has become as absolutely depraved as the Devil, as our author puts it. In fact he states just the opposite. We point to only three statements by Van Til.

In the booklet *The Dilemma of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, 1954), p. 45, Van Til speaks of the absolute antithesis between the Christian and the non-Christian principle. The antithesis may be called absolute, he says, because there is no degree of deadness or life. It is one or the other—dead, alive. And a person is either dead in sins, or alive through the Spirit. "Yet" Van Til says, and this is what is so important for our purpose, "the absolute antithesis is one of *principle only*. And principles do not come to full expression in human life until the end of history. In practice, therefore, the non-Christian can know and teach much that is right and true." Could anything be clearer than this to show that Van Til does not believe in absolute depravity as distinguished from total depravity? For he says in definite terms that "the absolute antithesis is one of *principle only*;" and that in practice, "the non-Christian can know and teach much that is right and true."

This idea is set forth in his book *Common Grace*, where in one place he says that "total depravity has two aspects, one of principle and one of degree" (p. 91). He goes on to show how that, although man is totally depraved in principle, yet he has not yet become fully Satanic. In the course of history, however, man will become progressively worse, and will approximate the ultimate of wickedness, but at present he has not yet sinned in the worst way possible.

In his *Letter on Common Grace* (p. 35), Van Til speaks out in still clearer terms, and this is after he had set forth his ideas in his syllabus, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*. In referring to a passage there which the author again misinterprets, Van Til says: "It appears then that the section in which I did use the expression 'absolute ethical antithesis' is mainly directed against those who would interpret the idea of the antithesis to mean that man is as bad as can be." In other words, the assertion that some make that Van Til teaches that man is as bad as he can be is without foundation. Van Til specifically repudiates such an idea. And if there might be some question as to what Van Til meant in his *Introduction*

to *Systematic Theology*—and there should not be, for it is clear—but if there should be, then we have this clarification in the *Letter on Common Grace*, which leaves no doubt whatsoever. Furthermore, Van Til does not leave the matter there, but, after the above-quoted sentence, goes on to say that “the whole burden of the argument is that to hold to the idea of absolute or total ethical depravity does *not need* to, and *must not* lead to, the idea that man is now Satanic. Since the antithesis is ethical and not metaphysical, God’s restraining grace keeps man from being as bad as he can be” (p. 35). Now, if someone will still assert that Van Til believes in absolute as opposed to total depravity, then words have lost their meaning. Note that he even underlines the words “not need” and “must not” just to make sure that there is no misunderstanding on this matter. And notice that he says that it was not just incidentally that he opposes the absolute depravity of man, but, on the contrary, it was “the whole burden of the argument.”

IV

Finally, I want to quote just a few passages where Van Til explicitly affirms that the non-Christian, when not philosophically speaking—when not epistemologically self-conscious and as such engaged in the interpretative enterprise—may have knowledge and virtue. These passages do not mean that if the unbeliever is fully aware of all the philosophical implications that are involved in his statements, that there is an iota of agreement between his view of a fact and a Christian’s view; but they do mean that if these philosophical implications are left out—if the non-Christian is not engaged in an interpretative enterprise—if it is just the three-year old, for example, who is speaking about his red ball—then the non-Christian can have knowledge.

In *Common Grace* (p. 27), Van Til distinguishes between the Christian and non-Christian philosophy of logic: the basis, foundation, and guarantee of logic. He holds that the two are diametrically opposite. But, he says, just because he is speaking about the foundations of logic and on that score is contrasting the Christian and non-Christian logic, “we do not mean, of course, that the rules of syllogism are different for Christians and non-Christians.” In other words, the non-Christian may reason as well as, if not better than, many Christians, but if one examines the philosophical basis of the logic, then there is a world of difference. But just because the non-Christian does not recognize the Christian basis of logic, it does not follow that he can not use syllogisms, for it is just because the Christian basis of logic is true that he is able to reason logically. Van Til goes on to say that “the unbeliever can follow the technical processes of procedure as well as, or often better than, the believer.” And in his *Letter on Common Grace* (p. 37), Van Til says that the very fact of common grace has made it impossible for the unbeliever to destroy his knowledge. “And in restraining him in his

ethical hostility to God, God releases his creatural powers so that he can make positive contributions to the field of knowledge and art.” What is true in the realm of knowledge is also true in the realm of ethics. So Van Til continues: “Similarly in restraining him from expressing his ethical hostility to God there is a release within him of his moral powers so that he can perform that which is ‘morally’ though not spiritually good And common grace is the means by which God keeps man from expressing the *principle* of hostility to its fullest extent, thus enabling man to do the ‘relatively good.’”

The author of *Common Grace and General Revelation* recognizes to some extent that Van Til asserts this when on p. 234 he quotes Van Til’s syllabus *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (p. 26), where Van Til says, “We are well aware of the fact that non-Christians have a great deal of knowledge about this world which is true as far as it goes That is, there is a sense in which we can and must allow for the value of knowledge of non-Christians.” But the author says that Van Til is forced to contradict this, and even denies that the believer and unbeliever “can still converse with each other and in some measure understand each other.” However, the author does not substantiate this statement with any specific quotations, and can not unless he should rip a sentence out of context, as he did with the above-mentioned one where Van Til says that both the believer and unbeliever have nothing in common when they are epistemologically self-conscious.

Or the author might try to deduce his assertion from the term “absolute ethical antithesis,” as he does in his book and in his *Calvin Forum* article. In his book he turns to Webster’s definition of “absolute” and then deduces that Van Til is talking about absolute depravity as contrasted with total depravity. But in so doing he fails to remember that for Van Til the absoluteness of the antithesis or of the depravity is one of principle alone, which has not been worked out in man to its fullest Satanic extent. And because the absoluteness is one of principle alone, natural man can know much that is right and true and can do much that is relatively good. “For me,” says Van Til, “the idea of total or absolute depravity means that the sinner is *dead* in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). In *principle* man is therefore blind But in spite of the fact that man is spiritually dead, dead in principle, absolutely dead, not half or partially dead in principle, he may know and do much that is relatively good” (*Letter on Common Grace*, pp. 23-24). And in *The Dilemma of Christian Education* Van Til says, “Yet the absolute antithesis is one of principle only In practice, therefore, the non-Christian can know and teach much that is right and true” (p. 45).

It should be clear now that on this all-important matter of the absolute ethical antithesis Van Til does not hold to the view of so-called absolute depravity as opposed to total depravity. It should also be clear

that he does not hold that the unregenerate can do nothing that is morally good, nor that he knows nothing that is right and true.

To assert the contrary is, we believe, to give a caricature of Van Til's position. Now for an author to make a caricature, his motives need not be impure. In fact, it is pleasurable to read the last paragraph of *The Calvin Forum* article, in which the author disclaims any personal dislike. That is laudable. But

the fact remains that a caricature can occur regardless of the motives, and in this case we believe that this has resulted from a misunderstanding, so that in reality the author stands much closer to Van Til than he realizes.

As we stated in the beginning, we believe that this is only one of the *innumerable* misrepresentations that the author makes, but since it is such a basic and important one, we have limited our discussion solely to this one aspect.

The Calvinistic Critic

Andrew Vander Zee
Orange City, Iowa

PAUL ELMER MORE, distinguished humanist and critic, in an essay entitled, "The Paradox of Oxford," points out that the students of Oxford for many generations were taught "to mold their emotions at once to the modes of the Psalms and of Horace, . . . to place Aristotle as an authority in morals by the side of St. Augustine." Education was based upon pagan and Christian ideals that were contradictory: the human ideal of self-government as opposed to the Divine command of self-surrender. This was also the paradox of Harvard and of many colleges founded by denominations in America. Indeed, the earliest church fathers could not escape the weight of classical culture. Mr. More discovered an interesting commentary by Gregory the Great on the following verse in Kings: " 'But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, his coulter, and his ax.' We go down to the Philistines [says Gregory] when we incline the mind to secular studies; . . . we should use it as a step to ascend the heights of Scripture. One goes to the Philistines to sharpen one's plow, because secular learning is needed as a training for Christian preaching." Some made more charitable attempts at reconciliation: Thomas Aquinas and the Cambridge Platonists. But Cardinal Newman's famous comment: "Jerusalem is the fountain head of religious knowledge, as Athens is of secular" only served to point up the paradox.

A thing of the past — this paradox? Wherever Christian truth has given way to humanitarianism, yes. However, even though the classical tradition has largely been replaced by science and modern literature in higher education, in a college where the primacy of the revealed will of God is still maintained, the paradox of a student molding ideals from both the sacred and the secular still remains.

In Reformed circles many believe that the above paradox has been resolved by the application of the doctrine of common grace to secular culture. Let us see how this doctrine is applied to literature. Courses,

textbooks, and single volumes of literature used in the Calvinistic college are almost identical with those used in any college. Why not? The vestiges of God's image or radiations of Divine light in natural man permit gifted writers to express the natural beauties of creation, to penetrate the secrets of human nature, and to celebrate the moral goodness of man. To be sure, an author may be a pagan, a pantheist, a deist, or an atheist, but there is understanding of life and there is beauty. One of our Reformed critics goes so far as to say we must enjoy "beauty for beauty's sake and therefore, for God's sake." One writer about literature in our circles has recommended Benet's *John Brown's Body*, and another has suggested that a mature Christian range freely in the field of modern fiction. A whole column in a recent *Calvin Forum* was expended upon a book of criticism of fiction by a secular critic. Apparently the doctrine of common grace permits the Calvinist broad latitude of choice in the realms of literature.

I do not deny that we may have such freedom. The kingdom of God is in the world. Not only does one go to the Philistines to sharpen one's plow, but form and technique and style and rules of criticism are shared by Christian and non-Christian alike. Although the kingdom of God, the *civitas dei*, is a grafted branch on the tree of culture, all culture, Christian and pagan, draws nourishment, to a certain extent, from the same root system.

When the doctrine of common grace, however, is thus broadly applied, does not our paradox still stand? Clearly, the study of *all* the selections in a literature textbook, the study of critical opinion in general, and the reading *John Brown's Body* is the pursuit of secular culture. Of course, we are urged to discriminate, but upon what basis? Critical guidance is usually in the negative. Emerson, Tennyson, and Wordsworth are pantheists; George Eliot, a positivist; Whittier is critical of Puritanism. And I suppose Bryant would be pigeonholed as a Unitarian, Hawthorne as a skeptic, and Paine as an atheist.

Such criticism is often detrimental, for much that glorifies God in these authors is neglected when our views of their works are prejudiced by an "ism."

The first duty of the Calvinistic critic is to be positive in his criticism. Our pilgrimage on earth is too short to spend much time on criticism of purely secular literature. The application of the doctrine of common grace may perhaps permit beauty for beauty's sake or humor for humor's sake or a game for the game's sake, but surely the paramount consideration for the Christian is to seize upon in literature all positive truth that glorifies God directly. Through common grace God has allowed non-Christians to express with beauty and power many of the doctrines and teachings of the Bible. Clearly, the loftiest duty that common grace imposes upon the Calvinistic critic is to direct the reader to the parts of the world's best literature that restate and amplify Scriptural truth. The best of all literature is in the Bible, for here the inspired authors have united the loftiest ideals that writers seek to attain, the perfect blend of truth, goodness, and beauty. Whenever a poem is merely beautiful, it praises God on one string; when novels portray character successfully or capture a period of history truthfully, they belong to secular literature unless they contain some of the moral truth of Scripture; therefore, such novels and poems will come last on the list of enthusiastic appraisals of Calvinistic criticism.

Literature that expresses Christian truth and morality in beautiful form and style will stand on the top of the list: Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; Milton's *Paradise Lost*; great Christian hymns or poetry of William Cowper, George Herbert and Whittier; and also Christian novels that rate as literature.

Rating almost as high in the estimation of the Calvinistic critic will be a vast area of literature that sets forth Biblical teachings, even though written by authors who are not professing Christians. Here we find poets who acknowledge God as Creator in poems in praise of nature, e.g. Bryant and Wordsworth;

novelists like Hawthorne, Melville, George Eliot, and Tolstoy; some of the dramas of Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe; essayists like Edmund Burke and Thomas Carlyle and Emerson. Sometimes there is a writer who must be rescued by the Calvinistic critic from the worldly critic. Melville has been claimed by the modern critic to be representative of modern agnosticism, and Hawthorne of skepticism. But these authors must be reclaimed by the Christian critic because they deal with life in Christian theological terms. Modern American critics generally hold that *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick*, and *Huckleberry Finn* are America's great novels. Our critics should question this critical estimate of Mark Twain's novel. Perhaps if we approve Ruth Suckow's recent enthusiasm for the classical qualities of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Oldtime Folks*, we could find a worthy substitute in the place of *Huckleberry Finn*. She claims that no novel in America has ever exhibited the varieties of Christian approaches to life better than *Oldtime Folks*.

Futhermore, specific Christian truth is often lacking in art which nevertheless can be used by the Christian to glorify God. Since a work of art is often objective, meaning can be read into it by the Christian. Even though Shelley does not acknowledge the Creator in the rhythmic praise of his poem, "The Clouds," a Christian cannot read the poem without praising God. One more example: Whitman's view of death may be pagan, but we can read our own meaning into his, "Come lovely and soothing death."

To be sure, critics in our circles *have* often evaluated specifically Christian literature and books that exemplify Biblical teachings in order that we may enrich our spiritual lives; however, this kind of literature is so rich and beneficial that the Calvinistic critic will want to expend most of his energies on books related to sacred truth rather than upon the purely secular. His motto may well be these lines of the American poet, Sidney Lanier:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God.



Eve: Milton's Concept of Woman

Betty Duimstra
Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE modern psychologist would no doubt investigate Milton's early childhood with minute detail to ascertain the origins of the poet's attitude toward women. Living, as we unavoidably do, in the context of our times, we accept such psychological procedures as normal routine, generally satisfactory. In psycho-analyzing Milton, however, we need the reminder that he lived in the context of *his* times, despite the precocious modernity of much that he thought and wrote.

I

Milton's preparatory academic schedule, even as a boy, was rigidly prescribed and observed. The long hours of study were hardly conducive to great sociability or indulgence in companionable pastimes. The boy loved books and time was precious. Cambridge served as a tournament ground for the display of his intellectual prowess. He was envied or respected, but his natural superiority posed an obstacle to intimate friendships with his fellows. I think we may safely assume that his Horton residence and the continental tour provided Milton with ample opportunity to escape exclusively male society and enlarge his circle of acquaintances to include some select feminine members. He was apparently impressed by their contribution. At any rate, his maturity and experiences must have convinced him that marriage was now desirable, and he took steps in that direction.

E. M. W. Tillyard insists that it is wholly compatible with Milton's temperament and conduct to suppose that he had met Mary Powell, his destined first bride, on occasions previous to the month before their union. He discredits the premise that Milton was temporarily obsessed with an inordinate passion for Mary and so concluded the affair hastily. The true account is obscured by inconsistencies in the biographical materials available, and by unavoidable conjectural differences. We know that the marriage was short-lived. Mary, immature and ordinary, soon became disappointed, then dissatisfied with her status, and finally asked permission to separate for a time. Her refusal to return at the designated season must have infuriated her neglected husband. It was certainly the immediate incentive for his writing of the divorce tracts.

Saurat inclines to the view that Mistress Mary refused her husband's natural advances, that the disillusioning circumstances of the whole event became the focal point of Milton's life, resulting not

only in the production of the divorce pamphlets, but in precursory intimation of the theme in *Paradise Lost*. Milton, he believes, was conditioned by bitter humiliation and suffering to adopt this theme, which was steadily assimilated till the commencement of the epic and interwoven throughout its most delicate texture, ". . . the notion that the Fall occurs generally, and most painfully through woman."¹ Tillyard is not convinced that Mary refused physical consummation of the marriage, but suggests the more plausible probability that the divorce arguments grew from the realization of intellectual and spiritual incompatibility. To Milton mere physical union was bestial. Confronted with the brutal fact that he had committed a legally irreparable mistake, he employed his talents in framing appeals for leniency in dissolving ill-contracted marriages. He exhibited "courage—in refusing to be passive in this extremeity but in seeking an outlet in action however unconventional or bold."² He measured his position and the traditional stand of authority on the divorce issue, and decided that since he "had entered into marriage, with full ceremonial ushering, by the main door; he would go out the same way, or not at all."³ His method of approach was uncompromising. He did not advocate exemption from law, but alteration of the law.

It is impossible not to read contempt for Mary and personal embitterment into some of the derogatory statements Milton scatters through his tracts. Sufficient evidence can be found in a few illustrations:

That indisposition, unfitnes, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindring and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugall society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce then naturall frigidity, especially if there be no children, and that there be mutuall consent . . .⁴

When as the sober man honouring the appearance of modesty, and hoping well of every sociall vertue under that veile, may easily chance to meet, if not with a body impenetrable, yet often with a mind to all other due conversation inaccessible, and to all the more estimable and superior purposes of matrimony uselesse and almost liveles: and what a solace, what a fit helpe such a consort would be through the whole life of a man, is lesse pain to conjecture then to have experience . . .⁵

. . . if the true definition of a wife were askt in good earnest, this clause being a *meet help* would shew it selfe so necessary, and so essential in that demonstrative argument, that it might be logically concluded: therefore she who naturally and perpetually is no meet help, can be no wife; . . .⁶

¹ Denis Saurat, *Milton: Man and Thinker*, p. 69.

² E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton*, p. 146.

³ *Ibid.* (quoting Raleigh), p. 146.

⁴ *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Milton*, (Modern Library College Edition), p. 629.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 632.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 645-646.

In general, I think we can agree with Saurat in interpreting Milton's conception of woman. Primarily her function is accessory, complementary. She is necessary for the "satisfaction of normal desire"⁷ and for "a special sort of intellectual intercourse, not to be had between men. . . ."⁸ Saurat continues: ". . . there is in the *mind* of woman something peculiar that makes it specially adequate to conversation with man; . . ."⁹ She possesses a more delicate perception and assists man's cultural improvement not by *contest*, a "battle of ideas," but by *harmony*. *Paradise Lost* contains the fruit of Milton's ripe deliberation on proper domestic and conjugal relations. In naked purity before the Fall, our first ancestors displayed ideal conduct:

. . . nor turned I weene
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the Rites
Mysterious of connubial love refus'd:

* * * * *

Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source
Of human offspring, sole proprietie,
In Paradise of all things common else.¹⁰
. . . for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to studie household good,
And good works in her Husband to promote.¹¹

The standards have not changed, but their operation is severely handicapped by the intervention of sin in man's life (and in woman's).

Secondly, woman is assigned a place just inferior to man in the hierarchical chain of being. This is neither a reduction to servitude nor a diminution of her integral dignity in Milton's scheme. In fact, Milton even anticipates occasional reversals of the situation: ". . . particular exceptions may have place, if she exceed her husband in prudence and dexterity, and he contentedly yield: for then a superior and more natural law comes in, that the wiser should govern the less wise, whether male or female."¹² Eve's subservience to Adam, however, is revealed in passages of holy tenderness. For example, Satan, on his excursion to Paradise, finds an odious (to him) spectacle:

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native Honour clad

* * * * *

; though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemd;
For contemplation hee and valour formd,
For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
Hee for God only, shee for God in him:¹³

And Eve, humbly submissive, addresses Adam as they retire upon concluding their daily garden labors:

My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst
Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains,
God is thy Law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.¹⁴

⁷ Denis Saurat, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁰ *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Milton*, p. 187.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

¹² E. M. W. Tillyard, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

¹³ *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Milton*, pp. 174-175.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

The Fall transforms Eve into a scheming temptress. In a kind of private "great consult" she reasons:

. . . But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appeer? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with mee, or rather not,
But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power
Without Copartner? so to add what wants
In Femal Sex, the more to draw his Love,
And render me more equal, and perhaps,
A thing not undesireable, sometime
Superior: for inferior who is free?¹⁵

But her eventual resolution is to inform Adam. The new emotion of jealousy, incited by the unendurable thought of Adam's wedding another Eve, compels her to make this decision.

Eve's disgrace brings us to the question, How did Milton integrate his concept of woman with the fabric of his narrative relating "Mans First Disobedience"? Milton's expressed purpose indicates that responsibility for earth's tragedy reverts to *man*, *Adam*. Eve's accusation of her husband has some relevancy then, but she is forgetting her station as co-responsible helpmeet. Inferiority here is neither excuse nor expiation for the crime she has committed.

We will need to delineate Eve's character as shown in *Paradise Lost*, and briefly consider Milton's reverence for Reason, in attempting to understand the catastrophe of Eden.

Douglas Bush states: "Eve's account of her first moments of existence and her first meeting with Adam gives. . . the first hint of her vanity and of his passion. . . if her waking conscience is sound, her uncensored dream had revealed the seeds of vanity and ambitious pride."¹⁶ Mr. Bush's first point is readily confirmed:

That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awak't, . . .

* * * * *

Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issu'd from a Cave and spread
Into a liquid Plain, then stood unmov'd
Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n; I thither went
With unexperient thought, and laid me downe
On the green bank, to look into the cleer
Smooth Lake, that to me seemd another Skie.
As I bent down to look, just opposite,
A shape within the watry gleam appeerd
Bending to look on me, I started back,
It started back, but pleasd I soon returnd,
Pleas'd it returnd as soon with answering looks
Of sympathie and love, there I had fixt
Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warn'd me, . . .¹⁷

Evil intrudes upon her in the Satanic flattery of her disturbing dream and indirectly discloses, still dormant, her concealed ambition to attain the elevated status of deity. Satan, coercing, says:

Here, happie Creature, fair Angelic Eve,
Partake thou also; happie though thou art,
Happier thou mayst be, worthier canst not be:
Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods
Thy self a Goddess, not to Earth confin'd,¹⁸

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.

¹⁶ Douglas Bush, *Paradise Lost In Our Time*, p. 76.

¹⁷ *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Milton*, p. 179.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

The illusory Satan of that disquieting fancy was to repeat his persuasive note in the ensuing temptation, when Eve consented to an inspection tour:

And what are Gods that Man may not become
As they, participating God-like food?

* * * * *

Causes import your need of this fair Fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste. ¹⁹

Satan was more confident of seducing Eve with her weaker intellect and less discerning logic than Adam. His plans called for advantageous deployment of the enemy. He

wish'd his hap might find
Eve separate, he wish'd, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanc'd, when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies, ²⁰

Mother Eve, on an obstinate impulse, secure in her self-sufficiency to combat the devil, has disputed the necessity of working as a team; Adam, not willing to restrain her by force, has released her from his presence for the morning. Satan found the circumstances extremely convenient for launching his successful offensive.

Bush analyzes: "Both man and woman. . . had lacked that entire and humble love of God which would have strengthened their moral judgment and moral will against two of the most universal and insidious dangers of human life, ambitious pride and sexual love."²¹ He implies that conjugal love between the solitary pair, existing in dangerous proportions and even incurring the frowning reproof of Raphael, enfeebled right Reason, that pride in aspiring to divinity destroyed right Reason, and the Fall occurred. Right Reason, according to Milton, involved the subordination of all other faculties to this highest, Godlike capacity:

But know that in the Soule
Are many lesser faculties that serve
Reason as chief; . . .
. . . of all external things
Which the five watchful Senses represent,
* * * * *
. . . Reason joyning or disjoyning, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion. . . ²²

And

. . . the Soule
Reason receives, and reason is her being. ²³

If passion should gain ascendancy, divide man against himself, it would subdue Reason. Certainly, Eve's breathtaking beauty, which excited even her

own admiration, and her becoming modesty, had a paralyzing effect on Adam's judgment:

. . . ; here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
Superiour and unmov'd, here onely weake
Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance.

* * * * *

. . . when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in her self compleat, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, vertuousest, discreetest, best;
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
Looses discount'nanc't, and like folly shewes; ²⁴

Earth experiences death-throes when Eve surrenders to the Serpent's guile. She was capable of resistance; Satan had influenced her by degrees until she abandoned Reason and permitted pride and sensuality to take control. Adam is horrified when he encounters her, returning from the voluptuous repast. He comprehends immediately what has happened, but his attachment to her is so impassioned that he cannot abstain from the forbidden fruit. Reason retreats at the sight and invitation of his beloved:

. . . I with thee have fixt my Lot,
Certain to undergoe like doom, if Death
Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;
So forcible within my heart I feel
The Bond of Nature draw me to my owne,
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our State cannot be severd, we are one,
One Flesh; to loose thee were to loose my self. ²⁵

The choice was made voluntarily.

The simple Scriptural account portrays the awful results of the Fall more vividly than any human record. Nakedness became vile; there was painful consciousness of transition from an exalted to a degraded state; there was the triple curse in punishment; but worst of all, there was the loss of intimate comradeship with God. To entertain the notion that Milton imputes to woman the full measure of guilt is to misinterpret his intention, I feel. Eve was not sole cause of man's downfall, but a pliable instrument, pitiable in her weaknesses, for invading man's kingly Reason, and effecting its collapse.

Milton's relations with Mary Powell undoubtedly stimulated his keenly intuitive portrait of Eve; and his estimate and depiction of Adam is at least a partial reflection of himself. Whether his disillusionment implanted the "deep mistrust of woman"²⁶ Saurat would have us believe it did is perhaps questionable. He respected woman as the necessary complement of man and ranked her but one slight step beneath man on the dais of created being.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 304-305.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

²¹ Douglas Bush, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

²² *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Milton*, p. 198.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

²⁶ Denis Saurat, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

From Our Correspondents

Holland, Mich.
September 16, 1954

Dr. Cecil De Boer:

Permit me to insert a brief preliminary announcement at this time of the *International Congress of Reformed Faith and Action*, to be held in Detmold, Germany, July 23 to August 1, 1955.

The theme and program will be given in the very near future. Plans for Reformed action are in the offing.

An early planning of a European tour is a must, since transoceanic travel has increased very substantially since World War II. Tourists are most cordially invited to attend this International Congress at Detmold, and to share in the development of a positively Reformed ecumenicity.

Thank you!

Jacob T. Hoogstra

Old Tom's Musings on Eccl. 12.

The preacher read the Preacher's words
Of light grown dim, of doors shut to,
Of grinding low and grinders few.

In his usual pew sat Tom Van Geers,
Burdened a bit by the weight of years,
Yet, mind alert, to musings he fell
And said to himself: "In Solomon's day
't was worse than now to be old and gray,
For the deaf had not a hearing-aid,
And bifocals no optician made,
And toothless gums no dentures had.
Yes, dismal could be old age," Tom said.

But Tom from his musings now awoke,
For from the pulpit a loud voice spoke;
The tone of the preacher betrayed his ire,
And eyes through glasses shot holy fire;
His words rang clear through teeth man-made
"There is no Common Grace! !!" he said.

A. J. R.

Book Reviews

COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS,
by F. W. Grosheide. (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1953*).
415 pages; \$5.00.

WITH each addition to *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* it is increasingly apparent that this literary venture, under the able editorship of Dr. N. B. Stonehouse, will be of great benefit to the Christian Church. The scholarship exhibited in the volumes that have already appeared justifies the eagerness with which we await the remainder of the seventeen volumes.

The author of the work under review has been professor in the theological faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam for over forty years. Among pastors and Bible teachers who read the Dutch, Dr. Grosheide is perhaps best known for his six volumes in the fourteen-volume *Kommentaar op het Nieuwe Testament*. It is regrettable that he is not better known in the English-reading world.

It can be said without fear of disputation that this conservative study of I Corinthians—an epistle that is unquestionably difficult—is the best that has appeared since Charles Hodge's work, published nearly a century ago. Here is New Testament scholarship that is fully conversant with modern Biblical erudition and at the same time is loyal to the Holy Scriptures.

One of the problems of interpretation in I Corinthians is that of the phenomenon of glossolalia. Dr. Grosheide

handles this problem with admirable discreetness. "It cannot refer," he writes, "to what we now call inspiration. For in the first place, prophecy precedes glossolalia and prophecy is used of the speaking by inspiration of the Spirit. Secondly, Paul mentions the interpretation of tongues as a gift of the Spirit, i.e., not every one could understand those speaking tongues. The reason for this cannot have been that, e.g., a Greek speaking person could not understand an Aramaic speaking person or the reverse, for if one did not know Greek or Aramaic one could learn that language as every language can be learned without a special gift of the Spirit. Paul speaks of Christians who received an extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, a charisma, to speak or to understand a language which did not have the ordinary human characteristics, a special language formed by the Spirit, unintelligible for ordinary people. The speaking in tongues, therefore, is the speaking of a miraculous spiritual language that had its own sounds. More than once expositors have contended that this miraculous language was the language spoken in Paradise. We do not deny the plausibility of such a view but maintain that it cannot be proved from the words of Paul but goes beyond them. Paul does not speak about the nature of the sounds."

One typographical error was observed. On page 332, in the comment on 14:24-25, "hearts" (in italics) should be singular, not plural.
Leonard Greenway

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA, by Herman N. Ridderbos, (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1953.*) pp.230. \$3.50.

THE appearance of the first volume in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* was an event of considerable importance in the conservative theological world, for in this volume on Luke's gospel Norval Geldenhuys presented us with a work which set a high standard for the volumes which were to follow. The present work, like others in the series which have recently appeared, is a worthy contribution which deserves a place on the shelves of the minister and interested layman. It is very readable and is marked by careful exegesis throughout. Moreover, the references to such definitive works as Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* and Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch* show that the author has a real acquaintance with his field. The two indexes, of subject matter and Scripture references, are helpful but there is none of bibliography or of names or works cited in the body of the text. It is difficult therefore to revert to references previously cited; e.g., the primary reference to Strack-Billerbeck, in which the full title mentioned above should appear, was missed by this reader and subsequent paging through the volume did not bring it to light.

Dr. Ridderbos shows himself to be a son of the Reformation in the discussion of such subjects as justification, faith and law. Strange words have been written by some Protestant scholars on these and other theological ideas in recent generations. In our own day, e.g., Vincent Taylor, well-known British (U. of Leeds) New Testament scholar has written the following concerning justification: "The doctrine of imputation . . . can never be anything else than an ethical fiction. Since it is not a commodity, but a personal state, righteousness cannot be transferred from the account of one person to another. Righteousness can no more be imputed to a sinner than bravery to a coward or wisdom to a fool. If through faith a man is accounted Righteous, it must be because, in a reputable sense of the term, he is righteous, and not because another is righteous in his stead. . . . Reformation teaching . . . cannot be said to have been successful in surmounting the ethical difficulties of justification . . . (Justification) is the divine activity in which God gives effect to His redeeming work in Christ by making possible that righteous mind necessary to communion with Himself." (*Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, pp. 57 and 66.)

With that perversion of the N.T. teaching in mind it is refreshing to read in Ridderbos that justification "expresses neither an ethical change or influence, nor an *iustum efficere* in the sense of causing someone to live a holy, unimpeachable life; it expresses, rather, the juridical judgment of God, in which man is protected from the sanction of the law in the judgment of God, and thus goes out acquitted. . . . At issue, in other words, is more than a human experience; at issue is God's verdict. And such an emancipating verdict is impossible for man, whoever he be, on the basis of the words of the law. There is but one way and one means: that of faith in Jesus Christ" (p. 99). In a fine discussion on the gratuitous nature of justification in which he shows that Jewish theology had represented "reckoning" as a "credit entry in heaven for a humanly merited earning," (p. 118f.), he states that the *righteousness* which Paul says was reckoned to Abraham was "not an ethical property, but a divinely conferred quality, by reason of which he is free of guilt and punishment. Negatively it means: being placed

outside the state of guilt; and positively: to be in harmony with the divine standard of judgment. Such justification has not at all an arbitrary character. The big assumption underlying it is that God accomplished the punishment which His righteousness demands in Christ on the cross, and that by being included in Christ the believer can arrive at acquittal." (p. 119).

The discussion on covenant shows that the author does not conceive God's covenant as a "contract between two parties, but rather that of a one-sided grant" (p. 130). "It has the character of a one-party guarantee" (p. 131). Ridderbos shares this view with the authors of a number of recent studies.

In fine, the reading of the volume was profitable, interesting and enlightening. The placing of critical material in footnotes is good practice in this kind of commentary and makes for smoother reading. We were not stirred way down inside as we were when we read Luther's immortal monograph on the same subject, but this is not meant to be that kind of a book. Our own penchant for the Reformer is such that we would like to have seen a reference to Luther, let's say, in the comments on Vss. 3:13f., but that is only a bit of subjective sentiment. We hope that this book and the series of which it is a part receives a wide reading in Christian circles.

M. Eugene Osterhaven

G. C. Berkouwer, DOGMATISCHE STUDIEN: DE SACRAMENTEN. (*Kampen: Kok; 1954*) Pp. 407.

THIS latest release in Dr. Berkouwer's series of studies in doctrinal subjects presents its argument in three sections, each a little over 100 pages in length. The first section takes up the Sacraments in general, or rather, such matters as have in the course of time come up in connection with the Sacraments in general. Section two treats of Baptism; section of three, of the Lord's Supper.

It is evident throughout that this book was written in Europe. Very little attention is given to Fundamentalism, with its often erratic views of the Sacraments; Modernism is treated as much more a thing of the past than it is in America. On the other hand much more attention is given to Catholic thought than one would expect from a man writing on this side of the Atlantic. It may be added that in this latter area Berkouwer is plainly in his *forté*.

As in the other works by Berkouwer the argument is everywhere neatly and carefully drawn. Berkouwer is a great controversialist, in spite of his restraint and candor — perhaps because of them. And there is here again the warmth of conviction that cannot fail to charm the reader. One is never in doubt as to whether the author speaks from *within* the Christian tradition or not.

The entire volume carries forward a well-argued polemic against what Berkouwer calls a trend toward Zwinglianism. He himself would rather, with Dr. Abraham Kuyper, err somewhat in the direction of Lutheranism than drift into the "miserable delineation" of Zwinglianism. There is no doubt in Berkouwer's mind that the Sacraments are a "means ordained by God to convey a glorious kind of grace to us," that in them we have to do with a Presentation quite as much as with a Representation.

One is led to ponder whether prevailing opinion in America, in Christian Reformed circles specifically, would follow in this aversion to anything that smacks of Zwinglianism, whether among us also there are those who would rather be Lutheran than Zwinglian. It must be recalled that at the

latest Synod of this Church an Overture was present asking that Article XXXV of the Belgic Confession be cleared of the terminology that "we err not when we say that what is eaten and drunk is the proper and natural body. . . ." — language that is wholly to Berkouwer's liking.

All the more reason this volume should be translated and read in these circles!

The historical orientation in this work is not always as good as is the theological. This need not surprise us — Berkouwer is a theologian in the first place and a historian incidentally. In keeping with a habit of long standing in the tradition in which he stands, he has a tendency to Calvinize history. One would get the impression that Calvin wrote the Belgic Confession, that it was he who set Holland on the way of Reformation! Berkouwer treats of "Zwinglianism" as an intruder in the Low Countries, whereas this type of thought was native to them (Zwingli himself acknowledged that he had derived his views from a Dutchman), and, until the influence of Calvin came to be felt (not much before 1550) had for some decades had the field quite to itself. It was in this "Zwinglian" climate that the first Reformed leaders were formed (contemporaries referred to them simply as "de Swingelsen"). And they felt called to rebuke Calvin for using language that offered solace to the Ubiquitists. Berkouwer's treatment of what he considers a dangerous trend would be even more helpful if it had taken place against this historic background—what about the argument that in it we have a return to a more ancestral view of the Sacrament?

Similarly, Berkouwer repeats the *cliché* that the prime reason for the Anabaptists' repudiation of Infant Baptism was "their antithesis between nature and grace. They could not believe. . . that 'the natural' could have a place in the covenant" (p. 230, tr. mine). But we now know that this was *not* the nerve of the Anabaptist rejection of Infant Baptism. (As to the question of the accessibility of child life to the Gospel, and the question of the propriety of speaking of the children of believers as being in the state of grace, Menno Simons, for example, would have satisfied most Reformed people.) Whatever may have been the contributory value of the "theological" argument against the baptism of children, the principle motive for the rejection of it was in the socio-political area. As the Anabaptists saw it—and to a large extent they were wholly in the right in this—Infant Baptism was a favorite device for keeping intact the empire-church combination. They had broken radically with the medieval pattern of Church and State and for that reason broke with an institution that was serving as the primary prop for that pattern. The value of Infant Baptism for keeping the empire together was felt very early; the Code of Justinian had already provided that "if any be apprehended rebaptizing anyone. . . he shall be subject to capital punishment." The Kirchenrat of the Palatinate showed that it was right here that the shoe pinched, when it declared that the views and practices of the Anabaptists "*haben nit allein ain speciem schismatis in der kirchen sonder auch ain speciem*

seditionis in der policei. It is high time we see through the words spoken by Felix Manz when he was on trial "*Es stecke mer hinder dem touf, das jetz nit se offnen syge*."

Berkouwer can easily be forgiven for repeating, in the course of a theological argument, a legend of history. It is harder to clear him when he thrusts aside as quite unworthy *on historic grounds* Karl Barth's delineation of the Medieval Church's tenacious hold on Infant Baptism (p. 217, note). The plain fact is that in the light of the sources Barth is to a large extent right. And Berkouwer would have rendered an even greater service if he had acknowledged the substantial element of truth in Barth's representation and had then shown, as indeed it can be shown, that even if we come clear of the medieval abuse in the matter of Infant Baptism, it still is a wholly defensible thing—the precise point where Barth's argument goes astray.

The Kok firm is known for fine attention to the mechanics of printing a book. But in this volume the proof-reading is not uniformly good. The word "niet" near the bottom of p. 58 must be deleted; "zien functionneren" on p. 91 should be "ziet functionneren"; the expression "het conditionele belofte," on p. 93 sounds like Yankee-Dutch, as does the expression "Oude en Nieuw verbond" on page 119.

We hope a translation of this fine piece of work will be available soon. We extend our compliments to the man who undertakes it—for Berkouwer is not easy to translate!

Leonard Verduin

L. Penning, GENIUS OF GENEVA. (*Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1953.*) Pp. 392. \$3.00.

This fine book with its striking alliterative title is a translation from the Dutch. And a smooth translation it is! The book is attractively bound and has a dozen good illustrations. The type is excellent and very easy on the eyes. So much for the externals. What of the content? We, who stand in the noble tradition of Calvin, may well thank the publisher for making this fine work available to English readers. As Calvinists we want our people to know something about the great man of God, John Calvin. Penning gives a sympathetic presentation of Calvin's life, character and work. He writes with a warm heart and feels himself debtor to the genius of Geneva. I would suggest that this book be placed in the library of every church. For it gives not only a fine life of Calvin but also helps us feel the pulsebeat of the turbulent times in which he lived. In fact, we learn about many contemporaries of Calvin, people very much worth knowing. It is true that there is something distracting about the long excursions into the lives of these contemporaries. But, this weakness notwithstanding, it is a charming book. Why not put it on your Christmas list to give to your husband, who may talk a great deal about Calvinism and yet know little of the man Calvin.

Wm. Haverkamp

