

Progressive Calvinism

Volume I

1955

**ESSAYS AGAINST SANCTIMONY
AND LEGALIZED COERCION**

© PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE, 1955

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois

Table of Contents

	Page
Table of References	v
Foreword	viii
The Character Of The Progressive Calvinism League	2
A Description How Most Of Us Feel About The Future Life Compared With The Present Life	16
A Great And Growing Inferiority Complex Of Calvinists	19
One Of The Dead And Inert Ideas In Calvinism, Namely, "Loving One's Neighbor"	21
An Address To Talented Students	23
Is The <i>Principle</i> Underlying Socialism-Communism High And Moral And Are Only Socialist-Communist <i>Means</i> Immoral, Or Are Both Principle And Means Immoral?	26
Understanding And Misunderstanding The Hebrew-Christian Law Of Love	28
A. The Plain Teaching Of Scripture Regarding Brotherly Love	30
B. Analytical Dissection Of Scriptural Law Of Brotherly Love	54
C. Scriptural Corrections Of Popular Errors Concerning Law Requiring Brotherly Love	85
D. Arrogance And Sanctimoniousness Associated With Other Definitions Of Brotherly Love	113
Reprint Of An Editorial From The CALVIN COLLEGE CHIMES About The First Issue Of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM	43
A Famous Political Philosopher Has Declared That The Trend Of All Human Institutions Is Downward	50
The Thought That Christianity's Message Has Become Unrealistic In Respect To An Aspect Of This Life	52
"Indian Not Lost, Tepee Lost"	79
Cain: A Murderer, A Liar, And A Lawgiver	147
New Doubts Among Calvinists Whether Psalm One Belongs In The Canon Of Scripture	149

Feudalism, Individualism, Socialism, Syndicalism And Interventionism	152
Confusilated And Complexified	177
Reverend Gerrit Hoeksema On: It Has Not Been Proven From Scripture To Be Sin	178
The Anti-Revolutionary Party; The Founder Was Confusilated From The Beginning and Now They Seem To Have Made A <i>Volte Face</i>	195
Professor W. H. Jellema On: That Takes Study	200
New Magazine, TOT VRIJHEID GEROEPEN (Called Unto Liberty), In The Netherlands	204
The Problem Of The Real Meaning Of Neo-Orthodoxy	209
Barth Versus Brunner, On Communism	213
"The End Justifies The Means!"	216
"The Powers That Be Are Ordained Of God"	218
Machiavelli, On Property And Women	239
We Are In Favor Of Justice For The Laboring Man	241
A Cause For Continued Amazement	243
A Great Banker's Thought	247
A Lament	248
"We Must Obey God Rather Than Men"	251
We Believe It Right That They Threw Daniel Into The Lion's Den	273
Challenging Prevailing Ideas On Brotherly Love, On Obedience To Government, And On Justice	279
Could Eve Talk?	281
We Line Up With Sixteenth Century Dutch Calvinists Rather Than Modern Dutch Calvinists	283
The Quest For Ramparts For Liberty	284

An Explanation Of The Selection Of Contents For November Issue	306
Wherein Talleyrand Was Greater Than Groen Van Prinsterer	307
Dr. Dirk Jellema On The Idea That Coercion Is Moral	310
Rev. Norman S. Ream On The Idea That Coercion Is No More Moral And Wise For Industry Than It Would Be In The Church	315
Mr. Joseph Gritter, Secretary Of The Christian Labor Association On The Idea That It Is Immoral To Stay Out Of A Union, And That Therefore Coercion Of Men Into The CLA Is Moral!	318
A Union Which Should Be Organized	321
Our Dutch Brethren Are Cutting Us Up	323
What Happened To The Daily Newspaper Abraham Kuyper Founded?	324
The Origin of TROUW, The Successor To DE STANDAARD	326
Dr. Bruins Slot On The Authority Of Government	328
A Survey Of Our First Year	338
Praxeology	341
What We Would Understand By "Conditioning"	347
Scripture Does Not Stand Alone	350
Individualism Is Compatible With Glorifying God	352
"Christian Reformed Intellectuals"	354
A New Lucubration	356
The Bruins Slot Proposition That The United States Has Become Prosperous Through Luck	358
Did "Luck" Make Holland Prosperous In Its Golden Age?	364
The Commandment Of God Which The "Luck" Idea Is Intended To Frustrate	367

Table of References

ALLEN, FREDERICK LEWIS, <i>The Great Pierpont Morgan</i> , Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948.	247
BACON, SIR FRANCIS, <i>The New Atlantis</i> , Oxford University Press, Inc., New York, 1951.	75
BARTH, KARL, <i>Against The Stream</i> , Philosophical Library, New York, 1954.	216
BEBEL, FERDINAND AUGUST, <i>Die Frau und der Socialismus</i> , J. H. W. Dietz, Stuttgart, Germany, 1910.	127
BELLAMY, EDWARD	76
BOHM-BAWERK, EUGEN VON, "The Austrian Economists," <i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> , January, 1891.	5
BRES, GUIDO DE, "Belgic Confession," <i>The Psalter Hymnal</i> , Publishing Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1934.	9, 226
CALVIN, JOHN, <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> , trans- lated by John Allen, Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, Philadelphia, 1936:	
Book III, Chapter 19, "Christian Liberty"	140
Book IV, Chapter 20	260
COHEN, MORRIS RAPHAEL, <i>Reason and Nature</i> , Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1931.	161
COMTE, AUGUST	73
DENGERINK, DR. J. D., <i>Critisch-Historisch Onderzoek Naar de Sociologische Ontwikkeling van het Beginzel der "Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring" in de Negentiende en Twintigste Eeuw</i> , J. H. Kok N. V., Kampen, Nether- lands, 1948	154
EPICETUS, <i>Moral Discourses of Epictetus</i> , Elizabeth Carter, Translator, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1910	356
FERRERO, GUGIELMO: <i>Aventure, Bonaparte en Italie, 1796-97, (The Gamble)</i> <i>The Reconstruction of Europe</i> (Subtitle: Talleyrand and the Congress of Vienna, 1814-15), pp. 19, 22, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1941.	287 287 ff.
<i>Pouvoir</i>	287
FOURIER, FRANCOIS MARIE CHARLES	75
GROTIUS, <i>Law of War and Peace</i> , Peace Book Company, London, 1939.	294
HAMILTON, ALEXANDER, "The Federalist No. 1," <i>The Feder- alist Papers</i> , Henry Regnery Company for The Great Books Foundation, Chicago, 1948.	135
HAYEK, FRIEDRICH A. VON: <i>Profits, Interest and Investment</i> , George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., London, 1939.	} 175, 283
<i>The Pure Theory of Capital</i> , MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1941.	
<i>The Road to Serfdom</i> , University of Chicago Press, 1944	160 ff.,
<i>Individualism and Economic Order</i> , University of Chi- cago Press, 1948.	176
<i>The Counter-Revolution of Science</i> , The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952.	161, 175
"The Political Ideal of the Rule of Law" (Lecture in Cairo under the auspices of the National Bank of Egypt, 1955).	283

HAZLITT, HENRY, "Private Enterprise Regained," <i>Clipping of Note</i> , August 15, 1949, Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York.	35
JAGER, RONALD, "Progressive Calvinism," <i>Calvin College Chimes</i> , Grand Rapids, Michigan, February 11, 1955	43 ff.
KOOY, DR. T. P. VANDER, <i>Op het Grensgebied van Economie en Religie</i> , N. V. Gebr. Zomer en Keunings Uitgever-smaatschappij, Wageningen, Netherlands, 1953.	26, 119
KUYPER, ABRAHAM: "Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring," address at Free Univ-ersity of Amsterdam, Netherlands, October 20, 1880.	266
<i>Ons Program</i> , 2nd ed., J. A. Wormser, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1880.	} 170
<i>Anti-Revolutionaire Staatskunde</i> , J. H. Kok N. V., Kamp-en, Netherlands, (Volume I, 1916; Volume II, 1917).	
LASSALLE, FERDINAND JOHANN	68
LINK, DR. HENRY C., <i>Rediscovery of Morals</i> , E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1947.	138
LIPPMANN, WALTER, <i>The Good Society</i> , Little Brown & Company, Boston, 1941.	143
MACHIAVELLI, NICCOLO, <i>The Prince and the Discourses</i> , The Modern Library, Inc., New York, 1940.	50 ff., 239
MARX, KARL, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> , Henry Regnery Com-pany for The Great Books Foundation, Chicago, 1949.	168
MILL, JOHN STUART, <i>On Liberty</i> , Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1947.	43 ff.
MISES, LUDWIG VON: Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut:	
<i>Bureaucracy</i> , 1944	175
<i>Omnipotent Government, The Rise of the Total State and Total War</i> , 1944	175
<i>Human Action, A Treatise On Economics</i> , 1949	175, 345 ff.
<i>Socialism—An Economic and Sociological Analysis</i> , 1951	171
<i>The Theory of Money and Credit</i> , 1953	175
Libertarian Press, South Holland, Illinois: "Middle-of-the-Road Policy Leads To Socialism"	173 ff.,
<i>Planning For Freedom</i> , 1952	346
MORE, SIR THOMAS, <i>Utopia</i>	75
NIEBUHR, REINHOLD, <i>Moral Man and Immoral Society</i> , Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1952.	12
NOCK, ALBERT JAY, <i>Memoirs of a Superfluous Man</i> , Harper & Brothers, New York, 1943.	58
NYGREN, ANDERS, <i>Agape and Eros</i> , translated by Philip S. Watson, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1953.	128
OPITZ, REV. EDMUND O., "Man Belittled," <i>The Freeman</i> , p. 579, Irvington Press, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, July, 1955.	214
ORWELL, GEORGE, <i>Nineteen Eighty Four</i> , Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York, 1949.	76
PLATO, <i>The Republic of Plato</i> , J. L. Davies & D. J. Vaughan, Translators, MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1916	20, 75
PRINSTERER, GUILLAUME GROEN VAN, <i>Ongeloof en Revolutie</i> , edited by Professor H. Smitskamp, 1951, T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands	258 ff.
REAM, REV. NORMAN S., "We Respectfully Desire Our Rights," <i>Faith and Freedom</i> , Spiritual Mobilization, Inc., Los Angeles, California, June, 1955.	316
RIESSEN, DR. IR H. VAN, <i>De Maatschappij der Toekomst</i> , T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands.	268 ff.

ROUSSEAU, JEAN JACQUES, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Henry Regnery Co. for Great Books Foundation, Chicago, 1948.	154
SCHOPENHAUER, ARTHUR, <i>Complete Essays of Schopenhauer</i> ; Book VII, <i>The Art of Controversy</i> , Willey Book Company, New York, 1942.	121
SNELLER, Z. W., "De Aanval van Fruin in 1853 op de auteur van <i>Ongeloof en Revolutie</i> ," <i>Groen's Ongeloof en Revolutie</i> , N. V. Gebr. Zomer en Keuning's Uitgeversmaatschappij, Wageningen, 1949.	157
STOB, DR. H. J., "The Liberty of Man," <i>La Revue Reformee</i> , Societe Calviniste De France, No. 17 and 18; 1954/1-2. (Presented at International Congress for Reformed Faith and Action, Montpellier, France, 1953.)	130
TALLEYRAND, <i>Memoir</i>	291
TOLSTOY, LEO, <i>My Confession, My Religion, The Gospel In Brief</i> , Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1927.	94
WEDDIGEN, W., <i>Wirtschaftsethiek</i> , Berlin, 1951.	26
WELLS, HERBERT GEORGE, <i>A Modern Utopia</i> , Nelson, London, 1916.	76
WHITEHEAD, ALFRED NORTH, <i>The Aims of Education</i> , Williams and Norgate, London, 1951.	22
<i>The Banner</i> , Official Organ of the Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan:	
"Protest Against Labor Policy of Synod of 1954," p. 805, July 1, 1955.	192 ff.
"Are They Slaves," p. 1130, September 23, 1955.	312
Letter by Dirk Jellema, p. 1194, October 7, 1955.	312
"Social Responsibility" p. 1322, November 4, 1955.	318
"Accredited Causes," p. 1339, November 4, 1955.	321
<i>The Calvin Forum</i> , Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.	190, 242
<i>The Evangelical Quarterly</i> , 39 Bedford Square, London, W. C. 1, July, 1955.	243 ff.
<i>The Guide</i> , "Labour Unions—Whither Christ," Christian Labour Association of Canada, Hamilton, Ontario, May, 1955	148
<i>The Grand Rapids Press</i> , Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 7 and 16, 1955.	179 ff.
<i>Notes</i> , Guild of Calvinist Scholars.	313
<i>The Psalter Hymnal</i> , Publishing Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1934:	
No. 340, "My God How Wonderful Thou Art."	16
"Heidelberg Catechism," Lord's Day XL	184
"Heidelberg Catechism," Lord's Day XXXIX, 227 ff., 274 ff., 308	
<i>The Reformation Review</i> , pp. 55 and 56, International Council of Christian Churches, Amsterdam, Netherlands, January, 1954:	
"Resolution on Dr. E. Stanley Jones"	115
"Resolution on the Message of T. Kagawa"	117
<i>De Standaard</i> , former Dutch Christian daily newspaper.	324 ff.
<i>Tot Vrijheid Geroepen</i> , Organ of Stichting Johannes Althusius, Zomerdijkstraat 1, Amsterdam Z, Netherlands.	204 ff.
<i>Trouw</i> , Dutch daily newspaper, September 8, 1955.	326 ff., 358 ff.
<i>De Wachter</i> , Official Dutch publication of the Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.	328, 360
World Council of Churches' letter, February 1, 1951.	118

Foreword

We send into the world herewith in bound form the first twelve issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. The collective name which we have selected is *Essays Against Sanctimony And Legalized Coercion*. The contents cover other subjects than those indicated by the title, but the only two subjects treated with any degree of completeness are *brotherly love*, which can be defined sanctimoniously, and the *authority of government*, which can be defined to legalize unwarranted coercion.

The contents of this publication are of diverse character, which is explained by the serial character of the successive issues and the circumstances under which the material was written.

Orthodox Christianity is not thriving. The cause rests *within* orthodox Christianity itself, and not in what is outside of it. It would have been out of order to have begun with criticism of ideas held *outside* of the churches or in denominations of which we are not members. The authors, therefore, have concerned themselves first with their own group and their own milieu.

FOUNDERS OF
PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

South Holland, Illinois
January, 1956

Progressive Calvinism

VOLUME I

JANUARY, 1955

NUMBER 1

Announcement of Organization of Progressive Calvinism League

We are organizing the Progressive Calvinism League. We shall be pleased if you will give serious thought to our program as outlined in this issue. We hope you will be in agreement with us and will join the League. Joining the League automatically puts you on the mailing list to receive for one year, from January 1955 through December, the League's publication, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. This League is different from anything of which you are a member now. The League will be a pioneer in social thought and research. To belong will be interesting and profitable. A membership blank is enclosed. Join at once and be a charter member.

FREDERICK NYMEYER
JOHN VAN MOUWERIK
MARTIN B. NYMEYER

Contents

	Page
Announcement of Organization of Progressive Calvinism League	1
The Character of the Progressive Calvinism League	2
A Description How Most of Us Feel About the Future Life Compared With the Present Life	16
A Great and Growing Inferiority Complex of Calvinists	19
One of the Dead and Inert Ideas in Calvinism, Namely, "Loving One's Neighbor"	21
An Address to Talented Students	23
Membership and Subscription Terms	24

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year; for students, \$1.00 per year. Address all subscriptions and communications to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

The Character of the Progressive Calvinism League

General Aims of the Progressive Calvinism League

The Progressive Calvinism League has been organized to promote in particular one phase of Christian doctrine and living, namely, the practical, everyday phase which is concerned about two relationships, namely,

- (1) the relationship of men to men, and
- (2) the relationship of men to things.

We should add that there is the still more important matter of

- (3) the relationship of men to God.

But we are not theologians, and although we shall take item (3) very much into account, it is a phase of Christian doctrine and living which we leave primarily to the experts in theology. We are neither theologians nor philosophers.

Let it be sufficient here to say that our over-all outlook regarding the relationship of men to God is determined by the ideas of orthodox Christianity. That is the *general* framework in which we think on *specific* questions about (1) the relation of men to men, and (2) the relation of men to things.

If you ask that this idea be expressed in Biblical terms, we reply by saying that we shall primarily be considering problems coming under the Second Table of the Decalogue, namely, the last six commandments, to honor father and mother, not kill, not commit adultery, not steal, not lie, not covet.

We shall be working in the field of ethics, that is, concerning ourselves about the conduct of each man toward his fellow men. We are interested in what in the academic world is called the *social* sciences. If we were concerned about dead things — metal, rocks, stars, or what have you — then we would be working in the field of the *physical* sciences; or if we were concerned about living things merely as physical organisms, we would be working in the field of the *biological* sciences — zoology, physiology, etc. Beyond theology and philosophy, beyond the physical sciences and the biological

sciences, there is the whole field of human relationships, namely, the *social sciences*, especially political science, political economy, law, and sociology.

Business is one of the activities in the social science field. We are businessmen. We like business. We think practical business solves correctly and naturally many important matters about which professional social scientists have impractical and even dangerous ideas.

We are *practical* social science men. In academic terms we might be called pragmatic social science men. We go by "experience that works well" which is what pragmatic means. We are so "practical" or "pragmatic" that we are suspicious of anything that does not work well. "Success" (correctly understood) is our yardstick.

Now we have discovered several interesting things: (1) that the Hebrew-Christian religion has a head-start, over the modern social sciences, of more than 3,000 years; that is a big lead; (2) that much of what passes today for "social science" is not really science; (3) that, very unfortunately, in order to be "up-to-date" many Christians are giving a borrowed and wholly wrong "social science" interpretation of Christianity; and (4) that *sound* theoretical social science and *practical* experience *both* are in complete agreement with ancient Biblical social science ideas.

So much for the relation of men to men.

But, you ask, why bring in your item (2), that is, the relationship of men to things? The answer is that in a world that has definite limits the relationship of men to men is affected by how much of "things" there is to go around. There is no unlimited supply of things. Socialists, communists, politicians, republicans and democrats, and all the uplift people do not admit that willingly. They all imply or positively promise a future limitless prosperity. As we said, Scripture, through Moses, was 3,300 years ahead of such social science error. Moses declared that there would always be a welfare shortage. We are confident that he was right.

What is our aim? To be successful in this life and to promote the success of others. (1) That requires sound social science

ideas. (2) That means that some ideas of modern so-called social science must be rejected. (3) That means that Biblical ideas on successful living are right and should be practiced and promoted. (4) That means that the identity of true social science and Biblical ethics, without any fantastic interpretations being required, can and should be established. (5) And finally, that also means, because the understanding of the general revelation of God should be progressive, that true modern social science has considerable light to throw on Biblical ethics.

The Hebrew-Christian religion taught a system of morality when society was relatively simple. We now have a complex society. Those ancient primitive Hebrew-Christian principles are not out-of-date. They do not need to be revised or improved. We are convinced that because many Christians, both theologians and laymen, are not trained in the social sciences, therefore they are confused on complex modern social questions and are frequently on the wrong side. Our aim then is to bring to bear on practical everyday questions the identical interpretation and guidance of both ancient Hebrew-Christian ethics and enlightened modern social science. Scripture and science together can help us. We are enthusiasts about both.

Those are our aims. Are you with us? You can help us and encourage us. We will talk the practical language of everyday life. We think we can help clarify each other's thinking. You should be prepared for some mental shocks. You will need an open mind, which is a characteristic of a wise man.

Probably we should add one idea. Why *PROGRESSIVE Calvinism*? For several reasons it might have been well for us to adopt the title, *PROGRESSIVE Christianity*. The various branches of Christendom differ seriously on *theological* doctrines. There is somewhat less disagreement on practical doctrines. The founders of this movement are members of a small Calvinist denomination (Christian Reformed), and it was decided to work in our own "circle" first. We shall be glad to help organize a *Progressive Christianity League*, or a *Progressive Lutheran League*, or a *Progressive Evangelical League*, etc. We do not wish to make a sectarian approach, and we think we are not.

We consider ourselves to be in the most-rigorous Calvinist tradition. We do not, however, believe that John Calvin settled all theological, or political, or social or economic problems. We paraphrase a great author on another subject:

It has never happened in any other case that the whole of a science was discovered, at the first attempt, even by the greatest genius; and so it is not surprising that the whole of [social science] was not discovered even by [Calvin]. His greatest handicap was that he was a forerunner; our greatest advantage is that we come after. We who are richer by four centuries of work than the founder of [Calvinism], should endeavor to work better than he . . .

Our Methods

Our methods are the methods of a sound society and a sound morality, namely, openness of mind, free discussion, digging into the depths for the truth, plainness of speech. There will be agreement on those methods except maybe the last. "Plainness of speech" may sound unbrotherly. But "plainness of speech" we must have. When we believe an idea to be wrong, we shall analyze it and criticize it and destroy it if we can. Further, we believe men should be responsible. We shall, therefore, not deal in abstract ideas. We shall refer to the men and the place and the organs through which those men expressed ideas which we consider to be erroneous.

We are expecting criticisms. A man is not entitled to hold an opinion unless he is ready to see it attacked hard, with no pulling of punches. We are more interested in the truth than in our winning an argument. We want no temporary successes in an argument. We are prepared to submit to the final approval of history, and be judged deliberately and slowly and with the benefit of historical perspective, and by the final outcome. We have neither respect nor sympathy for error accompanied by piety, nor for piety accompanied by error, whether it is our error or another's.

In short, our method will be to work over debated questions, or over questions which should be debated. There are plenty of them. In the interest of truth, we shall neither give nor expect quarter. In the discovery of truth we shall not exercise "love" so-

called. We shall exercise love only in the form of patience and forbearance. To consider love (so-called, but what is really a toleration of error) as a substitute for probing for the truth is a vicious idea.

Basic Principles

Plodding effort has gone into preparing a set of basic ideas. They appear in the following Declarations. The Declarations are as plain as we can make them in a brief statement. In various ways they need considerable explanation. Many people, if not most, will promptly say: "I'll agree to them. I see nothing really new in them. Of course, I am against a sickening piety (sanctimoniousness); and I wish to be progressive; and I believe in humility; and in a single standard of morality; and that success generally is a reward of virtue; and I do not wish to discredit what Christianity says about the supranatural by favoring some unsound or silly ideas in regard to the affairs of this world. I'll sign." We shall be delighted if you will sign to become a member.

These six Declarations will be used and re-used by us with steadfast consistency. You may discover that you must change your ideas fundamentally on some specific ethical problems, if you are going to hold consistently to these general Declarations. We shall be exposing as many inconsistencies in popular thinking as we can.

Here are the Declarations an acceptance of which is a requirement for membership in the Progressive Calvinism League:

I hereby declare that as a member of the Progressive Calvinism League, I will boldly and steadfastly

1. (a) Promote brotherly love as required by the Christian religion; and (b) attack all "extensions" of the Scriptural rule which extensions make the rule sanctimonious.
2. (a) Promote the further discovery of the greatness of God, as revealed in nature and in Scripture, by (1) promoting an attitude toward research in the sciences which will be fruitful in results and will inspire men

with humility and awe; and by (2) rejecting the idea that the comprehension of special revelation has been completed; the Scriptures must be reapplied to changing circumstances.

3. (a) Promote awareness of the limitations of the human mind, that is, promote true humility; and (b) resist the arrogance of all attempts at universal planning, that is, all attempts at pretending we are as God, and all Comtian Positivism.
4. (a) Promote a single rule of morality; and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.
5. (a) Promote confidence that prosperity obtained in a free market society is the result of obedience to the law of God; and (b) discontinue all apologies for that prosperity and all policies which will undermine that prosperity.
6. (a) Promote a program for this life (1) which will be distinguishable (antithetical) from a non-faith program, (2) which will bring good temporal results, and (3) which, therefore, cannot discredit Christianity's message in matters beyond this life; and (b) resist all programs borrowed from non-Christian sources which science and experience will reveal as unsound for this life, and which will consequently discredit Christianity's supernatural message.

Brief Explanations of the Declarations

DECLARATION NO. 1

(a) Promote brotherly love as required by the Christian religion; and (b) attack all "extensions" of the Scriptural rule which extensions make the rule sanctimonious.

Is there anyone who cannot agree to this Declaration? No communist can; no socialist can; many "Christians" cannot. There are people in rather orthodox Calvinist churches who *on specific problems* select an answer which will conflict with this Declaration.

What does the Declaration mean by "brotherly love" and by an "extension" of the requirement of brotherly love?

The Hebrew-Christian rule of brotherly love is usually summarized as follows: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We believe it. We promote it. You should not join the Progressive Calvinism League unless you wholeheartedly believe it yourself and live it.

And what is meant by the "extension"? By the "extension" we mean a still "stronger" law of love, namely, "From each according to his ability to each according to his need." That is the way Karl Marx put it, the founder of so-called "scientific socialism" and the father of modern socialism-communism. Probably there are more so-called Christian people in the world who profess to believe that socialist-communist law of love than who profess to believe the Biblical law of love.

The Biblical and the socialist-communist laws of love are irreconcilable and are in mortal conflict. They are not primarily two laws about "love" in varying degrees, with the socialist law having a higher degree of love, and therefore better. The socialist law of love is hyper-pious; it is sanctimonious. It is hypocritical.

The shocking thing is that many who claim the name of Christian interpret the Biblical law of love by means of the socialist-communist law of love.

These men, naturally, reject the "methods" of socialism-communism, namely, violence, oppression, injustice, falsehood; but they do not reject the basic principle of "love" of socialism-communism. These men are as doctors who give no more than morphine for the pain, but are really well pleased with the basic disease, the cause for the pain. There is no future for Christianity if it only attacks the symptoms of socialism-communism and not the evil root. The evil root is the sanctimonious law of love.

In fact, the great attractiveness of the Marxian law of love is, for some, just the fact that it goes *further*, that it demands *more* than the Biblical law of love. They realize that the law is an "extension" of the Biblical law. The more pious, the better they like it. We do not. There is a limit to our piety. We stagger under the load of endeavoring to live according to the Biblical rule. *We* are not good enough ever to be *voluntary* socialists or communists.

DECLARATION NO. 2

(a) *Promote the further discovery of the greatness of God, as revealed in nature and in Scripture, by (1) promoting an attitude toward research in the sciences which will be fruitful in results and will inspire men with humility and awe; and by (2) rejecting the idea that the comprehension of special revelation has been completed; the Scriptures must be reapplied to changing circumstances.*

There is a famous confessional statement, known as the *Belgic Confession*, written by Guido De Bres. Parts of this Confession will be controversial among Christians, but hardly the first two articles. They are:

ARTICLE I. *There is only one God.* We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good.

ARTICLE II. *By what means God is made known to us.* We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to "see clearly the invisible things of God," even "His everlasting power and divinity," as the Apostle Paul says (Romans 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation.

We are here particularly interested in this first "book," called "elegant": that is, the book of "nature." Generally, people will take that to be mountains and oceans, sun, moon and stars, beautiful colors and sounds, the marvelous living world of plants and animals, the laws of physics, chemistry, etc., and the marvels of

the sexes and reproduction. If men must work ceaselessly to accomplish small things, how great must be the Being who made the whole universe! A person who does not believe in a Supreme Intelligence appears to be unrealistic and even not genuinely rational.

It is our view that Scripture is primarily a book of revelation about God; secondly, a book on private morality; thirdly, a book on public morality; fourthly, but in a substantially lesser sense, a book on social science laws; and finally, in a rather limited way, a book in the fields of the biological sciences and of the physical sciences.

In other words, we hold the view of Scripture that it is not a social science textbook, but nevertheless, it is more a social science textbook than it is a physical science textbook. At the same time, we hold that not all social science laws are specifically spelled out in Scripture, and that there is a field of discovery in the social sciences which field is not directly covered by what is taught in Scripture, such matters as the division of labor in society, the financial organization of society, the proper relations between voluntary organizations and the state, etc.

The social sciences have made great gains since the days of Guido De Bres. Insofar as the social sciences have truly discovered laws which govern the organization of society it may be said that through these sciences it is possible to see today more clearly the rules governing a society than was possible in De Bres' days. In that sense, *general* revelation has been progressive.

DECLARATION No. 3

(a) Promote awareness of the limitations of the human mind, that is, promote true humility; and (b) resist the arrogance of all attempts at universal planning, that is, all attempts at pretending we are as God, and all Comtian Positivism.

The famous economist, Adam Smith, one of the greatest benefactors of mankind (but many of whose ideas have needed revision because economic science is also progressive), wrote about society being benefited by a guidance as of "an invisible hand." God? Maybe Smith meant that. A sufficient explanation is that the benefit society gets from (1) freedom, (2) voluntary cooperation, and (3) from the sum total of all human intelligences is

infinitely greater than it can get from "planning" and "coercion" and "guidance" by any single human mind or any dozen or so human minds. Smith's ideas are known philosophically as Individualism. Individualism is a product of humility. Opponents of Individualism are unknowingly humanists. Humanism, in the light of the sovereignty of God, is basically arrogant. Humanists who are opposed to Individualism wish to "rationalize" society by legalized coercion; they will engage in "central planning." Every socialist and communist and many professing Christians believe in the merits of a "planned" (that is a coercive) society which has behind it as boundless arrogance as the builders of the Tower of Babel. The human mind will PLAN where God has failed to plan!

But what are the fruits of such an arrogant evaluation of the human mind. The temporal fruits are confusion, poverty, coercion, oppression, violence, fraud, ruin. ALL *planned* societies are organized contrary to the will of God as outlined in Scripture. There are no exceptions. ALL free societies, if based on the Second Table of the Decalogue, are *unplanned* and prosperous and peaceful. The blessing of God rests on them. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The "laws" in the *social sciences* are as unalterable as in the physical sciences. But cause and effect operate under different circumstances. In the physical sciences cause and effect are "regular." In the social sciences there are interfering influences and delaying influences. As Solomon says: "Because sentence against an evil work *is not executed speedily* [effect after a cause is delayed] therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). This indicates how the whole epistemology of the social sciences must differ from the epistemology of the physical sciences, which is one reason for the unrealistic social science ideas of some mathematicians, physicists, chemists and other physical scientists. One of the elephantine errors of many Christians who belong to the so-called Christian intellectuals is the inappropriate application of the epistemology of the physical and biological sciences to the social sciences.

DECLARATION No. 4

(a) *Promote a single rule of morality; and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.*

Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the famous theologians in America today who influences the trend of theological thinking as much as any man in America, has indicated that it is moral for society to do what it is immoral for an individual to do (see his *Moral Man and Immoral Society*). This is a vicious principle. It establishes a double standard of morality — one for a man as an individual, and another for a man as a member of a group, a union, a state, a race, a class, or mankind as a whole. It is wrong for a man to steal as an individual, but as a member of American society, which is deliberately inflationary, a man may engage in public stealing every day (by means of inflation)! This is only one of many examples we intend to cite and explain.

The "church" is almost universally silent on all this *public* iniquity. The "church" has retreated. Many churches have no discipline any more against *individual* sins. But in regard to *public* sins, is there one large denomination in all America which concerns itself about them and has a Biblical answer? Or do the answers of the great denominations allow more or less for a double standard of morality? Where there is no personal (private) discipline the church is dead. Where there is no testimony against *public* sins the church is worse than dead; it is a renegade.

And the outcome? As Solomon says about events in the social science field, the effects are "not speedily executed" — it takes time, but they are as sure to come as effects in the physical sciences. And the effects of a dual standard of morality, the effect of the church (by inaction) blessing public sins will be what? The effect on the reputation of the church will be calamitous; the church will be cursed, as apostasy was cursed by the prophets of old — it will be a desolation, a hissing and an execration. Not for nothing is the church generally in disrepute among smart people.

DECLARATION No. 5

(a) *Promote confidence that prosperity obtained in a free market society is the result of obedience to the law of God; (b) discontinue all apologies for that prosperity and all policies which will undermine that prosperity.*

The "have-not" nations of the world accuse the "have" nations of being exploiters. The "have" nations are the nominally

Christian nations. Ah! They became rich by iniquity! They are not rich because the morality of the Hebrew-Christian religions permeated them!

All this lack of confidence in the blessings resulting from obedience to the law of God reflects a basic lack of confidence in what the Hebrew-Christian religions teach about the effect of obeying the laws of God. The effect? It is this: prosperity is the sure effect of obedience to the law of God; and adversity is the sure effect of disobedience to the law of God. Almost tiresomely that message occurs as a refrain in Scripture. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM holds that the rule stated in Scripture is true.

The churches will be ineffective in mission work unless they are willing to declare boldly and loudly that prosperity follows the Christian religion as his shadow follows a man. Why should anyone adopt the Christian religion if it does not pay to do so? It is only a limited comfort for distress in this life to believe in happiness in a future life.

But, it may be said, look at the distress and the poverty of the "righteous" in this world. Why are they in distress? For two reasons: (1) because of an enemy or because of an oppressive government, and (2) because of combinations of circumstances. But these are *exceptions* and they are not the kind of exceptions which invalidate the rule. The evil, most of which is public evil or group evil, should be resisted. The combinations of circumstances which constitute misfortune should be (and can be) alleviated by mutual assistance, or as it is called, charity.

Generally, mission activity has failed. Great efforts do not fail without cause. The cause, in this case, is the degeneracy of the message, for this life and the life to come, compared with what the message should be. Until the day comes that mission effort attacks the evils of untrue religions as prophets of old attacked the worship of Baal, and proclaims the magnificent benefits currently and afterwards of the Christian religion, no super-salesman will ever sell the Christian religion to large numbers of the "heathen." But today most "mission work" is nice and brotherly; sissified; no harsh words said. We shall in future issues present evidence on this.

DECLARATION No. 6

(a) *Promote a program for this life (1) which will be distinguishable (antithetical) from a non-faith program, (2) which will bring good temporal results, and (3) which, therefore, cannot discredit Christianity's message in matters beyond this life; and (b) resist all programs borrowed from non-Christian sources which science and experience will reveal as unsound for this life, and which will consequently discredit Christianity's supernatural message.*

Christianity, in many instances, makes itself ridiculous. It borrows, for example, some of its "social" program from non-Christian sources. It runs with that ball harder than the anti-Christians or the half-Christians themselves. Maybe these imitative Christians (both the real and the spurious) will carry this foreign ball across the goal line. But it will be the wrong goal line. The victory will be a calamity. Christianity will eventually be discredited. Why believe what Christianity says about a distant heaven if it is completely wrong about important matters here and now in this life?

**Responsibility
for Articles**

Articles in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will be signed by names or initials. The individual only is responsible for the content of the article. Liberty of opinion beyond the accepted Declarations is encouraged among the founders of the Progressive Calvinism League.

**Our
Prospective
Members**

We wish to have members, or if not members, at least readers.

We wish to have members who are intellectuals, that is, anyone who is influential in spreading ideas. We are eager to have as members, preachers, teachers, professional men, students.

We are eager to have as members that great body of common-sense people who are farmers and businessmen and employees.

What we advocate will be written so that everyone who reads carefully will be able to understand.

If our program to influence people fails, it will be our fault; nobody else's. Nor will it be the fault of the content of the message. We truly believe that the smarter a man is the more he holds himself responsible for success.

How did *we* learn what we think it will be so valuable for others to learn? By good fortune. Our lot has been that for us "the lines have fallen in pleasant places" and we have, in the providence of God, had opportunities to learn what has not been available to others. As the lepers in the gates of Samaria who discovered the flight of the Syrian host and who said, let us go into the city and tell the good news, so we have stumbled onto many things as good as the plunder of the Syrian camp for a starving city.

Subjects Which Will be Discussed

We shall not be side-stepping the "hot" issues. Sooner or later we plan to discuss subjects such as the following:

1. The difference between the Christian and the Communist Laws of Love
2. The Causes of Prosperity
3. The Legitimate Authority of Government
4. Unionism
5. Discrimination
6. Inflation
7. Common Grace and Social Science
8. Birth Control and Migrations
9. The Introduction of the Doctrines of the French Revolution into Present-Day American Society
10. The Foundations of Society — What Holds it Together
11. The Pre-Fall World a la Moses
12. The Parallelism between Biblical Morality and Sound Social Science
13. The so-called Neo-Calvinism of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner

14. The Social Ideas of Reinhold Niebuhr
15. The Advance of Positivism — the Introduction of Comtian Epistemology into the Christian Churches

We shall not work over these subjects in the abstract. We shall devote special attention to what has been written and what has been omitted in various Calvinist publications. That at least will often be our starting point.

F. N.

A Description How Most of Us Feel About the Future Life Compared With the Present Life

The old preacher liked to talk about the Second Coming of Christ. He liked to send up the petitions: "Lord Jesus, come quickly." He would call to the attention of the congregation that this should be the petition of all believers. If you could not pray for this, there must be something wrong with you. There is much of value in this reflection. But there were some members in my family who had a little trouble with that. Life was so interesting; business was good; all eight children were well placed in business, in jobs, in the professions or in college; there was a granddaughter, and two grandchildren on the way; one son was about to get married. No wonder that my wife did not wholeheartedly join in with the old minister about the coming of the Lord "quickly." She wanted to see the other grandchildren first. The son wanted to realize his wish and consummate a happy marriage. And since I did not need much imagination to conclude that the rest of the family would like to remain on earth for some considerable time to come, I got busy with the subject in the middle of the night and wrote to my wife and children in substance as follows:

*Father of Jesus, Love Divine,
What rapture will it be,
Prostrate before thy throne to lie
And gaze and gaze on Thee.*

Verse five of hymn number 340 from the Psalter Hymnal is one of my favorites. I like to sing it and I like to sing it, chest expanded.

But nearly every time I sing it, I observe strange phenomena: eyes kind of moist, rain drops (or something) running down my cheeks, voice not too clear, chest not expanded to full capacity. But, it is my favorite hymn, and I want to sing:

*Prostrate before thy throne to lie
And gaze and gaze on Thee.*

It looks mighty good to me that some blessed day, I shall lie there prostrate and gaze and gaze.

But when — today or tomorrow? If I may express my wish in the matter I would like to petition: Not yet, but after several years.

You see my life-work is not finished (at least so I think). I have several plans to carry out. There is the well we are planning to drill and the pump, the pressure tank and the several pasture sprinklers we are going to set up. I would like to see it all completed and see how much water we will get from this well. And after that I would like to see the abundant crops we can raise. Then we have the Black Bench Ranch in San Gorgonio Pass. We have just started disking and after that we will have to work the land with the noble blade, to make ready for the planting of the crop of oats this fall. If we then could have abundant rains and good growing weather, we could have a bumper crop next year. My, that is something to look forward to! Remember all these nice heifers we expect to freshen September/October? What pleasure will it be to have them come in with a four-and-one-half to six-gallon yield of milk daily. That would bring our average production over five gallons per cow daily. Something to be proud of. We just started two new milk routes on the other side of Cajon Pass. It is all rather promising. If all these enterprises may be crowned with God's blessing, we will prosper. I like to prosper, and God promises prosperity in the way of obedience to his commandments (see

the first chapter of the book of Joshua). Not that I would like to keep it all for myself, but, you know my wife and children also like to enjoy prosperity and the good things of this earth. And then, forget not the joy of giving, helping people, and the joy of promoting various causes of the Kingdom of God. How blessed it is to give of time, of money, of energy!

I enumerated mostly material interests. There are so many worthwhile things besides. Take our children, and grandchildren, either already born or yet to come. Three children married, five to go. It is a parent's delight to see the children established in their own home. God thus ordained it and parents love to see their children settled, establishing homes, building families. How happy are Christian parents when their children find good mates, mates who fear the Lord. When the young people make it their motto and their choice:

*As for me, I and my house,
we will serve the Lord.*

And then the grandchildren come! What joy to see these little ones! To see them grow, learn to walk and to talk. It makes you look forward to a family reunion ten years hence. To see your children with their husbands and wives, and their children. All covenant children, wearing the baptismal sign and seal of the covenant on their forehead. What many good things to look forward to. All these young men and women who have reached maturity, placed in the business world or in the professions, where they can work to the glory of God.

Before my death, or before the return of the Lord in glory, before I prostrate myself before His throne in the hereafter to gaze on Him, I would like to have the desire of my heart and see all the above fulfilled.

Is it sinful of me to desire that and to pray for its fulfillment? No! We are created to live, not created to die. Therefore we want to live to see all the good things enumerated to happen. I hate death. Death is our enemy.

But, maybe the Lord is not planning to grant unto me all these desires and petitions. Maybe He wants me to be through with the good things of this earth. Through with dairies, farms, wells, crops, business. Through with wife, children, grandchildren. Maybe He wants me to come home, to the "House with many mansions," where Christ is; where I can see my Savior face to face. If it would be God's design not to leave me here any longer but to call me to my Father's house; if He would say to me: I have heard your petition, your sins are all forgiven, your debt is paid, and now come home at once — would it be so bad if I would have to forego farms and business, wife and children in order that I may lie prostrate before His throne and gaze and gaze on Him?

Thus wrote I to my children. I am sharing it with you fathers and mothers not out of sentimentality, but out of covenant-consciousness.

J. V. M.

A Great and Growing Inferiority Complex of Calvinists

Culture! How badly we do want it! We are not happy about our Christianity and we are not happy about our Calvinism unless it is "cultured."

This basic motivation betrays a deep inferiority complex. That term, inferiority complex, means that we wish to think well of ourselves and also that we wish others to think well of us, but we sense that we are not worthy of being admired as we wish to be admired, that in fact, we are over-rating ourselves. And so we put on airs, we become aggressive, we are sensitive to criticism, or we engage in pretenses of illness, and a whole series of so-called maladjustments. We have an inferiority complex; the Dutch have a much more descriptive term, *minderwaardigheidsgevoel* (a feeling of being less worthy or inferior). In this cultural business the fundamental psychology is that we are already somewhat ashamed of our religion.

One way to acquire the culture we feel we need is to associate our religion with Greek philosophy. And so there is a great interest among some Calvinists in ancient Greek ideas. We ourselves are admirers of the great Greeks, especially Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Nevertheless, *we* do not need Greek philosophy to keep our Calvinist morale up. And we do not think highly of the Calvinism which props the Christian religion with the ideas of the Greek philosophers.

We can state it pretty simply. Our fourth Declaration reads: (a) *Promote a single rule of morality; and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.*

Now what did Plato put in his dialogue called *The Republic*, Book III? This:

Then if anyone at all is to have the privilege of lying, the rulers of the State should be the persons; and they, in their dealings either with enemies or their own citizens, may be allowed to lie *for the public good*. But nobody else should meddle with anything of the kind. . .

Just as ordinary businessmen, we do not believe what Plato writes.

And what is the real "joker" in the statement. It is four words which we have italicized, the words "*for the public good.*" That dangerous phrase masks every public iniquity which people tolerate and accept. A great Netherlander, Groen van Prinsterer, called attention to the fact that every piece of evil perpetrated by the French Revolution was defended as being "*for the public good.*" Those words always betray self-deception or masked malignancy. The principal is: the end justifies the means, and there is always an assumption of a dual moral rule.

We ourselves hold to Declaration Four. We hold to *one* and the same standard of morality for both individuals and the State, Plato to the contrary notwithstanding.

Scripture is far more "simple" than Plato. Where in Scripture is lying justified! Scripture does not talk about *ends* or *purposes*. It talks about *means*. It has no hypocrisy about the ends justifying the means.

In short, we plan to stick to Scripture, and we have no inferiority complex about Calvinism or Christianity even though we do not prop them up with Greek philosophy.

We hope you will not miss Plato's point nor our point. The "public good" is something *different* from "personal good." Plato recommends a dual morality. We believe in a single morality. Read again our Declaration Four.

F. N.

One of the Dead and Inert Ideas in Calvinism, Namely, "Loving One's Neighbor"

Scripture is not a book on psychology, but it is nevertheless based on sound psychology.

Modern psychology has rediscovered basic psychological truths clearly indicated in Scripture. Those psychological truths had largely been lost by religious people. What happened was this: the religions kept the husk of the idea and lost the kernel. By keeping the husk but losing the real and valuable idea religion made itself ridiculous.

This is what happened:

1. Sound psychological ideas in religion and life became confused and dead and inert.
2. The science of modern psychology discovered the real idea, or better said, rediscovered it.
3. Psychologists then ridiculed (not entirely fairly) the bastardized religious idea.
4. Then they gave their correct idea (the old Scriptural idea) a new name, a new nomenclature. The

new *name* helped persuade themselves and others that they really had a brand new idea, (but it was not).

5. The public then took to the new ideas as a duck to water. In many places psychology substitutes for religion, and psychologists for pastors.

What has happened? Christianity first loses grasp of reality (in ideas); someone else rediscovers it; he exaggerates the dull and stupid shift in meaning which religion has tolerated; religion becomes a laughingstock; he gives a new name to the real idea; he parades his "new" idea; the public catches on and accepts the sound idea. In short, Christianity has been poorly served by those who profess it.

Take "confession" for example. Scripture calls for whole-hearted honest confession and abandonment of sin. Scripture calls the alternative (namely, not to confess) bad. But in course of time "confession" of sins becomes a mere routine. It means practically nothing to Christians.

Then what does psychology do? It discovers that a bad conscience can destroy a man by making him melancholy and depressed. He may "go crazy." And so psychologists have returned to the "confession." They put you on their couch. They tell you to relax. And they tell you to talk — just talk. Get off your mind what is on your mind! ! ! You must be purged of your sense of guilt! Then you will be normal again. If he considers it necessary, the psychologist will declare your evil deed was not an evil deed. They will try to purge you of a sense of guilt by telling you your sin was not bad.

Christianity "discovered" the necessity of confession long ago. Instead, however, of minimizing evil it said: The sin *is* sin, but God will forgive.

Christianity was ahead, and when not lost in dead and inert ideas, is still ahead.

The late philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, very highly regarded among some Calvinists, wrote the following in *The Aims of Education* (we have substituted *Calvinism* for *education*):

In the history of [Calvinism], the most striking phenomenon is that schools of [Calvinism], which at one epoch are alive with a ferment of genius, in a succeeding generation exhibit mere pedantry and routine. The reason is that they are overladen with inert ideas. . . Every intellectual revolution which has ever stirred humanity into greatness has been a passionate protest against inert ideas. . .

It is not education only nor Calvinism only that is woodenish with dead and inert ideas. As in the case of religious psychology, religion generally has become foolish and a laughingstock, particularly in social science ideas.

Consider the statement — Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. It will be developed in later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM that Christians practically never get beyond the mere parroting of the words. In the next issue we intend to analyze that term.

F.N.

An Address to Talented Students

Whoever reads the *Calvin College Chimes* (Grand Rapids, Michigan) and other student publications realizes that there are highly talented young men and young women in the student body.

But it is also soon noticed that any hopes among those brilliant and ambitious and devoted persons to perform great deeds and make epoch-making contributions to Calvinism may possibly be disappointed. It is evident that Calvinism's youth is in a rut. Youthful work is running headlong into a blind alley. The old foundations have long had as big a superstructure built as the foundations can carry. The concrete is only six inches thick. There is need for an 18-inch foundation. Many a smart young Calvinist may be headed for frustration and depression, or may go off on a tangent.

The surest evidence that a basically new approach is needed is the literature of Calvinist youth. That literature is mostly concerned with mere form; style has superseded content; the play on words has taken over the role of penetrating thought; the tread-

mill paddles carry no new water from the Nile onto the land; in fact, the question may well be asked, has the literary style of present-day Calvinist youth become unattractive and sometimes even ridiculous.

But Calvinist youth does not lack ability. There is reason to believe that there are potentially thorough and powerful and conscientious thinkers among our present youth.

And how is a person to get out of an arid and sterile intellectual climate? Read something new and different. It may be wrong. But expose yourself to new ideas. Wisdom and truth are not discovered except there be the friction of conflicting ideas.

Read PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to get something different to stimulate your mind.

F. N.

Membership and Subscription Terms

Memberships or subscriptions run for one year, from January 1 to December 31. On in-between dates membership or subscriptions will be retroactive to the preceding January. Back publications to that January will be mailed to intra-year subscribers.

Membership in the Progressive Calvinism League depends on signature to the Declarations. The right is retained, by the officers of the Progressive Calvinism League, not to accept an application.

Annual memberships in the League, or subscriptions only to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, are \$2.00. For students, \$1.00.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

FEBRUARY, 1955

NUMBER 2

Contents	Page
Is the <i>Principle</i> Underlying Socialism-Communism High and Moral and are only Socialist-Communist <i>Means</i> Immoral, or are both Principle and Means Immoral?	26
Understanding and Misunderstanding the Hebrew-Christian Law of Love	28
A. The Plain Teaching of Scripture Regarding Brotherly Love	30
B. Analytical Dissection of Scriptural Law of Brotherly Love	
C. Scriptural Corrections of Popular Errors Concerning Law Requiring Brotherly Love	
D. Arrogance and Sanctimoniousness Associated With Other Definitions of Brotherly Love (Sections B, C and D will be presented in the third and later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)	
Reprint of an Editorial from the CALVIN COLLEGE CHIMES about the First Issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM	43
Membership and Subscription Terms	48

* * *

The attention of readers is called to what was published in the first issue also, namely, that *individuals only* are responsible for specific articles in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, to wit, the individual whose initials or name is shown at the end. Other co-founders or members are not responsible; to require complete agreement on all subjects would be so restrictive that the welfare of the Progressive Calvinism League would be hindered. The League is open to all who accept and sign its Declarations. Beyond that there is complete freedom of opinion.

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students, \$1.00 per year). Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 160th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

Is The Principle Underlying Socialism-Communism High and Moral and Are Only Socialist-Communist Means Immoral, Or Are Both Principle and Means Immoral?

Within the pale of Christianity Germany, aside from its extensive Catholicism, may be called Lutheran. Similarly, The Netherlands, aside from also extensive Catholicism, may be called Reformed, or Calvinist; the latter also applies to England and Scotland.

Calvinism had a revival in The Netherlands in 1834 and again in 1886. The revival in 1886 resulted in the founding of a Calvinist school, known as the Free University of Amsterdam. Among the rank and file of the Dutch Calvinists, the school is highly regarded.

This university naturally has a Department of Economic and Social Sciences. One of the professors in the Department is Dr. T. P. Vander Kooy. He has written a book, published in 1953, *Op het Grensgebied van Economie en Religie* (On the Borderland Between Economics and Religion).

Professor Vander Kooy's ideas and mine are throughout his whole book radically different. At the very end of the book Dr. Vander Kooy writes (translated):

The writer* of a treatise on economic ethics has pointed out that the performance of labor according to ability and the enjoyment of reward according to need [the socialist-communist principle] is in accordance with the ethical demand of charity and of brotherly love. The big mistake of socialism is that it pursues a high moral principle by immoral means, yea even with spiritual coercion . . . (P. 177)

Here, Dr. Vander Kooy quotes favorably (as the context reveals) the famous socialist principle, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. He further lauds that socialist principle

* Vander Kooy here refers to a German author, W. Weddigen, who in 1951 published a book in Berlin entitled *Wirtschaftsethik* (Economic Ethics).

as a "high moral principle." His exact words are *hoog zedelijk beginsel*.

In unqualified disagreement with Dr. Vander Kooy, we, as was made clear in the January issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, are unalterably opposed to the morality of socialism-communism, not merely because it uses coercion, violence, fraud, theft and unmitigated cruelty as a *means* to attain its ends, but because its basic *principle*, namely its principle of brotherly love (from each according to his ability to each according to his need) is vicious and immoral and unscriptural.

If the basic *principle* of socialism-communism is tolerable and even noble, as Dr. Vander Kooy indicates, and if the only moral shortcoming of socialism-communism is the *means* it employs, then all that is necessary to make socialism-communism acceptable is to induce it to discontinue certain means but to strive for the same ends, a certain so-called *social* justice according to the principle just stated — from each according to his ability to each according to his need.

The view of Dr. Vander Kooy, who is undoubtedly a leader among orthodox Calvinists in The Netherlands, shocks me. To approve the morality of the famous Marxian formula is to give up to the enemy the key fortress in the whole line. By one grand concession everything is lost.

There is a saying in Europe: "East of the Rhine there are only socialists." Amsterdam, geographically, is east of the Rhine. (We quote the saying with our tongue in our cheek, of course.)

They may not know there that by agreeing to the famous (should be infamous) socialist-communist law of love they are already ideologically in the socialist-communist camp. Dr. Vander Kooy, it should be mentioned in fairness to him, rejects socialism for technical reasons, as well as for the use of improper means, but the character of his reasoning disturbs us. To reject a great evil for lesser reasons and to accept the basic error of the evil is almost as disturbing as approval of the evil.

We have here a situation to which we called attention, in a broad way, in the January issue. We there made the point that,

with the passing of time, the adherents of certain ideas which are described by certain terms, such as the term *brotherly love*, abandon the original meaning of the idea and accept, under the same term, just the opposite idea. Figuratively speaking, everything is turned upside down. That is what has happened in this case; a professor in one of the social sciences (economics) in the believed-to-be staunchest Calvinist university in Europe accepts and praises the basic socialist-communist principle.

We feel constrained to challenge such error, because error it can be shown to be, as poor economics and poor ethics and poor Christianity and poor Calvinism. All, of course, unwitting and unintentional.

This explains why a major portion of this issue and several subsequent issues is devoted to an analysis of *brotherly love*. Can it properly mean today exactly the opposite of what it meant, as we understand it, in Old Testament and New Testament days? Does *brotherly love* as defined in Scripture, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, mean "from each according to his ability to each according to his need"? Dr. Vander Kooy says the two are not incompatible and that the socialist-communist law is a high moral principle. In flat contradiction, we shall endeavor to show that it is a low, immoral principle.

F. N.

Understanding and Misunderstanding The Hebrew-Christian Law of Love

We are attending in this analysis to a very simple thing — the *correct* meaning of a term. The term is *brotherly love**. That term is used to cover an idea expressed in the famous law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Hebrew-Christian ethics are summed up in that law. There is, we hold, no difference in the correct Hebrew and the correct Christian interpretation of the law. They are indetical.

This law on brotherly love is used, more frequently and more widely than any other rule known to us, to approve an action or

*In this article *brotherly love* and *neighborly love* are used interchangeably.

to criticize an action. This law is an almost universally accepted moral standard. By it men and the actions of men are praised or condemned.

But what *does* the law mean? Our endeavor is an attempt to show what the correct, and the only correct, definition of the law is.

It is proposed to consider four very interesting aspects of the idea of brotherly love, namely:

1. What really is the *Biblical* doctrine of brotherly love?
2. What will an analytical dissection of the concepts involved in brotherly love reveal?
3. What are the essential corrections which are needed in the interpretation of the ancient scribes who were the experts on the law, and how are those erroneous interpretations in the opposite direction from popular modern error?
4. How does a modern interpretation of the law of brotherly love result in sanctimony in profession and disaster in social affairs?

Some of the conclusions which will be derived from the following analysis are:

(1) The law on brotherly love, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, cannot possibly mean what many very earnest people who claim the name Christian, whether they be liberal or orthodox, think it means. What they think "loving the neighbor" means is pure fiction and hallucination.

(2) An *erroneous* idea of a moral law of brotherly love can have no validity in determining what is sound public policy, acceptable group morality and true individual morality. Neither communism, socialism, interventionism nor free enterprise can be validly judged by a *mistaken* rule.

(3) The law as frequently understood by "Christians" is not only erroneous, and a bad standard by which to judge, but an evil idea, a damnable iniquity, a sure road to ruin, and consequently it is a sure way to do eventual desperate damage to the reputation of the Christian religion. A religion which is wrong on the

relation of men to men will be estimated by most men probably to be even more wrong on the relation of men to God.

A. THE PLAIN TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE REGARDING BROTHERLY LOVE

Love—A Word With Many Meanings

There are few words which are *univocal* (yu-niv'o-cal) — that is, words which have only one meaning. Instead, nearly all important words are *equivocal* — that is, they have more than one meaning. The word *love* is not a univocal word; it is a very equivocal word.

The various meanings which the word *love* has cause confusion and mischief. It is the purpose of this analysis to see the mischief there can be in this word when it is used as a basis for morality and for determining the organization of society, that is, when it is used to describe and to designate what is thought to be the required relation of men to men, in society.

The Word, Love, in Sex Matters

The meaning of the word *love*, which is usually assumed to be the meaning intended unless the context indicates otherwise, is "sex love" and its related family love. This is not the aspect of love which will be analyzed in this little study, but it will be interesting to explore at least two meanings of the word *love* in sex matters. It will then be easier to understand that in the social science field the word *love* has equally diverse meanings.

When dealing with the opposite sex, the word *love* is hypnotic. Whisper to a girl "I love you" and she will always thereafter think tenderly of you unless you have a terrible case of halitosis or a monstrously crooked nose.

The word *love* in the sex sense covers two entirely different things — (1) legitimate love, and (2) illegitimate love; that is, it covers a benefit in one case and an injury in another case. There can be no doubt that the pursuit of an illicit love affair, with a prostitute or with a woman considered respectable, can be prospered by earnestly telling the woman, "I love you." Women (and

men) have a weakness for believing what they wish to believe. The purpose of the declaration is obvious; to say, "I love you," is equivalent to saying that you wish to have possession of the woman.

Such a wish to have possession of a woman may be accompanied by the intention to have no responsibility for her at all. Under the circumstances a great injury is being proposed to her under the fine-sounding term, *I love you*.

But change a few of the conditions. Assume that a young man gently and politely courts a young woman, and then respectfully sees the girl's parents and asks to have her in marriage. He will undoubtedly declare to both daughter and parents that he *loves* her. What he means is that he wishes to have possession of her. In that sense the proposition is no different whatever from the same declaration in an illicit "love" affair.

In the one case the expression, "*I love you*" pleases daughter, parents and the public. The marriage may be celebrated in a church with benefit of clergy. In the other case the expression will be couched in the same words — *I love you* — but daughter, parents, public and clergy (if the latter learn of it) are all highly offended.

The word *love* in sex matters, therefore, has two meanings which make the word altogether different depending on attendant circumstances. *Love* has a good meaning when it is accompanied by the intention to undertake responsibility for the support and protection of the woman; and it has an evil meaning when covering the same subject with no intention of undertaking responsibility for the woman.

In short, *love* in one instance means one thing; in another instance it means something entirely different. In the first instance it means a wonderful thing; in the second instance it means a disastrous thing. A woman who is not smart enough to understand "*I love you*" in one sense when it comes from an honorably intentioned man, and "*I love you*" in another sense when it comes from a dishonorably intentioned man will probably end up in trouble.

Similarly, a society which does not know what the sentence means — thou shalt *love* thy neighbor as thyself — will equally surely end up in dire trouble. And we have sadly noted that some

of the easiest sinners in sex matters use the word *love* most freely, and that similarly some of the easiest sinners in social matters use the word *love* equally freely.

The Two Different Meanings of Love in Social Matters

In social matters we are told we must love our neighbors as ourselves, and do unto others as we wish to be done unto. Are there (at least) two meanings to this, and if so, what are those two meanings? Yes, there are two (and more) meanings which appear to be not very dissimilar but which are as dissimilar as telling a prostitute you love her and telling the parents of a girl you wish to marry that you love her.

In the one case, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, means:

1. You should do as much for your neighbor as for yourself.

and in the other case, the expression means:

2. You should not harm your neighbor and should have goodwill toward him.

Lazarus, the beggar in heaven speaking in the parable to Dives in torment, declares, "There is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us." The gulf between these two definitions of neighborly love, although they may look as if they differ in only a minor way, is unbridgeable.

Of these two definitions of brotherly or social love (as distinguished from sexual love) the first, that brotherly love is in essence or requires that you do as much for your neighbor as yourself and not displease him, is rejected as incorrect and evil; the second, that brotherly love simply requires that you do not harm your neighbor and that you manifest good will toward him, is accepted as correct and good. This very brief simplification of the law requiring brotherly love needs considerable explanation, which is endeavored in what follows.

To indicate the direction of this analysis we here state that the version of the law of brotherly love which requires that you do

as much for your neighbor as for yourself is a socialist and communist law; the other, which requires that you do not harm your neighbor and that you *manifest good will* toward him is in accordance with the Hebrew-Christian and the capitalist traditions. The specific socialist-communist formulation of the law of brotherly love is, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. The specific Hebrew-Christian and capitalist law of love is, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The former law must be interpreted as making the wish of the "neighbor" the standard; the latter law cannot *correctly* be interpreted in any other way than that the wish of a person himself is the standard, *with certain supplementary qualifications*.

**Early and Late, and Repeatedly,
Christians Tend to Turn to the
Socialist-Communist Law of Love**

The moral requirement of a law of love, that you do as much for your neighbor as for yourself, has repeatedly been considered, but erroneously, as the essential characteristic of brotherly love and as evidence of brotherly love. It is neither.

The early Christian church in Jerusalem experimented with the idea of doing as much for your neighbor as for yourself and instituted "community of goods," that is, it experimented with a *voluntary* socialism. (Orthodox socialism is not voluntary but is essentially a *coercive* system; you share with others whether you wish to do so or not, because the *group* to which you belong has decreed it — passed a law that you *must* share.) The experiment of the early Christian church in Jerusalem is described in Acts 4:34. The text reads: "For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them, and brought the prices of things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." Then follows the story of Ananias and Sapphira. That their contributions were voluntary is evident from Acts 5:4; the Apostle Peter is speaking to Ananias: "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? And after it was sold was it not in thy power?"

Obviously, this was not what is meant by socialism and communism today which *are* coercive. The members of the early church

engaged in *voluntary* acts to share fully with their neighbors. In order to do that they sold their fixed assets, houses and lands, and "distributed."

The sequel tells the story. This "equalization" of wealth, this equalization of income, this egalitarian (leveling) process was eventually a dismal failure. It is not necessary to wait to know the sequel; the outcome could be positively forecast. Clearly when there is a rapid liquidation (sale) of fixed assets, it will not be long before there are no fixed assets left to liquidate (sell). What looked as if it were sensible brotherly love could by cold logic clearly be seen to be no more than a temporary living beyond their means, a spending spree, because they were "running their assets down." It was like a young man "going through his inheritance"; the rate of consumption could not be kept up indefinitely. This therefore was not unalloyed Biblical charity; there was something more added to it. Charity is not suicidal; egalitarianism always is. The penalties of egalitarianism in the end, in a staggering manner, outweigh the benefits in the beginning.

The sequel is clearly indicated in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter two, verse 10. Paul had gone to Jerusalem to see Peter and James and settle certain matters. Then Paul was to go his way again, but Peter and James, elders in the mother church, probably once rich but now evidently poor, obtained from Paul the promise that he would hold in his distant and new and struggling churches, collections for the *poor in Jerusalem*. Clearly the emotional spree of too much brotherly love (not really *sound* brotherly love) had left the original church exhausted and mendicant (begging).

The lesson is plain for all to read and learn.

We are not saying that the dissipation of the property of the members of the first church in Jerusalem was a sin. It was not sin, because it was a *voluntary* dissipation. If it had been a *coercive* distribution it would undoubtedly have been a gross sin. The members, as Peter said, could do what they pleased. They were in a frame of mind to have a financial honeymoon; as Solomon sardonically says, there is a time for everything — including spending. And it *can* be argued that it is really a good thing to live lavishly today even though you will not have enough to eat tomorrow.

There is nothing in Scripture which says that you cannot decide to make life exciting by doing things in extremes. We, therefore, make no criticism of the acts of the first church in Jerusalem, but we do call attention to the facts, namely:

1. They were on a spending spree.
2. It could not last long.
3. It did not last long.
4. The pay-off consisted in their being so poor that they had to ask struggling foreign churches to send them "poor collections." In short, they followed a short-lived, and a short-sighted, and a not-wise policy. That was their business. But nobody is under any obligation to imitate them. And everybody is entitled to his opinion of what he thinks of their wisdom or foolishness.

It is equally instructive to take a more modern example, the Puritans in New England. These people were Calvinists, austere, hard-working; a generation of them, in England, had bounced England into the front ranks of prosperity. Henry Hazlitt, quoting Betty Knowles Hunt, has described the situation well (by quoting largely from Governor Bradford's record). (We retain the original spelling in the quotation.)

Most of us have forgotten that when the Pilgrim Fathers landed on the shores of Massachusetts they established a Communist system. Out of their common product and storehouse they set up a system of rationing, though it came to "but a quarter of a pound of bread a day to each person." Even when harvest came, "it arose to but a little." A vicious circle seemed to set in. The people complained that they were too weak from want of food to tend the crops as they should. Deeply religious though they were, they took to stealing from each other. "So as it well appeared," writes Governor Bradford, "that famine must still insue the next year allso, if not some way prevented."

So the colonists, he continues, "begane to thinke how they might raise as much corne as they could, and obtaine a beter crope than they had done, that they might not still thus languish in miserie. At length [in 1623] after

much debate of things, the Gov. (with the advise of the cheefest amongst them) gave way that they should set corne every man for his owne perticuler, and in that regard trust to them selves . . . And so assigned to every family a parcell of land . . .

"This had very good success; for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corne was planted then other waise would have bene by any means the Gov. or any other could use, and saved him a great deall of trouble, and gave farr better contente.

"The women now wente willingly into the feild, and tooke their litle-ones with them to set corne, which before would aledg weakness, and inabilitie; whom to have compelled would have bene thought great tiranie and oppression.

"The experience that was had in this commone course and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince the vanitie of that conceite of Platos and other ancients, applauded by some of later times; — that the taking away of propertie, and bringing in communitie into a comone wealth, would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God. For this comunite (so farr as it was) was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much employment that would have been to their benefite and comforte.

"For the yong-men that were most able and fitte for labour and service did repine that they should spend their time and streingth to worke for other mens wives and children, with out any recompense. The strong, or man of parts, had no more in devission of victails and cloaths, than he that was weake and not able to doe a quarter the other could; this was thought injustice . . .

"And for men's wives to be commanded to doe servise for other men, as dressing their meate, washing their cloaths, etc., they deemd it a kind of slaverie, neither could many husbands well brook it . . .

"By this time harvest was come, and instead of famine, now God gave them plentie, and the face of things was changed, to the rejoycing of the harts of many, for which they blessed God. And the effect of their particuler [private] planting was well seene, for all had, one way and other, pretty well to bring the year aboute, and some of the abler sorte and more industrious had to spare, and sell to others, so as any generall wante or famine hath not been amongst them since to this day."

Hazlitt adds one paragraph in comment on the foregoing. It is: "The moral is too obvious to need elaboration."

To believe that *brotherly love* requires that you do as much for your neighbor as for yourself by equal sharing or by not hurting his feelings (however that might be accomplished) is a hallucination. Scripture does not teach it; nor does experience.

We turn to what Scripture *does* teach about brotherly love, namely, that it requires not injuring your neighbor and good will — and no more. It will be profitable to analyze this scriptural idea in considerable detail.

The Old Testament On the Law of Love

The great emphasis on the affirmative statement of the Second Table of the Law in the form, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is in the New Testament, the second of the Two Books which are the basis of the Christian religion. Christ is popularly considered to be the formulator of the condensed commandment to love the neighbor as thyself. But there is considerable reason to believe that there was nothing unusual or especially advanced in His formulation of the Law. Probably the statement had already for a considerable time had that formulation, and Christ was merely expressing a fairly common sentiment.

The evidence on that is really interesting. In Luke 10:25-28 the following is written:

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal

life? An he [Christ] said unto him [the lawyer], What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he [the lawyer] answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he [Christ] said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.

The lawyer, as well as Christ, and as was probably true of most of the hearers, was thoroughly familiar with the idea that the Second Table of the Law could be very briefly summarized by saying: love thy neighbor as thyself.

It is not surprising that there had come to be a general acceptance of the idea, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. If any natural as well as supernatural origin is to be sought in Christ's brilliant understanding of the Law, then the attention is immediately directed to the Old Testament as a probably direct or indirect source for Christ's statement. In fact, a careful review of the ideas Christ propounded will reveal that all His ideas were rooted in and that His thinking was saturated with ideas from the Old Testament.

The exact statement, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, appears in the Old Testament, 1400 years before Christ, in Leviticus 19:18b, as a *positive* statement to summarize the *negative* commandments in the preceding verses, 11-18a.

Ye shall not steal; neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah. Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind; but thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor. Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am Jehovah. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt

surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah.

The parallelism in the Old and the New Testaments is perfect — both state the negative commandments and both state the positive commandment. They are perfectly agreed.

The Identity of the Positive Law and the Last Five Commandments

Scripture declares that the Ten Commandments were written by God himself. They must, therefore, by devout Christians be considered perfect and complete. The last five of the Ten Commandments are negative — thou shalt not kill, commit adultery, steal, lie, nor covet. Anyone disparaging the negative form of these five commandments, and declaring they should have been positive or affirmative is too bold in his criticism. The negative form of the Second Table of the Law is not, it is believed by us, anything to be criticized, but rather something to be pleased about and to be lauded.

It is striking that in all the New Testament references to the requirement of loving the neighbor there is the unvarying and identical explanation of that Law by saying it means: thou shalt not kill, commit adultery, steal, lie nor covet. The law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, as so prominently promulgated by Christ in the New Testament, is *never* explained except by prohibition of killing (violence), adultery, theft, lying and coveting, and, it may be confidently added, *cannot* be explained except by such specific prohibitions. Because of the importance of the point we shall quote the relevant scriptural passages (in addition to Luke 10:28 already quoted):

Matthew 22:34-40. But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like *unto it* is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.

Mark 12:28-34. And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Romans 13:8-10. Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

II John 1:6. And this is love, that we should walk after His commandments.

The Original Law of Love Between Mankind

There is a great deal to be added to the foregoing before there is a full understanding of what is meant by, thou shalt love

thy neighbor as thyself, but certain simple, positive statements can already be made with complete confidence and with complete accuracy; they are:

(1) The teachings of the Old Testament and the New Testament on, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, are *identical*. There is not a scintilla of difference.

(2) *Basically* the law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself means nothing more than that you should not harm your neighbor. As Paul said: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor," and because he equates that with "love," therefore working no ill to his neighbor is "the fulfillment of the law." John, the apostle of love, says the identical thing. "And this is love, that we should walk after His commandments" (obviously referring to the Second Table of the Law). (This statement will appear controversial to some. We call attention to our use of the word *basically*. Remove that word, and then our statement will not stand. Clearly, we admit something of less importance must be added, for special reasons. But what is added is not the *essence* of the law of brotherly love. The *essence* of the law is *not-to-harm-the-neighbor*. It is not possible, here, to develop the supplementary features of the law of brotherly love. We are now stating only the *basic* law, as written by the finger of God, and given to Moses. All errors in regard to the law of brotherly love stem from a subtle denial of the correctness of what God gave Moses.)

(3) The Second Table of the Law (to honor father and mother, not kill, not commit adultery, not steal, not lie, not covet) — not to harm one another — was all there was to the Commandments *before* the Fall of Adam and Eve in paradise, they were the *whole* law on the relation of men to men. Nothing needed to be added. Because of the design of the world by predestination (almost certainly supralapsarian) and because of the entrance of sin, something more must be added to the foregoing explanation, but we shall show eventually that what must be added because of the predestination of sin would not, if sin had been excluded, have been a part of the basic commandments.

(4) To those who would lament that this robs the Second Table of the Law of "love" — nice, sentimental, gushy affection and self-sacrificing services as were perpetrated by the early church members in Jerusalem and the devout Puritans in New England — we shall develop an answer in what follows to the effect that such love is neither wise, nor workable.

The reader who has been thinking more sentimentally about "love" than the foregoing analysis suggests, and who has already grasped the arms of his chair and is lifting himself up in wrath (not in "love"!) will probably pull the chair up with him when he reads that we quietly add that there is a famous expression in economics and business which covers exactly the same idea. It is *laissez-faire*. *Laissez-faire*, when it is correctly understood, has in business exactly the same meaning as is given in the foregoing to the plain and obvious and consistent teachings of Scripture. The term means: let business alone; permit it to be free; do not interfere. That formulation of *laissez-faire* ASSUMES the laws (of God) are being followed, and that beyond that business should be free. *Laissez-faire* is in the field of business an identical concept to the Second Table of the Law — freedom *except you may not*, as Paul wrote, "*work ill to your neighbor*."

We now come to what must be added to the original law of love *because of sin*, and what in a parallel manner must be added to *laissez-faire* because of sin. This eventually leads us to the famous Sermon on the Mount, summarized in Matthew, chapters five to seven, in the New Testament, and also in corresponding passages in Mark and Luke. Before doing so it will be well to analyze what may be concluded and what may not be concluded from what has already been reviewed.

B. ANALYTICAL DISSECTION OF SCRIPTURAL LAW OF BROTHERLY LOVE

(To be continued in the next issue of
PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

**Reprint of an Editorial
from the CALVIN COLLEGE CHIMES
about the
First Issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM**

The *Calvin College Chimes*, founded in 1906, is published weekly by the students of Calvin College under the authority of the Student Council. The subscription rate is \$2.00. The Editor-in-chief is Ronald Jager.

A one-column editorial signed "R. J." appears on page 2 of the February 11, 1954 issue. (We believe the date should be February 11, 1955; at any rate the folio number is XLIX, number 16.) This editorial we are reproducing in full exactly as it appeared.

As the next to the last paragraph reveals, the *Calvin College Chimes'* editorial writer estimates that it [*Chimes*] "is also, perhaps, the only institution that will expend any energy combatting the nebulous fogs of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM." From this then we may expect further evaluation of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM from the *Chimes*. We welcome that. And then, if we accept the editorial writer's estimate about the attitude of other publications toward PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM then we must expect that no other publication will take note of us. We shall regret that.

The reason why we welcome criticism is because we subscribe to what John Stuart Mill wrote in his famous essay *On Liberty*, namely:

... All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility.

* * *

... There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true, because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and

assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion, is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action; and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.

* * *

. . . In the case of any person whose judgment is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so? Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct. Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; to profit by as much of it as was just, and expound to himself, and upon occasion to others, the fallacy of what was fallacious. Because he has felt, that the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this; nor is it in the nature of human intellect to become wise in any other manner. The steady habit of correcting and completing his own opinion by collating it with those of others, so far from causing doubt and hesitation in carrying it into practice, is the only stable foundation for a just reliance on it: for, being cognizant of all that can, at least obviously, be said against him, and having taken up his position against all gainsayers — knowing that he has sought for objections and difficulties, instead of avoiding them, and has shut out no light which can be thrown upon the subject from any quarter — he has a right to think his judgment better than that of any person, or any multitude, who have not gone through a similar process.

* * *

... However unwillingly a person who has a strong opinion may admit the possibility that his opinion may be false, he ought to be moved by the consideration that however true it may be, if it is not fully, frequently and fearlessly discussed, it will be held as a dead dogma, not a living truth.

In agreement with Mill, we admit that we are not entitled to hold an opinion with conviction unless we are prepared to have it attacked.

We shall be particularly interested in what the editorial folk of the *Chimes* write, because it will be possible to make one of two inferences: (1) that the editorial staff has some "solitary thinkers," or (2) that the editorial staff reflects the ideas and the character of the faculty of Calvin College. The latter of the two possibilities makes what appears in the *Chimes* highly significant. In the case of young people, except the very highly talented and really intellectually independent, the great probability is that they are reflecting the ideas and principles of their teachers. We do not know whether the writer of this editorial in the *Chimes* is a solitary thinker or a reflector of ideas in the Calvin College faculty.

The enthusiasm of students for the faculty of their school is often humorously referred to by telling the story of the survey made among students in various schools about their estimate regarding who were the three greatest philosophers of all time. The survey, so goes the story, showed a remarkably definite pattern; the three greatest philosophers of all time were: Plato, Kant, and the head of the philosophy department of that particular college.

What follows is the *Calvin College Chimes'* editorial about the first issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

(A Reprint from *Calvin College Chimes*)

"PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM"

This past Monday's mail forced upon the attention of almost every Calvin student the activities of a newly organized group of social reformers which has called itself the Progressive Calvinism League.

Now there are some people to whom one speaks with difficulty; there are others to whom one speaks in vain. Consequently this editorial is not directed at Calvinism's latest League. The League itself will be interesting, and either funny or pathetic to some; it will be ignored by many and taken seriously by a few. It is primarily to these last two groups that this is written; others may read it for the satisfaction of finding in print what they already know.

The first publication of the League — "a pioneer in social thought and research" — was last Monday's twenty-four page pseudo-intellectual Dagwood sandwich: a layer of Plato, a layer of clichés about morality and Scripture, some apple sauce about missions, a layer of Whitehead, more platitudes . . . This social-political-economic-literary epoch-maker was, I gather from page fifteen, produced by special arrangement with the tenth Muse who communicates only to the select and has made the P.C.L. privy to the truth. Either that or we have here the workings of an anthology mentality, random reading on an assortment of unrelated topics, and an infinite capacity for fallacious reasoning. At any rate, having announced themselves as authorities and judges in Israel, the founders of the P.C.L. like the Samaritan lepers are now disclosing their revelations. Concretely, this means that these self styled reformers are about to call the Calvinistic world to order and reprove it for its misdirected values.

There is a naivete about all this that almost inspires pity for its perversion of religious sincerity. "Scripture and science together can help us," say the founders; "We are enthusiasts about both." But being enthusiasts about both means by definition and by practice that they are scholars about neither. This is unfortunate since these brethren obviously consider themselves to be religious and social critics of a rather significant variety. Christian charity compels some sympathy for such immaturity of purpose and such misunderstanding of Calvinism.

For they do indeed misunderstand Calvinism. Behind the heaped-up clichés and intellectual capsules there are operating

some notions about religion and society whose absurdity is their own best refutation:

. . . Scripture, we are informed, is concerned not about ends or purposes, but about means. This, I admit, is really pioneering. (Of course, Arius and Arminius were also pioneers of an analogous stripe, but I seem to recall they had SOME basis for their views.)

. . . Plato, nasty pagan that he was, had a "double standard of morality." So Plato is expelled and all of Greek culture with him. ("Love of culture" stems from an inferiority complex anyway.)

. . . Prosperity and material benefit, it is asserted, follow the Christian religion as his shadow follows a man. "Why become a Christian if it does not pay to do so?" But some Christians are in distress and poverty, we are told, and the reason is (1) because of an enemy, or (2) because of combinations of circumstances." If superficially has ever exposed itself in more crass form than this brilliant bit of ankle-deep analysis it was not done in the name of intelligence.

All this and much more lip-wisdom is pasted together by a preoccupation with an apologia for wealth and an aversion to social planning, the latter so undocumented that it does not deserve the respectability of being called reactionary. The whole is then capped with an "address to talented students" which is calculated to rescue those "brilliant and ambitious persons" whose writings in "Calvin College Chimes and other student publications" indicate an "arid and sterile intellectual climate." So far CHIMES is the only contemporary institution weighed and wanting. It is also, perhaps, the only institution that will expend any energy combatting the nebulous fogs of Progressive Calvinism: for the P.C.L. is not more than a drop of an idea diffused into a hazy mist, and others will realize, perhaps better than we, that you cannot dispell fog with hand grenades.

So what about it all? For one thing CHIMES does not oppose a re-examination of Calvinism and a re-application of its principles to an ever changing society; we favor few things more. But Progressive Calvinism (an ill-chosen and meaningless name that never does get around to defining itself), judging by its first publication, has offered no credentials for such an undertaking. Nevertheless, the League seems to have no want of religious enthusiasm, it has ample audacity and no little presumption, it has a most ambitious program and is assumed to be well financed; it lacks only discerning thought, an understanding of Calvinism, and a real message for the Christian Reformed citizens of Hadleyburg.

—R. J.

(End of Reprint from *Calvin College Chimes*)

Membership and Subscription Terms

Membership in the League

Membership in the League depends on signature to the Declarations. Annual membership fee is \$2.00 (\$1.00 for students). Membership fee also covers a one-year subscription to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. The right is retained by the officers of the League not to accept an application.

Subscription Only

You may wish to subscribe to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM without becoming a member in the League, which is possible; we shall be happy to have you as a subscriber only. Annual subscription is \$2.00 (\$1.00 for students).

(Use the enclosed return envelope for your convenience in signing the Declarations and/or subscribing to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

<p>BULK RATE U. S. Postage PAID SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL. Permit No. 12</p>
--

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

MARCH, 1955

NUMBER 3

Contents

	Page
A Famous Political Philosopher Has Declared That The Trend Of All Human Institutions Is Downward	50
The Thought That Christianity's Message Has Become Unrealistic In Respect To An Aspect of This Life	52
Understanding and Misunderstanding The Hebrew-Christian Law of Love	54
B. Analytical Dissection of Scriptural Law of Brotherly Love	54
"Indian Not Lost, Teepee Lost"	79

Information For Readers

This is the third, and last, of our introductory mailings. *Those interested who have not yet subscribed should do so now.*

Subscriptions are on a calendar-year basis, from January each year through December. The subscription price is \$2.00 (\$1.00 for students).

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM does not present *miscellaneous* ideas, but a *systematic set* of ideas. It is the *regular* readers who will be able to evaluate later issues.

An important purpose of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is to analyze pseudo-Biblical ideas which are being promoted under the belief that they are Calvinistic or Christian, namely, ideas on brotherly love which are sanctimonious, and on the social order which are destructive, and on the capacities of the human mind which are insultingly arrogant toward God.

A Famous Political Philosopher Has Declared That The Trend Of All Human Institutions Is Downward

There are differing opinions regarding the real trend in human events. Some say the natural trend is upward; they are optimists. Others say the natural trend is downward; they are realists. We quote one of these realists, a famous political philosopher.

To Insure A Long Existence To Religious Sects Or Republics, It Is Necessary Frequently To Bring Them Back To Their Original Principles

There is nothing more true than that all the things of this world have a limit to their existence; but those only run the entire course ordained for them by Heaven that do not allow their body to become disorganized, but keep it unchanged in the manner ordained, or if they change it, so do it that it shall be for their advantage, and not to their injury. And as I speak of mixed bodies, such as republics or religious sects, I say that those changes are beneficial that bring them back to their original principles. And those are the best-constituted bodies, and have the longest existence, which possess the intrinsic means of frequently renewing themselves, or such as obtain this renovation in consequence of some extrinsic accidents. And it is a truth clearer than light that, without such renovation, these bodies cannot continue to exist; and the means of renewing them is to bring them back to their original principles. For, as all religious republics and monarchies must have within themselves some goodness, by means of which they obtain their first growth and reputation, and as in the process of time this goodness becomes corrupted, it will of necessity destroy the body unless something intervenes to bring it back to its normal condition.

* * *

Now with regard to religions we shall see that revivals are equally necessary, and the best proof of this is furnished by our own [Roman Catholic], which would have been entirely lost had it not been brought back to

its pristine principles and purity by Saint Francis and Saint Dominic; for by their voluntary poverty and the example of the life of Christ, they revived the sentiment of religion in the hearts of men, where it had become almost extinct. The new orders which they established were so severe and powerful that they became the means of saving religion from being destroyed . . .

The author of the foregoing is Niccolo Machiavelli.

Using the foregoing statements as the base from which to reach specific conclusions we arrive at the following:

1. The trend of Calvinist churches (in common with all churches) is downward. Similarly, the natural trend of the Christian Reformed Church is downward.

2. The Calvinist churches would not have lasted long if their first principles had not been good. Similarly, the Christian Reformed Church would not have lasted as long as it has, if its first principles had not been good.

3. The Calvinist churches periodically need a restoration to their first principles; similarly, the Christian Reformed Church.

In this connection the important question is: has the time arrived for an internal renewing of the Calvinist churches, or of an individual denomination?

In the Netherlands there was a strong declaration on Calvinism at the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619. After a long decline there was a restoration in 1834. Then there was a second restoration in 1886. The time intervals were in round numbers 200 years and 50 years.

F. N.

The Thought That Christianity's Message Has Become Unrealistic In Respect To An Aspect of This Life

Many people are indifferent or hostile to the Christian religion. It is not all *their* fault.

If people do not believe what you tell them, there must be some explanation. Some of the simple explanations are: (1) you are known to be untruthful; (2) you do not act yourself as you say others should; or (3) your message lacks plausibility (that is, you may be known as a fairly truthful person and you may be an exemplary Christian, but your version of Christianity may sound unimportant, or unreal, or foolish).

This message of Christians to non-Christians pertains to one or both of two subjects: (1) to this life, and (2) to the life-to-come. On the latter there is not daily proof, and that part of the Christian religion has a fair hold on mankind, mankind being by nature credulous (believing what they hear). Belief in a future life cannot be proved to be false; and it is a comforting idea. The result is that Christianity more or less survives as far as its future-life ideas are concerned.*

In regard to the influence of Christians on non-Christians, in matters pertaining to *this* life, that situation has a tendency toward deteriorating steadily or at least is unsatisfactory. In matters pertaining to *this* life, people can see every day what works out and what does not.

The message of Christians to non-Christians about matters pertaining to this life appears, generally nowadays, to be implausible and too-pious to be palatable. This manifestation of piety groups itself around the idea of *brotherly love*. Christians have come to teach a doctrine on brotherly love that is against nature, nobody lives by it, and practically nobody will ever be willing to live by it. The subject of brotherly love in *personal relations* has become unrealistic talk, and in *social relations* is actively in the process of destroying society. Non-Christians may not take the time

*This is the reason why even in decadent Christian churches ministers are in demand for funerals.

to investigate thoroughly, but they "sense" it. Having a reasonable amount of intelligence, many people are drifting away from irrationalistic teachings of the Christian religion on practical subjects.

Our analysis of causes of present-day irreligion, therefore, is that it is not entirely (1) total depravity, (2) feebleness of Christian testimony, (3) nonexemplary lives, and (4) future-life doubts, but (5) to a considerable extent *a message unsuited for this life*. That unsuited message consists in mistaken notions about brotherly love in personal conduct and in social relations.

In the February issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we declared that there was a serious confusion about the meaning of the term, *brotherly love*, and we summarized the plain teaching of Scripture on the subject, without far-fetched "extensions" of what Scripture teaches. Scripture is not sanctimonious (not hyper-pious) about brotherly love, but is a most-practical and common-sense book.

In this issue we proceed to a further analysis of brotherly love. We believe that this analysis will do several things which will be helpful, namely, (1) it will throw additional light on the Scripture texts already quoted; (2) it will throw light on a basic characteristic of sin; (3) it will be a warning blinker that certain ideas commonly associated with (added to) brotherly love should not be associated with it; and (4) the clarifying statements by Christ about brotherly love in the Sermon on the Mount will be more readily understood and more easily analyzed.

It is regretted that it is not possible to outline all phases of scriptural teaching about *brotherly love* in one issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Readers may have some doubts and objections which will not be answered until the later instalments. We shall endeavor to cover *all* phases of brotherly love eventually. And what we neglect or that concerning which we may be in error will certainly bring forth objections, which we shall be able to answer or which we shall promptly accept as valid corrections.

Our "general approach" is that we intend to follow Scripture *strictly*, and be strict constructionists. Further, we are *against adding* anything to the scriptural doctrine of brotherly love. Further, we have a special objection to adding something to brotherly love which is *more pious* than Scripture; with Solomon we heartily say:

"Be not righteous overmuch." (Ecc. 7:16a) Further, we object to a nonscriptural definition of brotherly love which common sense tells everybody is too idealistic and is simply impractical. And finally, we object to a definition which will make life not worth living, because it destroys the basis of temporal, human happiness.

What follows is the second instalment on the general subject of "Understanding and Misunderstanding the Hebrew-Christian Law of Love."

F. N.

Understanding and Misunderstanding The Hebrew-Christian Law of Love

(The first instalment under this general title appeared in the February, 1955, issue with the subtitle: "The Plain Teaching of Scripture Regarding Brotherly Love." The second instalment follows.)

B. ANALYTICAL DISSECTION OF SCRIPTURAL LAW OF BROTHERLY LOVE

In this issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we are endeavoring to analyze the idea of neighborly love* *systematically*. We shall do that under the following subheadings:

1. The Ultimate Standard for Loving Neighbor
2. The Violation of the Law of Brotherly Love
3. The Five Great Seemingly Restrictive Commandments
4. The Great Free Area in Life, and Happiness Dependent on Freedom
5. The Ultimate Purposes of Life
6. Contributing to Chaos
7. Contributing to Violence and Tyranny

*Throughout this analysis, neighborly love and brotherly love are used interchangeably.

8. Contributing to Human Arrogance
9. A Rough Classification of the Motivations Involved In the Manifestation of Brotherly Love
10. Summary

It can happen to a man when he has lost his way that he cannot recognize what he really knows. Because he has his directions turned around, everything appears new and strange. Suddenly in a flash he realizes where he is; his mind in one big turn reshifts everything that he sees, out of a false "frame of reference." If he had thought that a house before him was a house in a strange town, he suddenly realizes that it is a neighbor's house in his own town. He wonders how he could have been so lost.

The basic "frame of reference" in what follows has undergone a considerable alteration. Some readers may not get beyond the point of agreeing (or disagreeing) with specific parts of the picture we present. But a reasonably careful reader will, we hope, realize that not only have certain ideas on brotherly love been presented here but that the "frame of reference" is generally different from the popular frame of reference. Only after the individual ideas (as if they were individual houses in our illustration) have been seen in the new frame of reference will the full import of the individual ideas become apparent. When you understand brotherly love as is here outlined, the world around you will probably look different to you than it did before. The changed frame of reference which is here presented is not the frame of reference with which we ourselves began. We began with the traditional frame of reference. We think the widely accepted frame of reference is naive and primitive. We have outlined, we believe, a realistic frame of reference. And that realistic frame of reference is strictly in agreement with Scripture.

The Ultimate Standard For Loving Neighbor

The grand summary of the law on brotherly love reads, thou shalt love thy neighbor **AS THYSELF**.

The two important words which have been printed in capital letters designate what the ultimate standard is for loving the neighbor. The ultimate standard is yourself.

It is a false statement to say that there is any higher standard for loving the neighbor. It is a false statement to bring God into the comparison and make His love a part of the analysis. The reason why we affirm what we affirm is because we are exactly quoting Scripture. The statement in Scripture reads, thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*.

The most obvious idea in the famous law is that you will love *yourself*. The law takes that for granted. It implies, too, that loving yourself is *meritorious*; it is a very good thing; it is a very *natural* thing. Further, loving yourself can have no meaning unless it means pursuing your self-regarding interests. And all you need to do is love your neighbor as much. You pursue your self-regarding interests; and you permit him to pursue his self-regarding interests.

Of course, if there is a reader who does not accept that plain idea, but who declares that we should love the neighbor *more* than ourselves, that is, that we must love our neighbor by some other standard than the scriptural standard, he will find it difficult to agree with anything that follows. If we are not together in the beginning of an analysis on something as plain and indisputable as the foregoing, then we will certainly not be together later on.

Every man is then his own standard for neighborly love. That standard is individualistic. It is not collectivistic.

I (A) am not ordered to love B as B loves himself, or as C loves himself, or as A plus B plus C plus D plus E, etc., love themselves. The recipient of my love, B, is not the standard. Neither has C, a third party, any voice in the matter. Nor does Scripture take an abstraction, man's collective love for his neighbor, as the standard for loving the neighbor. There is nothing in Scripture which says that a majority, who may pass a law, and who may believe themselves motivated by brotherly love, can set a standard for one individual to love another individual. Scripture is much too realistic, and too wise, to develop any abstract standards for neighborly love. Instead, Scripture assumes individual and individualistic self-love; and the magnificent commandment is: love your neighbor *as much as yourself*.

It may be difficult for some who profess the Christian faith to accept so modest an objective for brotherly love. They may struggle toward a nobler objective, namely, to love the neighbor *more* than themselves. That idealistic aim is an objective they may feel free to attempt to grasp, and they may even believe they have grasped it. But it is worthy of consideration that the ideal involves an unsolvable conflict. The problem is this: whosoever sets out to love his neighbor *more* than himself develops a problem of reconciling such love with the requirement to love God more than all else.

The "first and great commandment" to love God more than self and more than all else becomes practically meaningless if 2,400,000,000 neighbors are also going to be loved by you more than you love yourself. What part of this greater love that you propose to have is to be allocated to God and what part to all other men?

One definition of love is that you do what the person loved wishes you to do. A man "loves" his wife when he does what may be unpleasant for himself but does please his lady. A man may be said to "love" God when he does what God wants him to do, although it is a hard chore for the man to do it. Well then, there are to be 2,400,000,001 (all mankind plus God) whom you must please. It is an impossible task. When your own inclinations conflict with God's revealed will, you must submit. Suppose a thousand of your neighbors have a will conflicting with God's revealed will and your own wishes, what will you do?

If a man says that he loves his wife more than himself, or if a mother says she loves a child more than herself, these are cases of love where the person speaking makes a highly individualistic comparison, namely, they are willing to sacrifice themselves for one or two others *at their own expense*. Such persons have a sense of *values* relative to wife or child. They pursue those *values* at terrific cost to themselves. But the *values* they pursue mean more to them than life itself. In short, they are still pleasing themselves; it is worth more to them to watch all night at the bedside of a sick child than to go to bed themselves. Their own sense of values constitutes their norm or standard. They *themselves*, their *values*, are still the standard.

A broad discussion on the nature of self-love will be undertaken later in this analysis. The matter is rested at this point with the mere reiteration, thou shalt love thy neighbor AS THYSELF.

The Violation of the Law of Neighborly Love

If the law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, means that you are not required to love your neighbor *more* than yourself, the implication is equally true that the law prohibits you from loving your neighbor *less* than yourself. In fact, this is the only deviation from the law which has any reality. Loving your neighbor more than yourself is usually self-delusion or hypocrisy; but loving your neighbor less than yourself is a terrible reality and one of the most prevalent evils in the world. All the real attention to the commandment on brotherly love is directed to the disheartening reality that we do *not* love our neighbors as ourselves. If we all will get rid of the sanctimoniousness about loving our neighbors more than ourselves, and will make some real progress on loving our neighbors as much as ourselves, then the world will soon be a much better place in which to live.

Considering that the law of brotherly love declares self and self-regarding interests to be the standard, then where does the lack of brotherly love come in? Because the whole idea can be easily illustrated by an anecdote, we shall quote the story on Epstean's Law. The source of this is Albert Jay Nock's *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*. Nock in his lifetime was a magazine editor and a noted essayist. Nock tells the story as follows:

I was at lunch in the Uptown Club of New York with an old friend, Edward Epstean, a retired man of affairs. I do not remember what subject was under discussion at the moment; but whatever it was, it led to Mr. Epstean's shaking a forefinger at me, and saying with great emphasis, "I tell you, if self-preservation is the first law of human conduct, exploitation is the second."

This remark instantly touched off a tremendous flashlight in my mind. I saw the generalisation which had been staring me in the face for years without my having sense enough to recognise and identify it. Spencer and Henry George had familiarised me with the formula that

man tends always to satisfy his needs and desires with the least possible exertion; but they had given me no idea of its immense scope, its almost illimitable range of action. If this formula were sound, as unquestionably it is, then certainly exploitation would be an inescapable corollary, because the easiest way to satisfy one's needs and desires is by exploitation. Indeed, if one wished to split hairs, one might say that exploitation is the first law of conduct, since even in self-preservation one tends always to take the easiest way; but the question of precedence is a small matter.

In an essay which I published some time ago, having occasion to refer to this formula, I gave it the name of Epstean's law, which by every precedent I think it should have. In their observations on the phenomena of gravitation, Huyghens and Kepler anticipated Newton closely. It was left for Newton to show the universal scope of an extremely simple formula, already well understood *in limine*, and hence this formula is known as Newton's law. As a phenomenon of finance, it had long been observed that "bad money drives out good," but Sir Thomas Gresham reduced these observations to order under a formula as simple as Newton's, and this formula is known as Gresham's law. So for an analogous service, more important than Gresham's and, as far as this planet is concerned, as comprehensive as Newton's, I thought that the formula, *Man tends always to satisfy his needs and desires with the least possible exertion*, should bear the name of Epstean's law.

I think Nock stumbled onto an enlightening interpretation of the law of brotherly love, namely:

1. There are legitimate self-regarding interests, or as Nock says, the law of self-preservation; and

2. The first thing we all do in order to pursue our self-regarding interests is to exploit our neighbor if we can, by violence (sixth commandment), by wanting his wife (seventh commandment), by theft (eighth commandment), by fraud (ninth commandment), and by continuous envy (tenth commandment).

Sin in the relations between men, is not the pursuit of legitimate self-regarding interests. Sin, on the contrary, is the pursuit of legitimate self-regarding interests *at the expense of the neighbor*, by spending our time and talents figuring out ways of exploiting him. Instead of pursuing his self-regarding interests by the right means, man operates as an exploiter, using violence, wife stealing, theft, fraud and unrestrained covetousness.

The "frame of reference" in which in this analysis we set sin is not that self-regarding interests are wrong but that the means we adopt to satisfy our self-regarding interests are wrong. The difference between Scripture and socialism-communism is summarized in that antithesis. Scripture assumes and approves self-regarding interests as the standard for relations of men to men; socialism-communism declares that self-regarding interests are wrong.

Albert Jay Nock realized the ineradicable nature of self-regarding interests. That is something created by God. It took a conversation with a friend, Epstean, for him suddenly to realize how prevalent sin is and what its nature is, namely, a spontaneous inclination toward exploitation of the neighbor.

Of course, it is not necessary to use Nock's label for this exploitation, to wit, Epstean's Law. We could just as well have said *total depravity*, relative to the Second Table of the Decalogue. That would be the standard way for a Calvinist to express the same idea.

The Five Great Seemingly Restrictive Commandments

Freedom to pursue our legitimate self-regarding interests — in other words, loving *ourselves* — is a wonderful freedom and presents a great vista for life and activity and pleasure before us. But two requirements close in or seem to close in on that fair view: (1) what does God demand of us, and (2) maybe life is not worth living if we may not exploit our neighbor.* The "world" often says that religion is a kill-joy, and a great unpleasantness.

*There are also sins which constitute self-damage. These are not being analyzed in this study.

The definition we have thus far given of neighborly love is a great liberation from narrow-minded ethics. We have, indeed, opened up all of life to the pursuit of the self-regarding interests, (1) except that we may not exploit the neighbor, and (2) *except as we have an obligation to God*. The second exception we are not discussing here; we are now addressing ourselves to how much life is worth living if we may not, and do not, exploit our neighbor.

Ethics can be taught so that it looks as if you may not do this, and you may not do that. In many respects Christian ethics is taught that way. Probably most children from Christian homes get the impression that the Christian religion narrows the range of pleasure in this life. It surely does if we must all knuckle under to our neighbors. But it surely does not really narrow life and its pleasures if everything is free except exploitation of the neighbor.

Scripture in fact does not admit that doing the will of God has a penalty attached to it in the form of less happiness. On the contrary, doing the will of God is presented in Scripture as being boundlessly rewarding and satisfying and happiness-producing.

In regard to the Second Table of the Law its prohibition of violence in the sixth commandment is a blessing and not a penalty. We all live more happily if the threat of violence in our lives is reduced to a minimum, and life would be better still if all violence could be eliminated. Similarly, it may be momentarily pleasant to possess the neighbor's wife, but a coldly calculating mind will eventually end up with the conclusion that the game is not worth the candle; eventually, there can be only disorganization and unhappiness; figure it out for yourself, if you have a brain. And similarly, there is no abiding happiness in theft or in fraud or in falsehood. The only happy and prosperous societies are those in which lives are safe (sixth commandment), possession of mate is safe (seventh commandment), possession of property is safe (eighth commandment), truthfulness is observed (ninth commandment), and contentment prevails (tenth commandment).

But why then do those commandments give people the impression that Christian ethics is so confining and almost as if they were prison walls? This is pure hallucination in a sense, namely, by following Epstein's law, the very first thing we think of in the

pursuit of our self-regarding interests is to help ourselves at our neighbor's expense. Therefore, we think we are frustrated by Christian ethics, and that is the primary impression we adopt. We see our frustration too much, and not our great opportunities if we will only use another method than exploiting our neighbor.

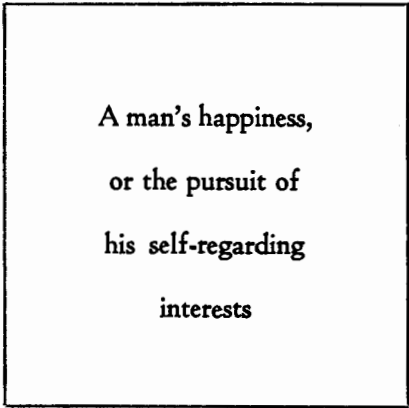
If we were not depraved we would see clearly that life is most glorious if we look at our great freedom to pursue our self-regarding interest, and exercise that freedom without climbing over a fence that does limit our freedom, namely, the fence that prohibits us from exploiting our neighbor.

The Great Free Area In Life, and Happiness Dependent on Freedom

We have now come to the more difficult aspect of the problem, and it may appear to some that we have failed to give an objective to our lives, and consequently that our lives are selfish and maybe aimless or at least not well-directed. Eventually, we shall have to answer the question — what is the purpose of life? Here we are discussing only those aspects of the purpose of life which inhere in the person himself. Part of life, we hold, must have a purpose relative to the person himself. We are described as being created in the image of God and consequently we are of some significance and more than a stock and stone in the sight of God.

We draw a square representing life and label it: a man's happiness.

A Man's Life



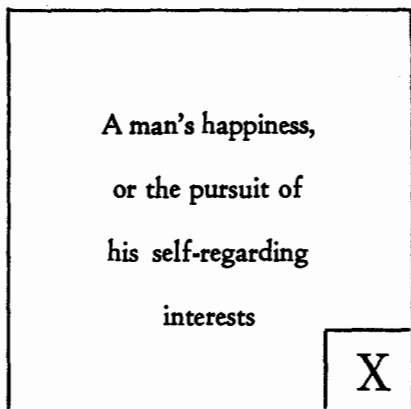
A man's happiness,
or the pursuit of
his self-regarding
interests

But the square must have an area fenced off. The revelation of God says the fenced off area is exploitation of the neighbor. How much shall we fence off because of that prohibition? Three fourths? One half? One quarter? How much?

If we were all really wise we would not have to fence off any area as an "exploitation of the neighbor" area, because we would know that sin does not pay, and we would not engage in it.

But to illustrate the idea we shall draw an area, which is restricted by the Second Table of the Law, as prohibited to us. We shall draw the area small, because we believe a sound perspective of life should make us realize that exploiting the neighbor does not pay. The rest of life is high, and wide, and large. We draw the same area then this way.

A Man's Life



X stands for the prohibited area. As we have drawn this, symbolically, $1/25$ of "life" is prohibited to us, that is the $1/25$ of life that might have consisted in exploiting the neighbor. That leaves $24/25$ for ourselves, uninhibited to do what we please.

As we have already said, the perspective on life is wholly wrong if we spend our time thinking that the prohibitions which constitute X rob us of the joy of living.

We can conduct ourselves as a cow in the big fence, but with $1/25$ of the pasture fenced off. And then as a cow we can wear

a path bare around that small area, lowing and looking in, and wanting to eat the bad grass inside that area which will eventually make us sick. And in the meanwhile neglect the fine grass in 24/25 of the area.

Sin, in our illustration, is a mistake, a fixation of our attention on what we should not want and should not have, namely, exploitation of the neighbor.

We should devote attention to the area which we neglect which constitutes 24/25 of the diagram. What does it represent?

To the wise, it represents, we believe *freedom*, specifically, the freedom to acquire happiness.

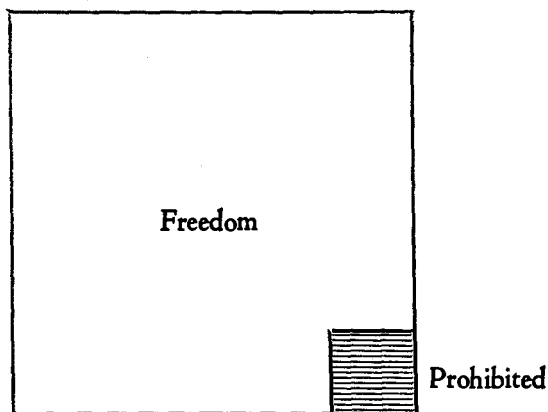
Life is not worth living except you can live it your own way. Living your life your own way permits you to be a "person", an individuality, a human being, a creature created in the image of God. To live your life your own way means that you can set your own *values*, that is, prize highly what you wish to prize highly, and prize lowly what you wish to prize lowly. You can exercise your own choices. Happiness can consist only in that. To have another's *values* coerced upon you, to be required to like what you do not like, and to be required to dislike what you really like, and to choose what you do not wish to choose, and to neglect exactly what you want — all that means life is made to be not worth living. Freedom is gone. You are a slave. Death is preferable to the denial of freedom and of choice.

We can now come to a definition that is awaiting expression. What, indeed, is *loving yourself*? If *loving yourself* is the standard by which neighborly love must be measured then *loving yourself* needs a very definite definition. The answer is: *loving yourself* consists in that freedom which permits you to set your own individual values on all aspects of life and permits you to pursue those values freely (except there be no exploitation of the neighbor). And when you love your neighbor as yourself you leave him equally free to set his own values and select his own choices and live his own life (but he may not exploit you and others).

Loving yourself consists in maintaining your freedom. Loving your neighbor as yourself consists in allowing him his freedom.

We would then re-draw our chart of life and re-label it, as follows:

A Man's Life



Of course, all our areas are symbolical. The ratios are purely arbitrary. We have used an illustration to make an idea clear. (We are aware that illustrations can have erroneous implications; but we estimated more was to be gained by the illustration than lost).

But now we find ourselves in a defensive position. We are about to be presented with the dangerous accusation that we have left God out entirely and that we are undisguised humanists.

We do not believe we have done anything of the sort. We call to the readers' attention that we have only been considering the *relation of men to men*. We have not been considering the *relation of men to God*. We considered it unwise to confuse the relation of men to men and the relation of men to God by analyzing both at the same time. Let us turn to a very brief consideration of the relation of men to God as that affects the relation of men to men.

The Ultimate Purposes of Life

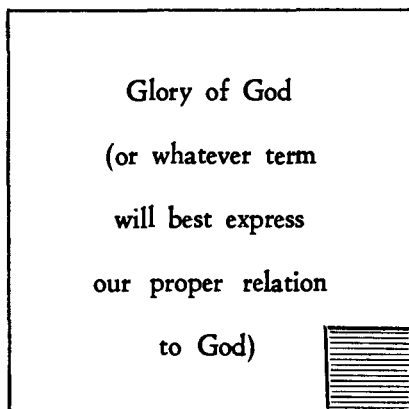
Christianity is more than a system of ethics; it is more than a set of principles pertaining to the relation of men to men. Christianity is a religion, and is even more concerned with the relation of men to God than of men to men.

Reverting to our chart and our 24/25 free area, what should a man do in the 24/25 of free area; does all of that free area belong to God, or does a man or his neighbors have a quit claim deed to any small part of it. There is here something of a dilemma. Either the space belongs wholly to God, or it belongs wholly to the individual, or it belong wholly to 2,400,000,000 neighbors, or it is shared in some ratio. (In regard to the neighbor, it is necessary to consider the 2,400,000,000 as *all* men are our neighbors.)

In answer to this problem we feel constrained to conclude that God has a claim on all of that area. We are insignificant creatures, with a life as transient as a mist, and with no intrinsic value of our own. God is all-important; we are unimportant.

We then obliterate all the "freedom" in the 24/25 area which we had designated by white space and assign it to God. To represent the idea we change the label.

A Man's Life



Prohibited

As a consequence of this we can immediately conclude that when God has such a claim, then no neighbor has any claim on our freedom, because if the neighbor does have such a claim, then he is taking an area which belongs to God. Scripture nowhere says we must do something for the glory of the neighbor. And we consider it a piece of effrontery for a neighbor to try to crowd God out of this space.

We now face the final question about the ultimate aims of life. In what does the glory of God consist, or what are we to do to love Him with all our heart, all our soul and all our mind?

The Old Testament answer was clear, (1) have no other gods, (2) make no image, (3) do not take God's name in vain, and (4) keep the Sabbath holy. (Add to these the obligation to honor father and mother, and not injure the neighbor and the requirements of God may appear satisfied.)

If this is extended to mean an overwhelming awareness of God being a creator and governor of the Universe, and that we are dependent on Him, in the last analysis, for everything, and that he is a just but merciful and redeeming God to us, and that there is no meaning to our lives except relative to Him then we are well-pleased. We subscribe to what Paul says: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (I Corinthians 10:31)

This doing all to the glory of God* has a peculiarly Calvinist

*The information we have been able to obtain regarding what "living to the glory of God" means according to great theologians and philosophers has not been very illuminating. Merely to repeat the phrase "live to the glory of God" is not very explanatory of the phrase itself, and there is much repetition of the phrase, but little explanation. To give meaning to the idea one man says we must live in the "image of God." What that means is also not fully clear. Another man speaks of promoting the *civitas dei*, the city of God, as the embodiment of living to the glory of God. His *civitas dei* is radically different from Augustine's *civitas dei*. Living in the "image of God" is an individualistic concept. Promoting the *civitas dei* is a collectivistic concept. Any reader who has knowledge of illuminating specific ideas on what is meant by the glory of God aside from the Decalogue and other plain teachings of Scripture will do us a favor by informing us of such publications. The subject greatly interests us—that is, the *ideas* not the *words*, or better said, the *actions required* as well as the *subjective ideas*.

flavor. It is common historical knowledge that one of the prominent ideas among the Puritans and other Calvinists has been the idea of a "calling," that is, a work or position in life which should be viewed as designated to you by God, and which you should do for God's glory as best you can. We agree.

It should be noted that this Calvinist idea of a "calling" is a *practical* one. It should also be noted that it is an *individualistic* idea. It does not talk of society, or neighbor, or any group. This is in contrast to certain ideas which have considerable acceptance today.

First, there is the socialist-communist exaltation of the *state* to the position of being the ultimate goal of life. It is plainly expressed in Ferdinand Lasalle's well-known expression: "The state is God."

Then there is the well-known ideal of a leading theologian in the United States. His goal is a society with equality of all men, that is, that the end result is equality; (he does not mean equality of opportunity). This is equally a socialist ideal, but is expressed more as a socialist *society* than a socialist state.

Then there is also the rather popular ideal of the Christian Dutch educator that the development of *culture* is the principal goal of mankind. This is a modern *collectivist* version of the original Calvinist idea of an *individual calling* (*roeping* in Dutch.)

In general, there is presently a trend in thinking toward group goals rather than individual goals. The idea is group happiness rather than individual happiness. This is a modern fiction, but is a subject which needs special discussion on some other occasion.

* * *

Earlier (in the February issue) we stated simply and briefly that there are two distinct definitions of neighborly love:

1. Do not harm the neighbor and have good will toward him; and
2. Do as much for the neighbor as for ourselves.

In the preceding analysis we have outlined the first part of the view on loving the neighbor which we consider to be based on

Scripture, namely, do not harm the neighbor. The requirement to have good will toward the neighbor will be discussed in the next instalment. Before completing this instalment it will be well to outline three important objections to the erroneous idea regarding neighborly love, namely, three objections against that idea of brotherly love which holds that we should do as much for our neighbor as for ourselves. The three objections will be discussed under three headings: (1) how an erroneous law of love can contribute to chaos; (2) how an erroneous law of love can contribute to violence and tyranny; and (3) how an erroneous law of love can be insulting arrogance toward God.

Contributing To Chaos

Just for the sake of the analysis (although the proposition is not admitted), let us assume that the law of love requires that we do as much for the neighbor as for ourselves. Let us assume further that we are prepared to live according to that rule, that is, our neighbors' wishes will govern our actions as much as our own wishes do.

Assume there are five people, *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, and *E*. *A* is required by the scriptural law of love, according to our assumption, to do as much for his neighbors *B*, *C*, *D* and *E* as for himself. When he does that it follows that *A* will have demonstrated that he fulfills the scriptural demands regarding brotherly love. All is well, however, until it develops that *B* wishes *A* to work with him to harvest some wheat, but *C* insists that *A* must go fishing with him, and *D* demands that *A* play a violin in *D*'s orchestra and *E* complains that *A* must help mine some coal. *A* himself, instead, wishes to go shopping with his wife. Whose wishes are to prevail? If the wishes of all five are required to be heeded there will be chaos.

Of course, if *B*, *C*, *D* and *E* have proper claims on *A*, then he has proper claims on them. *A* may properly insist that his wishes prevail as much as the wishes of his fellows. We have talked of five people.

But there are 2,400,000,000 people in the world, all of whom have a claim on each other, according to the erroneous law of love.

Obviously, all the resulting intermingling and conflicting claims cannot possibly be honored. It is an utter impossibility.

Plainly, the idea that my neighbor's wishes are a legitimate claim on me is a logical absurdity. Scripture would teach an absurd doctrine if it taught that my neighbor in the *regular** affairs of life has any claim on me whatever. Scripture teaches no such absurdity. The doctrine that the law of brotherly love requires me to bow to my neighbor's demands is imbecilic.

It is one thing to be absurd; it is a worse thing to pretend a pseudo-piety. The idea that you should do as much for your neighbor as for yourself is sanctimoniousness, an insincere display of piety.

There is no more effective way to ruin the reputation of the Christian religion than to make it sanctimonious. A lot of people have caught onto the idea that much that is proclaimed by the Christian churches is twaddle.

But there is an uglier phase to this twaddle about brotherly love.

Contributing to Violence and Tyranny

That "brotherly love" as falsely defined (to do as much for your neighbor as for yourself) cannot be applied individualistically (which is the only way it can really mean anything) is so obvious that it is never tried. In practice there is a shift, and the shift is a malignant one and positively contrary to the Ten Commandments.

The shift is a simple change. *A* is supposed to do as much for *B, C, D* and *E* as for himself. If he cannot comply with their individual and *conflicting* demands, he can be made to comply with their *combined* demands. And so *B, C, D* and *E* "get together" and decide that they want *A* to do so-and-so. They present *A* with a collective demand, a law. There is no chaos any more now. *A*, so *B, C, D* and *E* decide, must work in the wheat harvest. *A* himself still wishes to go shopping with his wife but his four

*There are *special* claims which will be considered in the next instalment.

"brothers" require that he show brotherly love to them by doing their wishes. And four are more than one. The wishes of the four prevail. *A* goes to harvest.

We now have a simple violation of the sixth commandment. The sixth commandment reads, thou shalt not kill. But that is only the classic abbreviation of the commandment. Its basic meaning has never been in dispute. The basic meaning can be stated less trenchantly but more completely thus, thou shalt not engage in violence or coercion against thy neighbor. When I bring compulsion, coercion or violence to bear on my neighbor in any way, except to use such means to prevent him from doing wrong, I am violating the sixth commandment. The essence of violation of the sixth commandment is that I am forbidden to impose my will on another. According to Scripture that is a sin. And that is what *B*, *C*, *D* and *E* are doing to *A* in our illustration.

Old-fashioned Calvinists have always realized this more clearly than other near-Calvinists or Arminians. The latter types have been sympathetic to sumptuary laws, that is, laws prohibiting various activities as smoking, dancing, theater attendance, card playing and drinking. In principle, the standard Calvinist idea of a minimum number of rules and no legislation or very limited legislation in the area of the *adiaphora* (*ad i aph' o ra*) (relatively indifferent things) appears sound. (The writer does not make this latitudinarian remark because of personal habits.)

The *eventual* outcome of the situation we described, namely where *B*, *C*, *D* and *E* were coercing *A*, is worse than majority tyranny. As soon as it is admitted that *B*, *C*, *D* and *E* may coerce *A*, then *C*, *D* and *E*, who still constitute a majority, may coerce both *A* and *B*. And finally a minority, say *E* alone, if he can acquire the power, may and will coerce *A*, *B*, *C* and *D*. This is inevitable if the principle has been established that there is no sacred area of freedom for each individual but that instead a neighbor may impose his will on you. It is tragic if the Christian religion is used to proclaim a law of brotherly love which law destroys the logical basis for freedom (and happiness and welfare).

The attention we are giving in the early issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to the requirements of brotherly love is because we have

reached the conclusion that the Christian religion is being enlisted to give support to a terrible evil. That evil is socialism-communism. By defining brotherly love incorrectly, the alleged Christian law of brotherly love becomes the ideological foundation for socialism-communism. The enemies of Christianity have subtly enlisted Christianity in their service.

Contributing to Human Arrogance

There is an even graver objection to giving an erroneous definition to the Christian law of love. What follows is, in fact, *the* objection, the final conclusive objection.

This objection is based on the First Table of the Law, and not on the Second Table of the Law. This objection, therefore, must declare that there is a sin involved which dishonors God directly, rather than only indirectly through wronging a neighbor.

Scripture declares that human wisdom requires *humility*, with that term having its full Biblical meaning. To lack that humility is to have arrogance toward God, and that in turn certainly means that a man is out of tune with the Maker of heaven and earth.

We return to our concept of 2,400,000,000 human beings operating in the area of freedom, in the area of liberty of choice (but no exploitation of the neighbor). What is involved when *B* insists on imposing his will on *A* and on many or all others? Our answer is: an arrogance as if we were God with no limitation to our minds. We make a series of affirmations:

1. Man was created in the "image of God."
2. As such, man is a rational being with a "free area" in which to make specific decisions and exercise his judgment and enjoy his own will. Man is not an automaton or a puppet of God. God gave him freedom. Man is privileged to pursue his own *values*, rather than another's values.
3. Then someone with an erroneous idea of brotherly love comes along and says that in the free area all neighbors have a claim on each and every other man. The free area is gone. There is an infinity of conflicting claims on each man.

4. To resolve the problem of conflicting claims group action is undertaken, not to restrain evil, but to control all choices so that they comply with the wishes of a majority.

5. Because the majority cannot determine all those matters specifically, they delegate the making of the decisions, coercing every man in that free area, to officers of the law, to members of a bureaucracy, that is, to a government official.

6. But the conflicts resulting from any survival of individual freedom continue. All the smaller plans must be dovetailed into larger plans, and the larger plans must finally be dovetailed into a master plan. The master plan must eventually be for a whole nation, and finally for the whole world. All of life will be rationalized (and that is not only tolerable because of the demands of brotherly love erroneously understood but is even required by such brotherly love).

7. This master plan will be of Comtian dimensions. Auguste Comte was the positivist, the founder of sociology, and the man who promoted the extension of the epistemology of the natural sciences to the social sciences, and declared that the world should be managed as an engineer manages a machine. Man, under this scheme, would "manage" the world. The top man, the Dictator, would be more of a God than the Hebrew-Christian Supreme Being, because the latter left a large area to man's freedom, whereas this Comtian scheme of things would take over everything. The man at the apex of the Plan would be more dictatorial than God. Comte was a forerunner of Marx. Marx obtained his basic idea from Comte. The boundless arrogance of the Comtian and Marxian scheme of things is an insult to the Creator and Governor of the Universe.

If unlimited arrogance is the supreme sin of mortal men, this scheme which has been outlined shows how an alleged law of love encourages and justifies a boundless human arrogance.

Mis-define the law of brotherly love by giving men a claim on their neighbors and you have destroyed freedom, justified despotism, and assumed that there can be a master mind, in an ordinary human being, as the mind of God. This is an abominable arrogance.

A Rough Classification of the Motivations Involved In The Manifestation of Brotherly Love

In order to make clear how the definition of brotherly love which has been given compares with other definitions a rough classification of the several possible ideas will now be presented. This has the additional advantage that others will be warned about making an erroneous or invidious (unfair) classification of what has been presented.

1. There is first the category (classification) of hedonism (*he' don izm*). The views here presented are not hedonism. One dictionary defines hedonism as: "The doctrine of certain Greek philosophers that pleasure of whatever kind is the only good." There is a second definition, namely, "In ethics, gross self-interest, self-indulgence." As PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is a publication in the field of ethics, the second is the definition which would apply to us if we were hedonists. But we deny that there is anything in what we have written which justifies saying that we say we believe in the pursuit of "gross self-interest" or that we believe in "self-indulgence." We have unqualifiedly maintained that the Ten Commandments *must* be observed. That leaves no room for self-indulgence or gross self-interest.

We are not hedonists.

2. There is secondly the category of eudaemonism (*u de' mon izm*). The dictionary defines eudaemonism as: "That system of ethics which defines and enforces moral obligation by its relation to happiness or personal well-being." And *eudaemonia* is given the definition "Well-being; happiness, especially in Aristotle's use, felicity resulting from life of activity in accordance with reason." If a hedonist is a man who seeks happiness by gross self-interest and self-indulgence, a eudaemonist may be defined as a man who seeks happiness by the pursuit of virtue and the use of reason.

The views here presented are not eudaemonism, although we consider eudaemonism to be the second-best philosophy of life that might be selected. To promote happiness by wisdom and virtue is not a positive evil, but only negative evil. It is still a humanist

program, and unresponsive and disrespectful to the Supreme Being. We are not eudaemonists.

3. There is a third category for brotherly love, the Hebrew-Christian view of life. Christianity, as we see it, takes over something from eudaemonism, namely, happiness through virtue and wisdom. But the Hebrew-Christian ethic is much more and is basically different. Its distinguishing features are:

- a. Everything is subordinated to the Creator.
- b. Virtue and wisdom are practiced (eudaemonism).
- c. Goodwill is manifested toward the neighbor, by
 - (1) abstaining from exploitation
 - (2) forbearance
 - (3) charity
 - (4) declaration of the gospel.

Items c(2), c(3) and c(4) have not been discussed yet. See the next (April) issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

We hold to the Hebrew-Christian ethic.

4. There is also the category of the utopias (*u to' pi as*), which make *equality* the basic test of the manifestation of brotherly love. The utopias aim at a *final* equality of men, which necessarily means they reject equality of opportunity. There have been a series of descriptions of utopias. First of all there is Plato's *The Republic*, which attempts to define justice, and in the process abolishes marriage and property and permits its philosopher-kings to sacrifice truth. Plato had a chance to apply his utopian ideas as advisor to the king of Syracuse. They would not work; the Platonian utopia failed. Then there was the pious Thomas More, who wrote a book entitled *Utopia*. Brotherly love again was to consist of *equality* — from each according to his ability to each according to his need. No property; everything communal; a *final* equality. Then Sir Francis Bacon, still more famous, wrote *The New Atlantis*. It too was a utopia. Equality was to be the goal and the characteristic of the ideal society. Then in more modern times, there is the utopia of Charles Fourier, the Frenchman — equality

in possession of women, and the various desirable things of life. Still more modern utopias are those of Bellamy, H. G. Wells, or of Orwell.

A characteristic of utopias is that they are described as being *voluntary*. The experiment of the first church in Jerusalem was a utopia. Utopias never last. They *cannot* last. They always fail to be permanent. Afterwards the participants are all worse off than before. The Christian churches have practically nowhere repeated the Jerusalem experiment. No church could long survive if it tried the experiment today. The experiment could not be successful today in Amsterdam, or Johannesburg, or Grand Rapids, or Denver. The Puritans in New England tried a utopia — equality by communal effort — but brought themselves to the abyss of starvation. Smart people do not experiment with utopias.

5. Beyond the utopias there is a fifth classification of brotherly love ideas, namely socialism-communism. Again the brotherly love ideal is *final equality* (often falsely masked under the term, justice), and the formula to accomplish that is the well-known socialist-communist law of love, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. Socialism presumably is the peaceful, non-coercive brand of this doctrine, a majority coercing a minority *by laws* is, they seem to think, not violence or contrary to the sixth commandment. Communism openly avows the use of brutal violence to establish equality, the accomplishment of equality being the evidence of true brotherly love.

Socialism and communism are merely *coercive* utopias.

6. Finally, there is a sixth classification of brotherly love, which we shall call self-abnegation. This aims at something beyond *equal* sharing or equality. The subject self-effaces himself for others. This is the zenith of idealism. There are only spasmodic manifestations of such idealism. Society keeps stumbling along without any real self-abnegation. Only men who are to be classed as fanatics even temporarily stay in the class of these idealists. (It will be necessary to distinguish carefully between self-abnegation and charity. See the April issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

Summary

The first three classifications of doctrines touching brotherly love (or deviating from it) are *individualistic*, towit, the doctrine of hedonism, eudaemonism and Christianity. The individual *himself* is the standard. The second three classifications, utopias, socialism-communism and self-abnegation, are *collectivistic*. The neighbor is the standard.

In the first three, the *self* is the center of gravity as far as the relation of men to men is concerned. In the second three, the *neighbor* (eventually always collectively) is the center of gravity. To move from the classifications which come under individualism to the classifications which come under collectivism, or vice versa, is to move from one land to a foreign land.

To define the Biblical law of love on the basis of a final equality, voluntary or coercive, that is, that the claims of the neighbor must be taken into account in the *basic* motivations pertaining to social life is a colossal error. If such an erroneous idea involves a voluntary equality, a utopia, it is a folly. If such an erroneous idea involves a coercive equality, a socialist-communist structure, it is a damnable iniquity.

On the following page a chart is presented which summarizes the various categories pertaining to man's relations to man, that is, pertaining to brotherly love.

* * *

In the next issue, in April, the third instalment of "Understanding and Misunderstanding the Hebrew-Christian Law of Love" will be presented. It will cover the ideas in the Sermon on the Mount, which were corrective of errors which stemmed from a corrupted interpretation of the ancient Biblical law of love.)

F. N.

Names Wanted

You may know people who ought to read PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Please send in the names and addresses of such potential readers so that we can introduce them to this publication by way of sample copies.

Standards By Which Brotherly Love May Be Classified

PRACTICAL STANDARDS

"As Thyself"

<i>Hedonism</i>	<i>Eudaemonism</i>	<i>Christianity</i> (Ethics only)
Pursuit of happiness without restraints (involving irresponsibility toward neighbor)	Pursuit of happiness by virtue and wisdom (involving no exploitation of neighbor)	Humility plus eudaemonism plus goodwill (a) no exploitation of neighbor (b) forbearance (c) charity (d) declaration of gospel

Individualistic

IMPRACTICAL STANDARDS

As the Neighbor
(Utopias and Fanaticisms)

<i>Utopias</i>	<i>Socialism-Communism</i>	<i>Self-Abnegation</i>
Objective is Equality by voluntary acts	Objective is Equality by coercion	Practically non-existent idealism

Collectivistic

"Indian Not Lost, Teepee Lost"

If you get up early and catch a train from one city to another, it is pleasant to meet a friend and be able to chat. On such a trip one cold morning it was my good fortune to meet in the diner an old associate, who is now head of one of the biggest firms of industrial psychologists in the United States. It is fun to banter a wise and experienced psychologist about psychology.

But, of course, you are likely to get your own medicine back in a double dose. And a businessman is not a match for a psychologist.

The train was slowing down for the station where we were both getting off, when he told a little story about the mental "confusion" which can afflict "businessmen."

An Indian had been looking all day for his teepee, but to no avail. Night was falling, and he was completely lost. And so he sat down, and grunted: "Indian not lost, teepee lost."

Nothing, we think, could better describe the mental situation of some modern Calvinists. They have lost a *real* understanding of traditional Calvinism. Their morale has gone down because they are no longer intellectually sure of their religious heritage. The pillars in their personal spiritual church can no longer hold the roof up strongly and proudly.

The natural thing for them to do then is to look for something on the outside to brace the walls and keep them from buckling outward and letting the roof collapse. What architects call flying buttresses are needed.

"Science" is one of the flying buttresses to which men turn who have become insecure in their religious ideas. Science can be called on to buttress the buckling walls of the Christian religion. The need for the buttresses, it should be fully realized, is the loss of a good grip on what the Christian religion really is.

We believe "science" has a legitimate function in that respect. But it depends on what is meant by "science." Hitch revealed religion and true science together and you are ahead. But hitch

a revealed religion *which has been enfeebled*, by not understanding revelation well, to a *spurious* science and the net total is less than that with which you started. If your religion is in bad shape and you need a flying buttress in the form of science, by all means, choose a true science as the flying buttress.

Many Calvinists who presently have a need of flying buttresses have turned to the social sciences for help. The stunning thing is that they have chosen the worst brands of social science, that which is not science at all, but ancient error dressed up in new words. Those errors have long been blasted into discredit, but perversely men return to ancient error in a wholly reactionary manner.

But in a lighter vein we remember our Indian; we Calvinists say: *We* are not lost; tepee is lost. If you let a psychologist tell you what he thinks of such mental self-deception, you will be very uneasy.

This is the last of our introductory mailings. Only regular members of the Progressive Calvinism League or regular subscribers will receive future issues.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

APRIL, 1955

NUMBER 4

Contents

	Page
Understanding and Misunderstanding The Hebrew-Christian Law of Love	83
C. Scriptural Corrections of Popular Errors Concerning Law Requiring Brotherly Love	85

Explanation to Readers Regarding Contents of Current Issues

It is hardly practical to plan the contents of a monthly publication far in advance. When we began PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we did not plan to devote so much space in early issues to the *one* question of brotherly love as is actually being done. But, once enmeshed in the process of explaining our views on brotherly love, we have decided to devote the required space to completing the analysis. We shall complete the major presentation with the May issue. Thereafter, we hope to give this publication a more varied, and consequently a lighter, tone.

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students, \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

But in a larger sense we make no apology for this early concentration on one subject. We consider that there is a great evil which is steadily expanding, namely, certain ideas on morality and the social order which are destructive of society and human welfare. The pervasive evil to which we refer is the steadily expanding acceptance of the socialist-communist doctrine of brotherly love, namely, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. The arguments being advanced for it are alleged to be both (1) moral and Christian, and (2) scientific. We have a special interest in the alleged "scientific" grounds for a socialist-communist social order. A major portion of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will *eventually* be devoted to analyzing in lay terms those "scientific" arguments. Those arguments will not be found to be "scientific" at all, but ridiculous confusion. But there is no great probability that a valid "scientific" argument against socialism-communism will be heeded, if the morality of socialism-communism is considered by the devout to be sound. Hence, we have concluded that, to open the minds of religious people to the scientific arguments against socialism, it is first necessary to show that there is no Christian, or Biblical, basis for the socialist-communist law of love.

It is, in fact, preposterous to believe that the "morality" of socialism-communism *can* be harmonized with the morality of the Christian religion. However, the best-known religious leaders in the Christian world today are endeavoring to do just that. And *basically* that is also what is being done in some so-called orthodox Calvinist (and other Christian) colleges and seminaries. We shall get down to cases later.

Those who claim the name of Christian, whether liberal or orthodox, and who disagree with socialism-communism only for one reason, because it is atheistic, and not because it is collectivistic, do Christianity a great disservice. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM disagrees with socialism-communism on two grounds, (1) because it is atheistic, *and* (2) because it is collectivistic, that is, because it teaches a vicious law of love.

Understanding and Misunderstanding The Hebrew-Christian Law of Love

(The first instalment under this general title appeared in the February, 1955 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM with the subtitle: "The Plain Teaching of Scripture Regarding Brotherly Love." The second instalment appeared in the March, 1955 issue with the subtitle: "Analytical Dissection of Scriptural Law of Brotherly Love." After brief summaries the third instalment follows.)

Summary of First Instalment

In the first instalment on the subject of brotherly love it was pointed out that the term *brotherly love** may mean one thing to one man and something else to another. One definition of brotherly love is that you must do as much for your neighbor as for yourself. A very different, and in fact conflicting, definition is that you should not harm your neighbor and should have goodwill toward him. The general idea advanced in this study of the Hebrew-Christian law of love is that the first definition just given is false and sanctimonious and un-Biblical, but that the second definition is sound and realistic and Biblical.

It was shown in the first instalment that Christians have shown themselves prone to adopting the first definition which is eventually always unworkable. Two idealistic, indisputable cases were cited, the early church in Jerusalem and the Puritans in New England.

Next it was shown that the *positive* law of brotherly love, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is invariably defined in Scripture by saying that it refers to the last five Commandments of the Decalogue which are given in a *negative* form. Therefore, *basically*, the law requiring brotherly love is this: thou shalt not harm thy neighbor, that is, thou shalt not subject him to violence

*Used interchangeably with term *neighborly love*. Attention may be given later to distinctions between the two terms.

(sixth commandment), take his wife (seventh commandment), seize his property (eighth commandment), deceive him (ninth commandment), nor covet what is his (tenth commandment). As Paul wrote: "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: . . . Love *worketh no ill* to his neighbor." And so Paul declares that working no ill to the neighbor "is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:8 and 10).

Summary of Second Instalment

In the second instalment it was shown: (1) that each person himself is the standard on how much to love the neighbor; the neighbor is not the standard; (2) that pursuing your self-regarding interests is meritorious; (3) that the pursuit of your self-regarding interests involves your individual and personal values and choices and wishes, and that you cannot pursue such interests if you do not have *freedom* in regard to those values and choices; and (4) that because freedom is *your* prerequisite to happiness and living the life of a human being, therefore your love to your neighbor is manifested by giving him the same freedom that you need, namely the right to pursue *his* individual and individualistic self-regarding interests.

It was next shown that the essence of sin in matters between man and man is that man is prone to pursue his self-regarding interests irresponsibly and in the easiest way, namely, by exploiting his neighbor. To make the point clear we cited the anecdote how Albert Jay Nock had his thinking illuminated by the idea to which he gave the name of Epstein's Law.

By various simple illustrations a re-oriented perspective on the Christian life, on relations of a man to his fellows, was given. The main objective of life is service to God but there is also the subsidiary objective of the happiness of man obtained not by exploiting the neighbor but by each man pursuing his self-regarding interests *without exploitation of the neighbor*.

Next it was shown that the other definition of brotherly love (the erroneous one that we should do as much for the neighbor as ourselves) is evil because it leads to and justifies (1) chaos,

(2) breeds violence and tyranny, and (3) promotes abominable human arrogance.

Finally it was shown that the Biblical definition presented as the Hebrew-Christian law of love was not to be identified with one indefensible form of individualism, namely, hedonism; nor with an inadequate form of individualism, namely, eudaemonism; nor with two malignant forms of collectivism, namely, utopias or socialism-communism.

We come now to the third instalment on brotherly love.

C. SCRIPTURAL CORRECTIONS OF POPULAR ERRORS CONCERNING LAW REQUIRING BROTHERLY LOVE

Objections By Well-Meaning Christians to the Correct Law of Brotherly Love

We believe that nothing in the first two instalments deviates from Scripture. Nothing has been added or subtracted from the *basic* law of brotherly love.

But what, it will be demanded, is now left of that wonderful and glorious doctrine of brotherly love — of charity, of self-sacrifice, of loving-kindness, of serving one another, of that wonderfully warm and glowing feeling of which the hymns speak, of that indefinable and mystical something that Christians call *love*! Or, as the theologians may wish to express it, what is left of *agape* (ag' a pe) the mutual love symbolized by the ancient love feast that preceded the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. (The character of the event was not always exemplary as is indicated in I Corinthians 11:20.)

The idea of *agape* love is ravishingly appealing to many people. But it is important to note that the idea of fervid, emotional attitudes from one to another is at best a high point in religion. It is not a sustained nor sustainable emotion or attitude or way of life. Obviously, it can be argued that it has its place; a crowd of young people who enjoy each other get together and have a fine time; a crowd of Christians get together and have a fine time; neither phenomena represents much that is tangible as

brotherly love; most people enjoy a crowd; most people like a sense of belonging. The subjective, emotional pleasure which comes from congregating together or of drinking too much together is not, we think, the essence of brotherly love.* (We may give further attention to agape love in some later issue.)

The major portion of this issue is devoted to adding to the *basic* definition of brotherly love several essential supplementary ideas which are clearly presented in Scripture. There is no relation between these added ideas and the general idea which many people designate as being agape love.

The definition already presented in instalments one and two would, it is believed, have been approximately complete, if there were no ethical sins in the world, that is, no wrongs between man and man, no inclination for a man to exploit and harm his fellow man. In a sinless world where the neighbor was suffering no exploitation and presumably had no unsatisfied needs (as the situation is usually presented!) and in which a man could spend his whole time for God, in such a world charity would be unnecessary, forbearance would be wholly unneeded, the gospel would not need to be preached, and there would not even be occasion for Lord's Suppers, or "feasts" beforehand as described in I Corinthians 11:21b, nor any of the apparatus of practical Christianity in the real world in which we live.

But men are not sinless and are not living in a sinless society, and so there can be no question that the definition of brotherly love presented up to this point is definitely incomplete and defective.

*It is hardly possible to treat of love wholly *subjectively* or wholly *objectively*. In this treatise we are treating *love* as something primarily objective and in the field of human action. But perforce it was necessary to treat it to a degree subjectively, as when discussing the *motivations* for action, motivations being subjective phenomena. Love has some *subjective* characteristics as compassion, mercy, etc. Those subjective phases are being reserved as largely outside the scope of this study. It is to the subjective phases that Nygren devoted special attention. We believe that the scriptural teaching on love is concerned primarily with the practical, objective manifestations of love.

What is added to the law of brotherly love in what follows is because sin is a reality in this world.

**The Great Correction
By Christ Regarding
Ideas on Brotherly Love**

Our original definition of brotherly love, on page 32 of the February 1955 issue read as follows: You (1) should not harm your neighbor and (2) should have goodwill toward him. In the two earlier instalments we covered the clause, *should not harm your neighbor*; in this instalment we shall cover the second clause, *should have goodwill towards him*.

In the time of Christ this idea of *goodwill* toward the neighbor had apparently been largely lost by a too-restrictive interpretation of the law by some of the Hebrew scribes. It appears that the prime purpose that Christ had in mind when he gave his well-known Sermon on the Mount was to correct misinterpretations of the law. He expressly declares "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: . . ." (Matthew 5:17-19a). The *law* then, according to Christ, was blemishless.

It follows, consequently, when he says in a whole series of parallel declarations, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time" . . . "but I say unto you . . .," that he is correcting an incorrect *interpretation* of the law; he is not changing the law itself.

The incorrect interpretation which Christ was attacking was the interpretation that the law did not require goodwill to the neighbor. Apparently, the idea had become prevalent that the law of punishment could be applied mercilessly, vengefully, and with no beneficent intentions at all toward whoever violated the law of conduct. The law of love was obviously being quoted by

some as if it were a satisfactory justification for hatred and vengeance.

The Basic Declarations In The Sermon On The Mount

The relevant ideas in the Sermon on the Mount are summarized below.

1. First there are the Beatitudes praising humility; comforting the mournful; blessing the meek, the would-be righteous, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the steadfast, the loyal to Christ.

Some of the qualities which Christ approves and praises are primarily personal and subjective, as for example, humility, and mourning, and steadfastness and loyalty. But others relate definitely to relations between men, for example, meekness, mercifulness, pureness of heart, and peacemaking. Clearly, a kindly intention and a well-wishing to others is implied in meekness, showing mercy, intending no sexual wrong to the opposite sex, and in restoring peace among enemies.

But these Beatitudes do not declare that the neighbor on the grounds of his right to brotherly love has a claim on us or can demand something from us. If, according to the Beatitudes we exercise a virtue relative to him, the virtue is our forbearance and goodwill toward him and not our compliance because he originally had a valid claim on us.

On the ground of the requirement that brotherly love be exercised the violent have no *claim* for themselves on anybody's meekness; the wicked have no *claim* for themselves on the merciful; the lecherous have no *claim* for themselves on the chaste; the troublemakers have no *claim* for themselves on the peacemakers. That meekness, mercifulness, pureness of heart and peacemaking are virtuous does not mean that the *cause* making the exercise of those virtues necessary was a nonsinful cause. Quite the contrary is the case; the causes calling for the exercise of the virtues men-

tioned are always sinful causes; they are never rights or valid claims in themselves.

It is obvious that there is no statement in the Beatitudes which gives my neighbor a legitimate claim on what he may decide to want from me. What I give him is in fact not what he wants. He is violent; he wants my services or my property; I exercise meekness toward him. The reason for my meekness is not because I believe his claim on me is valid, and therefore I need have no sense of obligation whatever to grant his specific claim. But I do have the obligation to resist his intended evil *by a well-intentioned method of resistance, namely, meekness*. By my meekness, we are told, I shall win out; for the meek "shall inherit the earth."

There is, in short, nothing in the Beatitudes that legitimizes any original claim whatever by a neighbor. The requirement of goodwill by *A* towards *B* does not validate any wrong claim by *B* against *A*, but only requires *A* not to lose his feeling of goodwill to *B* even though *B* is on an evil course. But *A* will be wholly wrong if he becomes indifferent to *B*'s evil program, or compliant to it.

2. The section in Matthew 5:38-48 is vital to our analysis, and must obviously be treated carefully and in detail.

The text of this famous section of the Sermon on the Mount recommending, apparently, nonresistance to evil and even the aiding and abetting of evil reads as follows:

Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love

your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

An Eye for an Eye, and A Tooth for a Tooth

The passage just quoted begins with the famous words: "Ye have heard that is hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, resist not him that is evil; . . ."

What is wrong with "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth?" Nothing. And we are sure Christ did not mean that there was intrinsically anything wrong with it.

The ancient law called for an *equivalent* penalty for every crime as a deterrent against repetition or imitation of the crime. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Genesis 9:6). Many if not most devout Christians believe in the death penalty for murder. *All* ancient and modern civilized societies have been or are organized on the basis of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Two ideas, it appears reasonable, cannot be in dispute; one is, that the penalty for a crime must be a deterrent, and the second is, that the deterrent must be proportioned to the crime, that is, the deterrent must be equivalent to the crime, that is, not less painful.

No *stable* society of which we have knowledge *systematically* applies penalties to crimes which are less than the crime itself. No society, in our opinion, can exist in which murder is punished merely by admonition, or where rape is punished by one morning in jail.

The road which consists of penalties inadequately proportioned to the crime is the road to individual and social ruin. Eli,

the old judge, never got beyond saying to his wicked sons, "Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay my sons: for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" (I Samuel 2:23-25a). Where Eli failed, the Lord himself is interpreted to have stepped in and proportioned the penalty to the crimes; the disastrous end of the house of Eli is well known and need not be narrated. The moral of the story is this: if men will not restrain evil by equivalence of punishment, the Almighty will insure that the *full* punishment will be experienced through the general course of events. Scripture declares that God is not successfully mocked, that is, it is not possible to violate the commandments of God and not be punished either directly or indirectly.

The concepts of heaven and hell, of atonement and grace, are inescapably related to equivalence of penalty to crime.

The idea that Christ's objection to "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" consists in his objecting to the principle of equivalence of the penalty is irrational.

Further, the idea that the *deterrent* character of a penalty was not an essential concept, and that deterrence was not something to be sought after is also rejected. To deter a person from a repetition of a crime is so obviously good for him and good for society that it is not debatable.

The thought is sometimes advanced that the objection by Christ to "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" consisted therein that the old rule permitted *private* retaliation. It is then alleged that it is a better rule that the *state* should do the retaliating. That idea is also rejected as being too much on the periphery of the problem to warrant much attention. There may be something in it, but we consider it to be of minor significance.

But there are two extremely plausible and extremely important criticisms which Christ obviously had in mind when he dis-

paragingly quoted the rule of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Those two important ideas are:

1. The moral law is not abrogated for *B* by the fact that the law had previously been violated against *B* by *A*; and
2. Even though ill-will prompted the crime, ill-will is not a legitimate ingredient in the application of the punishment.

These ideas are the real content of this section of the Sermon on the Mount and we undertake to outline them in detail.

The Break-Down of All Law

It is one thing to admit the general necessity of equivalence of punishment in proportion to the crime, but that does not justify the proposition that I may use violence against my neighbor *because* he has already employed violence against me.

If every time a man lies to his neighbor his neighbor may *therefore* lie to him; if every time a man steals from his neighbor his neighbor may *therefore* steal from him; if every time a man commits adultery his wife may *therefore* commit a compensatory adultery — if all that is true, then it follows that when one man breaks the law *therefore* another man may break the law. This says in effect that a man can paralyze or temporarily abrogate the law of God until he (the man) has "gotten even" with whoever has wronged him. In other words, the law of God would be temporarily shelved. All vengeance has that premise in its reasoning. That reasoning is erroneous. The law of God is *never* legitimately shelved.

All reasoning which declares or implies that because *A* broke the law of God therefore *B* can also do the same thing to *A* is a violation of the great principle of *forebearance*. Before we demand punishment *identical* to the crime we must *forebear*. We must ask: can the criminal be brought to contrition and restitution by a simpler and easier means than identical equivalence in the punishment, and can other potential criminals be deterred without recourse to identical equivalent punishment.

Without *forebearance* society is continually in the process of becoming chaotic. Any interpretation of the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is a wrong interpretation if it leaves out *forebearance*. That was what had been done in Christ's day; the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was used as an excuse for, as a justification of, a ruthless demand to have eyes gouged out and teeth knocked out.

Forebearance can be defined in minimum terms as being tentative and temporary forgiveness. Having applied *forebearance* in that sense, and having obtained a gratifying result, the full definition of *forebearance* must be broad enough to include forgiveness in the unqualified sense of the term.

Ill-Will as an Ingredient of Punishment

The second and equally important objection to the demand of a wronged man that he be authorized to get an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is that he may be welcoming the opportunity for revenge. If ill-will prompted the original wrong, that does not justify ill-will in the punishment. If that were legitimate, the law of God would again be abrogated, paralyzed, shelved.

The obligation of goodwill to the neighbor, the obligation to wish him well for his sake and not to wish him harm, that obligation is timeless, boundless, and universal.

The obligation of goodwill from man to man is *never* abrogated.

The Amazing Doctrine Not To Resist Evil

We come now to the doctrine which appears to many as being one of the most astounding and contradictory doctrines in Scrip-

ture — the doctrine, not to resist evil (as expressed in the King James version). The exact words in the Revised Version are: "But I say unto you, *Resist not him that is evil*"; and then follows the advice to turn to a wrongdoer the second cheek, give him your cloak too, and go with him a second mile.

On the face of it, this section of Scripture teaches that the neighbor does have a *claim* on me. If that is correct, then all that has previously been written in this analysis of brotherly love must collapse as erroneous; not only must you, apparently, live *for* your neighbor but you must tolerate violence (sixth commandment), theft (eighth commandment), and coercion (sixth commandment), against yourself by him, and you must encourage him in his evil conduct. Moses, it *seems*, was all wrong; he forbade harming the neighbor; here the neighbor, according to the New Testament, must be encouraged to trespass the commandments at your expense!

Merely to state the problem fully in that manner immediately brings urgently to the fore the necessity of a more-sensible explanation.

Nevertheless, the doctrine of nonresistance to evil has had some powerful advocates in the past, and has many powerful advocates today.

Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, adopted as the central theme of his "religion" the doctrine: Resist not evil. He calls that doctrine the quintessence of the teachings of Christ. He declares all other Christian ideas must be interpreted in the light of that all-important and controlling statement.

We consider the Tolstoyan doctrine to be absurd. We do not believe Christ taught that it was the essence of brotherly love to tolerate evil and he certainly did not teach that it is meritorious to encourage evil.

Eli, to whom we have already referred, failed to resist the evil conduct of his two sons. God, speaking through the prophet, forecasted the ruin of Eli's house. All Scripture becomes an inconsistent mass of instruction if evil is not to be resisted.

**The Aim, The Means,
and the Motivation
in Resisting Evil**

When Christ made the famous statement, resist not him that is evil, he may have had in mind any one of three ideas:

1. Evil should not be resisted; this is a matter of *objective*.
2. Evil should not be resisted by improper or ineffective *means*.
3. Evil should not be resisted because of wrong *motivations*.

Without more ado the idea that the *objective* of the statement, resist not him that is evil, is to tolerate or encourage evil is rejected. Exactly the contrary is taken as the correct explanation, namely, evil is *not* to be tolerated or encouraged.

That leaves the question of *means* and *motivations*. The statement, when correctly understood in its context, means: Resist not him that is evil *by improper means nor from improper motivations*. Adding those two ideas, taken from the context, to the abbreviated statement, rationalizes it completely and easily.

The *means* which Christ advises are extraordinary and sagacious. He advises you to *advertise* your forbearance and that you be more-than-reasonable.

The use of more-than-reasonable means may appear nonsensical. But the advice, as wise and experienced people know, is excellent.

The controversies between men do not ordinarily involve physical violence. But bitter differences can poison the relations between men without a blow being struck. How judge between men in any controversy, and how should the contestants conduct themselves according to Christian ethics?

In a controversy, the natural tendency is for each contestant "to pull his own way." That is one reason why bystanders usually criticize both sides. They may grant that *B* has more right than

A, but they do not line up completely with *B*. His case may look impregnable to himself, but he may be the only person who believes it. *A* may even sincerely think *B* is wholly wrong. What is the wisest and shrewdest policy for *B* to follow? It is for him to be more-than-reasonable. The way for *B* to get public opinion behind him is for him to be not only reasonable but more-than-reasonable. The way to frustrate an opponent is to make it clear that you are not fighting in an area where there may be a legitimate difference of opinion because of a difference of viewpoint, but that you are willing to go beyond that belt, far over into his territory, so that all the public standing around will finally say: Why, that man *A* was not only unreasonable but dishonest. My sympathies are now wholly with *B*. Look what *B* conceded.

The man who has public opinion behind him is greatly benefited. Somewhere in the Old Testament there is the statement that the righteous and the wise can afford to be magnanimous. It is not necessary for them to drive hard bargains.

Awareness of the importance of favorable public opinion is the hallmark of a wise man who intends to have a minimum of recourse to violence. A rich and aged farmer, half-soliloquizing with himself, has often said in the hearing of others, "I could have done that; I had it coming to me; but I am rich and they would have said I was taking advantage of him." That man is a "two-miler." And smart and shrewd.

Young men competitive with other young men as employees in a business often fail in magnanimity. They pull for themselves. They do not help their fellow young men. They may even surreptitiously trip them up. But the man whom the employer will finally promote is he that is the most reasonable, the most patient, the steadiest under insults and injuries, the young man who does not knife his fellows, but actually goes out of his way to help them. He is a "two-miler." It is the two-milers who get the promotions.

And when such a man is promoted, there is less envy and jealousy toward him about his promotion than any other man on the payroll. The others all say: "Well if I did not get it, I am glad he got it, because he is a decent guy." The reputation of

"decency" is only acquired by being more-than-reasonable, by being a "two-cheek" man.

But promote a young man who has always followed "the pulling for himself" policy and then hear the turmoil and see the disruption in the department!

After Moses died it was said of him that he was the "meekest" man of his generation. Does it mean that he was a weak man? Not at all. It means that he was the most patient, the most reasonable, the man with the most-reluctant recourse to violence—in short, the man who appeared to be turning his second cheek and going the second mile but who by that process was getting done what could not otherwise be done except by violence.

Patience, reasonableness, more-than-reasonableness, magnanimity are the most powerful *means* for accomplishing in a good society all legitimate ends that there are.

Looked at coldly and analytically those attributes are not related in any way whatever to letting your neighbor lord it over you. You are *not* making a *sacrifice*. You are instead a calculating and shrewd person selecting the most effective means to get done what you wish to get done. If eventually these means are ineffective, what then? Violence must *then* be employed to resist violence.

The weaker — and more wicked — a man is the more he will deviate from Christ's advice. In a *voluntary* society, that is, in a society organized according to the commandments of God, the principal reliance in relations between men will be on the devices which Christ was graphically recommending — forbearance, magnanimity, favorable public opinion, reasonableness and more-than-reasonableness.

It is necessary, however, to warn against "extending" Christ's statement, which is something practically everybody will do. The unwarranted "extension" will consist in this: if a man is wise to go a second mile, he is therefore by Christ advised to go the third mile or the tenth mile or the hundredth mile.

There may be some who reason in that manner, extending the interpretation beyond the statement. But we are strict constructionists and have developed an acute dislike for sanctimonious extensions of scriptural commands. To "extend" Christ's statement beyond what he said or apparently intended to say is to interpret him as recommending a course which will promote the growth of evil!

To extend the interpretation in an unlimited manner, just to be sure to impress the world with a Christian's piety, is also equivalent to making Christ say that resistance to evil *by force* is never permissible. This violates the teaching of Scripture generally and also of Christ generally.

It is one thing to advocate forbearance, to advocate trying to see a matter in dispute from the neighbor's viewpoint, to recommend being more-than-reasonable, to recommend advertising your Christian goodwill, but to say that Christ recommended that all resistance to evil should be limited absolutely to nonforceful means is to have him say something which, as we read the text, he most certainly does not say. In John 2:13-17 the incident is told how Christ horse-whipped the traders out of the temple. He deliberately used violence.

Further, if to the contrary that is what Christ was saying, then Christ was in disagreement with Moses. But in his introductory remarks Christ made clear that he was not disagreeing with Moses at all (nor specifically for that matter about resistance to evil or use of force to deter from evil); he was disagreeing with an interpretation about Moses's deterrent to evil which interpretation approved or encouraged a spontaneous, vengeful, identical retaliation, without attempt to use a forbearing and persuasive method.

* * *

Finally, there is the question of *motivation* and there appears to be good reason for believing that the main idea in the statement about not resisting him that is evil is that the *motivation* must be right.

An eye for an eye had been incorrectly interpreted as permitting a second violence to compensate for a first violence; as it were, a second lie to compensate for a first lie. The *means* to resist evil was thus incorrectly selected. But the motivation — what should the subjective motivation be when resisting evil?

The motivation, if we read the Sermon on the Mount correctly, must be unfailing, unalterable, undiminishable goodwill. The moment that the motivation has become ill-will, to damage the neighbor, to work him ill, to humiliate him, to deceive him, to rob him of the things that make life worth living, at that moment all formal compliance with the letter of the law, in regard to the application of suitable punishment, is still inadequate and sinful. Only when the purpose is *beneficent to the recipient* is the law of brotherly love, whether written by Moses or Christ, obeyed.

That this is the basic idea in verses 38 through 48 of the Sermon on the Mount is especially clear in verses 43 through 48. *Motivation* is directly discussed in these verses. Christ first says: "Ye have heard that it was said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, *and hate thine enemy*." We do not know to what Old Testament Scripture passage Christ may have been referring. We infer that the clause, *and hate thine enemy*, was that wrong interpretation (not in Scripture) made by the so-called experts of the law. Then he goes on to advise, love your enemies, pray for them that persecute you. The import of the text is too obvious to require elaboration. It is simply this: the motivation of all brotherly relations must be goodwill.

We can then restate the abbreviated expression, resist not him that is evil, in this manner: resist not him that is evil by the use of improper means nor from motives of ill-will; or more positively and better: Resist evil by forbearance and with goodwill toward him that is evil.

The absurd interpretation of this text by Tolstoy and the pacifists is simply because they have failed to read the abbreviated statement in the sense obviously and completely determined by the context.

We can now add two important ideas to the *basic* law of brotherly love. The *basic* law is: love worketh *no ill* to his neighbor (Romans 13:10). Because sin entered the world it is necessary to have two additions: (1) forbearance and (2) a motivation consisting of goodwill. The two ideas of forbearance and a right motivation can be covered in that one word, goodwill. Brotherly love is, then, working no ill to the neighbor plus goodwill.

It should be noted that thus far there is no evidence that the neighbor has a *claim* on you according to his need and your ability (the socialist-communist law of love). That idea has not even been approached by anything that Christ said.

Charity

But our definition of brotherly love is not yet complete. It is necessary to add another idea to the definition. That idea is charity. Charity is referred to in the statement: give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

The idea of charity is taught in Scripture in two ways:

1. A pervasive teaching of the required universal payment of tithes, or a tenth of income annually, or occasionally of a tenth of all assets.
2. A spasmodic teaching that a man must dispose of everything, in one single act, for charity.

Let us consider the second idea first.

The *occasional* demand in Scripture for an act of charity involving 100 percent of a person's assets obviously cannot be a general rule. If it were a general rule it would swallow up the tithe idea entirely. The occasional rule is either the universal rule or it is a special rule. Without engaging in elaborate proof because the idea is logically so indisputable, the thought of 100 percent charity all of the time is rejected. To require 100 percent charity is to negate the right to property. One-hundred percent charity will prevent any property existing which can be stolen. Theft is impossible if the right of title to property is denied. Scripture nowhere questions the right of private property as between persons.

(The general idea that God is the ultimate owner is accepted, but that is wholly irrelevant in this discussion.)

When the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22) came to Christ, and was instructed to give up all his possessions, that must be taken as an exceptional case. The demand was not because his ownership of property was invalid and wrong. The young man was presented in his special case with a demand for the Kingdom of God and not for the poor. He flunked out because between his property and the Kingdom of God he would not give up his property. It was not the claim of the poor but the claim of God which he rejected. Christ by his adroit question brought out the evidence that the young man was unprepared to keep the *whole* law, the first table (to love God above all) as well as the second (to love the neighbor as himself). The young man loved himself (his property) more than he loved God.

The claim made on the young man was a special case. It is not the general case. There will always be such special cases. There are such special cases today. The responses in those special cases are individual. There is no validity in quoting the special case to establish the general case.

We come now to charity proper — the tithe — the universal case.

It is inappropriate and not practical to cover *all* phases of the subject of charity at this point. Instead a number of summary statements will be made:

1. The tithe is not properly invariably restricted to 10 percent; it probably should under specific circumstances be more than 10 percent (especially among the rich) and it may conceivably be less than 10 percent, although any facile appeal to the second idea should be appraised with suspicion.

2. The tithe can be looked on as a contribution to the unfortunate, and in that sense be strictly charity; or it can be looked at as an investment or far-sighted expenditure for self-regarding interests, such as, the general welfare or religious and educational services of which the person or his family or his friends are or will

be the beneficiaries. In this latter case the tithe is not really charity at all. We are not endeavoring to declare how much of any tithe money is strictly to be allocated to charity and how much to intangible but highly prized self-regarding interests, for example, money to your own church or school. Certainly, providing yourself with a church and a preacher is not charity.

3. Charity is never described in Scripture as a required payment to the lazy or the foolish or the unworthy poor. The demand for free and cheerful charity is for the benefit of the widows and orphans and weak and distressed. Nowhere in Scripture is a man declared to be obligated to help the wastrel or the lazy.

4. The need for charity falls into two fields. The one is wholly honorable, but the second is not. The first is the charity that is needed to cushion the blow of unpredictable misfortune; the second is the charity that is needed to cushion the effects of folly. A man marries. He has a family. Then he dies in a tornado. The widow and orphans need help. The charitable help is as honorable for the widow and orphans as were the earnings of the father. But another father may turn out to be improvident. At a given moment that improvident father and his family may become destitute. The destitution is the effect of folly. Although charity should not be performed to finance (and thereby encourage) folly, *in the emergency* there can be no question regarding the obligation to assist.

5. Assistance by means of charity is good for yourself, it is a manifestation of far-sighted judgment and a wise pursuit of the self-regarding interests. Usually, this is denied by implication by referring to promises of *direct* reward by God. We hold to the proposition that God works through logical and reasonable means. When then Malachi (Malachi 3:10) promises that the "windows of heaven" will pour down prosperity in response to paying the full tithe, it appears absurd to appraise that as illogical. The sensible interpretation is that it is smart to pay the tithe; for these reasons: (a) it pays to alleviate acute distress, such as starvation, illness, ignorance, incompetence, deterioration, which are all inevitable concomitants of failing to try to lift up the stricken and the unfortunate and the demoralized; it is well to

remember that "a stitch in time saves nine"; it is wise not to neglect disease of the social body any more than to neglect stomach ulcers or tuberculosis or diabetes; (b) you yourself, or your near kin, may also be hit unexpectedly by misfortune and temporarily collapse; if you do not help others so situated *now* they will have small urge to help you *when you are down*; the good Samaritan was a prudent man by being good; maybe he travelled the rough Jericho road regularly and feared he would be beaten and robbed and left to die; he probably hoped, it appears reasonable to believe, that somebody else would then do for him what he himself was doing for him "that fell among thieves"; it is, therefore, only the stupid who are hostile to charity. Charity is as necessary in society as grease in an automobile transmission.

6. Charity has a taint of disgrace to it. That disgrace belongs there when the need for charity is the result of folly. If distress because of folly is to be considered honorable then there is an inadequate deterrent to folly. That disgrace does not belong there when the need for charity was caused by the unpredictable, the "falling among thieves" on the wild Jericho road. But unfortunately the taint spreads to the whole field of charity, and not without reason did Christ say, it is more blessed to give than to receive. A person with pride who needs charity may earnestly wish to pay back. He cannot because of circumstances immediately pay back the specific benefactor; later the specific benefactor may not be around, or may be unwilling to accept repayment; (if he does accept repayment, he made a loan and did not engage in charity); and so "repayment" of real charity can only be to another person, a third party, who is hapless at the time. It is base social ingratitude for me to accept charity when I need it myself, but later to refuse to give it or give it only churlishly when another needs it. In other words, charity is a commonsense, realistic, profitable adjustment to social reality. But it sometimes hurts our pride to receive it. It should hurt our pride *only* when our need for charity is caused by something disgraceful and foolish.

7. Charity has a peculiarly subjective character. It is something that the giver decides and not the recipient. That is one reason why charity is always humbling. When you *buy* something you decide. You determine your own wishes and the fulfillment

of them. But charity always puts the giver in the position of deciding. He is the person who adjusts his means to his own needs and yours. He really does not consult you. He can calculate how much he should help you and how much others should help you. You are not a principal in the transaction; you are essentially a minor. As the recipient you may say: I need so and so, but the giver may say, you get only so much, because *B* and *C* and *D* need it more than you do. An essential phase of charity therefore is that the giver is the decider. The recipient does not declare a *claim*. The giver decides the gift. If charity were to be shown only toward those who are stricken by unpredictable providence, and never to those in unfortunate circumstances by their own folly, then the right of participation in the decision by the recipient would be clearer. But when charity *must* be dispensed in *emergencies* to the foolish as well as the unfortunate, the foolish certainly have no good claim in saying they demand so and so.

8. Charity, therefore, is essentially voluntary. The giver is a *giver*. He is not paying a debt. He is a giver because of both goodwill and good judgment. He has compassion for the recipient, and a long-view of the social benefits and the personal benefits of Biblical charity.

9. The expression, from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away, appears to be a reference to consumer loans and not to outright charity nor to a straight business transaction. If the reference is to the making of a loan to a distressed person (which appears probable) the basic concepts applicable to outright charity apply.

We summarize our definition thus far of brotherly love as: doing no harm to the neighbor, plus goodwill. And goodwill has up to this point the subsidiary definition of (1) forbearance, (2) general beneficent intent, and (3) standard Biblical charity.

There is, it should again be noted, in all this no allegation or implication in Scripture that the neighbor can clap his hand on your shoulder and say: "In the name of brotherly love give me your services or your wife or your property." He has no claim whatever to what is legitimately yours. You have no obligation

whatever to grant that demand on the alleged ground that Scripture teaches it. Scripture does not teach anything of the kind.

Being Debtors To All Men

A final and important idea must be added to the Biblical definition of brotherly love.

There is a well-known text in Romans 1:14: "I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish." The writer, Paul of Tarsus, had been well educated, and the inference might be that Paul was saying he had learned something from practically everybody, Greeks and Barbarians, wise and foolish. But the text probably means something different, namely, that Paul considered himself obligated to everybody, Greek and Barbarian, wise and foolish, in regard to informing and urging upon them the Christian gospel.

The obligation to preach the gospel to all may be considered to be an obligation primarily to God and not to the neighbor. But the actual language says that Paul considered himself *obligated* to his *fellowmen*, that is, he considered himself a debtor.

The last addition, then, to the definition of brotherly love is the idea of informing the neighbor of the Christian gospel. It is not something which the possessor may withhold. The potential recipient does have a *claim* on that. He is a creditor; those who know the gospel are debtors.

In regard then to the intangible, spiritual good of which the gospel consists we are all debtors. We must engage in spreading the gospel whether we wish to or not.

Summary

The definition of brotherly love as defined in Scripture, as we understand it, has been completed. That definition consists of:

1. Doing no harm to the neighbor; not exploiting the neighbor; avoiding following Epstein's Law of looking out for ourselves *at the expense of the neighbor*; retaining freedom for ourselves and allowing freedom to our neighbors.

2. Manifesting goodwill to the neighbor

- (a) by forbearance and forgiveness — that is, not considering the law on brotherly love to be abrogated for ourselves because our neighbor has broken the law against us
- (b) by intending to do the neighbor good; by being motivated by what is thought to be his welfare
- (c) by extending charitable aid when needed
- (d) by informing the neighbor of the gospel.

That is considered to be brotherly love. Scripture teaches nothing more.

Texts Apparently Contrary To The Foregoing Definition of Brotherly Love

In the February issue the statement was made that the word love is *equivocal*, that is, that it has more than one meaning in Scripture and out of Scripture. Indeed, the word has a large number of shades of meaning.

A reader can get a Bible concordance and look up the word *love*, and then read all the texts in Scripture in which the word *love* appears. And then he may doctrinarily assert that brotherly love means something different from and much more than what has been defined in the foregoing.

It should immediately be granted that the love from God to men and the requirement of love from men to God is different from the requirement of love to the neighbor. If the two "loves" were identical, then Moses and Christ and his contemporaries should not have formulated *two* laws of love but only one. Any endeavor to interchange the two laws, although individual Bible texts may make that appear possible, is rejected as invalid; otherwise, why *two* laws?

Further, almost anything can be proved by individual texts. It is the *general* teaching of Scripture which should be determinative.

It should be emphasized that many texts on *love* get a very strange meaning if taken out of their context. In fact, when taken out of their context, some texts appear to say just the opposite of what they really say. (We have just gone over a classic example; it is tragically wrong to say as Tolstoy did that the statement, resist not him that is evil, should be taken literally and in isolation.)

It is not practical to consider all of the texts that might be cited as teaching a different definition of brotherly love than has been presented in the foregoing. But representative texts will be considered and commented on briefly.

When reviewing representative texts, we shall, in order to be consistent, analyze whether and how they teach or seem to teach, something different from brotherly love as defined in the foregoing; that is, do the texts teach (1) doing no ill to the neighbor and maximum freedom for everybody, (2) forbearance, (3) kindly intent, (4) charity and (5) proclamation of the gospel, *or do the texts teach something more, and if so, what.*

Galations 6:2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

This seems to teach something more than brotherly love as it has been defined here. A socialist-communist or a Calvinist holding to a sanctimonious definition of brotherly love will say: clearly this text says that we must do *everything* for each other; *everything* must be communal; we must act as the early church in Jerusalem, we must sell houses and lands and "bear one another's burdens."

In actual life, with isolated exceptions, nobody does anything of the sort. And practically no professing Christian intends even in his high moments to do anything of the sort. It is sanctimonious prattle. It discredits Christianity to declare something that is hardly ever even intended.

But when the text is read in its context, what does it mean? It means something radically different from supporting each other. It means that we must be *forebearing* and forgiving to someone

who has fallen into sin, *exactly in accordance with the interpretation which we have given to brotherly love*. We must bear each others burdens, how? By *being forgiving*. Here is the *whole context*.

Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden.

It is more unreasonable to quote, *bear ye one another's burdens*, as support for a sanctimonious definition of the law of love, than it is unreasonable to quote the last sentence, *for each man shall bear his own burden*, as proof that you should give nothing for charity!

* * *

Let us consider two texts together.

I Corinthians 10:24. Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good.

Romans 15:1-3. Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.

Both of these texts can be made to appear to support a sanctimonious idea of brotherly love, namely, that the neighbor has a general claim on us. We appear to be admonished to neglect our own interest and to work solely for the neighbor, that is, 100 per cent charity (or socialism-communism).

The texts in both cases really teach the exact opposite of what they *seem* to teach. They have been torn from their contexts.

The context in both cases refers to Christian liberty. Paul advises that we make certain concessions to brethren who are weak in the faith. In order to promote the weakling's faith, concede, he recommends, to certain restraints that the neighbor considers important. The purpose is to stabilize the neighbor's faith, that is, the purpose is purely spiritual, and pertains to the point we specifically acknowledged in our analysis, namely, we *must* make sacrifices for promoting the gospel. By no sensible exegesis can the conclusion be reached that we must order our lives according to the idea that our neighbor's whims must be our law — except in a limited number of *matters of faith*, as our eating meat dedicated to idols, which our neighbor with more feeble faith says we must not eat.

* * *

John 13:34,35. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

In this text Christ himself is speaking. When he refers to his love for his disciples as a universal standard he may be considered to be referring to two things: (1) his life up to that time; or (2) his atoning death. But that is impossible. He cannot be referring to his death. He uses the past tense. He must, therefore, be referring to his life up to that time.

A standard idea is that Christ did two things for his people, thereby fulfilling all righteousness, namely:

1. He bore the punishment for their sins; and
2. He fulfilled (kept) the law for them.

Christ's admonition, therefore, cannot mean that we must all try to die atoning deaths for each other. It must refer only to his keeping the law. The law is: thou shalt not kill, commit adultery, steal, lie nor covet; nor fail to be forbearing and forgiving; nor fail in charity; nor fail in concern regarding the salvation of our neighbor's soul. It was in all these matters that Christ had fulfilled the demands of love, and it was to these that he must have been referring when he made the statement quoted.

It is possible to give great emphasis to the single word, *new*, in the text. When that is done, the exegesis of the text will require the interpretation that Christ was stating a revolutionary law. Hitherto he had always declared he was in accord with the Old Testament. Now, at the approach of death he suddenly is said to put out a "new" law. That "new" law is proclaimed in one single sentence. It is not enlarged upon and it is not explained. The only explanation given is "as I have loved you." If Christ was the first who kept the law, is not that something *new*?

The newness of the law, it appears plausible, is not that the law is new and different, but the newness consisted in there finally having been a demonstration on how to keep the old law. Having finally obtained an actual pattern, the law of love could be declared by Christ to be something *new* to his disciples and to all mankind.

* * *

I Corinthians 13:1-13. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have *the gift* of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love

suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love.

The foregoing is the famous Chapter 13 by Paul on love.

In Chapter 12 Paul had discussed the question of spiritual gifts — the gift of speaking in tongues, the gift of prophecy, of healing, of working miracles. Apparently there was great rivalry and envy about those “gifts” in the church at Corinth. Goodwill and cooperation were in danger of being wholly lost. Paul uses an illustration of the parts of the body being necessary to each other. In short, he makes a powerful plea for cooperation and for mutual appreciation — in short, for mutual goodwill. He advises the Corinthians to grow up and rid themselves of childish rivalries.

That goodwill he calls “agape” or “love” or “charity.” And what is it? Nothing more than “forebearance” and mutual appreciation and cooperation and “goodwill.” His word “love” really does not mean more than

1. To stop disparaging each other
2. To be patient and gentle
3. To be modest
4. Not to be slanderous

And it all gets down to this: in regard to all those spiritual gifts what good are they if they cannot be used cooperatively, because there is no goodwill?

But what is there in this chapter that supports the idea that my neighbor has a broad claim on me to do as much for him as for myself? Nothing at all *unless the chapter is read out of the context.*

F. N.

* * *

The next issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will be devoted primarily to a critical analysis of the "extension" by pious men of the Biblical definition of brotherly love to cover, erroneously, although in the name of freedom and of justice and of religion, personal and social relations, which are irreconcilable with what Scripture teaches about brotherly love. An *identical objective* of socialists-communists and of pious Christians will be exposed to be sanctimonious delusion which is destructive of human welfare and of society.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

866 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

MAY, 1955

NUMBER 5

Understanding and Misunderstanding The Hebrew-Christian Law of Love

D. ARROGANCE AND SANCTIMONIOUSNESS ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER DEFINITIONS OF BROTHERLY LOVE

This is the fourth section of an analysis of the Hebrew-Christian Law of Love. Christianity and communism cannot be reconciled; they are opposing systems. But many Christian thinkers have come to identify the Christian law of love with the communist law of love. The purpose of this analysis is to discover by what fallacies that is apparently accomplished.

The previous sections had the following titles:

- A. The Plain Teaching of Scripture Regarding Brotherly Love (February issue)
- B. Analytical Dissection of Scriptural Law of Brotherly Love (March issue)
- C. Scriptural Corrections of Popular Errors Concerning Law Requiring Brotherly Love (April issue)

It will not be possible to understand the full meaning of what follows without having read the three sections just mentioned.

The first three sections were largely positive. They briefly outlined the scriptural doctrine of brotherly love. The general *pattern* of that doctrine has been outlined, but as Scripture abounds in statements concerning love it was not practical to consider *every* text referring to love.

Now we turn to those statements of the doctrine of brotherly love which have become widely accepted among men who declare

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students, \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

that they are Christians, but which statements do two things: (1) they deviate from Scripture, and (2) they agree with the basic premise underlying the communist law of love, which law is, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. This section then is more negative in character; it aims to initiate a rebuttal to the communist law of love. The *full* rebuttal, however, will require extensive and varied arguments, from the social sciences as well as from Scripture.

Outline of This Section

Consideration will be given to the following:

1. Do Religious Leaders Really Identify the Christian Law of Love With the Communist Law of Love?
2. How Do Christian Leaders Accomplish Identification of the Two Laws of Love?
3. The Principle of "Extension" as Known to Logicians
4. The "Extension" Itself; the Pseudo-Biblical Doctrine of Brotherly Love
5. Voluntary Collectivism
6. The Popular New Religion of Agape
7. The Coercion of Recipients
8. The Coercion of Givers
9. Mental Coercion
10. John Calvin on Freedom Versus Tyranny
11. A Voluntary Versus a Coercive Society
12. The Bond of Society — Legitimate Self-Regarding Interests
13. Summary

Do Religious Leaders Really Identify the Christian Law of Love With the Communist Law of Love?

Many outstanding religious leaders in the world do identify the Hebrew-Christian law of love, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, with the communist law of love, from each according

to his ability to each according to his need. There are a few conspicuous exceptions.

The foregoing statement is true of such outstanding leaders as: Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Theological Seminary; Karl Barth; Emil Brunner; G. Bromley Oxnam, Bishop of the Methodist church; E. Stanley Jones, world-famous Methodist missionary leader; and Toyohiko Kagawa, the well-known Japanese. The statement is also true of the principal spokesmen for the World Council of Churches. It is true of a faculty member of the Free University of Amsterdam as was quoted in the February issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*. And it is also true of public statements which stand unchallenged in orthodox denominations.

In this issue we shall quote two outstanding liberal religious leaders, Dr. E. Stanley Jones and Toyohiko Kagawa.

We shall quote them indirectly, using a specific incident as a setting for the quotations.

From July 26 to August 2, 1953, the Second Biennial Conference of the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches met in Karuizawa, Japan. This Council is a sectional organization affiliated with the International Council of Christian Churches (generally known as the I. C. C. C.). At this Council several resolutions were passed, of which one was the following:

Resolution on Dr. E. Stanley Jones

In view of the visit to certain Far Eastern lands in recent months of Dr. E. Stanley Jones, a Methodist missionary and a leading figure in the World Council of Churches, the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches is constrained to lift its voice against the position of Dr. Jones which is aiding communist world revolution.

Dr. Jones, by means of Christian terminology and in the name of what he calls Christianity, has actually championed the communist economic order. We list instances of this:

1. Dr. Jones conceives of the Kingdom of God as a social order embracing the entire world. He accepts as the economic foundation of this Kingdom the economic

foundation of communism as expressed in the Russian Constitution. He writes in his book, *The Choice Before Us*, "The fruits of the Kingdom in a material life would be a fundamental justice to every man apart from class and race and birth; a holding of the means of production by all on behalf of all; a brotherhood that would make life a family instead of a feud; a sense of destiny and direction coming from the fact that God is in the corporate life giving meaning, permanence, depth, and redemption to the whole" (p. 30).

He further says, "In this new Society of the Kingdom we shall exclude none, but when some exclude themselves in spirit, then they thereby exclude themselves in sharing. If they refuse to cooperate, they are refused fruits of cooperation. They segregate themselves, so they must live to themselves — and perish by that very isolation. There will be a simple rule — from each according to his ability. If they refuse this, then they cut themselves off from the first part — to each according to his need" (p. 203).

In Dr. Jones' book, *Mahatma Gandhi: An Interpretation*, he gives expressions to the same concept of the Kingdom, and declares, "It will be a Kingdom of God society. That society is struggling to be born" (p. 201).

2. Dr. Jones accepts the communist thesis "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

He writes in *The Choice Before Us*, "I know that some of the objections to communism are based on partial knowledge or misunderstanding. For instance, the statement that communism loses sight of the individual in the mass is obviously not true of a theory that culminates in the words: 'To each according to his need, and from each according to his ability.' The fact is, as some one has said, 'Communism is the only political theory that really holds the Christian position of the absolute equality of every individual' " (pp. 133, 134).

Dr. E. Stanley Jones has become a propagandist throughout the free world for a concept of society which is in conflict with the teaching of the Bible and of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God, according to Christ, is a spiritual order which men enter by means of the miracle of the new birth. The Marxian principle "from each to each" is the core of the totalitarian system in which men serve the interests and whims of the state instead of serving the living God.

This social gospel distortion of the Biblical teaching concerning God's Kingdom flows from the underlying theological error of Dr. E. Stanley Jones, as found in his many books. We therefore urge Christians of Asia to avoid fellowship with churches who invite Dr. E. Stanley Jones to exercise the teaching ministry in their meetings.

The Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches reaches an adverse conclusion regarding Jones' identification of the two doctrines of brotherly love — one, the traditional Christian doctrine, and the other, the communist doctrine. The F. E. C. C. C. objects to that identification. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM also objects. The Council does not give its detailed reasons for deservedly opposing the E. Stanley Jones position. Exactly what the argument or evidence is of the Council against the ideas of E. Stanley Jones we do not know. Neither do we know whether the Council would agree with the argument we are here presenting. But regardless of reasons, the Council and PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM come to the same result and we salute the correct conclusion of the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches relative to the brotherly love and social ideas of Dr. E. Stanley Jones.

The same Council also passed a "Resolution on the Message of T. Kagawa," which is as follows:

Whereas, there is in the Far East today a great confusion as to what the Christian message really is, due to the ceaseless propagandizing and wide acceptance by undiscerning Christendom of some church leaders whose message is a far departure from Biblical Christianity.

Be it resolved, that the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches' second biennial convention, meeting in Karuizawa, Japan, warn the Christian public of Japan and the whole Far East that the message of Toyohiko Kagawa, which identifies the Biblical Kingdom of God with a modern cooperative social order, is not the Christian message, and that it is being proclaimed by a man who denies the true deity of our Lord Jesus Christ and the full truthfulness of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The preaching of the so-called "social gospel" as a substitute for the Bible's individual Gospel of personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and His redemption, is a tragic substitution in which a message which is completely foreign to the teaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is presented in His name. Furthermore, we greatly deplore the new translation of the New Testament which was recently published by Mr. Kagawa as its editor. This New Testament is sure to do great damage to the Christian public, containing as it does in its Introduction a denial of the apostolic origin of the Gospel of John and Matthew and various of the epistles of Paul, Peter, Jude and John. Placing the origin of portions of the New Testament in the second century cannot be substantiated, and is an attack upon the inspiration of and value of the Scriptures. It should be resisted.

The foregoing quotation from resolutions by the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches is taken from *The Reformation Review*, January, 1954, pages 55 and 56.

On February 1, 1951, the World Council of Churches sent out a letter to all member churches reading:

The peoples have seen the vision of social justice. It is for us to help transform it into reality. All people in privileged countries — particularly Christians — must strive to enter sympathetically into the social DEMANDS

of the needy. FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY AND TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS, HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST. (Emphasis supplied.)

We have quoted the ideas of two famous missionary leaders and a letter of the World Council of Churches. They associate the welfare of men, and the very essence of the Christian gospel, with certain ideas on brotherly love and on the social order, which tie together the acceptance of the Christian gospel (so-called) with the social structure of communism.

We do not, of course, declare that either E. Stanley Jones or Kagawa approves the notorious methods of communism — violence, coercion, oppression, murder, assassination. We say merely that they approve the *basic principle* of communism, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. It is *that* objective, *that* principle which is the *real* issue between communism and Christianity. The atheism of communism is not its really relevant characteristic as is perfectly clear from the fact that the men who have just been quoted are not atheists.

It is indeed a great error to hold that so-called orthodox Christians do not concur on this issue with the E. Stanley Joneses or the Kagawas or the World Council. We quote again the professor* in economics at the Free University in Amsterdam which considers itself orthodox. He writes (translated) :

The big mistake of socialism is that it pursues a high moral [*sic!*] principle [from each according to his ability to each according to his need] by immoral means, yea even with spiritual coercion.

Possibly not one protest has even been voiced by anyone in the Reformed churches of The Netherlands against the statement of Vander Kooy just quoted. Possibly not one protest will ever be voiced by a responsible leader in sister denominations throughout the world.

*Dr. T. P. Vander Kooy, of the Department of Economic and Social Sciences, in *Op het Grensgebied van Economie en Religie* (On the Borderland Between Economics and Religion).

In fact, if Christian "witnessing" is an evidence of what the various orthodox Calvinist denominations think in this age about the famous communist rule on brotherly love, from each according to his ability to each according to his need, then the general *absence* of critical "witnessing" is conclusive proof that the communist principle is accepted or at least is not considered dangerous nor a principle to be contradicted or fought.

Typical of the wide acceptance in liberal Christian churches of the communist law of love are the statements and activities of the Committee on Social Action in the Congregational churches.

Therefore, this conclusion is in order. Many if not most religious leaders, both liberal and orthodox, genuinely identify the communist law of love with the Christian law of love; that is, for them the two statements are identical, the traditional Christian one, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and the traditional socialist-communist one, from each according to his ability to each according to his need.

How Do Christian Leaders Accomplish Identification of the Two Laws of Love?

How do both orthodox and liberal Christians accomplish an identification of the Christian law of love, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, with the socialist-communist law of love, from each according to his ability to each according to his need?

That question fascinates us. *How* arrive at the erroneous conclusion that Christianity teaches, regarding the relations of men to men, the same thing that Marx, Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini (all of them basically socialists) taught, namely, that the right relations between men require a social order described by the socialist-communist law of love, from each according to his ability to each according to his need?

The answer is very simple. A limited requirement to love the neighbor was changed to an unlimited requirement. A natural and reasonable and psychologically sound requirement to love the neighbor was changed to an unnatural and unreasonable and psychologically unsound requirement to love the neighbor. A sincere relation between men as prescribed by Biblical ethics became a

hyper-pious, sanctimonious, sickening relation. Socialism-communism had literally out-done Christianity in its demands for love between men. Socialist-communists were like politicians who had out-promised the politicians in the opposite party. There appeared to be nothing for Christians to do other than to alter their definition of brotherly love so that it would promise as much as the socialist-communist law of love. Political demagogues compete with each other in making ever greater and greater promises. The clergy and the socialists-communists have engaged in a similar competition — an extending of the law of love between man to infinity. This is wholly contrary to Scripture. Scripture speaks of a potential infinite love between Creator and creature. But nowhere (as has been shown) does it speak of an infinite love between man and man.

Modern leaders of the Christian church have led the church into a trap. Competition from the socialists-communists has brought the church from sincerity to insincerity, from realism to sanctimony, from wholesome ethics to vicious ethics, from wisdom to folly.

The Principle of Extension as Known to Logicians

The ridiculous thing about the action of the teachers of so-called Christian ethics is that they were not run into a trap but that they ran into it themselves of their own accord.

In a free-for-all argument the thing that is sometimes attempted is to run an opponent into a trap. Schopenhauer in his essay on "The Art of Controversy" advises that you "extend" your opponent's argument. He wrote regarding this dialectical trick in order to win an argument regardless of honesty, as follows:

THE EXTENSION. This consists in carrying your opponent's proposition beyond its natural limits; in giving it as general a signification and as wide a sense as possible, so as to exaggerate it; and, on the other hand, in giving your own proposition as restricted a sense and as narrow limits as you can, because the more general a statement becomes, the more numerous are the objections to which it is open.

If someone, therefore, in an argument about how much the neighbor should be loved had followed the policy of stretching and extending more and more demandingly the requirements for loving the neighbor he would certainly finally have his opponent trapped in an "extension" which would be fantastic and fatal to the opponent. Then, after getting his opponent "out-on-a-limb" the limb could be sawed off by a little common-sense argument. In an absurd manner many religious leaders have climbed far out on a limb in regard to the demand for brotherly love. It is time that they climb back before the limb is sawed off.

**The "Extension" Itself;
the Pseudo-Christian Doctrine
of Brotherly Love**

The reader is now referred to the diagram which appears on page 123. This diagram summarizes what will be elaborated in the following text.

The following may be briefly noted:

1. The scriptural definition sets the individual himself as the general standard; the nonscriptural definition sets the group collectively as the alleged standard, or the neighbor distributively as the standard.
2. The five specific items included in the scriptural definition have been explained in detail in the earlier instalments, and none of that will be repeated.
3. The scriptural definition provides for a *voluntary* society, that is, a society in which its coercive arm (the state) limits its activity to the resistance of evil. The nonscriptural definition provides for a *coercive* society, that is, a society in which its coercive arm (the state) extends its activity to the alleged endeavor of doing more for the so-called public good than resistance to evil.
4. The several specific items included in the nonscriptural definition will be elaborated upon in what follows.
5. The unwarranted "extension" of the meaning of the law of brotherly love to include what is in the right-hand section of the diagram constitutes the means by which religious leaders

Two Definitions of the Famous Law, Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself

The Scriptural Definition

A Voluntary Society

INDIVIDUALISM

(yourself as the standard)

	Goodwill			
	Forebear- ance and forgive- ness	Goodwill or benefi- cent attitude toward neighbor	Charity	Declara- tion of the gospel to the neighbor
No harm to the neighbor				
(objective)	(objective)	(subjective)	(objective)	(objective)

The un-Biblical and fatal-to-society extension of the scriptural law of brotherly love consists in extending the definition from what is on this side of the line . . .

The Anti-Scriptural Definition

A Coercive Society

COLLECTIVISM

(the neighbor collectively as the standard,
or distributively among all neighbors)

Voluntary Collectivism or one hundred percent charity The New Agape Religion (objective and subjective)	Coercion		
	Coerced Receiving	Coerced Giving	Mental Coercion
	The arrogance underlying this	Forced sharing or egalitarian- ism, that is, from each according to his ability to each according to his need	Must avoid hurting a neighbor's feelings
	(objective)	(objective)	(subjective)

. . . to include also what is on this side. The effect of this is that what is provided on this side of that line nullifies what is on the other side of the line. The extension is therefore not merely an extension, but also in its effects a destroyer.

have seemingly been able to identify the Hebrew-Christian law of love with the really antithetical communist law of love.

We proceed to a more-detailed description of the ideas in the right-hand section of the diagram.

Voluntary Collectivism

If collectivism was not hypocrisy it would be possible to find at least a limited number of people who *voluntarily* practiced *full-fledged* collectivism. Such people cannot be found. They have never been found. They will never be found.

People will make great sacrifices at times and for certain individuals, but they will not make egalitarian (equalizing) sacrifices all the time nor for everybody. Genuine collectivism requires just that; egalitarianism for everybody all the time.

The churches send missionaries to far countries where the standard of living is much lower. No denomination expects its missionaries to reduce their standard of living to that of the native population. And none does. If it were required it would be impossible to get enough candidates for mission work. If a man might think he had the fortitude for it, his wife would rebel. If his wife did not rebel, father and mother both would object to their children being subjected to such conditions. To teach egalitarian Christianity as a missionary is to be patently inconsistent with one's own life as a missionary. That is one of several reasons why missionaries from the Occident are no longer wanted in the Orient. Egalitarianism is often taught as a standard but is never lived as a standard. If egalitarianism is *the* right system according to the proclamation, then why do not the missionaries personally and completely practice it? We do not criticize them for non-egalitarianism in living; we do criticize them for teaching egalitarianism.

In his busy retirement the founder of a world-wide business travelled through the Orient. He published some of his observations. One of them was that in China a missionary (in former days) was a very privileged man, with a person more sacred from restraints than any other foreigner. Further, that the missionaries were able to live in grand style because the purchasing power of

their salary was in China far greater than it would be in the United States. They occupied some of the best dwellings; they employed servants; in the season they visited the resorts with the best climate, etc. This shrewd gentleman's observation was that the situation for missionaries was the reverse of what might be expected. The missionaries' standard of living was not between that of a correspondingly situated person in the States and the natives; instead, it was above that of the correspondingly situated person in the States. We see nothing wrong with that. However, the fact is in the reverse direction from egalitarianism.

But it is a mistake to preach egalitarianism and not to live it.

Christ himself was not egalitarian. Surely, he condemned wealth obtained by coercion and fraud. Surely, he required charity (in the Hebrew sense). But he did not at any time call for any complete levelling. And, of course, if a complete levelling is permissible or desirable one time, then repeated acts of levelling are equally permissible and desirable. The result of that would be the discouragement of thrift and industry, and the spread of poverty and idleness.

Christ declared he had no property, no place to lay his head. But he associated extensively with people of means or with fair connections, the sons of Zebedee for example; and with Lazarus, Martha and Mary, who probably were not "proletarians." Christ had a garment without seams, obviously valuable. If he were an egalitarian why did he not give it away, or why did he not discourage its production so that two or three cheaper garments might have been made in its stead? Further, not only was he not egalitarian in his dress, but he was also not egalitarian in his eating. The Pharisees called him a glutton and a winebibber, which undoubtedly was defamation. But there is no reason to believe that Christ had a poor fare and did not eat and drink better than the poorest of the Hebrews of his day.

Egalitarianism is not a suitable method for equalizing the property of the very rich and the very poor. The rich man became rich either dishonestly or honestly. If he obtained his wealth in violation of the law, he should be prosecuted under the law as a criminal. That is in such a case the proper correction. If the rich man obtained his wealth by thrift and labor and by service to

the public voluntarily paid for by the public, why take away from him what he has come by honestly according to the law of God and the corresponding law of men (if it is corresponding)?

This argument against egalitarianism is not merely scriptural, but it is also economic and can stand autonomous of Scripture and be independent of scriptural authority. In subsequent issues of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* various examples of internal inconsistency in egalitarianism will be developed which will discredit any claim it has to credibility.

Machiavelli declared that a prince (a ruler of a people) could have a fairly secure tenure as ruler if he did not disturb his subjects in regard (1) to their property or (2) to their women. But if such a prince conducted himself so that his subjects were inadequately protected against him in regard to their property or women then sooner or later there would be a conspiracy against him to remove or destroy him.

Machiavelli's observation appears profound and unchallengeable. But his manner of speech (which in his case was wholly permissible) hides a fundamental fact. He might as well have said a prince needed to leave his subjects undisturbed in legitimate possession of property. Period. It was not necessary to add the women. The reason for this is that women are only one form of property. Machiavelli mentions them separately only because they are such an important form of property.

Nothing disrespectful of women is meant by the foregoing. A man's wife is his property. The corresponding statement for a woman is that a woman's husband is her property. Machiavelli might well have said if he were thinking of a princess (a female ruler as distinguished from a prince) that she would be secure in her tenure as ruler if she left the property of her subjects and their husbands alone. Otherwise, she could confidently be expected to be poisoned (or something) by the irate women in her country.

Men do not "love" women because they are all so remarkable. A man loves a wife because she has given him possession of her. He tells her sweet things and she believes them, but he would not tell them to her if she were not his *possession*. And vice versa.

Men do not treat unfortunate prostitutes as they treat their wives. Men will not protect *public* property but only *private* property in things and in women. A man will not support a prostitute. A wife will not (ordinarily) keep a philandering husband, or if she keeps him she is doing it for practical reasons (subsistence, position or children) and is acutely unhappy about the philandering.

The *essential* requirement that a girl must meet (really or at least apparently) to get and hold a husband is that she will genuinely and permanently belong to him alone. And to nobody else. And vice versa.

It is *possession* which gives happiness, and not beauty or intelligence or charm. Men have incapacity to wish to keep unfaithful mates. Women have an equal incapacity to wish to keep unfaithful mates.

A conclusion follows from all this. It is this. To be consistent the egalitarians must make wives and husbands common property as well as things.

All utopists, all outliners of an "ideal" society, a voluntary collectivism, all of them make women *common* property. Consider Plato, or Fourier, or the full-fledged ideas of the socialists. See August Bebel's *Die Frau und der Socialismus*.

Indeed, the consistent voluntary collectivists, the egalitarians, the utopists, the people who say that the claims of the neighbor are valid, all these must share women as well as things. On this point, however, the religious moralists with a background in Hebrew-Christian ethics have not yet become fully consistent. They recoil from *that* application of their *principle*.

There is, in conclusion, no sincere egalitarianism anywhere. Deeds never match fine words on egalitarianism. Where egalitarianism is taught with the appearance of sincerity it is a self-delusion. And further, egalitarianism is not an effective solution of the so-called problem of inequality of wealth.

Any professed moral standard, the observance of which is as far away from reality as *voluntary* collectivism is, should be set aside as impractical and sanctimonious.

The Popular Religion of Agape

Agape (ag' a pe) is one of the Greek words in the New Testament translated both as *love* or as *charity*. That it has been translated both ways illustrates the difficulty of giving its exact meaning. Consider how the translators of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians have floundered between *love* and *charity* when translating *agape* in that chapter.

The "development" of the idea of *agape* has resulted, we believe, in a new religion wholly different from Christianity. We would, therefore, when considering what follows have the reader keep in mind, Christianity VERSUS *agape*. In short, the new *agape* religion is *not* the Christian religion, and it is not reconcilable with the *traditional* Christian religion.

Bishop Anders Nygren has written a book entitled, *Agape and Eros*. Bishop Nygren is one of the two famous theologians at the state-supported Lutheran Theological school in Lund, Sweden, who have made world-renowned what is known as the Lund school of religious thought. On the Continent the two modern best-known Protestant schools of thought are the Barthian and the Lund.

Nygren carefully and systematically develops his main thesis, namely, that there are two main ideas on *love* in Christian thought, the one *eros* and the other *agape*. A third and minor one is *Nomos*, man's fulfilling of the Law. Nygren rejects the *eros* and even more so the *Nomos* concepts of love. Christianity for him consists in acceptance of his *agape* definition and the identification of Christianity with the accomplishment of that definition of love.

Eros will to all who know Greek mean sensual sex appetite. But Nygren (following Plato) has the term defined more broadly, namely, as selfish, or self-seeking, or self-benefiting and self-satisfying desire. The desire a man has for a mate is a specific case of a self-satisfying desire or love. It is a love motivated by self-satisfying considerations. It is a low form of *eros*. A high form of *eros* would be a self-seeking love toward God.

But if a man loved a woman not for possession but solely for her welfare; if his "love" was unmotivated by any inclination for

self-gratification and regardless of her merit as an object to be loved then it would be *agape*.

Eros, for Nygren, is essentially the human love for the divine, a love of man for God. *Eros* is an appetite, a yearning desire, which is aroused by the attractive qualities of its object; and in eros-love man seeks God in order to satisfy his spiritual hunger by the possession and enjoyment of the divine perfections. In such a "love" there is an alloy of "selfishness." It is not a high love. *Agape* is the love above all selfishness.

Nygren himself writes that:

1. *Agape* is spontaneous and "unmotivated"
2. *Agape* is "indifferent to value"
3. *Agape* is creative [creates value by loving]
4. *Agape* is the initiator of fellowship with God
... *Agape* is God's way to man.

From what has been written or quoted the reader will realize at once that Nygren's views and the views presented in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are wholly irreconcilable. What we call love, Nygren would consider the opposite of *agape*. What we call love would hardly for him be *eros*. What we call love would probably be in his estimation a combination of a low-grade *eros* with a strong mixture of *Nomos*, a relationship to God which essentially requires a wish to be obedient to the law.

Nygren has performed a great work. He has shown what the basic premises are which must underlie a definition of love which is wholly non-self-regarding. Those premises, however, unavoidably involve:

1. Universalism. God loves the sinner as much as the non-sinner. The object does not influence the manifestation of love. There is no real place whatever for reprobation, as an attitude of God, in Nygren's scheme of thought.

2. The creation of "objective" values, as distinguished from "subjective" values. This latter difference is so fundamental it cannot be more than mentioned here. It requires wholly special treatment.

A by-product of Nygren's definition of *Agape* is that he is constrained to declare the Christianity of the New Testament to be different *in principle* from the religion of the Old Testament.

We have then in the Nygrenian ideas an extremely extended definition of love in a manner to reject all validity to self-regarding evaluations and motivations and actions. This is setting up that which is external to the individual as having a unique claim on him. Nothing could be a better theoretical justification for the socialist-communist law of love in the field of positive action, from each according to his ability to each according to his need, than this *agape* religion of Nygren.

Nygren's definition of *agape* requires man to do so much that beyond doubt Nygren has outlined the most idealistic religion of love that has yet been formulated. We consider it so idealistic that it is unnatural, inhuman, unattainable, and impossible *ex definitione*.

Nygren's influence on the definition given to love among theologians generally has been enormous and pervasive. The ideas expressed in lectures of Dr. Henry Stob of Calvin Theological Seminary manifest, for example, affinity to the ideas of Nygren. In the paper presented by Stob at the International Congress for Reformed Faith and Action at Montpelier, France, in 1953, he commented on the deficiencies in Plato's idea of love along the lines of Nygren.

. . . More basically still, they [Plato and Aristotle] had no experience of that Love without which true communion is impossible — the Divine Agape, God's love for sinful and unworthy man. The best they knew was Eros, a self-initiated attachment to what was considered good and valuable. But this from the nature of the case, could not be exercised upon the ignorant, the wicked and the ugly, and thus large numbers were excluded in principle from human fellowship, and authentic community was never achieved.

Stob's evaluation of Plato and Aristotle is accepted, but the standard for love which is implied is the same extension that Nygren makes to which we dissent. We cannot find acceptable

either the logic or the conclusion. True communion is possible, and only possible, if the definition in the left of the chart is employed. No real communion whatever is possible when a definition of love is given which underlies the social systems outlined in the right side of the chart.

The Coercion of Recipients

When mention is made of a coercive society the idea is usually taken to mean that someone is being coerced to *do* or *give* something. But the assumption is too restrictive. A coercive society can also consist of individuals being coerced to *accept* something. This idea of an obligation to accept something may appear to be above criticism, but it is not. The Biblical law of love cannot be extended to include coerced acceptance any more than coerced giving. Understanding of the objections to coerced acceptance is relatively rare.

An idea may be prejudiced by giving it an unfavorable setting. We shall do just the contrary, and we shall examine this phase of the violation of the Biblical law of love under the most favorable circumstances.

We shall consider a not infrequent case, a certain type mother and her family.

Imagine a woman with a husband and three children. Assume a natural and wholesome relationship, genuine affection throughout the family. See that family in historical perspective — newly established, growing, children dependent, children maturing, parents aging, children marrying, grandchildren arriving, the original father and mother failing and dying.

During the minority of the children the parents make the decisions for the children in proportion as the age of the children makes them irresponsible. But eventually the children mature; they become independent; they may become rebels toward the parents; or they may continue in the path of the earlier parental guidance, but they now do it on their own.

Indefinite continuance of parental authority or guidance becomes oppressive and eventually obnoxious to the children. As

psychologists know, children who do not become independent of their parents never amount to anything. An essential hallmark of maturity in man and beast is that the young eventually set out on their own.

But in our assumed case the mother cannot outgrow her early responsibilities. She was once obligated to sacrifice comfort and her own inclinations in order to care for, protect and rear the children.

The mother insists on continuing the old pattern for manifesting her love. The children come home to visit. She wishes them to eat what she specifies and how much. They *must* have another helping of food at meals. Their clothes are examined and they are not warm enough; more must be worn. They must be tucked in again in bed at night. They cannot be too active on their vacation or they will not get enough rest.

What is the reaction of the recipients of all this mothering attention? Suppose they accept it as a matter of course and let their mother slave for them. Nobody will think much of them. Or maybe they will tolerate it a little just to please the mother, but beyond a certain point they rebel — they refuse to accept it any more. And then there may be the final clash — the children refuse to let an aging and failing mother overexert herself for what is unnecessary and, worse still, is unpleasant. Finally, they put their foot down — no more overloading of plates with food, no more pampering against every breath of air, no more anxiety about sleeping warm.

Why do the children put a stop to the expression of love which the mother wishes to show? They object for two reasons: (1) they consider it unfair to their mother, and (2) they do not have the same sense of "values" that their mother has. They do not wish to do what their mother endeavors to impose on them. They have their own "values."

The mother is, in fact, imposing *her* sense of values on *them*. When the children were small it was necessary to impose her sense of values on them. But as responsible human beings they are now interested in ordering their life according to their own sense of values; they do not wish to overeat; they do not wish to wear

enervating clothing; they do not care that the bed clothes are not tucked in well.

Now assume the mother insists. What does such insistence reveal? Basically, it reveals arrogance. She "knows better" than her grown-up children what is good for them! Her judgment is, she considers, better than the judgment of her mature children. We judge her gently and understandingly. But nobody really approves of her attitude.

In a simple case as outlined everybody understands that to make somebody a coerced recipient is unwise and finally wrong, that is, evil. Any definition of love, therefore, which permits coercing the wishes of a recipient is evil; sin. (The exception, of course, are the irresponsible recipients — the minors, the mentally deficient, etc.)

A good law of love, therefore, protects an unwilling recipient as well as it protects an unwilling giver.

When mothers or fathers, or the wise, or the powerful, or the good or the wicked, set out to impose their "values" on others, thereby denying each individual his right to pursue his own values then the recipient of those imposed, coerced values is no longer loved as Scripture clearly teaches we should love the neighbor. According to Scripture there is only *one* type of coercion permitted, namely, the coercion which consists in resisting the evils prohibited by the Decalogue.

To go beyond that is to do just the reverse of what Scripture teaches.

The Greeks had a word for a type of arrogance, namely, for overweening arrogance, for insufferable arrogance. Their word for that arrogance was *hubris* (hew' bris). To impose your "values" on your neighbor is a *hubris*.

The only being who could properly be considered to be authorized to have such a *hubris*, to regulate every man's choice and values, is an omniscient being, that is, God. But the God of the Hebrew-Christian religion did just the reverse of that — he made man free in his choices and values. Adam was set up as a *free* man. Adam departed from the command of God of his own free will. (The character of that deviation is worthy of special analysis.)

But our illustration from mother "love" embellishes the real character of coercing recipients. Who are the usual coercers — doting mothers and fathers? friends? brothers and sisters? No, the coercers of recipients are usually complete strangers who know only a few individuals and look at men in the mass. They do not know the mass in any real sense whatever. Certainly, they do not know mankind *en masse* as well as the mother in our illustration knows her three children. And neither do they really "love" mankind *en masse* as this mother "loves" her three children. Lacking both the mother's love and knowledge, the coercers of recipients would regulate the lives of mankind as if those who regulate were genuinely wise and genuinely virtuous. A feeble human intellect, with only a short span of activity in this life, is to impose its "values" on the mass of men. It is a hubris, a damnable piece of arrogance, a pretense of being wiser than God.

Basically, behind the improper extension of the law of love beyond the scriptural definition is an epistemological error and hubris. Epistemology concerns itself with the range and limits of the human mind. What *can* a man's mind know? To think any finite being *can* have values so universally applicable to all men as to justify imposing those values on all men is to be epistemologically as far away from Calvinism (with its acceptance of the doctrine of total depravity) as it is possible to be. Calvinism sets a low value on man's native wisdom and goodness. To adopt a broader, an extended, law of love which consists in imposing your own values on your neighbor, is to approach the whole of life wrongly — arrogantly. You are setting out to do more than God apparently set out to do.

But the case still has been represented unrealistically. We have considered an extended "love" from a doting mother toward three children, and then an extended "love" of *well-intentioned* people towards the millions who constitute mankind and whose individual values those well-intentioned few cannot possibly know, and by whom it is a hubris to think they *can* know. But who are the people who *really* constitute the coercers of recipients in modern society? They are socialists and communists — the greatest butchers and tyrants in all history — the Lenins and Stalins, the Hitlers and Mussolinis. It is the men who are notoriously evil who insist

on imposing their values on mankind. They come as if they were as harmless as sheep, but they are wolves in sheep's clothing. Knowledge of that idea is not limited to those acquainted with Scripture. The great political philosophers have learned from history that the path pursued by most tyrants is the path of pretended love and the imposing of the good on everybody. Nearly all tyrants begin by pretending to a love beyond what Scripture teaches.

Alexander Hamilton and his associates when founding the United States understood the foregoing very well. In the first of *The Federalist Papers* Hamilton wrote:

... a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people than under the forbidding appearance of zeal for the firmness of government. History will teach us that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people; commencing demagogues and ending tyrants. (Emphasis supplied.)

We would paraphrase Hamilton and make a parallel statement: History will teach us that extending the Biblical law of love by making it require more than Scripture requires has been found a much more certain road for the introduction of heterodox ideas than the commonsense interpretation of Biblical rules, and that of the men who have subverted the vitality of religion the greatest number began their career by interpreting the law of love so that it became sanctimonious; commencing with sanctimony the church ended with hypocrisy.

Let us now turn to that extension of the law of love which involves coercing the givers, as distinguished from the recipients.

The Coercion of Givers

Our original illustration of overextended mother-love continues to give an unduly favorable impression of the real situation. The mother in our illustration was giving her mature children a second

helping of food while her own first helping was getting cold on her plate; she was insisting on her daughter wearing the mother's rubbers and the mother's feet got wet; she was walking over cold floors to tuck the blankets around her son already fast asleep and comfortably warm. All this was *at her own expense*.

But when the extenders of the law of love began to impose their values on all mankind there was a basic change in the situation. The do-gooders were not imposing their wishes on all others at their own expense. Indeed not. Their whole program depended as much on coercing givers as on coercing recipients. The values of the do-gooders, of the extenders of the law of love, were imposed on both recipients and givers.

(We have already covered in sufficient detail the chaos which would result from a distributive imposition of *A's* values on *B, C, D, E*, etc.; and of *B's* values on *A, C, D, E*, etc.; and of *C's* values on *A, B, D, E*, etc. See pages 69 and 70 of the March issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*. By "distributive imposition" we mean the imposition of *individualistic* claims by each man on each other man. To distribute such individual claims or values among mankind is a manifest intellectual absurdity. The claims of the neighbor, the imposition of his values, therefore, always becomes collective. The finite human mind, arrogantly overdefining brotherly love, cannot deal with individuals anymore; it deals only with men as a mass.)

The basic characteristic of the coercion of the recipients has been described as being arrogance. The basic characteristic of the coercion of the givers is hypocrisy. The neighbor is "loved" (beyond the scriptural command) at the expense of a third person. *A* "loves" *B*, that is, he imposes his values on *B*. But the cost of the imposition on *B* of those values *A* assesses against *C, D, E, F*, and all others. *A* is simply generous with what belongs to somebody else, in this case the values of *C, D, E, F*, etc. This, of course, cannot be considered "love" by any kind of definition. But it passes for love and is always called pure love — agape — by the extenders of the Biblical law of love. The mother in our illustration was after all not a hypocrite.

All coercive imposition of values on recipient or giver is sin. It involves not only arrogance and hypocrisy but also other ob-

noxious violations of the commandments. A favorite goal of most of those who extend the Biblical definition of the law of love is equality. This never means to them equality in the rules for the game of life but equality in the end result. This is very clear from the statement of their law of love, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. The need is generally estimated to be the same for all. That means equality in the end result. But clearly the law assumes differences in ability and the law states that greater ability imposes the obligation to make a greater contribution.

Equality in the end result is therefore not to be obtained by equality in the rules or in general opportunity. No, equality in the end result is to be obtained by inequality in the rules of the game.

There *cannot*, indeed, be equality both in the rules and in the end result. It is either equality in the rules and inequality in the end result; OR, there must be inequality in the rules and equality in the end result.

When placed on the horns of that dilemma Scripture chooses for equality in the rules and tolerates (encourages) inequality in the end result. But the Reinhold Niebuhrs and the others who have an extended definition of the law of love choose contrarily. They choose for equality in the end results and inequality in the rules. And the best-known Calvinist colleges and universities in the world choose with Niebuhr.

Scripture has some harsh comments about those who have different rules for playing the game of life — one rule for one man and another rule for another man. And about the most infrequent word in Scripture is the word, equality. Justice, in contrast, is a common word; it always implies *uniform rules*.

Scripture, therefore, cannot be used as an authority for declaring that *differing* rules should prevail in order to attain a uniform end or equality in the end result.

Mental Coercion

The coercion of the neighbor either in receiving or giving is not restricted to the material world; in practice the coercion of the

neighbor involved in the socialist-communist law of love is always extended to include a *mental* coercion as well. That is because *coercion* is an unavoidable concomitant to the socialist-communist law of love.

The extension of the law of love to justify *mental* coercion is spontaneous and slips into a given situation unnoticed and unchallenged. The extension to which we refer consists in this: the law of love requires that you may not hurt your neighbor's feelings; you may not show you disapprove of anything about him; you should endeavor to like what he likes. You must have "authentic community" with him.

Scripture teaches none of these ideas. We are nowhere taught in Scripture not to hurt a man's feelings; we are not required by Scripture to be silent about things we disapprove about him; we are not told to have the same tastes or the same likes and dislikes. All these requirements involved in the socialist-communist law of love as it is always interpreted, or must be interpreted if its professors are to be consistent — all these requirements are extra-scriptural.

Dr. Henry C. Link, in a book entitled *Rediscovery of Morals**, tells of the action, under the guidance of Elias Lieberman, associate superintendent of New York City junior high schools, of a committee of students for drawing up a code of moral conduct. The first rule in the code reads:

I will never, knowingly, by word or deed, injure anyone's person, *feelings* or property in any manner. (Emphasis supplied.)

These students, undoubtedly under the influence of their advisors and of the spirit of the age, added what has not been in any famous ancient code, namely, you may "never . . . knowingly . . . injure anyone's . . . feelings." This fine-sounding rule covers an enormous area; note the words *never* and *anyone's*. Aside from the rule being expressed in too-extended and too-demanding terms, the really significant extension in it is the result of the inclusion of the word *feelings*.

In the first place this inclusion prohibits all deliberate, and well-intended, but realistic criticism. No one can be "corrected"

anymore if it is anticipated his *feelings* will be hurt. And most people's feelings are genuinely hurt by the mildest of criticism. Scripture, in contrast, does not give attention to the problem of people's feelings being hurt.

Secondly, the right of individual *choices* is also denied by this "rule" of junior high school students. Jacob, Scripture relates, did not like Leah as well as Rachel. The reason given is that Leah had "tender eyes" which probably means they were bleared, and unhandsome and maybe inefficient. Anyway, Jacob did not like them. And his dislike was not secret; he made his taste in the matter of eyes known. Was Jacob in this instance a sinner? It is ridiculous to affirm it. How pervasive, however, the idea is that you may not hurt people's feelings is indicated in the statement of Dr. Henry Stob, previously quoted:

. . . but this [*eros*, as a self-initiated attachment to what was considered good and valuable] from the nature of the case, could not be exercised upon the ignorant, the wicked or the ugly, and thus large numbers were excluded in principle from human fellowship, and authentic community was never achieved.

Dr. Stob together with the junior high school committee denies the rightfulness of exercising one's own choice — you must like the ignorant, the wicked, and the ugly as you do the wise and the good and the beautiful, or otherwise you have excluded "large numbers . . . in principle from human fellowship, and authentic community [is] never achieved."

These new legislators, whether junior high school students or Nygren, do a very simple thing — they restrict the legitimate exercise of one's own choices to those choices which will not hurt the neighbor's feelings. We have here the unwarranted extension of the scriptural law of love, which looks innocent enough: your neighbors, all of them, individually and/or collectively, have a claim on you, namely, their choices and wishes can override yours. If you do not substitute the neighbor's choices and feelings for your own, then you do not "love" him, you do not have *agape*.

There are, probably in the opinion of some, certain characteristics which a neighbor may have (which you may not like) regard-

ing which you may not show him that you do not like them. The type of characteristics to which reference is made is the type which consists of *uncorrectable* defects — namely, defects due to heredity, environment, or generally the “providence of God.” Poor Leah had such an uncorrectable defect, tender eyes; Jacob *should* have liked those tender eyes as well as a pair of handsome eyes! Nevertheless, we do not consider him a sinner in the matter. The infinite variety in creation justifies selectivity, choice, likes and dislikes. And when a law is extended piously, that you may not exercise *your own* choices but must suppress them *to please* others then the scriptural law has been turned upside down. You have substituted collectivism for individualism, a group for the individual, coercion for liberty.

The general subject of the right of discrimination in the varied universe in which we live is worthy of separate treatment, which is intended in later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

John Calvin on Freedom Versus Tyranny

John Calvin had something to say about the neighbor lording it over a man by insisting that the feelings, opinions, choices, wishes or needs of the neighbor should prevail rather than a man's own feelings, opinions, choices, wishes or needs. Calvin wrote a chapter in his *Institutes* which has the title, “Christian Liberty” (*Institutes*, Book III, Chapter 19). The ideas in this chapter are not couched in modern language, but they are simple. They are:

1. *Get rid of your guilt complexes*, or in Calvin's language, the “consciences of believers should raise themselves above the law, and forget the righteousness of the law.”

2. *Stop thinking of the law as essentially prohibitions but think of it as an opportunity for real living* (as was outlined in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM beginning on page 62 of the March issue), or in Calvin's language, the “consciences, being free of the law, yield a voluntary obedience to the will of God.”

3. Each man can do what HE HIMSELF PLEASES and not according to what pleases the neighbor, or in Calvin's language, “we are bound by no obligation before God respecting

external things, which in themselves are indifferent, but that we may indifferently sometimes use and at other times omit them."

Calvin teaches (1) freedom from a guilty conscience, (2) freedom in the great area beyond the restrictions of the Decalogue, and (3) freedom from the tyranny of the neighbor, i. e., three great freedoms.

The tyranny of the neighbor Calvin treats specifically under a subheading pertaining to "offenses." He considers offenses of two kinds, "offenses given" and "offenses taken." The "offenses given" are offenses which trouble spiritually weak neighbors. Calvin warns against giving such offenses. But the other offenses he considers "offenses taken" and he advises deliberately flouting them. Quoting Calvin:

. . . I approve of the common distinction between an offense given and an offense taken, since it is plainly countenanced by Scripture, and is likewise sufficiently significant of the thing intended to be expressed. If you do anything at a wrong time or place, or with an unseasonable levity, or wantonness, or temerity, by which the weak and inexperienced are offended, it must be termed an offense given by you; because it arises from your fault. And an offense is always said to be given in any action the fault of which proceeds from the performer of that action. An offense taken is when any transaction, not otherwise unseasonable or culpable, is, through malevolence or some perverse disposition, construed into an occasion of offense. For in this instance the offense is not given, but taken without reason by such perverseness of construction. The first species of offense affects none but the weak; the second is created by moroseness of temper and Pharisaical superciliousness. Wherefore we shall denominate the former "the offense of the weak," the latter, that "of Pharisees"! and we shall so temper the use of our liberty that it ought to submit to the ignorance of weak brethren, but not at all to the austerity of Pharisees . . .

Now, since the consciences of believers, being privileged with the liberty which we have described, have been delivered by the favor of Christ from all necessary obligation to the observance of those things in which the Lord has been pleased they should be left free, **WE CONCLUDE THAT THEY ARE EXEMPT FROM ALL HUMAN AUTHORITY.** (Emphasis supplied.)

There is a wide gulf between those who say we may "never . . . knowingly . . . injure anyone's . . . feelings" and Calvin who said "exempt from all human authority."

A Voluntary Versus a Coercive Society

What is it that the idealists in the world, the gentle as well as the angry, want, and for what are they striving?

They are looking for a "good society." They know a "good society" cannot be rife with violence. What kind of society, then, do they endeavor to construct?

1. Moses set up a society leaving everything free, except he prohibited injuring the neighbor. He declared, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. This made each man himself the standard.

2. Marx set up a society making everything coercive. He declared, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. This made the neighbor the standard. Freedom is impossible in such a society. A man is a slave to his neighbors individually, or as the idea always is put into practice, a man is a slave to his neighbors collectively.

3. Nygren would set up a third kind of society, an *agape* society. It is the Marxian society with the neighbor and not the self as the standard, but instead of the coercion of collective action through the state, *agape* is voluntarily to accomplish for each neighbor individually what Marxism accomplishes coercively and collectively.

The ideas of Marx are widely accepted in the so-called Christian churches. The means to accomplish that acceptance were first, to feel obligated to have as sanctimonious a law as Marx, and

secondly, to interpret the teachings of Christ in the New Testament as being different from the teachings of Moses in the Old Testament, namely, as teaching an *agape* as defined by Nygren.

**The Bond of Society —
Legitimate Self-
Regarding Interests**

Many pious have turned toward a Marxian and Nygrenian definition because they have been persuaded that, except there be coercion or *agape*, society will be chaotic and suicidal. The pursuit of the self-regarding interests (except that such pursuit at the expense of the neighbor is prohibited) is assumed to be warfare, destructive, disorganizing, unplanned, unloving. The pursuit of the neighbor's interest is automatically considered cooperation, constructive, organized, planned and loving.

With Scripture we choose for a society in which every man is not only authorized but enjoined to pursue his legitimate self-regarding interests. With Scripture we choose against a society in which every man is prohibited from pursuing his self-regarding interests because he must ascertain what the neighbor wishes.

Walter Lippmann in his book, *The Good Society*, declares that an individualist society always becomes (1) free, (2) peaceful, and (3) prosperous; and that a collectivist society always becomes (1) tyrannical, (2) bellicose and (3) impoverished. The good society which is free, peaceful and prosperous is a society based on the law of Scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The bad society which is tyrannical, bellicose and poor is a society based on a contrary law, thou shalt love thy neighbor by doing his wishes, which is usually expressed by the formula, from each according to his ability to each according to his need.

Why the situation works out as Lippmann declares is simple, but the argument is in the field of the social sciences. That argument need not be based on the authority of Scripture; it is reserved for consideration in a later issue.

Summary

According to Scripture, you are free in choices and action. Your neighbor is also free in choices and action. You may not coerce your neighbor. Your neighbor may not coerce you. Or

more detailed, the scriptural law of love is: (1) thou shalt not harm the neighbor, and (2) thou shalt have goodwill toward him. By goodwill is meant (a) forbearance and forgiveness; (b) a well-wishing attitude; (c) charity; and (d) proclamation of the Gospel.

Contrary to Scripture, the other law is that you are not free in choices and action. Your neighbor is not free in choices and action. You may coerce your neighbor. He may coerce you. When there is a conflict, the group may coerce, or whoever collectively or individually has the power to do so. Or if you do not coerce or are not coerced, you still are not free nor are your neighbors free, because each has an *agape* obligation to all the others. Each must be ready, according to *agape*, to adjust himself to others in order to attain "authentic community." *Agape* requires it. Or more explicitly, the nonscriptural law of love is that society must be organized in a voluntary collectivism, a 100 percent charity, and there must be a nondiscriminating *agape* attitude; further, each can coerce his judgments and values on the neighbor, if necessary at the expense of third parties, and under no circumstances must the neighbor's feelings be hurt.

The extension, beyond Scripture, is very simple; your neighbor and not yourself is the standard. It is as simple as that. Instead of, thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*, the law is changed to, thou shalt love thy neighbor *to suit his fancy*. He is no better off than you are; he must love you *to suit your fancy*.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

JUNE, 1955

NUMBER 6

Contents

	Page
A Word to Readers	145
Cain: a Murderer, a Liar, and a Lawgiver	147
New Doubts Among Calvinists Whether Psalm One Belongs in the Canon of Scripture	149
Feudalism, Individualism, Socialism, Syndicalism and Interventionism	152

A Word to Readers

Five issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM have been published. In the first issue (January, 1955) we outlined our principles and stated our purposes.

In the second issue we began a series of articles on brotherly love. We felt constrained to do so because PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is a publication in two fields — in economics and in ethics. We considered it prudent to explain first certain fundamental ideas in our ethics. Readers already know that we object to sanctimonious ethics — a being holier than the Christian religion teaches. With Solomon we fervently say: "Be not too righteous." It took four issues to summarize (and the work is not complete) our ideas on brotherly love.

In this issue we make another small contribution to the idea of brotherly love, under the title, *Cain: a Murderer, a Liar, and a Lawgiver*. Then we turn to new subjects, such as the relationship

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students, \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

between obeying the Decalogue and prosperity, under the title *New Doubts Among Calvinists Whether Psalm One Belongs in the Canon of Scripture*. We write that article in a half-bantering note. Our purpose is to indicate that there is a "problem" regarding what the relationship is between obeying the Decalogue and prosperity. It is not a wholly simple relationship. Sceptics can attack our declaration that there is a favorable relationship between obeying the Decalogue and prosperity; we can equally attack the idea which they *seem* to hold, namely, that obeying the Decalogue involves the loss of prosperity. The truth, we are sure, lies between the *apparent* extremes. We begin by showing the impossible task which men will have of explaining plain Scripture texts if they declare that prosperity *never* follows from obedience to the Decalogue. They cannot, we believe, explain such texts, and must therefore declare they do not belong in Scripture; which, of course, they will not declare. Nor do we seriously say that they do declare it.

Then in this issue we endeavor to explain the meaning of certain terms in the social-political-economic field, the terms feudalism, individualism, socialism, syndicalism or guild socialism, and interventionism. We propose to use those terms frequently, hereafter. If their meanings are not clearly understood, what is written later in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will not be understandable.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM holds to what is presently the most misunderstood of those social-political-economic ideas, that is, we hold to Individualism. No one should consider us to be timid Individualists. We are unqualified and bold promoters of Individualism. The attack by others on Individualism is a controversy into which we walk with happiness and confidence.

We shall eventually analyze in detail the ideas of Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer as a Feudalist; Abraham Kuyper as an idealistic Syndicalist; the Christian Labor Association as Interventionist; John Calvin as an Individualist; etc.

F. N.

Cain: a Murderer, a Liar, and a Lawgiver

Cain is described as the first murderer who in a jealous rage slew his brother, Abel. We are against murder, and against the bad example of violence which Cain set.

Cain was also a liar. God asked Cain where his brother, Abel, was. Cain retorted: Am I my brother's keeper? Cain was lying in a very skillful manner; he was evading the question by another question which had nothing to do with the question originally asked. God asked the question because He knew Cain had killed Abel. Cain answered by asking, Do I have to look out for my brother, and know exactly where he is, and have to take care of him?

It is a pretty shabby argument to talk about an obligation to "keep" a brother when in fact you have just killed him. It was not a question of being his brother's *keeper* but of being his brother's *murderer*.

We have an interesting problem. Did Cain put forth the argument about not being his brother's keeper, believing that God would say that Cain actually was his brother's keeper, or did Cain put up a defense for himself which he believed God would accept? A man does not put up a defense which he believes the judge will not accept. He does the reverse; he advances an argument which he believes the judge will accept. That is our opinion of Cain's argument; we think that he believed God would not dispute the proposition that Cain did not have to look out for, and support, and mollicoddle Abel.

We believe Cain's argument was sound, namely, that he was not his brother's keeper in the sense that he had to peddle around after Abel on his farm to see to it that nothing happened to him, and that while following after him he (Cain) could neglect his own wife and children and his herds. Anyway, Cain would, as population increased, have quite a problem regarding whom he should protect — his own wife and children, or all his brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, second cousins, grandnephews, etc.

If he had to protect them all, support them all, be the "keeper" of them all, Cain would soon have been more than busy.

We know Christians today who are devout but they seem never to have undertaken to be their brother's or neighbor's keeper. Those Christians look after their own children, but seldom bother about their brothers and sisters, or nieces and nephews, let alone more distantly related relatives.

It is interesting that God did not answer Cain and say that Cain should be his brother's keeper, that is, in the sense of taking care of his brother. Nor does Scripture in the same sense, as the mouthpiece of God, say anywhere else: Jones is his brother's *keeper*; and Smith is his brother's *keeper*; or that all men are their brothers' *keepers*.

The *principle* Cain advanced as his defense was a good one; he did not have to be a shepherd, or a keeper, of his grown-up brother. But he was lying by giving a wholly false impression. He had not minded his own business and let Abel mind his (of which Abel was undoubtedly fully capable) but he had cracked Abel over his head and killed him. It was not a question at all whether he had to follow Abel around to protect and to "keep" him; instead it was a question of being called to account for killing Abel. The case was a *fact* of murder, and not a *principle* of not being accountable for every other human being on the planet.

But what do people do? They consider that Cain was as wrong when he said he was not his brother's *keeper* as he was wrong when he was his brother's *murderer*. Such people extend the prohibition of murder to include the necessity of supporting the neighbor. The extension is unscriptural.

Over the period of a year or so we corresponded with a young man in the Netherlands who wanted a guarantor in order to immigrate into the United States. Eventually, he immigrated into Canada. The Christian Labour Association of Canada publishes a paper, *The Guide*. In the May, 1955 issue there is an article entitled "Labour Unions — Whither Christ." The article is signed with the same initials as our young Dutch friend.

The article contains the following statements:

We believe that every man is his brother's keeper . . .
For all men there must be a basic standard of living.
Full employment, an annual wage system wherever possible, comprehensive family allowance, no racial discrimination and co-partnership.

Here again there is the fatal extension of the Biblical law of love to the anti-Biblical law of love of socialism-communism; that is exactly what socialism-communism teaches, namely, that I am my brother's keeper. The socialist-communist law of love, from each according to his ability to each according to his need, could not be summarized better than it has been in this labor publication where we read "every man is his brother's keeper."

Cain indirectly has done more harm to mankind by giving men an excuse for believing men are each other's keeper than he did by killing Abel. Cain's effect on bad ethics is pervasive and perennial; his murder of Abel was a single act.

And, sadly, we note in the quotation those other goals or principles which involve ideas not reconcilable with common sense nor with Scripture. But the analysis must wait for a suitable occasion.

We are against Cain as a murderer, and against Cain as a liar, and against Cain as a man who stated a principle under conditions which has resulted in almost universal misunderstanding.

F. N.

New Doubts Among Calvinists Whether Psalm One Belongs In The Canon of Scripture

The publishers of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM have learned with considerable astonishment that there is an objection among Calvinists regarding Psalm One.

We quote the psalm.

1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor

sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2. But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4. The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

We learn that the objection is to verses three, four and five. These verses say that prosperity follows from obedience to the law of God, and that adversity follows from disobedience to the law of God.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has as one of its platform planks the declaration:

5. (a) Promote confidence that prosperity obtained in a free market society is the result of obedience to the law of God; and (b) discontinue all apologies for that prosperity and all policies which will undermine that prosperity.

What the author of Psalm One says in verses three, four and five and what PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM says in Declaration 5(a) are identical. When, therefore, we learn of objections to Declaration 5(a) among Calvinists then we regret the necessarily corresponding objection they must have to Psalm One. But despite objections we hope and trust that verses three, four and five of that psalm will be kept in the canon (that is, in the Scriptures).

We have before us a subscription blank which has on it the following note in ink:

Dear Brother:

Please do not send me another copy: Job's three friends said it all long ago.

Yours, etc.

The signer is an internationally distinguished Calvinist theologian.

What did Job's three friends say? They said that Job's troubles stemmed from secret sins of which he must have been guilty, or otherwise he would not have been afflicted as he was. In other words, those three friends said that *invariably* prosperity attends a good man, and that *invariably* adversity attends a wicked man. The idea is contrary to everyday observation and common sense.

Despite the allegation of our distinguished, internationally known ministerial critic we are *not* in agreement with Job's three friends. We said something altogether different in the explanation which we gave of Declaration 5 in the January issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 12-13. We there declared that there were exceptions to the rule, namely, of two kinds; we wrote as follows:

But, it may be said, look at the distress and the poverty of the "righteous" in this world. Why are they in distress? For two reasons: (1) because of an enemy or because of an oppressive government, and (2) because of combinations of circumstances. But these are *exceptions* and they are not the kind of exceptions which invalidate the rule. The evil, most of which is public evil or group evil, should be resisted. The combinations of circumstances which constitute misfortune should be (and can be) alleviated by mutual assistance, or as it is called, charity.

In other words, we disagree with Job's three friends; prosperity does not *invariably* follow obedience to God's commands.

Job's friends said that "misfortune" is conclusive evidence of sin. No, that is not quite right; we do Job's friends an injustice. They said that the blows of misfortune *which appear to be the hand of God through providence*, especially illness as Job was suffering, should be interpreted as evidence of the chastising or chastening hand of God.

We know a man who lost money in the stock market crash in 1929-1934. He had engaged in some unethical acts in the 1920's and he considered his losses as a chastening act of God. Maybe. If he was correct, then our opinion is that God surely caused a lot of losses to a lot of people because of this one man's

unethical conduct! We do not believe that millions lost millions just for God to take away a few thousand dollars of the assets of our acquaintance. But *that* was his logic.

The "providence of God" cannot be interpreted glibly and personally in that manner, and *necessarily* be right. But that is what Job's friends were doing. We do not agree with them in either of their two propositions. The first was that God's providence is always selective in beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries, and the second was that Job had been a hypocritical sinner or he would not have been afflicted as he was.

We do agree with Psalm One. We believe that Psalm One states the basic rule correctly, to wit, there is a benefit from not sinning, and a penalty from sinning. We do not see how anyone with common sense can disagree.

This whole question of prosperity and obedience to the Decalogue, we have come to realize, needs careful and extensive explanation. We shall eventually endeavor to do it.

F. N.

Feudalism, Individualism, Socialism, Syndicalism and Interventionism

There are several *terms* which need to be defined so that everybody knows what is being talked about. These terms are *feudalism, individualism, socialism, syndicalism and interventionism*.

Calvinists are not all feudalists, nor all individualists, nor all socialists, nor all interventionists, etc. There are some Calvinists in every classification. It is impossible for a Calvinist, or any human being, not to fall into one or more of these classifications.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM stands proudly and determinedly for individualism. What are you — a feudalist? an individualist? a socialist? a syndicalist? an interventionist?

A good definition of these terms requires a formal statement. To make the subject more understandable we shall approach the problem historically. Further, we shall take a relatively unknown

history, but one which will have special meaning among the members of the small Calvinist denominations in the United States, such as the Reformed and the Christian Reformed (both denominations originating among people from the Netherlands), etc.

Feudalism

Modern society eventually evolved out of the feudal society of the Middle Ages, the type of society which prevailed especially from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries.

Under the feudal system a man as vassal owed loyalty to his immediate chief. In return the chief was obligated to protect the vassal. A duke or a count or an earl owed loyalty to his king. The king in return was obligated to protect the duke, count and earl in his position. The duke, count or earl in turn had lesser noblemen who similarly owed loyalty or fealty, being obligated to military service but also being guaranteed protection by their liege lord (the duke, or count, or earl or who have you). Finally, at the bottom were the serfs who were obligated to their petty lord, and who were or were presumed to be protected by him. Feudalism meant fealty, that is, fidelity, by the vassal to his lord, and protection by the lord to his vassal. It was a tolerable arrangement for mutual benefit.

Let us see how Calvinists have adjusted themselves and moved from feudalism to more modern ideas.

One of the most famous Dutch Calvinists in the nineteenth century was Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, (1801-1876), hereafter designated as usual by the shorter name, Groen. It is hardly possible to understand present-day orthodox Calvinism in the Netherlands or among the Netherlands in the United States without understanding the rôle played by Groen.

Groen was a son in a distinguished family. His abilities were of a high order. He was courageously orthodox in his Calvinist ideas. He became a member of the Dutch parliament. He was appointed to be the official historian of the royal Dutch house, the famous family of Orange-Nassau. In the Secession of 1834 (a secession of orthodox Calvinists from the modernistic but historically Calvinist state church of the Netherlands) Groen was

probably the most distinguished Netherlander who without equivocation showed his sympathies for the persecuted Secessionists. Naturally, his influence would be proportionately great among them, and their later American counterparts, the Reformed church (in the Middle West) and the Christian Reformed church. He is, indeed, the fountainhead of various social-political-economic ideas in the denominations whose cause he courageously defended.

The royal Dutch house of Orange-Nassau could not be expected to appoint as official historian a man who was unsympathetic to that royal house and its famous forerunners, powerful *Stadhouders* and princes. Groen was an unashamed admirer of that princely and royal house. That house had performed heroic deeds in defense of Calvinism which Groen loved. The Netherlands had been most prosperous and most powerful when under the guidance of devout Calvinist princes of that house. The house of Orange-Nassau, and Calvinism, and prosperity, and power were inseparably linked together in Groen's mind. To Groen the house of Orange-Nassau had a claim on every Netherlander for loyalty. As Dengerink a few years ago wrote somewhere in his book, *Critisch-Historisch Onderzoek Naar de Sociologische Ontwikkeling van het Beginsel der "Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring" in de Negentiende en Twintigste Eeuw*, Groen was essentially a feudalist; his idea was that the house of Orange-Nassau had a claim on every Netherlander for personal loyalty.

Pseudo-Individualism

That feudalist psychology of Groen, however, had been rudely challenged a generation earlier by Jean Jacques Rousseau, (1712-1778) son of a Swiss preacher. Rousseau's name is inseparably linked with the ideas of the French Revolution. Rousseau attacked the "divine right" of kings and all overlords, and of course, that included any reigning house, such as the house of Orange-Nassau.

Rousseau's argument presented in Book I of his *The Social Contract* is a superb analysis; the argument is as good as an atom bomb. Consider what Rousseau says about the false interpretation usually given to the Apostle Paul's injunction to obey the "powers that be."

Suppose for a moment that this so-called "right" [of the "powers that be"] exists. I maintain that the sole result is a mass of inexplicable nonsense. For, if force creates right, the effect changes with the cause: every force that is greater than the first succeeds to its right. As soon as it is possible to disobey with impunity, disobedience is legitimate; and, the strongest being always in the right, the only thing that matters is to act so as to become the strongest. But what kind of right is that which perishes when force fails? If we must obey perforce, there is no need to obey because we ought; and if we are not forced to obey, we are under no obligation to do so. Clearly, the word "right" adds nothing to force: in this connection, it means absolutely nothing.

Obeys the powers that be. If this means yield to force, it is a good precept, but superfluous: I can answer for its never being violated. All power comes from God, I admit; but so does all sickness: does that mean that we are forbidden to call in the doctor? A brigand surprises me at the edge of a wood: must I not merely surrender my purse on compulsion; but, even if I could withhold it, am I in conscience bound to give it up? For certainly the pistol he holds is also a power.

Let us then admit that force does not create right, and that we are obliged to obey only legitimate powers.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM detests the positive ideas of Rousseau, but acknowledges the validity of this critical argument against feudalism and against the "divine right of kings." Rousseau is not famous or infamous because he was wholly right or wholly wrong. We consider Rousseau to be wholly right when he states the problem is one of being "obliged to obey only *legitimate* powers." (Emphasis supplied.)

The attack by Rousseau on the divine right of kings would naturally be resisted by Groen, the official historian, and the panegyrist, of the house of Orange-Nassau. This was aggravated further by the excesses of the French Revolution, a movement which in part at least was a product of Rousseau's ideas. The war

cry of the French Revolution was *No God, and No Master*. Both ideas were offensive to a man who feared God and was loyal to the house of Orange-Nassau. Thirdly, Groen disagreed with the ideas of Rousseau and of the French Revolution in regard to how far the State could coerce individuals. Careful reading of Groen reveals that he objected to a political order which denied basic human rights. And, therefore, he vehemently disagreed with the ideas of Rousseau and of the French Revolution in which the "citizen" was swallowed up in the "people." Rousseau's ideas in regard to the State merely substituted the people as a tyrant in place of a king. Despite some obvious confusion in his ideas, Groen was essentially devoted to liberty and not to coercion. He corrected his unfortunately erroneous ideas on the divine right of kings by insisting on the sacredness of hard-earned prerogatives obtained by the people against their princes. That was his own personal corrective for his incorrect idea on the divine right of kings. By being unalterably opposed to the violation of the "rights" of individual persons by kings and princes, he was equally unalterably opposed to the violation of the rights of individual persons by the "people" allegedly acting collectively. And so, Groen is unflinchingly against Rousseau and the French Revolution.

The ideas of Rousseau, and of the French encyclopedists, the brain trusters of the French Revolution, acquired the name of individualism. And so Groen was opposed not only to Rousseau and to the French Revolution, but he was also opposed to individualism, which became the accepted term to describe the ideas of the French Revolution.

It is most unfortunate that Rousseau's ideas came to be known as individualism, because the term is incorrectly applied, and because the same term, individualism, is also applied to the exactly opposite ideas developed in England at about the same time. It is confusing to have one term, individualism, cover two systems of thought, which basically are in irreconcilable conflict.

The ideas of Rousseau and the school of thought to which he belonged represent what may be called *Rationalistic Individualism*. The ideas of Adam Smith and Edmund Burke and the great English representatives of individualism represent what may be called

Antirationalistic Individualism. The adjective, rationalistic, is used in the term, Rationalistic Individualism, to designate that this type of so-called individualism is rationalistic, confident in and arrogant about individual human reason. Human reason can *plan* and direct all social activities. This is all in the tradition of Descartes. The adjective, antirationalistic, is used in the term, Antirationalistic Individualism, to designate an attitude which considers man to be a very fallible and foolish being, incapable of running all of society by arrogant *human* planning.

Rationalistic Individualism is a false individualism. Eventually, it has always led to socialism or at least to interventionism. Antirationalistic Individualism is the true individualism. It always has been the term to describe just the opposite of socialism and interventionism.

The tragic thing is that Groen, prejudiced against a valid argument by Rousseau against the divine right of kings because he (Groen) was basically a feudalist, and hostile to the Rationalistic Individualism of Rousseau because he (Groen) clearly saw the basic error of Rousseau, should condemn individualism in *general* terms, and should fail to see that basically he (Groen) was in agreement with Antirationalistic Individualism.

The Dutch historian, Robert Fruin, (himself tainted with the ideas of Descartes and Comte and consequently himself to a degree a Rationalistic Individualist) attacked the error Groen made in failing to distinguish between Rationalistic Individualism and Antirationalistic Individualism. Groen was never able to answer him, or at least (I believe) did not endeavor to do so. Some of the present-day admirers of Groen admit Groen's error. (See article by Z. W. Sneller: "De Aanval van Fruin in 1853 op de auteur van *Ongeloof en Revolutie*" (The Attack of Fruin in 1853 on the Author of Unbelief and Revolution) which appeared in a book entitled *Groen's Ongeloof en Revolutie*. The book is a symposium, published in 1949.

Groen, then, was a feudalist, (1) who was incensed by Rousseau's valid argument against the divine right of kings, (2) who equated the term individualism with the Rationalistic Individualism of Rousseau and of the French Revolution, which Rationalistic

Individualism was never true individualism and which has always led to socialism (which is proof it could not be true individualism), (3) who failed to understand that the Antirationalistic Individualism developed in England by Adam Smith and Edmund Burke was something altogether different from the French variety and which was in fact vehemently opposed to it, (4) who criticized the United States (a) as a social, political and economic structure not feudal in psychology, which he thought it should be, (b) as a product of the French Revolution and Rationalistic Individualism which it was not, and (5) who failed to see that basically the United States was founded on Antirationalistic Individualism.

The usual interpretation of the official doctrine of the Christian Reformed Church on the relation between the individual and the State is feudal. That feudal doctrine is taught annually from many of its pulpits. The denomination has not been able to progress beyond the ideas of the sixteenth century any more than Groen was able. Practically all the leaders of Reformed thought among the Netherlands also faithfully follow Groen's error in regard to confusing French Rationalistic Individualism with English Antirationalistic Individualism. Fortunately, Americans of Dutch extraction have been sufficiently influenced, thank God, by English Antirationalistic Individualism so that this whole trend of thought stemming from Groen has not in reality influenced them. Only a few intellectuals have been tainted with these errors.

Groen was a great man. We are a profound admirer of him. We have greatly benefited from reading what he wrote. His insights on many matters were profound and prophetic. His basic trouble was his feudalistic ideas. His successors lacked his basic judgment. They accepted Groen's erroneous ideas but failed to note the correctives which he had used to help himself from being too wrong.

True Individualism

It is only the Antirationalistic Individualism primarily developed in England which is the true individualism. The great names in the tradition of Antirationalistic Individualism are John Locke,

David Hume, Bernard Mandeville, Josiah Tucker, Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, and Adam Ferguson. Later two names stand out as men who correctly understood and believed in and described this Antirationalistic Individualism, the famous English historian, Lord Acton, and the famous French historian, Alexis de Tocqueville. In a still broader sense the whole Puritan and later Whig movement in English political history represented the ideas of Calvinism and of antirationalistic individualism. And consequently the Cromwells, the Pitts, the Gladstones, the Macauleys and others are all in the great tradition of Antirationalistic Individualism. They are the men who stood for ideas (1) that were in accordance with the social order prescribed by Scripture, and (2) that resulted in England becoming the then leading nation of the world.

It would be a mistake to believe that Antirationalistic Individualism was a purely British idea. The Low Countries had been the first, under the influence of the *independent* thinking that arose in those countries, to unshackle themselves from feudalism and mercantilism. (Mercantilism was the first development away from feudalism; mercantilism involved centralization, protection of home industry by tariffs, bureaucratic controls, and detailed regulation by civil authorities.) Because of that independent thinking the great development in and prosperity of England had been *preceded* by an amazing prosperity in the Low Countries which was the envy of the rest of the world. In *practice*, therefore, it may be said that Antirationalistic Individualism developed fully in the Netherlands before it did in England. But the Dutch did not develop the *theory* of Antirationalistic Individualism as did the British.

It is interesting to note that a Dutch prince, known to the Dutch as William III, the last of the descendents in the male line of the first Prince William of Orange, was perfectly adjustable to British thinking, as is evidenced by the blossoming out and prosperity of the Whig movement during his great reign, first as sovereign with his wife under the title, William and Mary, and after her death as William III.

The outstanding characteristic of Antirationalistic Individualism is *humility*. We do not here mean by humility a fawning attitude toward other men, or feebleness of convictions by which a

man shows vacillation when dealing with his fellows, but we refer to an intellectual attitude and appraisal of man and of man's mind. It is possible to appraise man and his mind highly; or in contrast to appraise man and his mind lowly. This is a fundamental question in epistemology — how is man and his mind to be appraised. Traditional Calvinism (and we are wholly in accord with traditional Calvinism) appraised man and his mind realistically, namely, man's intellect is feeble, his will is weak, and his character is invariably corrupted. This is, epistemologically, the position of Antirationalistic Individualism.

We quote from the famous essay by Dr. Friedrich A. von Hayek, entitled "Individualism: True and False," (which essay is the first in a book of essays by Hayek entitled *Individualism and Economic Order*, (The University of Chicago Press; copyright 1948 by The University of Chicago):

The antirationalistic approach, which regards man not as a highly rational and intelligent but as a very irrational and fallible being, whose individual errors are corrected only in the course of a social process, and which aims at making the best of a very imperfect material, is probably the most characteristic feature of English individualism.

That basic attitude, that epistemology, that true humility is not possible for an advocate of any of the other systems of social ideas, that is, it is not possible *intellectually* and *morally* for a feudalism, for a socialist, or a communist, or a syndicalist, or an interventionist. Genuine realism in social matters and genuine intellectual humility are associated only with that attitude toward society which is called Antirationalistic Individualism.

It should be borne in mind that the term, *antirationalistic*, does not mean that Antirationalistic Individualism is illogical or irrational; on the contrary, those holding to the ideas of Antirationalistic Individualism are criticized exactly for the consistency of their logic; their arguments cannot be answered and so their opponents attack the idea that logic has general rules and is the same for all men, an employer as well as for an employee. Antirationalistic Individualism is, therefore, not irrational individual-

ism; it is rational individualism but is against the rationalistic arrogance which consists in giving a superhuman evaluation to an ordinary human mind. *Antirationalistic*, then, is an adjective which indicates dissent from holding that man is wise, good and strong — capable of individually planning society and making it good. Clearly, in the sense that they both have the same true humility, Antirationalistic Individualism is the secular counterpart of traditional Calvinism. Hayek in another book, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, (The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois) expresses the idea as follows:

The main lesson at which we have arrived is indeed the same as that which one of the acutest students of scientific method has drawn from a survey of all fields of knowledge: it is that "the great lesson of humility which science teaches us, that we can never be omnipotent or omniscient, is the same as that of all great religions: man is not and never will be the god before whom he must bow down."* (Page 102.)

Elsewhere (pages six, seven, and eight) in "Individualism: True and False" Hayek writes about the true, that is, Antirationalistic Individualism as follows:

. . . It is the contention that, by tracing the combined effects of individual actions, we discover that many of the institutions on which human achievements rest have arisen and are functioning without a designing and directing mind; that, as Adam Ferguson expressed it, "nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action but not the result of human design"; and that the spontaneous collaboration of free men often creates things which are greater than their individual minds can ever fully comprehend. This is the great theme of Josiah Tucker and Adam Smith, of Adam Ferguson and Edmund Burke, the great discovery of classical political economy which has become the basis of our understanding not only of economic life but of most truly social phenomena.

*The quotation by Hayek is from M. R. Cohen, *Reason and Nature*, page 449.

We are wholly in agreement with the foregoing. Ah, our friends may say, this is nothing more than a scientific expression of the idea (in some Calvinist circles) of *common grace*; however, *that* conclusion will need critical scrutiny, and will probably get it on another occasion.

Hayek then goes on to write (page eight):

The difference between this view, which accounts for most of the order which we find in human affairs as the unforeseen result of individual actions, and the view which traces all discoverable order to deliberate design is the first great contrast between the true individualism of the British thinkers of the eighteenth century and the so-called "individualism" of the Cartesian [French] school. But it is merely one aspect of an even wider difference between a view which in general rates rather low the place which reason plays in human affairs, which contends that man has achieved what he has in spite of the fact that he is only partly guided by reason, and that his individual reason is very limited and imperfect, and a view which assumes that Reason, with a capital R, is always fully and equally available to all humans and that everything which man achieves is the direct result of, and therefore subject to, the control of individual reason.

Hayek later goes on to say:

And, while the design theories [Rationalistic Individualism, that is, false Individualism] necessarily lead to the conclusion that social processes can be made to serve human ends only if they are subjected to the control of individual human reason, and thus lead directly to socialism, true individualism believes on the contrary that, if left free, men will often achieve more than individual human reason could design or foresee.

This contrast between the true, antirationalistic and the false, rationalistic individualism permeates all social thought. But because both theories have become known by the same name, and partly because the classical econo-

mists of the nineteenth century, and particularly John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, were almost as much influenced by the French as by the English tradition, all sorts of conceptions and assumptions completely alien to true individualism have come to be regarded as essential parts of its doctrine.

A tentative summary of what has already been said about Antirationalistic Individualism will be helpful before calling attention to the most fundamental characteristic of this true individualism.

Firstly, Antirationalistic Individualism is not selfishness or exploitation of the neighbor. The proponents of true individualism have always favored safety of property, that is, they were against theft; they have always opposed violence as a disruptive force in society; they have always insisted on honesty being the best policy. In short, they have always accepted the rules of the second table of the Decalogue in its most fundamental sense, namely, that the neighbor might not be harmed. In general, Antirationalistic Individualism has agreed with the definition of the law of love presented in earlier issues of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*; (the obvious exception is that this secular doctrine has not concerned itself with the spreading of the Christian gospel).

Secondly, Antirationalistic Individualism represents intellectual humility and social and political realism. Other social doctrines do not promote true intellectual humility, but instead are based on conscienceless arrogance, and involve an evil hubris. A basic reason why men are true individualists is that they *cannot* do more than tend to their own affairs; they *cannot* wisely guide the lives of others; and they never should consider themselves to be that "smart."

This is how Hayek states the idea:

Far more important than this moral attitude, which might be regarded as changeable, is an indisputable intellectual fact which nobody can hope to alter and which by itself is a sufficient basis for the conclusions which the individualist philosophers drew. This is the constitutional limitation of man's knowledge and interests, the

fact that he *cannot* know more than a tiny part of the whole of society and that therefore all that can enter into his motives are the immediate effects which his actions will have in the sphere he knows. All the possible differences in men's moral attitudes amount to little, so far as their significance for social organization is concerned, compared with the fact that all man's mind can effectively comprehend are the facts of the narrow circle of which he is the center; that, whether he is completely selfish or the most perfect altruist, the human needs for which he *can* effectively care are an almost negligible fraction of the needs of all members of society.

We came, thirdly, to what we believe is a still more fundamental reason for holding to Antirationalistic Individualism. We shall begin again by quoting Hayek.

The real question, therefore, is not whether man is, or ought to be, guided by selfish motives but whether we can allow him to be guided in his actions by those immediate consequences which *he can know* and care for or whether he ought to be made to do *what seems appropriate to somebody else* who is supposed to possess a fuller comprehension of the significance of these actions to society as a whole. (Emphasis supplied.)

To the accepted Christian tradition that man must be free to follow *his* conscience in moral matters if his actions are to be of any merit, the economists added the further argument that he should be free to make full use of *his* knowledge and skill, that he must be allowed to be guided by his concern for the particular things of which *he* knows and for which *he* cares, if he is to make as great a contribution to the common purposes of society as he is capable of making. Their main problem was how these limited concerns, which did in fact determine people's actions, could be made effective inducements to cause them voluntarily to contribute as much as possible to needs which lay outside the range of their vision. What the economists understood for the first time was that the

market as it had grown up was an effective way of making man take part in a process more complex and extended than he could comprehend and that it was through the market that he was made to contribute "to ends which were no part of his purpose."

It was almost inevitable that the classical writers in explaining their contention should use language which was bound to be misunderstood and that they thus earned the reputation of having extolled selfishness. We rapidly discover the reason when we try to restate the correct argument in simple language. If we put it concisely by saying that people are and ought to be guided in their actions by *their* interests and desires, this will at once be misunderstood or distorted into the false contention that they are or ought to be exclusively guided by their personal needs or selfish interests, while what we mean is that they ought to be allowed to strive for whatever *they* think desirable.

What does the foregoing say? It says this: the problem is not basically one of anarchical self-interest, nor for that matter either is it a problem of the limitation of the human mind, but instead in the final analysis the question is *who* should decide, *you* or *your neighbor*. Note how Hayek wrote it: "... what we mean is that they ought to be allowed to strive for what *they* think desirable"; and note what he says elsewhere: "The true basis of his [the individualist's] argument is that nobody can know *who* knows best and that the only way by which we can find out is through a social process in which everybody is allowed to try and see what he can do. (The italics are Hayek's.)

And what does that mean? It means that the most famous economists of the world (as interpreted by Hayek) say this: thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*. You can decide for *yourself*. When the basic argument is uncovered it gets down to this: the question is *who* is to decide for you — yourself or your neighbor. The issue must be either — or. Both cannot decide. As has been outlined in previous issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, Scripture teaches that each man *himself* is the proper judge of his affairs

and not his *neighbor*. As has just been quoted, that is exactly what the great Antirationalistic Individualists* declared.

Dutch Calvinists beginning with Groen have nearly all been attacking French Individualism, that is, false individualism, the individualism correctly described as Rationalistic Individualism. Then being nondiscriminating they also attacked true individualism, correctly described as Antirationalistic Individualism. Emigrants presently streaming into the United States and into Canada are bringing along with them an antagonism to the traditional American social-political-economic structure based on a confusion a hundred years old and still not corrected. These emigrants have been conditioned against an Antirationalistic Individualism, which is the sole reason for America's greatness, by a fixation of their critical attention on its opposite, Rationalistic Individualism, which has been of inestimable damage to France, the Netherlands, and all countries in any way tainted with it. Why? Because that Rationalistic Individualism inescapably leads to socialism or interventionism.

There are three practical manifestations of Antirationalistic Individualism which should be mentioned; it holds to (1) the *private* ownership of property, (2) a *free* market, and (3) *unequal* rewards in proportion to the unequal satisfaction of the neighbor's needs. These are exactly in accord with the teaching of Scripture. Space is lacking to expand on these ideas at this time.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is well informed on the indiscriminating wrath and contempt poured on individualism generally (of all kinds) by fellow Calvinists. We plan to quote and quote and quote that sorry record and call attention to its absurd errors. We expect attempts will be made to dismiss our views by the supercilious remark that PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM represents outmoded individualism.

*Readers who are accustomed to serious reading should certainly read Hayek's essay entitled: "Individualism: True and False" in *Individualism and Economic Order*. And readers who are qualified to be interested in the problems of epistemology should also read Hayek's *Counter-Revolution of Science*. This latter is more technical than the former.

Socialism

The term, socialism, was coined to be the opposite, the antonym for individualism. (If you wish to be known as a real opponent of socialism then there is only *one* name you can assume, the name of individualist.)

Socialism is founded on the idea that the neighbor is the legitimate controller of your choices, your activities, your property, your life. Individualism is founded on the idea that you yourself are the legitimate controller of your choices, your activities, your property, your life.

There are many brands of socialism, and there are endless varieties among the various brands. We aim to be brief and shall comment on only three phases of socialism: (1) the public ownership of the means of production; (2) the "organization" of society in an "economic order" which socialism requires; and (3) the "distribution" of the proceeds of production among the various participants and claimants according to a set of principles called "social justice."

1. Socialism disputes the basic right of a man to ownership of things. Nothing a man may have is really his own. Private property ownership is suspect and to be forbidden.

Some socialists would permit private ownership of consumers' goods, but all socialists demand public ownership of producers' goods, that is, of lands, mines, factories, machines, transportation facilities, power projects, etc.

All the wars and persecutions among men have together hurt the human race less than public ownership of property. No plague has ever been so terrible to the bodies of men as the public ownership of the means of production has been to the prosperity of men.

2. Socialism concerns itself also with the way society is organized. Socialism proposes an "organization" of society which involves *coercion* and endless controls. Society is to be *directed*. Society is not to be *free*. The neighbor, *collectively* through the state or other *collective* agencies, is to determine what the individual may do. The consumers, they themselves, are no longer to deter-

mine the "order" of society, but producers or a functionary of the state are to determine that. Socialism, therefore, from the standpoint of the "social order" involves a program of coercion, and the enforcement of another man's program on you. This is the opposite of the program of Antirationalistic Individualism, which, in contrast to socialism, opposes coercion, wishes the consumer to be free, and makes the consumer *individually* the standard, or center of gravity in the social order.

3. Then there is the third phase of socialism which directs attention to the "distribution" of the proceeds of production. The word, distribution, here has a special meaning. By "distribution" we mean how much each man gets of what is produced. (We are here up against the problem, from each according to his ability to each according to his need.) One way to "distribute" what is produced is to distribute *equally*. Another way is to distribute according to some other rule but still to distribute *coercively*. Another way is to distribute the shares in what was produced *in accordance with the demands which each fulfilled* — one man more, and another man less; this is the individualist and scriptural way of distribution; it is unequal, because the contribution of each man to the fulfillment of the wants of his neighbors is unequal; it is brotherly, because it does not involve coercion, everything being exchanged in a voluntary market; it is cooperative, because freedom entails voluntary action in contradistinction of coercion which entails the use of force.

The *distribution* phase of socialism, as distinguished from the *ownership* and *production* phases advocated by socialism, is the most widely accepted of the three phases of socialism; this is also true in the Christian Reformed church. This, it is believed, is in notorious neglect of the teachings of Scripture or the tradition of Calvinism.

For example, for more than forty years there has been a *progressive* income tax in the United States. A progressive tax is a tax with a higher rate for some than for others. That kind of a tax is a key plank in the *distributive* system demanded by socialism and communism (see Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto*). But in the more than forty years in which that income tax has existed, no voice (to our knowledge) has been raised in the Chris-

tian Reformed church against that specific socialist program in violation of the principles of Scripture.

Apparently, nearly all devout Calvinists in the Christian Reformed church believe in inequality in the laws, and a variable measuring stick. The progressive income tax rule is designed to injure those who have more, but it can be shown to work against those who have less far more than against the former. (This is just another case where the declaration of Scripture is borne out when it says that whosoever digs a pit for his neighbor to fall into will fall into it himself.)

The general idea of "progression" (as in the *progressive* income tax) is unknown in Scripture, and clearly is obnoxious to the principles stated in Scripture. Consider such an obvious piece of evidence as the fact that nowhere in Scripture is "progression" declared to be a part of the law of charity. The minimum *law* of charity (as distinguished from the voluntary *practice* of charity beyond that law) is a flat ten percent. There is no progression mentioned whatever. And wisely so, because the progression can be shown to be harmful for the poor — finally. Here again Scripture and sound economics and Individualism agree.

In connection with the high-sounding propaganda of socialism it is necessary to call attention to its transvaluation or confusion of ideas in connection with the idea of justice.

Individualism — and Scripture — concern themselves about *justice*. Socialism denies justice, as outlined by Scripture and accepted by individualism, and believes in a so-called *social* justice. If such social justice were the same as justice it would not be necessary to add the adjective *social* to the term, social justice. The addition of the adjective does not designate something *additional* to justice, but something *different from* justice. Social justice and scriptural justice are antinomies—that is, they are irreconcilable opposites and contraries. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is against all *social* justice. It considers everything that is specifically *social* justice to be contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. We stand *for* justice; we stand *against* social justice.

It is planned that we give the idea of *social* justice extensive, critical examination.

Syndicalism

Syndicalism has another name, guild socialism, but is definitely to be distinguished from socialism itself.

Syndicalism comes from the French word, *syndics*, which means unions. Syndicalism is then a society based on groups of producers.

The simplest way to distinguish syndicalism from socialism is that syndicalism makes the producers *in a particular industry* the owners of *that particular industry*, in contrast to socialism making *all the people* owners of *all industry*. According to syndicalism everybody connected with textiles would own the textile industry; and everybody connected with coal mining would own the coal mining industry.

The most famous of modern syndicalists (in principle) was Benito Mussolini, with his corporate state.

The customary way that the idea of syndicalism is introduced is to propose "cooperation" between employers and labor in an industry. The two should "get together." That was a favorite idea of Dr. Abraham Kuyper, a well-known Dutch theologian and politician; at heart he considered syndicalism the *ideal* form of society. We plan to substantiate that idealism of Kuyper in later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM by quotations from Kuyper's *Ons Program* (Our Program) and *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* (Anti-Revolutionary Statecraft).

Syndicalism is a device for conducting a nongeographical civil war. The American civil war was between the North and the South — geographical (and political) entities. But syndicalism proposes warfare between industries. The textile industry (by collusion between owners, management and labor) will raise wages and then (because the industry is "cooperating" and a monopoly) raise prices. Nobody can stop it. The victims? Oh, everybody else, who has no choice except to pay the price or go naked.

But then what will the coal mining industry do? Oh, it will also raise wages, and then in order to take care of the extra cost, it too will put up the prices of coal; owners, management and labor

will all "cooperate" to accomplish the exploitation of the consumers of coal.

Then the steel industry will do the same thing. And the shipping industry. And the food industry. Etc.

This, as was said, is setting up a system for inter-industry civil war. Yes, the government is supposed to police these various monopolies, and restrain them, and maybe judge between them. But the power of the government to be an arbiter between these monopolistic industrial behemoths has always been insufficient. The civil war will continue to go on.

There is a large amount of syndicalism in the world. Syndicalism is already extensive in the United States and is probably the most harmful single factor in American society. But American syndicalism does not go by the name of syndicalism. Here we call it unionism. John L. Lewis is a potential syndicalist. If he could only get *real cooperation* from coal mine operators, he would really develop syndicalism. First, they (he and the mine owners) would put up the wages; then they would put up the prices, and make the public like it. (Of course, other industries could and would play the same game.)

The steel industry already operates substantially on a syndicalist basis *unavoidably*, because of union pressure. The wages are pressured upward by the unions on the ground of *social justice* or some other reason. Finally, the steel companies surrender. Then to make good the increased cost, the owners promptly raise steel prices. The victims, again, are *all* the buyers who have no option but to pay. But why complain if that is the system which the people want, as they apparently do.

Of course, a system which really means nongeographical civil war whether proposed by Mussolini, or an Abraham Kuyper, or John L. Lewis even though it sounds good theoretically can hardly be expected to be either scriptural or good economics. And it is neither. We shall develop the evidence in later issues.

One of the several books written by Dr. Ludwig von Mises, world-famous economist and one of the greatest economists of all time, is entitled *Socialism—an Economic and Sociological Analysis*

(Yale University Press). (This is the definitive, critical analysis of socialism and of the various related social systems, including syndicalism.) Mises ends his comments on syndicalism, as follows:

As an aim Syndicalism is so absurd, that speaking generally, it has not found any advocates, who dared to write openly and clearly in its favour. Those who have dealt with it under the name of co-partnership have never thought out its problems. Syndicalism has never been anything else than the ideal of plundering hordes. (Page 275.)

The reader will remember that earlier in this issue we quoted from an article in *The Guide*, published by the Christian Labour Association of Canada. One of the objectives stated in that quotation is "co-partnership," a form of syndicalism referred to by Mises in the foregoing. "Co-partnership" is also an objective of the Christian Labor Association in the United States. We plan to analyze the idea in later issues.

There are undoubtedly thousands of convinced syndicalists in so-called Calvinist churches.

Interventionism

The real favorite among the rank-and-file of Calvinists is not feudalism, nor individualism, nor socialism, nor syndicalism, but interventionism. The reason for their interest in Interventionism is not because of their "Calvinism" but because their thinking merely reflects current public opinion.

Interventionism establishes a "regulated" society. The idea of the interventionists is that individualism is selfishness and bad (that idea is, of course, naive); that socialism is not right either but not too bad an idea (except that leading socialists have been atheists); and so interventionists would set up a society which is a cross-breed between individualism and socialism; they still say that they believe in private property as do individualists, but the freedom of individualism — which freedom is bad! — will be restrained and guided by extensive regulation by wise and nonpolitical and virtuous political employees. The assumption is that it is not hard for a man under political pressure still to be honest!

Hitler was, as he acknowledged, basically a socialist, but he considered thoroughgoing interventionism a suitable form for accomplishing his generally socialist ideas. He is said to have used a simple illustration, in this wise: In Russia they want the milk, and to do that take away the ownership of the cow. In Germany we leave them keep the cow, but we "control" who gets the milk. And then he cynically added: What difference does it make that Germans think they still own the cow when we control all that the cow produces? They are happier, but the ownership of the cow really means nothing to them now that we get all the product of the cow.

That was thoroughgoing interventionism. Presently in the United States the social-political-economic situation is a moderate interventionism. Interventionism is never fully effective unless it becomes thoroughgoing. Interventionism is widely accepted as a "middle-of-the-road" policy, but it eventually leads to socialism.*

Dutch Calvinists from Abraham Kuyper on have been entranced with interventionism. It is their well-beloved doctrine. It is also the doctrine taught in Calvin College of the Christian Reformed church in the United States. Probably, it is the prevailing doctrine in most other Calvinist schools in the country. It is also the accepted doctrine of the Christian Labor Association.

Interventionism can be attacked on the ground that its premises are not in harmony with the basic propositions of Calvinism, and on the ground that it is internally inconsistent. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will devote considerable attention to the untenability of Interventionism.

Summary

The foregoing semi-historical summary of feudalism, individualism, socialism, syndicalism and interventionism is too sketchy to be satisfactory but it will have to serve for the time being. These ideas touch on the relation of men-to-men so vitally that we shall be referring to them repeatedly in subsequent issues. Later

*See Ludwig von Mises' essay: "Middle-of-the-Road Policy Leads to Socialism," in his book of essays entitled *Planning for Freedom*.

references will, we hope, greatly add to clarity regarding these political and economic systems.

There are two reasons for the particular character of our presentation which we wish expressly to state.

1. We consider Antirationalistic Individualism to be the social and economic system which conforms most closely to the teaching of Scripture and the principles of Calvinism. Antirationalistic Individualism has flowered where Calvinism flowered — in Switzerland, the Netherlands (in its halcyon days), England and Scotland, and the United States. The Puritans who surely made a tremendous contribution to England's greatness were devout Calvinists and individualists. The greatest heroes and the greatest leaders the Dutch have ever had were Calvinists and individualists. (However we are not implying that all individualists are Calvinists, or vice versa.)

We are, in that great tradition, Calvinists *and* individualists. We do not expect, however, that individualism should stand for everything for which Calvinism stands. Individualism is a social and economic doctrine. Calvinism is a religion. They overlap; they cannot be and are not the same.

We, proudly, claim the name, individualist, as well as we proudly claim the name, Calvinist.

2. Our second reason for the specific type of presentation which we employed was to reveal our views on Dutch Calvinist tradition regarding individualism. We consider the prevailing Dutch Calvinist attitude toward individualism to be Continental European and unhappily parochial and unenlightened. We outlined the reason — a preoccupation with French, that is Cartesian (from the French rationalist, Descartes) and Rousseauian Rationalistic Individualism. We explained briefly (in fact, so briefly that the point is not effectively made) that a great Netherland's churchman, scholar and statesman, Groen van Prinsterer, basically misunderstood individualism; (we shall develop that later). His successors, Abraham Kuyper, especially, proceeded blithely and with inadequate knowledge in the same channel of thought. We believe Kuyper seriously aggravated a bad misunderstanding.

Consequently, we shall be constrained to challenge the influence of a large segment of Dutch Calvinist thought on American Calvinist thought. We think Dutch Calvinist thought in the social-political-economic fields has not been and is not helpful to American Calvinist thinking. We *personally* follow the American tradition on Antirationalistic Individualism. We consider it far better than the feudalism, syndicalism, and interventionism emanating from the Netherlands. We consider our economic heritage far better, and more Biblical, and more Calvinist, and more-rewarding.

In regard to the term "more-rewarding" we can make our point clear in this manner: if the economic ideas of Abraham Kuyper had come to the United States and genuinely been put into effect one hundred years ago, the prosperity of the United States today (in our opinion) would not be one-half of what it is now. We thank God that those ideas were not transported here then, and we view with apprehension that they be imported now.

The Writings of Two Famous Living Individualists

There are two world-famous economists who are the greatest living exponents of true Individualism. Their names are Dr. Ludwig von Mises and Dr. Friedrich A. von Hayek. Both were originally at the University of Vienna. Both left Austria before Hitler came in.

Mises is professor of economics at New York University. He is the author of famous economic works, including *Human Action — A Treatise on Economics*; *Socialism — an Economic and Sociological analysis*; *The Theory of Money and Credit*; *Omnipotent Government — The Rise of the Total State and Total War*; *Bureaucracy*; and *Planning for Freedom and other Essays and Addresses*.

The major works of Mises are of epoch-making significance.

Hayek is associated with the Law School of the University of Chicago. He is in the same tradition as Mises. His well-known books include *The Road to Serfdom*; *The Counter-Revolution of*

Science, Individualism and Economic Order; Profits, Interest and Investment; and The Pure Theory of Capital.

Our indebtedness to Mises and Hayek is beyond measure. To those accustomed to reading in the fields covered by their books we earnestly recommend the reading of those books.

The logical connection between the secular works of these famous economists and the ancient principles of Scripture will be worthy of careful study.

F. N.

The Christian religion is not so great an influence as it should be. Most people in so-called Christian nations are relatively indifferent to a *personal* brand of the Christian religion, which is another way of saying that they do not care much what Christianity specifically teaches.

An important reason for such indifference is the unsoundness of many ideas which are declared to be Christian and are palmed off on the public as being Christian, and believed by the naive to be Christian, but which smarter people reject or ignore because they "sense" that there is something wrong with those ideas.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is a monthly devoted to a *critical* examination of pious ideas which are neither scriptural nor logical.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

JULY, 1955

NUMBER 7

Contents

	Page
Confusilated and Complexified	177
Reverend Gerrit Hoeksema on: It Has Not Been Proven from Scripture to be Sin	178
The Anti-Revolutionary Party; the Founder was Confusilated from the Beginning and Now They Seem to Have Made a <i>Volte Face</i>	195
Professor W. H. Jellema on: That Takes Study	200
New Magazine, <i>Tot Vrijheid Geroepen</i> (Called <i>Unto Liberty</i>), in the Netherlands	204

Confusilated and Complexified

Neither of these words, *confusilated* and *complexified*, are in the dictionary. They are two words coined by a friend which we have frequently heard him use.

The meaning of these two terms will be easily inferred. To be *confusilated* is to be mentally mixed up on some specific problem. To *complexify* something is to make something more complex than it is or need be.

This issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is largely devoted to three representative instances of *confusilation* and *complexification* among groups not untouched by vanity in regard to their "Calvinism."

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

Reverend Gerrit Hoeksema on: It Has Not Been Proven from Scripture to be Sin

On Saturday, June 19, 1954 the Synod of the Christian Reformed church was nearing the end of its session in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The subject under discussion was the construction of Calvin College buildings (and other denominational buildings) by "closed shop" contractors.

Large buildings, as for a college, require large construction contractors. Most large contractors have, voluntarily or under coercion, agreed with American Federation of Labor unions to have a closed shop. A closed shop means that that contractor will not hire you unless you first join a particular union. If you will not join, then employment by that contractor is barred to you. You will not, then, be hired to work on any construction job awarded to that contractor who has, voluntarily or of necessity, accepted a closed shop as demanded by the union. Most unions in the construction trades have traditionally been AFL (American Federation of Labor).

An "open shop" means that you can get a job and hold it without being compelled to join a union. There are some small open shop construction contractors. The big contractors with very few exceptions have generally been forced or intimidated into accepting a closed shop, or they may have voluntarily agreed to it in order to force up costs of competitors.

Naturally, on big college contracts it is difficult to get a General Contractor who can get *all* his subcontractors to operate on an open shop basis. If a single necessary subcontractor operates on an AFL closed shop basis, his men will not work on any job where there are non-AFL workers employed by any of the other subcontractors. Big jobs become then, almost always, completely closed shop jobs.

From a *practical* standpoint, under the given circumstances on June 19, 1954, it appeared reasonable to argue that to attempt to build Calvin College buildings on an open shop basis was impracticable even in a city as Grand Rapids which is one-third

Dutch. (However, see Appendix at end of this article.) It could be argued that a big job would "have to go" AFL, that is, closed shop. It may have appeared to the Synod of the Christian Reformed church that it was hardly the time and the place to argue a *basic* question when a *specific* contract was not far in the offing, and while prior pronouncements by the denomination on the "principle" involved — the principle of the validity of a closed shop — had never been definite and bold or, as some people would say, honest.

Sensible (?) people adjust to practical necessities. They bend with the wind. Synod might have decided to instruct its Boards when constructing buildings to tolerate a closed shop of *necessity*. Then if that had been accompanied by going on record that the closed shop was an evil, then at least there would have been a "witness" against an evil.

But with excellent timing an influential preacher takes the floor, and says: The closed shop has not been proven from Scripture to be sin. The speaker was the Reverend Gerrit Hoeksema, president of the Calvin College and Seminary Board of Trustees.

Hoeksema's apparent reasoning was very simple:

1. What has not been proven from Scripture to be sin may not be forbidden (major premise);
2. The closed shop has not been proven from Scripture to be sin (minor premise);
3. Therefore, the closed shop may not be forbidden (conclusion).

Hoeksema's argument was reported in *The Grand Rapids Press* as follows:

Says "Sin" Not Issue

Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema of Chicago, president of the Calvin board of trustees, said the basic issue was whether or not the closed shop was sin. He said that this has not been proven from Scripture, it has not been the stand of the church and that the church is in no position to take this stand since it permits members of the AFL and CIO to be members of church and members of consistories.

If the closed shop is not sin, he said, we must leave our boards free to ask for bids in accordance with their best Christian judgment.

From the quotation it is clear Hoeksema gave three reasons for his position:

1. The closed shop has not been proven from Scripture to be sin;
2. To ban the closed shop is not at this juncture for our problem *practical*;
3. The church permits membership in the AFL and CIO unions.

We are at this time discussing *only* the proposition that the closed shop has not been proved from Scripture to be sin. The other reasons given by Hoeksema are worthy of separate treatment.

Hoeksema has long been a most powerful minister in the Christian Reformed church, if not always externally at least behind the scenes. He is an experienced man not far from retirement. He has been president of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College longer than any other man, and probably longer than any future term for anyone (the rules regarding tenure in office having been changed to prevent long tenures).

The circumstantial evidence, of course, is conclusive that Hoeksema does not believe that the closed shop *can* be proven from Scripture to be sin. On moot questions he has long been active and a dominant participant in the thickest of the fight. Undoubtedly, on a burning question such as the closed shop he has given it extensive thought and study. Beyond reasonable doubt, then, Hoeksema holds the opinion that not only the closed shop has not been proven from Scripture to be sin but also that the closed shop *cannot* be proved to be sin.

It is important then to note that Hoeksema does not limit his toleration of contracts to closed shop contractors to *practical* grounds. He proposes a policy on *moral* grounds, namely, that it has not been proved to be sin, and with the obvious implication that nobody has yet shown him that the closed shop is sin, and with

the inference that he does not believe anyone can show the closed shop to be sin.

Let us consider more carefully Hoeksema's "neat little syllogism," which has previously been quoted on page 179.

Hoeksema's Major Premise

Hoeksema's major premise (it is not quoted in the newspaper article but it is obviously what he holds) is: What has not been proven from Scripture to be sin may not be forbidden.

That is a big proposition. Its negative form adds to its force and gives the rule enormous application. Is it true that what cannot be shown to be sin according to Scripture may not be forbidden?

This is an old problem in the Christian Reformed church. There is nothing in Scripture which says a man may not be a member of the fraternal order known as the Free Masons. Nevertheless, the Christian Reformed church prohibits its members from being Masons. The refusal to permit dual membership, both in the Christian Reformed church and in the Masons, is because the church declares some of the religious and ethical declarations of the Masons conflict with Scripture (as interpreted by the Christian Reformed church), and on the basis of such an alleged inconsistency dual membership is prohibited. There is no specific reference in Scripture against the Masons. The Christian Reformed church objects to Masonry on *deduced* grounds. The church declares that there is something in Masonry which positively conflicts with Scripture. Hoeksema in this closed shop case then obviously holds that (1) there is no reference in Scripture to the closed shop (which is certainly true) and (2) there is no principle stated in Scripture which is against the closed shop (which may not be so true).

As we think it over we are under a strong inclination to agree with the major proposition in the Hoeksema syllogism, namely, that what is not proven from Scripture to be sin may not be forbidden.

In fact PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM might be expected to welcome that proposition. On pages 63-65 of the March, 1955 issue we represented a man's earthly life as consisting of his happiness, or the "pursuit of his self-regarding interests *without exploitation of the neighbor*," and we finally equated that with "legitimate freedom." (This allows fully for the proper worship of God because the Scriptures certainly make clear that God does not want coerced but voluntary worship.) Nothing can be more fundamental than this in our thinking about the relation of man-to-man. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is unqualifiedly for freedom. Hoeksema's proposition appears also to be for freedom. Temporarily, at least, we let the proposition stand.

Hoeksema's Minor Premise

Hoeksema's minor premise is: The closed shop has not been proven from Scripture to be sin.

Whether that is true or not we do not know. We do not know what was *proven* and what was *not proven* at the Synod of 1954 of the Christian Reformed church. Maybe not one voice was lifted at the Synod against the closed shop on *moral* grounds. Maybe every argument advanced at the Synod of 1954 to show that the closed shop was sin was considered by Hoeksema to be a dud and to be advanced by people whose reasoning powers Hoeksema considered to be inadequate.

There were, however, strong objections at the 1954 Synod in regard to the closed shop. The news report in the daily newspaper previously quoted also wrote:

Coming in the closing minutes of the annual synod of the denomination, the action on a report by Cornelius VanValkenburg leaves the church boards free to award building contracts to open shop or AFL contractors and skirted taking a stand on the closed shop issue which has troubled the church for years.

* * *

Observers called the decision the most surprising one of the two-week session since two large committees advocated a position which would have limited bidding on

church and college projects to contractors who would guarantee an open shop policy.

VanValkenburg spearheaded the fight for a hands-off policy. Although not a delegate to synod this year, he had been member of a 10-man study committee on the issue appointed by last year's synod. His minority report was rejected unanimously by the advisory committee on its report to the delegates. His presentation Friday afternoon, however, gathered support and finally won a 44-40 decision.

We come then to the conclusion that Hoeksema considered the majority report of the Study committee on the closed shop question and the report of the synodical Advisory committee both to have flunked out on any *moral* argument they presented against the closed shop. Maybe the minority report of the Study committee (the minority report was by attorney Cornelius VanValkenburg) showed that the closed shop could not be sin. (Unfortunately, we do not have either the majority report or the minority report of the Study committee, or the report of the synodical Advisory committee.)

Let us pass on from Hoeksema's low regard in respect to any moral argument presented at the Synod of 1954 against the closed shop.

But when we come to what undoubtedly was really Hoeksema's position, namely, the closed shop *cannot* be shown to be sin or the closed shop *is not* sin, then that is something entirely different.

In fact the proposition, the closed shop is not sin, is a notorious contradiction of what Scripture teaches.

What Sin Is There In The Closed Shop?

The ancient Hebrews considered the Ten Commandments a wholly remarkable piece of legislation, writ with the finger of God himself. They considered it completely comprehensive even though short. When a commandment said, thou shalt not kill, that did not mean to them that you could beat up a neighbor to an inch of death and then stop and say, "It has not been shown that I

sinned; the man is not dead. The commandment says only, thou shalt not kill, and I have not killed anybody. I am not a sinner."

As it was true for the ancient Hebrews, we also think very well of the Decalogue, and consider it marvelously short and magnificently comprehensive.

Consider the sixth commandment as explained in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XL:

What does God require in the sixth commandment?

That I, neither in thought, nor in word or gesture, much less in deed, dishonor, hate, wound, or kill my neighbor, whether by myself or by another, but lay aside all desire of revenge; moreover, that I harm not myself nor wilfully expose myself to any danger. Therefore, also the magistrate is armed with the sword to prevent murder.

But this commandment seems to speak only of murder? In forbidding murder, God teaches us that He abhors the root of murder, as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that He accounts all these as murder.

But is it enough that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way? No; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves; to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness towards him, prevent his hurt as much as in us lies, and do good even to our enemies.

It is not debatable, therefore, according to this accepted "standard" among Calvinists that the sixth commandment forbids more than accomplished murder. It forbids murder and all violence and coercion (*except violence and coercion to resist evil*). That kind of violence and coercion (to resist evil) is not forbidden; it is eventually required. Anyone and everybody is authorized we believe eventually, when all other measures fail, to employ violence and coercion to restrain evil. God himself does just that. He authorizes the state to do just that. And there is nothing in Scripture which says that *final resistance to evil* by violent means is forbidden.

But — and this is important — ALL OTHER VIOLENCE AND COERCION IS FORBIDDEN AND IS SIN. There is no easier way to summarize what the Heidelberg Catechism says about the sixth commandment than to say, *it forbids all coercion*, except such eventual coercion as restrains evil, which specific coercion is permitted as an exception. We believe the commandment could have read: Thou shalt not coerce, or, Thou shalt not engage in violence. But then those statements would have to be qualified, by “except to restrain evil.” Such qualifications however would be incongruous with the whole “tone” of the Decalogue. The qualification was fully implied by the use of the word, *kill*, which denotes evil. One word, *kill*, covered what would otherwise require *coerce except to restrain evil*, that is, one word does the work of five. We therefore consider the following two statements to be identical:

Thou shalt not *kill*

and

Thou shalt not *coerce, except to restrain evil.*

Moses used four words; the alternative requires eight.

The absence of *coercion* makes society voluntary, makes it free, makes it happy. The goal of love, the goal of freedom, is the absence of all coercion, except the eventual coercion to resist evil.

We believe in a *voluntary society*. We believe in a noncoercive society. We believe in meekness, forbearance, patience, persuasion in all ordinary affairs of life, and believe in resort to coercion and violence only as the *last* resort in order to restrain evil.

To say, thou shalt not *kill*, means to us, thou shalt not coerce, threaten, engage in violence, restrict a neighbor's freedom of choice.

Now, what is a closed shop?

A closed shop advertises itself as a means of coercion, and its practical record is studded with violence and crime. But forget about the actual record. Consider the *principle*. The principle of the closed shop is coercion. It is that by definition. A logician would say that the term, closed shop, indicates coercion *ex defini-*

tion. No further explanation is necessary; the term itself implies compulsion. If you will not join the union, we will not permit you to work. Join, or starve, if necessary.

That the closed shop is an unqualified evil is known to secular thinkers. Resistance to the principle of a closed shop is universal except among those who have something to gain by it, namely, labor racketeers, and those union members who are deluded by union propaganda into believing that the closed shop does them some good. (Exploding that delusion will be reserved to another occasion.) The laws of some lands have come to tolerate the closed shop only because coercion and threats were employed politically to get laws passed which tolerate the closed shop. The closed shop is, if there is anything clear in this world, a damnable iniquity, and a plain violation of the sixth commandment.

The alternative is equally obvious. If coercion is permissible in one thing, then it is permissible for all other things. The *coercion* principle — except to restrain evil, as Scripture defines — is either of universal application or it is to be universally condemned.

Let us take a completely parallel case of coercion — a business monopoly. Instead of employes "getting together" in unions to coerce someone by the exercise of power of some sort, the employers "get together" in a cartel, and coerce each other, their employes and their customers. That is known as a monopoly. It can be protected by iniquitous laws just as a corresponding union monopoly by means of a closed shop can be protected. Imagine Hoeksema getting up on the floor of a synod and declaring: It has not been proven from Scripture to be sin to organize a monopoly.

In earlier issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we have presented what we consider to be the plain teaching of Scripture in regard to the famous law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. We presented as the most obvious and the most nondebatable explanation of that law that none of us is authorized to harm our neighbor, in fact, that it is positively forbidden. We declared that everything is free to us except sin, and that it is sin to coerce a neighbor except to use coercion to restrain his sin. But now we rub our eyes and fidget and pinch ourselves to be sure we are not

having a nightmare; here is the most influential minister in the Christian Reformed church, president of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary, at the zenith of his career, speaking to the delegates elected under the prayers of the church to the most powerful legislating body in the denomination, and he declares to them: an institution, namely, the institution of the closed shop, which by definition and by its very nature is a coercive institution, that institution is not a plain violation of the sixth commandment, which reads, thou shalt not kill, and which in its basic meaning prohibits coercion; instead the speaker by implication placed that coercion in the hands of any man or group of men which wishes to control entirely how you are to earn your living for yourself and your children.

But our astonishment mounts. We again quote the newspaper report:

The synod decided to "refrain from making a directive to any board regarding the right or wrong method of economic organization in employer-employee relations as a part of the contract involved in building projects and to refrain from stipulating a procedure that makes distinction in labor union affiliations based on mode of membership organization."

Not only did Hoeksema declare an immoral principle; the Synod accepted it!

As previously quoted (on page 183) the final vote stood 44-40 that an institution founded on coercion and advertising its coercive principle is not sin. In plain language, the persuasive words of Hoeksema that coercion has not been shown to be sin, and the implication that coercion can not be proven from Scripture to be sin, induced forty-four preachers and laymen to vote that the church should not take a stand on the question of coercion.

It has long been a matter of common observation that when something is positively and clearly wrong but is to be defended for some invalid reason that those in favor of the iniquity follow one of two policies: (1) they defend the iniquity; or (2) they refuse to permit a judgment, that is, they will not commit themselves regarding the iniquity and say, "That is debatable." To

protect an evil there is no better way of appearing prudent and of avoiding open defense of evil than

to REFRAIN from making a directive to any board regarding the *right* or *wrong* method of economic organization in employer-employee relations . . . (Emphasis supplied.)

The Christian Reformed denomination abdicates deciding what is *right* and what is *wrong*. It "refrains" from a policy for itself as a denomination when having buildings built in which there will be prayers and Christian education and Christian literature published. And it "refrains" for only one reason; it is *afraid* to go on record against a notorious public evil and so silences itself. It will not issue a "directive." It will not go on record.

And note the last words of the formal decision of Synod:

. . . and to refrain from stipulating a procedure that makes distinction in labor union affiliations based on mode of membership organization.

The issue is not, let it be noted, one kind of *voluntary* mode of membership versus another kind of voluntary mode of membership — that is the way it sounds — but the issue is between absolute coercion regarding membership or no job at all. It is not honest to declare the question to be one of "mode of membership."

In fact, carry to its natural and full consequences what the Christian Reformed church has solemnly and prayerfully legislated *and holds to to this day* (June 5, 1955) and then *coercion* can be applied all through society. Everything may be coerced — your job, your tastes, your leisure, and your religion. If you may be coerced on earning your living, why may you not be coerced on spending what you earn, and what you are to like, and on how to worship God, and all the rest. Coercion either is a universal principle, or it is no principle at all. The Christian Reformed church has simply legislated the principle of the police state, the principle that coercion is moral and can be universally applied.

The great issue between communism and historic Christianity can be expressed by saying that communism authorizes and believes in coercion for the *alleged* public good, and that Christianity pro-

hibits and condemns coercion of every kind (except to restrain violence, fraud and theft). The great economists in the history of mankind have all favored a *voluntary* society, that is, a non-coercive society. That is what they mean by the term, *voluntary*. The great rogues in the history of mankind have all gone on record in favor of coercion for the *alleged* public good. The Christian Reformed church "refrains" from committing itself on coercion.

When Jeroboam with the ten northern tribes rebelled from Rehoboam, son of Solomon, he feared political complications if his people went up to Jerusalem to worship at Solomon's magnificent temple. And he, therefore, set up two altars or sanctuaries, one at Dan and the other at Bethel. He did not intend to depart from the worship of Jehovah, but he decided that golden calves would be a good means for promoting that "worship." He undoubtedly told his people he was promoting the same, old true religion. The Christian Reformed church may declare that it is also following the same, old true religion, but it is also deviating as Jeroboam did. Jeroboam said, I shall worship Jehovah by means of calves; the Christian Reformed church says, We shall declare the law of God to be neutral on the question of coercion. Moses banned images; Jeroboam used them. Moses banned coercion; the Christian Reformed church says that it "refrains" from banning coercion. Undoubtedly, the Christian Reformed church is as truly worshipping the true God as Jeroboam did.

Until 1954 it is probable that the Christian Reformed people were suspicious if not hostile to being neutral on unscriptural coercion. The Study committee on closed shop contracts was against the closed shop, except one member. The special Advisory committee (acting only during the session of Synod) reported for the majority report against the VanValkenburg minority report. In other words, there still was a fairly good grasp on one of the first principles of morality, namely, the principle against coercion, until Hoeksema made the powerful argument based on, it has not been proven from Scripture to be sin, which clearly implied that nobody had been able to show *him* that it was sin, and that he had not been able to convince himself that it was sin, and that for all practical purposes he was endorsing the principle of coercion by labor unions. And it was not VanValkenburg who did it. He was not able to convince any of his fellow committee members,

nor was his minority report able to convince the Advisory committee which opposed his findings. The explanation was that a new fighter had entered the ring, Hoeksema. As Goliath went down before David so everything went down before the persuasiveness of Hoeksema. As a parliamentary feat the performance merits our unqualified admiration and astonishment. Only a parliamentary artist of the foremost rank, without a peer in the denomination, could have accomplished what he accomplished.

An Inquiry

Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids teaches ethics, that is, it undoubtedly intends to teach the Scriptural principles of morality, the true law of brotherly love. All members of the Christian Reformed church are assessed to finance that seminary. The Calvin professor of ethics must have some opinion on the "ethics" of the closed shop. As the closed shop is a controversial and important issue what does the professor who teaches ethics at Calvin Seminary say about the closed shop? If he holds to the Nygrenian* definition of neighborly love, and believes in "authentic community," is that "authentic community" which he recommends manifested in the coercion of the closed shop — that is, is love manifested in that community in which you cannot earn a living except you join the union?

And what is the position of the other members of the faculty of that theological school, who are to teach and pray and inspire in buildings built (almost certainly) by contractors operating under a closed shop?

The faculty of Calvin College and Seminary publishes the *Calvin Forum*. That publication publishes articles about various question of morality. What has been written in the *Calvin Forum* about the closed shop? Is the assumption correct that complete silence since June, 1954 on the closed shop issue is because the editors of the *Calvin Forum* believe the closed shop cannot be proven from Scripture to be sin?

We are interested whether any who teach an *extended* definition of brotherly love, are also (at the same time that they are teaching such a sanctimonious definition of brotherly love) teach-

*See PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, May, 1955, page 128.

ing that the *coercion* of the closed shop is a fine morality and a manifestation of that brotherly love.

Nota Bene (Note Well)

The foregoing analysis of the immorality of the closed shop is not an analysis of unionism. Unionism is not necessarily coercive; it happens usually to be coercive, but the definition itself of unionism does not make unionism coercive.

In the case of the closed shop it is different. The closed shop by its very nature, the closed shop *ex definitione*, is indeed and unavoidably coercive.

We should probably also add the following:

1. As we have stated in earlier issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, our use of events in the Christian Reformed church in order to call attention to its confused and un-Biblical positions is solely because we happen to be members of that denomination. We are of the opinion, however, that practically none of the other denominations can afford to throw stones. What denominations have courageously and Biblically gone on record against coercion as contrary to the obvious teaching of Scripture? The Christian Reformed church is not the only church which has the courage only to deal with an inconsequential individual member who has sinned, but is afraid to attack a popular and powerful *public* or group sin, as the closed shop.

There are undoubtedly many individuals in the Christian Reformed denomination and other denominations who are opposed to the closed shop. They are like the 7,000 in Elijah's time who had not bowed the knee to Baal. But such contemporaries nor their denominations are ready to declare themselves unequivocally against a powerful and dangerous *public* evil. The real significance of Elijah has always appeared to us to be that he had the courage to go on record against powerful and *public* sins. He was not a pussyfooter or a pollyanna about them. At any rate, let other denominations remember that people who live in glass houses should be careful about throwing stones.

2. Maybe we should add something else. Probably many churchmen are uninformed on the elementary idea that *coercion* is

(ignoring the scriptural exception) a violation of the sixth commandment and plain, downright sin. However, the idea that coercion is an evil is an old and widely accepted idea in social science circles. There they do not call it *sin*. They declare instead that coercion is not the suitable means to attain the declared objective. The *means* are inappropriate to the *end* sought. Such people oppose sin on purely rational grounds, which we consider to be one very valid ground.

3. We are reminded of what we quoted in the March issue from Machiavelli's *Discourses*, namely:

To insure a long existence to religious sects or republics, it is necessary frequently to bring them back to their original principles.

We think there is conclusive proof (1) that the trend in the Christian Reformed church in regard to ethical ideas has been downward, (2) that it must be brought back to its pristine principles, and (3) that if it is not, it will become insignificant, and hypocritical and apostate.

Appendix

Since writing the foregoing, two pieces of news have come to our attention:

1. A protest against the closed shop decision in 1954 by two laymen of the Christian Reformed church and the decision of the 1955 Synod in regard to those protests; and
2. Information on the building situation in Grand Rapids at the present time (summer 1955).

Decision on the Closed Shop by the 1955 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church

The July 1, 1955 issue of *The Banner*, official weekly of the Christian Reformed church, gives the following information on page 805:

Protest Against Labor Policy of Synod of 1954

Two members of the First Church of South Holland, Illinois, protested against the decision of the Synod of 1954 on its labor policy in the awarding of contracts for denominational buildings. The protest was on two counts: formal procedure and the material aspect of the matter. *This Synod maintained that the Synod of 1954 was not in error in giving priority to the minority section of the Study Committee. As to the material side of the matter, Synod held, over against the contention of the protestants, that the Synod of 1954 did deal with the real issue and that the position of the protestants that this issue was "camouflaged under a barrage of considerations that were only indirectly connected with the problem" is not correct.*

The 1955 Synod has gone on record that the "real issue" was dealt with and settled in 1954!

Apparently still, *coercion is not sin*; then, coercion must be brotherly love, because certainly the Christian Reformed church teaches that brotherly love must be exercised; the closed shop must be a manifestation of brotherly love; and if the closed shop is brotherly love then the principle of coercion is brotherly love!

**Grand Rapids Building
Situation in Summer of 1955**

The June 7, 1955 issue of *The Grand Rapids Press*, page 35, carried a news item on the letting of the contract for the new public Riverside Junior High School building.

Contract Let At Riverside**New Junior High to Be First Here Since '25**

Contract for construction of Riverside Junior High school building, first such structure to be built in Grand Rapids in 30 years, was awarded Monday by the board of education to Baker-VanderVeen-DeYoung-Kraker Co., low bidder, at a figure of \$964,000.

The contract was approved unanimously in spite of a request from Robert V. Coulter, vice president of the Grand Rapids Federation of Labor, that the board "take another look."

Charges "Exploitation"

Coulter, speaking also for the Grand Rapids Building and Construction Trades Council, charged that the board is "ignoring the very concept of an established and stable economy" and protested that the board was letting contracts to contractors who "exploit cheap labor." Coulter asked that in the future the board consider a policy of requiring that contractors maintain the "prevailing wage."

The June 16, 1955 issue of *The Grand Rapids Press* carried a news report under the title: "School 'Cheap Labor' Charge Lashed by CLA Spokesman." Excerpts from this article follow:

In a letter received by school Business Manager Harold P. Herrinton, Joseph Gritter, secretary of the CLA, commended the board for ignoring the AFL protest on awarding the contract for Riverside Junior High school contract and sharply challenged the federation's charges of substandard labor conditions among nonunion contractors.

In Gritter's letter he writes:

"The remarks made by Mr. Coulter . . . concerning cheap labor reflect not only on the contractors, but also on our organization, which has a contract with Baker, VanderVeen, DeYoung & Kraker Co. Labor costs of the general contractor are fully as high as those of others who bid on the job . . . (We have a union shop contract with exceptions for conscientious objectors.)"

* * *

I. J. VanKammen, school engineer, pointed out that of the 11 contracts let so far seven have been with union contractors and four with nonunion.

Two things may be noted:

1. The CLA itself (Christian Labor Association) has a "union contract" with a contractor. The only difference between a *closed shop contract* and a *union shop contract* is that a closed shop contract provides you cannot get a job without first joining the union; the union shop contract provides that you can get a job but *must* within a specified time join the union, or you cannot *keep* your job. In principle there is no difference whatever between a closed shop contract and a union shop contract. Both are coercive. Both are damnable iniquities. But note: the *Christian Labor Association* has signed a *union shop contract* with a building contractor! However, exceptions are apparently allowed for, by some arrangement for "conscientious objectors."

2. The second thing to be noted from the foregoing news items is that it is *practical* to have an open shop policy in Grand Rapids for the construction of large buildings. At least, million dollar *public* school buildings have been erected by contractors declared in the news article to be "nonunion."

F. N.

The Anti-Revolutionary Party; The Founder was Confusilated from the Beginning And Now They Seem to have made a Volte Face

The French words, *volte face*, mean an about face, a turn around, a change in direction of 180 degrees.

We have a letter from an acquaintance* in the Netherlands. His letter refers to the Free University of Amsterdam, the Calvinist school founded by Abraham Kuyper. A quotation from the letter follows:

I think there are many people in this country too who do not understand the political *volte face* which the "Anti-revolutionaire party," the party of the Gereformeerde Kerk *par excellence*, has made. Many of the younger members,

*An acquaintance acquired through a secular connection.

especially of the Free University professors, are nearly socialists. The pity is, it is so difficult to stop it, as the professors have a system of co-optation, that is, they themselves are choosing and promoting colleagues and successors. But I still hope that in the long run the good idea will win.

Our acquaintance in the Netherlands refers to a *volte face* — an about face at the Free University of Amsterdam. And he refers to a *volte face* in the direction of socialism and away from whatever the school favored or seemed to favor in times past.

Traditional Calvinism was naturally individualistic. The Calvinist immigrants who emigrated out of the Netherlands into the United States between the end of the Civil War and the end of the nineteenth century were not socialists, nor were they interventionists; they were individualists.* They believed in the Biblical law of love, thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*, and had no interest in, thou shalt love thy neighbor according to his wishes, which is the socialist law.

With the turn of the century, however, there was a change; many of those who came later had been influenced by the ideas of Abraham Kuyper. Especially immigrants (for example, weavers from the textile industry) who came from the industrial area of the eastern part of the Netherlands talked a different language. They talked of a *menschwaardig bestaan*, which translated means a "standard of living worthy of a human being." They believed, as all interventionists do, that the state can and should support individuals! These were men, influenced by Kuyperian ideas, who basically had a different philosophy than native Americans. The earlier immigrants adjusted easily to the American philosophy of freedom and individualism; those who came later and held Kuyperian ideas were more genuinely *foreigners* in thought and outlook.

Recent immigrants represent ideas still more interventionist. To a typical American the ideas of many of these newcomers

*For meaning of terms, interventionists and individualists and socialists, see June, 1955 issue.

appear to be plain socialism. Apparently, those ideas are in line with what is taught at the Free University of Amsterdam. The immigrants, too, seem to represent a *volte face*, an about face; they have interventionist and socialist ideas, just the opposite of the individualist ideas of those who came 75 years ago.

The sober fact is that Anti-Revolutionary ideas never won any real battles against the main thrust of the French Revolution. The Anti-Revolutionary party's ideas about society were from the beginning confusilated.

In what follows we attempt to put the problem in perspective as we see it. In doing so we surprise ourselves by ending with a different conclusion than our Dutch correspondent. He apparently believes that the Anti-Revolutionary party has made a genuine *volte face*, about face. It might be concluded from his view that at one time the Anti-Revolutionary party was sound, and has only lately deviated from sound principles. But as a native American, conditioned by American ideas rather than Continental ideas, we believe some of the basic ideas of the Anti-Revolutionary party were never sound. On some issues we are dealing, we have concluded, not with a *volte face* but with nothing more than the inevitable *harvest* from the seed sown by Abraham Kuyper.

Kuyper was a theologian turned politician. He lamented that he never had had training in the social sciences; he admits his own disqualifications. But after doing so, he then proceeds doctrinairely to talk on many subjects on which he obviously had no real knowledge.

Kuyper made the attack on the ideas of the French Revolution a great part of his program. Kuyper even named his party the Anti-Revolutionary party.

We select three features of the French Revolution for brief mention:

1. The hostility of the French Revolution to religion;
2. The liquidation of the French monarchy;
3. The claim of the French Revolution to the power of *regulating* the lives of its citizens for the *public* good.

1. With Kuyper we concur completely on item number one. We condemn the French Revolution for its heavy attacks on Christianity. (But the attack of the French Revolution on Christianity was not something peculiar to the French Revolution. Many governments have been hostile to Christianity.)

2. In contrast to Kuyper we have small concern with the liquidation of the Bourbon monarchy. We are not Continental in devotion to a royal house. This question of unseating a monarchy — one of the powers that be — leaves us uninterested. We are, therefore, indifferent to point two.

3. The third point is a very important point. The French Revolution was a *political* phenomenon. It must be judged politically. The political phenomenon was vitally concerned with two matters:

- a. The relation of (human) government to God.
- b. The relation of government to the people.

These are the two political issues posed by the French Revolution.

At this time we concern ourselves only with the second point, namely, what is the relation of government to its people. We expressed the same question differently earlier, namely, were the theorists for the French Revolution right when they argued that government has the proper authority for *regulating* the lives of its citizens for the alleged *public* good? Or, as we posed the problem in earlier issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, does the neighbor have legitimate claims (expressed individually or collectively) against any man beyond what Scripture teaches on the law of neighborly love?

To these questions the French Revolution said: Yes, the people have a claim against each individual which claim has no boundary. The individual must bow to the group. This is an interventionist and socialist and anti-individualist idea.

To these questions Abraham Kuyper also said: Yes, the government may make claims on each individual which claim goes beyond the claim an individual may have against another individual.

To these questions PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM says: No, the government may make no claim on an individual, which claim goes beyond the claim an individual may have against another individual.

In short, on one of the two basic *political* questions posed by the French Revolution, Kuyper basically accepted an interventionist position. He was, on the real issue, unwittingly in the camp of the French Revolution.

Let us merely consider Kuyper's interventionist ideas on a very delicate subject, his idea of a *menschaardig bestaan*, usually called in English, a living wage. He would not leave that to private charity. Oh no, that was a matter beyond private charity; it was a matter of taking by unscriptural laws from one to give to another. A government, he held, had that legitimate authority.

The French Revolutionists had the same idea regarding the proper authority of a government. The French Revolution led to an unscriptural society, to interventionism and socialism. The *volte face* of the Free University is exactly in the same direction. The fruit of the Anti-Revolutionary party's present ideas are the same as the fruit of the ideas of the French Revolution. If the fruit is the same, the tree must also be the same. If the Free University of Amsterdam is now presenting the same fruit as the French Revolution but with a Calvinist label, it is worth some space in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to show that basically the root of the French Revolution is the same root on which the interventionist and socialist ideas among so-called Calvinists grow.

If there is anything wrong in our acquaintance's statement about a *volte face* at the Free University, it is this: it is not really an about face; it is merely the inevitable harvest from a root which always was unscriptural, the root that the neighbor's claims are the standard for morality between men.

We intend to show in future issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, that Kuyper basically accepted the same *underlying political premise* as did the French Revolution. The Anti-Revolutionary party was misnamed.

The founder of the party was confusilated.

F. N.

Professor W. H. Jellema on: That Takes Study

In February, 1955, there was a homecoming program at Calvin College for old graduates. At four o'clock on February 25, there was a special lecture by Professor W. H. Jellema, head of the Philosophy Department, on the subject "The Golden Rule."

The lecture has interested us greatly. Here is a brief summary:

1. There is a naturalistic interpretation of the rule, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and it is rejected as being the wrong one and impracticable. The natural interests of the neighbor constitute no claim or obligation on a person. The criterion, whether our own or our neighbors' natural interests and desires, is naturalistic or materialistic.

2. As the law states — we must love our neighbor as *ourselves*. Now how are we to love ourselves? The answer is that we must love ourselves as God loves us. We must love in ourselves what God loves in us. Hence, we must love our neighbor as God loves us. We have no obligation to serve our neighbor's natural interests. We must promote in him what God wants us to promote in him.

3. But what does God want promoted in our neighbor?

- (a) It requires more than just not harming your neighbor, not killing him, not stealing from him, etc.
- (b) The reason for institutions as Calvin College is to determine what God wants promoted in our neighbors. That takes study.

The foregoing summary may not be letter perfect but it summarizes, we believe, the thought structure of the lecture.

Let us give a little thought to the ponderous idea: That takes study.

Three thousand three hundred years after Moses and 1,900 years after Christ there is to be research at Calvin College on what

God wishes us to love in ourselves and so in our neighbor. That takes study!

It may be questioned how wise it is to develop a faculty and a school where they are at this late date engaging in some abstruse and occult study of what God wants us to promote in ourselves, and that *that* is the clue on how we should love our neighbor.

We are reminded in this connection of Milton's "grand infernal peers, who reasoned high" on various points, and concerning whom Milton wrote, "They found no end, in wandering mazes lost." The research project proposed will finally be in "wandering mazes lost."

The lecture presented some interesting points. Let us consider them.

1. Jellema declares that our natural interests and desires are naturalistic and materialistic, and hence that they are suspect. That proposition we consider to be wholly false. The desire for food is naturalistic and materialistic, but does that make it wrong? We in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are not ascetes (that is, we are not exceedingly self-denying and austere). We believe in living lustily and enjoying life. The rejoinder may be that the desire for food which is *necessary* for life is not bad, but the desire for really *fine* food is bad. Why should it be? Solomon wrote:

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let not thy head lack oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy life of vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all thy days of vanity: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labor wherein thou laborest under the sun.

Why should we not consider that to be good advice? Solomon says: eat well, drink well, wear good clothes, get a good haircut and good hair oil, do not be unhappy with your wife (it is an insult to her if you are), and be merry and live with joy. Why? Solomon says that if you cannot do that, why work!!

But Jellema indicates that the naturalistic and the materialistic are suspect, are fundamentally not to be trusted — or, shall

we say, are sin? Our own opinion is that this life become a completely abnormal torture house if the "material" is suspect or evil.

But there are two things about the material that we do admit are evil, namely (1) the getting of the "material things" of life *at the expense of the neighbor*, and (2) the appraisal of the material without relation to the Creator.

There is no merit, whatever, in our opinion, to the proposition that material self-interest is wrong. It is the *wrong pursuit* of material self-interest that is wrong. The second proposition is as different from the first as night is different from day.

If this first proposition of Jellema fails, then of course, all of his subsequent points based on it become fictitious. The unrealistic point about legitimate self-interest being untrustworthy is the device by which the subsequent fanciful points are able to be presented.

2. Jellema in his second main point adroitly steers clear of a bad reef. He declared that we do not have an obligation to serve the neighbor's natural interests. This keeps him clear of basically accepting the principle underlying communism and socialism and interventionism, namely, the principle that the neighbor has a claim on me. Whether we are quoting Jellema exactly verbatim we do not remember, but when he indicated that "I have no obligation to serve your natural interests" he was, we believe, indubitably and admirably right.

Having escaped that submerged reef, he comes to his major proposition (again quoting from memory): We must promote in the neighbor what God wishes us to promote in ourselves and consequently in the neighbor.

Now note what is happening to the argument:

1. The neighbor does not have a *materialistic* or a naturalistic claim on you;

2. The neighbor does have a spiritual claim on you. This claim must apparently be beyond the gospel, because the accomplishment of how to meet this claim requires *study*. We believe the gospel is clear enough not to need more study. Appar-

ently it is a spiritual claim beyond the gospel that needs research at Calvin.

We think the statement by Jellema about promoting in the neighbor what God wants me to promote in the neighbor means practically nothing. The expression is foggy. Let it be defined. We consider it to be undefinable.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in earlier issues has specifically defined what our obligation is to our neighbors. We said it was to allow him liberty, cause him no harm, be forbearing and forgiving, show him charity when he needs it, and declare the gospel to him. We based those requirements on Scripture. We tried to omit nothing and to add nothing. If there is anything else — anything more of any kind whatever — that God wants us to promote to the neighbor, what is it?

Scripture, we believe, never went off on flights of fancy of what God wants promoted in the neighbor, *except the gospel*. There is nothing abstruse about that. What study does it need?

This proposition, that we must promote in the neighbor what God wants promoted in ourselves, is a decoy. The sole use of the idea is that it gets away from the *plain* common sense teaching of Scripture, and does make us the *servants of the neighbor on some vague, pseudo-lofty level*. The use of the idea is that it gets away from the last two words of the great commandment which last two words are not pious enough, *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*.

Jellema is complexifying the law beyond Moses and Christ. He would have it, *thou shalt love thy neighbor as God wants you to love yourself*. If that is the law, why was it not put that way in Scripture?

If Calvin College is engaging in profound research to fathom what God wants me to promote in myself and in you let us hear what it is, and let us get this research out of the college laboratory and into everyday practice.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is unsympathetic to all complexification.

F. N.

**New Magazine,
TOT VRIJHEID GEROEPEN (CALLED UNTO
LIBERTY), in the Netherlands**

The publishers of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM did not expect that their periodical would be universally accepted. We expected criticism; we were prepared for haughty contempt. Both came. We gratefully acknowledge the encouragement which we have received in various ways from various sources.

We wish to call attention at this time to what appears to be a parallel publication which has just been begun in the Netherlands. The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to us by Mr. M. A. van Wijngaarden, secretary of the editorial staff of the new publication:

May 5, 1955

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, volume I, number 1, sent by you to A. Zijlstra, Groningen, The Netherlands, has been read also by me.

I was very glad to read your paper, and for two reasons. Firstly, being a Calvinist myself, I rejoiced reading a paper written by fellow-Calvinists. I can subscribe to your Declarations.

Secondly, you published your paper almost at the same time as we, in the Netherlands, issued the periodical *Tot Vrijheid Geroepen* (i.e., *Called Unto Liberty*, taken from Galatians 5:13). Judging from number one of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, I can say that you and we strive after the same purposes, standing upon the same basis. You can imagine my gladness when I read your paper!

* * *

About our paper I can say that (a rarity for Holland!) Christians of various church-denominations and political parties joined in the editorial staff and the contributors. I myself am one of the editors, at the same

time the secretary of them. I therefore write this letter also on behalf of our paper.

I should like it if we could work with you in the propagation of our ideas, to the glory of God Almighty.

We have read the first three copies of *Tot Vrijheid Geroepen* with profound approval. The paper is oriented to the post-war economic and political problems of the Netherlands and of what was formerly known as the Dutch East Indies (now misnamed "Indonesia"), and is showing special interest in the tragedy of the island of Ambon and the Ambonese. Those practical problems are not ours but as their kinsmen we take sympathetic note of them.

It appears to us that in regard to principles we stand on the same foundation as *Tot Vrijheid Geroepen* does. We are anxious to hear more of what these writers have to say. The editorial staff contains a galaxy of distinguished names of Dutch statesmen, theologians and scholars in various fields.

Tot Vrijheid Geroepen is the organ of the "Stichting Johannes Althusius,* or as we would say in America, Johannes Althusius Institution. As followers of Althusius the editors of this periodical are taking a decided stand against usurpation of power by the government.

As in our country so in Holland more and more laws, regulations, and ordinances find a place on the statute books regulating the conduct of business and labor. Freedom of movement in these spheres is being curtailed by *gebod op gebod, en regel op regel* ("line upon line, and precept upon precept"). A "police state" or a "police community" is gradually developing in which the citizens ultimately will be forbidden to do anything that is not specifically permitted by law. Such legislation, controlling action by requiring the prior issue of licenses, is contrary to the God-ordained way in which the government (which carries the sword) only makes laws to forbid that which is evil, restraining evildoers and protecting the just.

*Johannes Althusius was born in Westphalia in 1557, studied law in Basel, and as a staunch Calvinist jurist became the champion of the rights and freedom of the people against the usurpation of power by kings and princes, the government in the days of yore.

As in our country so in Holland the government adopted during the war years what were considered to be emergency measures binding the hands of free enterprise. The best we can say for this is that it was a "necessary evil" (a contradiction in terms), necessary only because of war. The loyal citizenry in all warring countries are willing to submit to reasonable war restrictions and rules, however with the understanding that such rules will be relaxed and finally removed, as soon as there is peace. The freedom-loving segments of every nation are anxious to return to unrestricted prosperity — restoring free enterprise. But the interventionists, the socialists and the communists (whose basic ideas are the same, although differing in practice) having had a taste of regimentation and enjoying the "benefits" of so-called "social security" and the many soft and lucrative jobs in the bureaucracy, are loath to let go of their prey which they have for years so firmly held in their economic grasp.

The people of Holland are suffering from the same interventionist burdens imposed by the government from which we suffer. The followers of Johannes Althusius are organizing for battle. They will not consider the state (government) as the pyramid of human culture. They hold to the Biblical view that the state (government) is there because sin marred God's creature, and can serve only as an emergency bandage to cover the wounds of humanity.

We welcome the appearance of *Tot Vrijheid Geroepen*. We are in full sympathy with its principles as mentioned above. May the Spirit of God give guidance to the brethren and may their work be crowned by God's blessing.

Any of our readers who understand the Dutch, and are interested in free enterprise based on Calvinist principles, should order a subscription. A good knowledge of the Dutch language is essential. Address: Zomerdijkstraat 1, Amsterdam Z, Netherlands. Subscription price: fl. 2.50 in Holland; \$1.00 should suffice for U.S.A. and Canada.

J. V. M.

Information To Readers

I

We prepared four articles for this issue in order to illustrate the extent of confusilation and complexification in Calvinistic circles. But we overran our space and the fourth article is being held for a future issue, maybe sometime in the fall. The title of that article is: "A Common Grace Declaration; a Gentle Modification of the Harsh Calvinist Doctrine of Reprobation." We think the article outlines a very interesting confusilation.

II

Readers will have noted that **PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM** has a book format and size. Our plan is at the end of each year to bind the twelve issues in regular book form, and to advertise the books for sale.

Further, we are of the opinion that future readers will not understand the later articles unless they have read the earlier articles. As a general plan, therefore, we expect future members of the Progressive Calvinism League and future readers of **PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM** to acquaint themselves with the contents of early issues, before reading later issues. At the present time and for some time to come we are working only on the preliminary groundwork which we believe necessary for modernizing Calvinism, debarnaciling it of very dangerous ideas, and making it sincere again, instead of having it present to the "world" a sanctimonious front, namely, "love" which violates the law of Scripture and which promotes coercion under the mask of legality.

III

We are prepared to send out 5,000 sample copies of this issue. If you wish sample copies to mail out to friends, we shall be glad to accommodate you as long as we have any copies left.

IV

In connection with all this confusilation and complexification, we remember our psychiatrist's Indian (mentioned in our March, 1955 issue), who had been looking all day for his tepee, but to no

avail. Night was falling, and he was completely lost. And so he sat down and grunted: "Indian not lost, tepee lost."

V

The next issue will be largely devoted to the relation of the individual to the state. We consider this a most important issue. We shall give the naive interpretation of "the powers that be are of God" a real "touch of high life."

VI

Prospective members of the Progressive Calvinism League know much more about us after reading seven issues. To those who are like-minded and have courage we extend another invitation that they join the league. One of these days the League will take steps to become active in practical fields. Be with us from the beginning. All who join in the first year will be considered charter members.

VII

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM differs radically from popular present-day Calvinism, which has become confusilated. The cause of the confusilation is twofold: (1) the real meaning of the "law of God" has been lost (for example, coercion is not sin but is brotherly love) and in its place a vague and vicious theory of "love" has been substituted; and (2) the pseudo-science of the current age has been adopted as if it were a native "Calvinist culture."

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

AUGUST, 1955

NUMBER 8

Contents

	Page
The Problem of the Real Meaning of Neo-Orthodoxy	209
Barth versus Brunner, on Communism	213
"The End Justifies the Means!"	216
"The Powers That Be Are Ordained of God"	218
Machiavelli, on Property and Women	239

The Problem of the Real Meaning of Neo-Orthodoxy

Two Different Meanings of the Term, Neo-Orthodox

The word *orthodox* is a word frequently used in religious and especially Christian circles. To be *orthodox* means that you hold to the traditional views, that you are faithful to long-accepted ideas, and that consequently you are to be trusted in that regard. If you *are* orthodox, the only question about your reliability in religious ideas is not whether you hold to the traditional ideas, but whether the traditional ideas are true.

To be *neo-orthodox* (newly orthodox) means that you are a participant in a revival of orthodoxy, or that you return to an abandoned orthodoxy but with some new features not inconsistent with the basic ideas of the old orthodoxy.

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

If it is not true that you are orthodox or neo-orthodox, you may still *claim* that you are orthodox or neo-orthodox, in order to quiet people's suspicions and to make them receptive to your ideas. To have the name, orthodox, or neo-orthodox, promotes good public relations for you among the devout; it is a valuable reputation in some quarters.

The word, neo-orthodox, can have another meaning. There may be an accepted orthodox position, and also a deviationist, nonorthodox position, but a third person may come along and retreat some from the nonorthodox position, or may *seem* to retreat from it. Such a retreat may be very great and practically may make a man orthodox, or it may be only a minor retreat or only a seeming retreat. Casual or inexperienced observers, merely seeing some retreat from certain nonorthodox positions, may then declare or imply that the retreat has been far enough to justify the term *neo-orthodox*, whereas as a matter of fact there has been no real return to orthodoxy. When the term, neo-orthodox, is applied to such a situation, it is not descriptive of fact.

The term, neo-orthodox, should be used only when it is descriptive of a genuine return to a traditional position.

Two Famous Modern Theologians Whose Ideas Are Described as Neo-Orthodox

The ideas of Karl Barth and of Emil Brunner, two Swiss theologians, are called neo-orthodox. Both men were reared in the Reformed tradition in the churches of Switzerland, the land where Calvin spent most of his adult life. Their ideas which are described as neo-orthodox would, therefore, naturally appeal to Calvinists throughout the world, wherever neo-orthodoxy is assumed to be a revival of genuine Calvinist orthodoxy.

Barth and Brunner are world famous. Their ideas have had a great impact on the clergy in the various denominations. This is also true in part for the Christian Reformed church. There are preachers and educators who have devoted much time to reading the books of Barth and Brunner and who quote them extensively. Some preachers in the denomination have been sufficiently influenced toward Barthian ideas through certain intellectuals in

the field of education to declare that the writings of Karl Barth are a source of "inspiration" when preparing sermons.

There are, it should be noted, few *bold* and *conspicuous* and *intransigent* anti-Barthians in the Christian Reformed church. It is possible to be anti-anti-Barthian and be in good standing in this denomination.

It is possible to be in good standing in the sister church in the Netherlands (*De Gereformeerde Kerken*, Synodicals) and be not-unsympathetic to the ideas of Barth and Brunner. A fairly general position is that Barth and Brunner are both orthodox and not-orthodox, an equivocal position which paralyzes resistance to their ideas.

There is an outspoken anti-Barthian, Reformed theologian in this country, Dr. Cornelius Van Til, professor of Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary, and a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian church. But Van Til's criticism of Barth's ideas has not increased Van Til's acceptance among some of the "orthodox." The sentiment for Barth is strong enough to make some religious leaders reluctant to impair their public relations by being plainly critical of Barthian ideas.

The Bastardizing of Terms

Barth uses traditional religious terms. But he gives the terms new meanings. The average reader tends to read what is written with the same old meaning in mind for the various terms although he knows new definitions have been given. Even a reader who intends to be a careful reader cannot readily understand what is really being said.

In this connection we are reminded of an infamous modern economist, John Maynard Keynes. Keynes developed a set of terms all his own. Generally those terms were new even for economists, and were still less easily grasped and used as mental tools by lay readers. But whoever loved new terms, as if they represented new ideas or useful tools for sound thinking, would certainly be beguiled by Keynes' repertoire of new expressions. But one inevitable consequence was that it became difficult to realize fully what Keynes was alleging.

Actually, Keynes was able to cloak his presentation of long-exploded fallacies with a new plausibility by means of his new nomenclature and terminology. Keynes was able by that means to appear original, profound and sound. Actually he was befuddling his readers and followers by words, and submitting notorious old economic fallacies as great new truths.

Redefinition of terms is the best disguise for perpetrating personal self-deception and an intellectual hoax on readers that is available to an ingenious mind.

What any man writes can be interpreted variously by others. But it is especially interesting to note that Barth has many admirers among both orthodox and nonorthodox theologians. This may be a phenomenon which indicates that Barth has made the non-orthodox to be orthodox, or the orthodox to be nonorthodox, or both the orthodox and the nonorthodox to be something different from what either were before, namely, just Barthian. Or, this phenomenon may indicate nothing more than confusion on the part of one or everybody. Surely, the lion and lamb are lying down together in an idyllic peace in the Barthian field.

Barth and Brunner In Regard to Economic and Political Problems

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM believes that it cannot ignore the ideas of Barth and of Brunner. But we have no intention of trailing after them in their various writings in the field of theology and philosophy. Barth and Brunner have both revealed their views on practical social, economic and political problems. Those happen to be fields in which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has definite convictions. And in those fields there is only one conclusion possible: either Barth and Brunner do not have real understanding regarding what they are talking about, or we do not. What they teach in the social sciences not only is mythological science and intellectual twaddle, but is, we believe, unscriptural and very bad ethics. This is especially true of Barth.

The surest hallmark of a wise man is that he knows *when* he does not know. The social science ideas of Barth and Brunner are obviously pronouncements of men who are speaking outside

of their field. It is a sad illusion to believe that you are a great surgeon *because* you are a great mathematician!

In fact, when a theologian sets himself up as a great social scientist just because he is a theologian, and when he reveals that he has no real knowledge of the social sciences, we suspect that he is not a good theologian either. (However, that conclusion is not a safe deduction. Einstein was a great mathematician and physicist but a wretched social scientist, although he commented doctrinairely on problems in the latter field.)

Barth and Brunner have not always agreed. The one is not to be held accountable for what the other wrote or said. Their ideas must be considered separately.

Neo-orthodoxy in its pronouncements in the social science fields will be given a critical examination by us. We do not in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM accept *words* at their face value. There is too much humbug in religion which is nothing more than a play on words.

F. N.

Barth versus Brunner, on Communism

Barth is "soft" on communism. Brunner has disagreed with Barth on that.

Some of the shorter post-war writings of Barth have been translated and published under the title, *Against the Stream*.

In that book there is a reprint of some *Correspondence* between Brunner and Barth. It consists of (a) *An Open Letter from Emil Brunner to Karl Barth*, in which Brunner asks "how come" that you were outspoken against Hitler but are soft on communism; and of (b) *Karl Barth's Reply*. In this controversy between Brunner and Barth our views are similar to Brunner's views.

We shall in later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM challenge various ideas of Barth as they are outlined in *Against the Stream*.

We consider Barth to have the most dangerous social science ideas of any present-day famous theologian.

We have received permission of *The Freeman*, the outstanding monthly publication in the field of libertarian social science, to reprint its book review of *Against the Stream*, by Rev. Edmund O. Opitz, a Unitarian minister.

Note in the following reprint the quotation by Opitz from Barth: "It would be absurd . . . to mention a man of the stature of Joseph Stalin in the same breath as such charlatans as Hitler . . ." PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM does not consider Stalin to have been a "man of stature" nor in any way better than Hitler. Stalin is properly described as the greatest butcher in the history of mankind, in comparison with whom Hitler was only a second-rate butcher, and in comparison with whom Genghis Khan and Nero are not to be mentioned. And Barth calls the most infamous butcher of all time a "man of stature!" Our readers will begin to understand how strongly our values differ from those of Barth.

The Opitz review (from *The Freeman*, page 579, July 1955) follows:

Man Belittled

What Keynes is among economists, so is Karl Barth among theologians. The list of orthodox Barthians who go right down the line for the master is small, but almost all contemporary theologians acknowledge an indebtedness to him. It was Barth who made the sharpest break with the optimistic and shallow liberal theology which collapsed in the debacle of our age. Western civilization suffered most in Europe as a result of two world wars, and consequently it was there that men were in deepest reaction against the thinking that had prevailed in the era preceding the first great war. Barthianism took hold during the twenties and received the label Continental or Crisis Theology.

Barth's massive output is volcanic and somewhat chaotic. He himself warns us against any canonizing of his results up to date, but the general drift and tendency of his thought is reasonably clear. There is in it repeated

stress on the illimitable gulf between God and man; there is disparagement of human righteousness if it thinks by moral effort to accomplish anything significant; there is a general devaluation of the earth and its concerns. Natural theology—the effort to trace the workings of the Creator in the order, harmony, balance and goodness in the universe—is discarded; and so is mystical theology—the effort of persons to discover “the Beyond that is Within” and to live by the laws they find written in the deepest part of the soul.

The practical consequences of this kind of teaching outweigh the theoretical, but one theoretical observation is pertinent. If man is as impotent and reason as dubious as some modern philosophies declare them to be, how can we know this? To say, in effect, that reason is competent to declare itself incompetent is an absurdity, and raises questions about any philosophy that so concludes.

On its practical side, an ideology which belittles man will make every man small who accepts it as applying to himself. Some men will stagger under its weight and affirm their own weakness and incompetence. They will be just the sort of raw material the men who long to rule are looking for. We live in an era of big government, but before you can have big government you must have little men. Many modern ideologies have tended to make men little, and have in that way been pressed into the service of the omnipotent State. Barth's has been one of these. Barth himself has favored socialism, but while he opposes communism he still refuses to utter against it the unequivocal negative which he opposed to Nazism. “It would be absurd,” he writes in the present volume, “. . . to mention a man of the stature of Joseph Stalin in the same breath as such charlatans as Hitler.”

Against the Stream is a collection of Barth's postwar writings on social questions, and in particular on the political issue between East and West. Those who take that issue seriously will be advised not to ignore this portentous book.

It will be very, very hard for PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to develop enthusiasm for the ideas of any man, especially any theologian who describes Stalin as a "man of stature."

F. N.

"The End Justifies the Means!"

In his essay, "The Church between East and West" (*Die Kirche zwischen Ost und West*, 1949) Barth writes (page 139, *Against the Stream*; Philosophical Library, New York, 1954):

... But if we have learned to discriminate by taking a glance at the French Revolution and at our so-called 'Christian era', if, as I hope, we do not condemn the Asiatic world outright simply because some form or other of despotism has always been, and very largely still is, the accepted form of public life, then it is pertinent not to omit to discriminate in our view of contemporary Communism between its totalitarian atrocities as such and the positive intention behind them. And if one tries to do that, one cannot say of Communism what one was forced to say of Nazism ten years ago—that what it means and intends is pure unreason, the product of madness and crime. It would be quite absurd to mention in the same breath the philosophy of Marxism and the 'ideology' of the Third Reich, to mention a man of the stature of Joseph Stalin in the same breath as such charlatans as Hitler, Göring, Hess, Goebbels, Himmler, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, Streicher, etc. What has been tackled in Soviet Russia—albeit with very dirty and bloody hands and in a way that rightly shocks us—is, after all, a constructive idea, the solution of a problem which is a serious and burning problem for us as well, and which we with our clean hands have not yet tackled anything like energetically enough: the social problem.

What does Barth do in this quotation? He does the following:

1. Barth advances in the foregoing quotation the principle that the *end justifies the means*. Some branches of Christ-

endom have tarnished their otherwise great names by succumbing to the temptation to teach the idea of compromise by the use of that dangerous principle. But Christianity finally has always rejected that infamous rule. That Barth appeals to this rule to defend communism is clear if his statements, separated by other material, are pieced together as Barth actually put them together although at fairly widely separated points. He writes:

I hope we do not condemn the Asiatic world [Russia] outright because some form or other of despotism has always been . . . the accepted form of public life [there] . . . It is . . . pertinent . . . to discriminate . . . between its totalitarian atrocities as such and the positive intention behind them: . . . [Communism is not] pure unreason, the product of madness and crime, [but the tackling of a] constructive problem, [namely] the solution of . . . : the social problem.

Barth declares that communism is not "madness and crime" and that the monstrous deeds of communism are to be judged more leniently than Nazism because the communists are working *constructively* on the solution of "the social problem." God help us all if that is true. And it is in that connection that he looks on Stalin as a man of stature and on Hitler *et al* as charlatans (quacks, deceivers)! A more unalloyed defense of the immoral idea, the end justifies the means, we have never read.

Barth is not in this a teacher of morality but of immorality. He is not a teacher of wisdom but of folly. It amazes us that any man expects the good to come from the evil as a natural fruit of the evil—in this case, "social justice" as the product of violation of the law of God! This doctrine of Barth appears to be a variation of the Marxian doctrine that when the communist society is established brotherly love finally will exist everywhere and the state (coercion) will wither away; but in the meanwhile coercion (synonymous with complete violation of the Second Table of the Law) will be the means by which the good end may be attained!

2. Barth excuses one evil (Eastern despotism) by another alleged evil (Western misgovernment). A practical politician might

reason in that manner, but is that the Christian religion? In fact, it is a regular feature in Barth's thinking to deny a general principle and to declare each instance should be judged uniquely. An easy shift from principles to opportunism is not for us a hallmark of true religion or true ethics. Barth, of that one may be certain, is no genuinely enlightened prophet in moral and ethical affairs. (His stand against Hitler is unqualifiedly to his credit. He is also right that those, at a safe distance from Iron Curtain countries, are not realistic advisers to Christians in dire danger.)

There is nothing original in Barth's social thinking. He is a plagiarist. He is merely a preacher who stands at a baptismal font and piously baptizes unmitigated evil with the toleration of neo-orthodoxy because that evil is assumed to have a good purpose. It is a phony baptism and a disgrace to Christendom.

F. N.

"The Powers That Be Are Ordained of God"

Obey A Good Government, But What About A Bad Government

The statement used as a title to this analysis is quoted from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. The full quotation reads:

Romans 13:1-7. Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an

avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause ye pay tribute also, for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is *due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

We rank this text from Scripture higher as a cause of immoral confusion among so-called Christians (and Calvinists) than any other text. This text has given rise, we believe, to more foolish interpretations of man's relation to government than any other text. We shall give two examples just to make clear what the problem is.

1. In World War II Hitler overran the Netherlands (as Stalin later overran the Balkan countries including Hungary). What should the Netherlands do, including the Calvinist Netherlands? Should they "obey" Hitler and thereby cooperate with him? Here we have an acute practical problem on the relation between men and government.

We have been told that a well-known man at that time connected with the Free University of Amsterdam reasoned as follows and recommended a corresponding course of action.

- A. All the powers that be are of God.
- B. The powers that be of God should be obeyed.
- C. Hitler is certainly one of the "powers that be."
- D. Consequently, Hitler should be obeyed.

We are told that this reasoning had some of our Netherlands' brethren confused and undecided for some time. Finally, they decided to reject that reasoning. The man (I think) was removed or retired from the Free University staff. It was too much for the Netherlands' brethren to develop any enthusiasm on religious grounds for cooperating with the second-greatest butcher of the age, Hitler. We think the Netherlands' brethren concluded correctly, although we do not admire any delay or lack of firmness in their reaching their conclusion. It is not necessary to have a Scripture text to justify refusal to cooperate with a base scoundrel as Hitler.

2. In a Christian Reformed church a minister recently preached on "insubordination." He chose his text from the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram against Moses (Numbers 16). These three men, it will be remembered, are reported to have perished with their families in a chasm in the earth's surface. Their "insubordination" was *summarily* punished.

The speaker developed the idea that any dissent against those in authority is a heinous sin. The moral was: *always* concur; *always* agree; *always* obey; the powers that be are ordained of God; if you do not obey, the terrible punishment of God may soon afflict you. Further, the speaker developed the idea that such dissent, that is, insubordination, is a disguised manifestation of envy and pride. If you disagree with a church board or those in "authority over you" you are manifesting a wish to have their authority and to supersede them.

Not once was mention made in the sermon to the fundamental question regarding who had *right* or *justice* or the *law of God* on his side. That apparently was irrelevant. The theme was that any insubordination is sin. "The powers that be are ordained of God," and Christianity requires universal obedience.

We aim to show in this and the next following issue that the two interpretations just summarized of the Apostle Paul's statement, the powers that be are ordained of God, are patently contrary to the meaning of the Apostle. We aim, further, to show that great damage is done by those who misinterpret Scripture as has been described. The worst damage is that it makes those who profess the Christian religion aiders and abettors of iniquity in high places and, of course, also makes them look foolish as moralists.

We consider interpretations as outlined in the foregoing to be immoral.

The Meaning Required By The Context

The *context* of the statement, the powers that be are ordained of God, clearly reveals what the obvious and only interpretation is which can be given to the text.

The whole quotation clearly refers to a *good* government and a good government only. The Apostle Paul recommends that we obey only a government promoting the good.

Paul was a Roman citizen, who prized his citizenship, and who had generally found the Roman government to be a rather satisfactory government. The Romans, after all, were famous for their attempts to promote justice. Paul's work as a missionary had undoubtedly been promoted by the wide domain of Roman government and the *general* attitude of that government. (Obviously there were local exceptions.) Paul identified the current Roman government with a government ordained and favored by God. But note that his unqualified restriction obviously is this: that Roman government must and would operate on the *principle of rewarding the good and restraining the evil*. Consider what he writes:

For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good and thou shalt have praise from the same; for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.

About twice as much space is used by Paul to make clear that he is talking about a *good* government *only* than he gives to the admonition to obey that government.

If men insist on reading Paul's rule out of its context an obvious and grievous error of interpretation will result. Anyone reading the rule *must* read the reason for the rule. Paul says: Obey the powers that be *because* they reward the good and restrain the evil.

If the basic instruction of Paul is to be correctly understood without the use and aid of the accompanying elaboration which he gives, then the text must read:

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers *that are good*; for there is no *good* power but of God; and the *good* powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore

he that resisteth the *good* power, withstandeth the ordinance of God.

The words italicized have been added to replace the qualification by Paul himself appearing in verses three through five previously quoted.

Other references in Scripture to obeying the "powers that be" have the same *assumption* underlying the requirement of obedience, namely, that the government is essentially *good*. There are no exceptions to this.

There are two other notes sounded in Scripture. One is by the Apostle John in the last book in Scripture, Revelation. The other is by Solomon who gives some *practical* advice.

The Apostle John had experienced less favorable treatment of the Roman government than the Apostle Paul had. John, near the end of his life had been banished to a lonely Mediterranean island, the island of Patmos. There, with a vision of the future, he considered the eventual and final government of the world to be the greatest possible organized evil, or as he called it, the Great Beast (Chapter 13). Nowhere does John recommend cooperating with such an evil government, and nowhere does he say that God requires us to cooperate (by obedience) with such an evil government.

These two contrary notes, one by Paul and the other by John—one to obey a government and the other that it is a monstrous beast—cannot be reconciled unless they describe different circumstances, a *good* government in the first instance and an *evil* government in the second instance. These statements by the two apostles clearly do not state principles which are universal regardless of facts and circumstances. They both state principles only as they apply to the assumed circumstances, or more correctly, not the *assumed* circumstances but the circumstances which the surrounding contexts indicate are the *specific and only circumstances which the writer, whether Paul or John, is taking into account*.

Solomon, as was also mentioned, refers in his wisdom books to the problem of obedience to a government. His approach to the problem is wholly practical. He warns against rash rebellion

against a government by admonishing against joining yourself with firebrands who cause social and political disturbance. Solomon merely counsels prudence and advises against the dangers of participating in political rebellion. Undoubtedly he remembered what he had done to those who had been rebellious against him. The founders of the United States in their great Declaration of Independence said that in their rebellion against England they pledged about everything—"their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor." They knew what risks they were taking! But they took them.

Power versus Authority

It will be helpful at this point to make a distinction between *power* and *authority*.

To a man who believes in a Supreme Being who is the Creator and the Sustainer of all things it will appear indisputable that all *power* as mere *power* is from God. The most sainted of men gets his *power* from God; and the most wicked of men gets his *power* from God. On this basis we are all obviously completely dependent on God. This definition of *power* refers merely to strength and ability to act. It has nothing to do with the idea of rightness or wrongness, or the favor or disfavor of God. In the sense outlined *power* merely designates some kind of force, but has nothing to do with morality.

If the word *powers* in the expression, the powers that be are ordained of God, is interpreted to mean mere might or ability to impose a will, then all devout theists will immediately agree that, the powers that be are ordained of God. But such an expression does not help in any way to solve the problem of what to do about what is right and what is wrong. *Power* and *powers* as defined refer merely to physical or mental strength and capability of action. Morally it has no meaning.

Further, unquestionably in the inscrutable plan of God there is a place for evil in the world. In that sense, God permitted the evil as well as the good. It can also be said then that the evil powers that be are *ordained* by God. But that certainly cannot mean to a devout Christian that they are *approved* by God and should receive cooperation in the form of obedience.

Instead of the word *power* there is another word which we consider useful in this connection, namely, the word *authority*. For us *authority* is limited to the idea of *proper* power, *legitimate* exercise of power, and *responsible* exercise of power. To have authority means to have a good title to what you are doing. (*Authority* can, of course, be interpreted to mean mere power or the original *derivation* of power from a legitimate source, but we are giving *authority* a specific definition for our purposes.) *Authority* for us, is power obtained from an acknowledged source, accountable to that source, and exercised according to the right rules set by the source.

We submit the following as sound ideas and principles:

1. The ultimate source of authority is always God;
2. The responsibility for the exercise of that authority is also to God;
3. The right rules for exercising authority must be clearly stated in what is declared to be and accepted to be the special revelation of God *or otherwise there is no practical significance to the statement that God is the source of authority.*
4. Therefore, unless authority (whoever exercises it and whatever it is) is based on the rules set by God that authority need not be obeyed.

Authority, then, is something quite different from *power*. *Authority* involves the idea of rightness, and justice, and of being workable, and useful to all, and suitable to obtain the end sought. Now, if Scripture authorizes an *authority* which violates those ideas, then Scripture gives a stamp of approval to an evil government, a thought repulsive to every responsible and well-intentioned man. Scripture, of course, does nothing of the sort.

What is it then that gives a government genuine authority? And when is a person obligated to obey and when obligated to disobey a government? Is there anything in Scripture which unqualifiedly gives the answer to such questions? We believe that there is, but the statement does not appear in any of the writings of either Paul or John. The only simple and comprehen-

sive statement regarding what is legitimate power, that is, what is *authority*, was stated by the Apostle Peter. His great principle, which we consider fundamental, was expressed when Peter was in a dangerous situation before the high priest and his party. That great principle is:

Acts 5:29b. We must obey God rather than men.

When, then, preachers in various Reformed churches speaking in the pulpits of their denomination, or a member of the staff of a university which has the word "free" in its title, or a religious leader whose ideas are called neo-orthodox—whether they or anyone else declares that it is required of Christians to obey a government regardless of whether it is right or wrong, and regardless whether it observes what is declared to be the revealed will of God, there can be only one conclusion, namely, those teachers are declaring a doctrine which sets human power above divine authority. Consequently, we hold that no government should be obeyed which does not operate according to the revealed will of God; the corollary is: every government should be disobeyed which does not operate according to the revealed will of God. We consider it to be as great a sin to obey an evil government as to disobey a good government.

We are not at this time considering the *serious* practical problem on how to disobey, that is, how to go about it in order not to make a futile gesture against an evil power and end up on the scaffold, or before a firing squad, or in a concentration camp, or in exile. That is the problem with which Solomon concerned himself as has already been mentioned. That large and difficult problem is reserved for future consideration. We have no hesitancy, however, in saying that we shall be as practical as Solomon.

The Reputation of Calvinists Regarding Loyalty to Government

Various Calvinists throughout the years have expressed some of the most sonorous ideas regarding loyalty to a government that have ever been expressed. They have outdone all other

branches of Christendom in the *profession* of loyalty. This is probably because they are in the tradition of the Apostle Paul whose statement in Romans (previously quoted) demands obedience to government (but as we have shown the statement is restricted to *good* government). But such talk about obedience to "the powers that be" has been somewhat inappropriate. The talk about obedience was in part contradicted by the record. Instead of being especially loyal subjects, the Calvinists have an actual record of being bold rebels.

Some of their declarations about their loyalty were inspired by their known reputation of not being loyal. One of the *standards* of the Christian Reformed church is the "Belgic Confession" written by Guido de Brès. One of the reasons why this Confession was prepared by De Brès was "to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were no rebels, as was laid to their charge, but law abiding citizens . . ." (The words are quoted from the official Introduction to the "Belgic Confession" on page two of the *Psalter Hymnal* used by the Christian Reformed church.) The fact is that when Guido de Brès wrote his "Belgic Confession" the Low Countries had for decades been disturbed by rebellion stirred up by Calvinists—and properly so.

The Swiss, the English, the Scotch, the Netherlanders, the Americans—all in past history with a large Calvinist population—have been famous for their love of independence and have been notorious for their preparedness to rebel against a government.

The record of deeds is the finest feather in the Calvinist hat.

In regard to *words* about obedience to government, Calvinists have cooed as harmless doves, but their *action* has been uninhibited and courageous.

But that record has not been all courage or prudence. There is also evidence of basic confusion. There are some absurd and uncomfortable contradictions in the generally accepted *doctrines* of Calvinists on the relation of men to government. It is these confusions and contradictions which we shall now set out to explore. What are those contradictions and how remove them? To accomplish that should result in sounder action by Calvinists and a more consistent record.

There is no Direct Authority From God

Set before yourself two propositions and select the one and reject the other:

Proposition 1: Those who have power have a *direct* authority from God.

Proposition 2: Those who have power have *only* an *indirect* authority from God.

Proposition Number One is usually accepted by members of the Christian Reformed church. We consider Proposition Number One to be erroneous. We accept Proposition Number Two only.

The ambiguity and confusion that exists can be made clear by considering what the denomination teaches about the Fifth Commandment, which commandment is the source used to justify the exercise of power or alleged authority. The "Heidelberg Catechism," one of the three standards of the Christian Reformed church, in Lord's Day XXXIX declares the following:

Question: What does God require in the Fifth Commandment?

Answer: That I show all honor, love and fidelity to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me; submit myself with due obedience to their good instruction and correction; and also bear patiently with their weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand.

Let us consider the ideas which the foregoing quotation presents:

1. Note that the position of a government is equated with that of parents. That is a very large extension and generalization.

2. Note that the word *authority* is used without being defined as *proper* power (as we defined it) but *implying* proper power. By not defining authority a later ambiguity is hid; see point five following.

3. Note how carefully the word *good* is slipped in ahead of the words, *instruction and correction*. Of course, no one can take exception to *good* instruction and correction; who can argue against that? But the problem is, what is *good*? Nobody, not even the authors of a church standard, can prove anything by the use of an adjective.

4. Note, next, the smooth transition to bearing "patiently with . . . the weaknesses and shortcomings" of parents and governments. This forbearance is hardly arguable; *forbearance*, we have admitted, is fundamental to all brotherly relations. But what about *sins* of governments?

5. Note, finally, what appears to be an entirely different proposition: "It pleases God to govern us by their [parents *and* governments'] hand." This is a proposition concerning *power* and not concerning *authority*. According to this it *pleased* God to put Hitler and Stalin over their respective nations! This proposition indicates that parents and governments are *direct* agents of God, and not that they are agents only when they are *good* governors. There is no plain statement here whatever about obeying God more than men.

The answer in the Catechism to the question asked clearly indicates the authors of the Confession were defective reasoners in this instance. It will be helpful to be more detailed.

The reasoning in Lord's Day XXXIX is *by analogy* (by a comparison). Everything in this Lord's Day in regard to government is based on an analogy (comparison) of the relation of children to parents. The government has authority over everybody as a parent has over children.

All reasoning by analogy is exceptionally treacherous. There is no more dangerous way of reasoning. And the analogy in this case is, we believe, completely invalid. Children are minors, are irresponsible, are helpless, are dependent. Of course, the parents *must* decide for such children. When could an infant be held accountable! And what is implied? This, that we are all wards of a government, as we were wards as children of our parents!

What, in fact, does Scripture teach to the contrary? This, that when a person is grown-up he is "on his own." He is no longer a ward of his parents; he leaves his father and mother, picks himself a wife, and sets up entirely for himself.

Behind this clumsy analogy in Lord's Day XXXIX there is a dangerous implication; that implication is that the necessary *authority* of a parent over a minor has genuine significance for the power of one adult over another. Under the cover of this plausible analogy we here have a specific case of confusion of *power* with *authority*. An *authority* over a minor based on physical necessity is extended to an *authority* over an adult not based on a physical necessity whatever. And when the transition is made to an adult there is no clear indication that the exercise of *authority* over an adult is something different from the exercise of *power* over an adult.

Power and *authority* are not even comingled when dealing with minors, because the Apostle Peter declared: "Children obey your parents, *in the Lord*"; and, *in the Lord* here means this: children obey your parents when their government is according to the law of God. But what is true between parents and children must be if anything more true between a government and adults. In our thinking, the authority of government is in no way derived from nor derivable from the authority of parents.

To show how important for the impression created by the answer in Lord's Day XXXIX its use of the word *authority* is, note how different the answer would sound if we substitute *power* for *authority*:

That I show all honor, love and fidelity to my father and mother, and to all who have [power] over me;

"All who have [power] over me" are to be grouped with my parents who have a natural affection for me and who felt responsible for me as a minor! Stalin or Hitler or any other tyrannical government mentioned in the same breath and to the same conclusion with my parents! The analogy is certainly as unfortunate as any imagination could develop.

Begin with the requirement to love father and mother, pass to all powers that be whether good or evil but use the word *authority* to imply a good power, slip in the adjective *good* in regard to their activities, concede they have weaknesses or shortcomings but do not refer to their sins, and then declare finally that they have proper title to rule over us regardless whether they are good or evil (*because*) "since it *pleases* God to govern us by their hand." (Does the *please* refer to good government or bad government?)

The authors of the "Heidelberg Catechism" have, it is obvious, really reversed their position before completing their answer. They began with authority and they end with *power*. They do not meet up with the problem of *authority*, as *proper* power, at all. They confused themselves and they confuse their readers. The *only* practical question between men and government is *proper* power. But when the "Heidelberg Catechism" teaches that authority is as direct for a government over me as an adult, as the authority of my fond parents over me as a newborn babe, it is necessary to remonstrate. Parents (except when obviously unfit) are always expected to be a beneficent factor in a child's life. But the same expectation cannot apply to the relations between men and governments. Governments are not *natural* benefactors; governments are *natural* enemies, and will continue to be so until men are no longer deprived.

Yes, of course, we agree with the "Heidelberg Catechism"; we believe in honoring, loving and showing fidelity to parents. And, of course, we are pleased to obey *good* governments. But what about obeying *bad* governments? What is the answer to *that*? There is no answer to *that* question in the "Heidelberg Catechism," but it *appears* that you are to show honor, love and fidelity—note it, *honor, love and fidelity*—to a Stalin, a Hitler, and every tyrannical, unjust, cruel, destructive government in the world!

We return to the alternative propositions which appear at the beginning of this section, the two propositions which are really contradictory propositions: those who have power have a *direct* authority from God; and those who have power have *only* an *indirect* authority from God. We shall explain what we mean

by the second proposition which is the only proposition that is sound.

**The Path of
Indirect Authority
From God**

Calvinists appear to have two ways to "elevate" their thoughts to God.

One way is to go out on a cloudless night, away from a smoky city, and to look at the heavens. Calvinists consider the mighty universe within the range of the eye of man, and humble themselves before the Creator.

But there is a second way for some Calvinists to get a similar inspiration. In this case they go out in broad daylight, and they again cast their eyes to the heavens. This time they see the most magnificent pipe line system ever devised. From out in space, from the throne of God, they see a myriad of pipe lines. Every line carries "power" direct from God! The idea is that if a man has power, and if power is from God, it must be piped somehow directly from God to man.

But this second source of inspiration has always eluded us, or maybe it has been denied us. Instead of such a pipe line system for the transmission of authority from God to men, we have been constrained to accept a far simpler scheme. Our idea of that transmission system is as follows.

1. Every king, potentate, congress, parliament, dictator, church, prelate, synod or general assembly which has claimed *direct* authority from God for its (or his) exercise of power has erred; no man or group of men can or may properly claim direct authority from God. It is a piece of over-weening arrogance, a hubris.

2. Every proper exercise of *authority* consists, not in appealing to a divine *origin* of that power, but in appealing to a valid *exercise* of authority.

3. The so-called "authority from God" is neither a manifestation of bald power to act nor an automatic blessing from God because that power to act exists, *but is based on obeying the*

revealed will of God, in short, obeying the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. The authority of any government rests on its establishing laws based on and in conformity with the Decalogue, specifically the Second Table of the Decalogue (Commandments V through X).

4. The authority of government does not rest on the Fifth Commandment, honor thy father and thy mother, but on the submission of its conduct by government to the general provisions of the Decalogue, especially the Second Table of the Law, namely: honor thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt not kill, commit adultery, steal, lie, nor covet. (The exact position of the commandments in the First Table of the Law needs separate consideration for which space is now lacking.) In other words, the authority of government is validated or invalidated by its obedience or disobedience to the Decalogue. The writers of the "Heidelberg Catechism" should have founded their requirement to obey government not on the Fifth Commandment but on the Fifth to Tenth (especially six through nine) commandments.

5. The title to authority over *ordinary* people does not finally rest on some *source*, such as a president of a corporation, or a king, or a parliament, or a dictator, or a synod. Authority in such cases depends finally on whether it does good to the people over which rule is held. If it does not do those ordinary people any good, why should they submit? But how can those people expect to be benefited by some rule over them unless that rule is in accordance with some undoubted, universally beneficent law, in this case, the best one known, the Decalogue. People will always benefit from a government operating according to the Decalogue.

6. Governments not based on the Decalogue should be disobeyed in specific cases. If a government *generally* disobeys the Decalogue that government should be destroyed and replaced.

7. It is not necessary to be hesitant for *reasons of principle* about overthrowing a government generally violating the Decalogue. It may be desirable to be cautious for *practical reasons* to overthrow a government generally violating the Decalogue.

8. The form of a government, whether monarchy, aristocracy or democracy, is unimportant relative to the basic question whether that government is based, not on alleged power piped directly from God but instead, on authority derived from obeying the revealed will of God. No government which exercises authority based on the revealed will of God will be found burdensome.

9. The reason for preferring representative government to dictatorship is that representative government permits those who are ruled, for the promotion of their own welfare, to insist on a government in accordance with or closer to the principles of the Decalogue than that government would be if the people did not have that means of protecting their self-interest, namely, the means which consists in representative government. If a government based on a representative system becomes oppressive by deviating from the Decalogue (which is the only way for a government to become oppressive), then a representative government permits the election of a government which will adhere more closely to the requirements of the Decalogue.

10. If the institution of representative government is lacking then bloody rebellion is the only agency left to accomplish relief.

11. "Authority from God," then, to us does not mean a pipe line of power from God permitting arbitrary and evil conduct based on such power, but instead: conformity to the revealed will of God. All *authority* is indirect; the *channel* is the revealed will of God in his Decalogue. When authority (so-called) deviates from the Law of God it is no longer authority and it no longer needs to be obeyed; it should be resisted. It has become mere power. It has lost its stamp of validity and genuine authority.

We summarize our views of Lord's Day XXXIX of the "Heidelberg Catechism."

1. There is no legitimate analogy whatever between parental authority over minors and governmental authority over adults.

2. Bad governments should not receive "honor, love and fidelity" from their victims.

3. Title to authority is not based on a power pipe line but is based on an intermediate requirement, namely, that authority must conform to the revealed will of God (especially the Second Table of the Law).

4. The conclusion of the Heidelberg Catechism regarding government may be considered to be correct for good governments, but evades the problem caused by bad governments.

5. The reason given for the conclusion about obeying a good government is an erroneous reason.

6. Calvinism can become progressive by improving this part of the "Heidelberg Catechism" so that it does touch the real problem and so gives an important answer as well as a trite, commonplace answer, and so that the right reason is given for both the trite answer and the important answer. (By trite answer we refer to the admonition to obey a *good* government. Everybody knows *that*.)

In the next issue we plan to show the erroneous doctrines on government of men such as Hugo Grotius, Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper, and their attempts to solve their self-initiated errors. We shall look at the ideas of Rousseau and the encyclopedists. We shall also consider the ideas of the Founders of the United States. We shall give attention to the ideas of Frederic Bastiat, a devout Catholic. And we shall also take a look at the ideas of a Christian and a secular American thinker.

Men first accept an erroneous principle which undermines liberty, and then they become inventive to find corrective principles. These corrective principles are feeble substitutes to restore the foundation under liberty. Some of these substitutes are (1) ancient privileges, (2) sphere sovereignty, (3) the consent of the governed, (4) the right of resistance, and (5) natural law.

If you begin with a general proposition which subscribes to the same basic principle as does the "divine right of kings," which is what historical Calvinism has often done, it is then necessary to appeal to one or another item in the foregoing list, such as sphere sovereignty (which happens to be an erroneous and

unnecessary doctrine). The "divine right of kings," it should be carefully noted, is nothing more than a specific case of the *general* idea that power is piped *directly* from God to men. We do not believe in that power pipe line system.

**What Kind of Power Is
Piped Through the Pipelines
From God to Men**

In the foregoing analysis we have expressed an unfavorable opinion of an analogy, namely, the analogy that governments have power over adults because parents must have care for their children in their minority.

Every illustration and every metaphor is also an analogy. We have ourselves been using a metaphor of a huge power pipeline system from the throne of God to governments. It may be argued that we have used as objectionable an analogy as that against which we have protested.

Although we have no intention to endeavor to substantiate any allegation we make by the mere use of a metaphor, we nevertheless consider our metaphor helpful and generally valid. That will become evident in the September issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*.

At this point we turn to the problem regarding what kind of power is piped through the myriad of pipe lines of power from God to governments and sphere sovereignties. That inquiry—what kind of power is being talked about—will be corroborating evidence in itself that we have been talking about a genuinely unsound idea widely accepted among Calvinists.

In the July issue we analyzed a statement of the Rev. Mr. Gerrit Hoeksema, that it had not been shown that a specific form of coercion (the closed shop) is sin. Power, as power, is of course coercion. And so we are here considering what we previously considered, namely, *what* coercion, or power, is proper and *what* coercion or power is sinful.

In earlier issues of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* we have carefully delimited the coercion which we believe Scripture teaches as Biblical and valid coercion, namely, the coercion which is restricted to restraining evil, all other coercion being a form of violence and

forbidden by the Sixth Commandment which reads, thou shalt not kill. As we explained, a lengthy way of saying, thou shalt not kill, is to say, thou shalt not engage in violence or coercion, except to restrain evil as evil is defined in the Decalogue, especially the evils listed in the Sixth through Ninth Commandments which are overt evils of action.

A man, as an individual, may and should employ violence and coercion to restrain improper acts (especially those forbidden in the Sixth to Ninth Commandments). I may resist bodily harm, and adultery, and theft, and falsehood attempted on me and on others by a neighbor. But in regard to everything else I must leave my neighbor free and he must leave me free. That is an essential characteristic of brotherly and neighborly love. All this, we believe, is very clear from Scripture. Now what *other* power or coercion does a government have? Is a *government* bound by the limitations set by the law of neighborly love, or does a government get some extra rights through alleged direct power lines from God? What statements in Scripture indicate such an extra portion of power, or right of coercion, is made available by God to governments?

Commonly, a state or government is said to be sovereign, that is, exercising power in its own right. Then Abraham Kuyper came along and wrote of *sphere sovereignty*; each sphere of activity, such as a ball league or a theater guild, has some kind of sovereignty, or claim on power in its own right. And then the unions came along and, as operating under *sphere sovereignty*, decree a closed shop, which is clearly an exercise of coercive power. And then the Rev. Mr. Gerrit Hoeksema makes a specific application of that *sphere sovereignty* idea and says that the sovereignty of the closed shop has not been shown to be sin.

Clearly, through all those power lines to governments and to "spheres of sovereignty" there is apparently some additional right to coercion, beyond the right which an individual has, which individual right is limited to the resistance of evil and which right may not go further without violating the law of brotherly love.

In other words, these power lines of power from God to men seem to give to those to whom the power lines run a special power, namely, the power to coerce and to bend *A* to the will of *B*, and

C to the will of D, etc. Where shall we end up under such a Calvinistic system, if it is Calvinistic?

Maybe we have failed. Maybe we are incompetent readers of Scripture. But we have searched the Scriptures in vain for any indication that any government or "sphere of sovereignty" has any authority whatever to do more than an individual may do. If any government or "sphere of sovereignty" has any such power, where is the text that supports that proposition?

In fact, if there were any text in Scripture of such a kind then the definition of brotherly love would be different for a group than for an individual. That, we believe, would be a damnable situation and an outrageous inconsistency.

Who can find anything in Scripture which declares that any government, or any "sphere sovereignty" (a labor union, a ball league, a theater guild) has any power or right of coercion beyond the restraint of evil *as defined in the Decalogue*. Will any reader please supply the text or texts?

Or, will any reader please explain how any such right to coercion may be *inferred* from what is expressly taught in Scripture?

We are confident that nothing in Scripture can be quoted as giving broad coercive power to any government over men, *unless the definition of brotherly love has previously been improperly extended as by Nygren and by various sanctimonious and confused theologians*, inside and outside the ranks of nominal Calvinists. By that device, namely an *extended* definition of brotherly love, a government or a sphere of sovereignty can *appear* to have a proper range of authority beyond what Scripture really has set.

One way to destroy the mythical power pipe lines from God to governments and sphere sovereignties is:

1. To insist that brotherly love does not go beyond the exact definition given in Scripture. (See our summary in earlier issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

2. To insist that no group, political or nonpolitical (government or sphere sovereignty), has any more power than an individual has. Proper group action then becomes brotherly love

exercised collectively rather than individually (for economy of effort's sake).

If those two ideas are accepted then there is no inconsistency between the rules of Scripture for individuals and for groups (governments or sphere sovereignties).

* * *

We hope to continue the preliminary presentation of ideas on the proper position of government in the September issue. We have in this issue directed attention to the failure of the "Heidelberg Catechism" to meet up plainly with the issue of bad government. We have also showed the only sound basis for any human authority, namely not a *direct* pipe line from God to men, but an *indirect* channel, namely conformity to the revealed will of God in the Decalogue. The Law of God is the channel, the intermediate means, for properly exercising authority. The interjection of that intermediate requirement binds governments, and all those who exercise authority, to a good and obvious standard. All such authority may be and will be obeyed by good citizens because it is a beneficent authority. All contrary authority may and should be resisted legally and illegally; we say legally *and* illegally because it is necessary to obey that basic requirement of the Christian religion, towit: "We must obey God rather than men." What is mere *human legality* versus *scriptural morality*!

But we lacked space to refute the many secular theories and the allegedly scriptural theories of the authority of government and the relations of government to men. We plan such refutation in the September issue.

Then we plan to devote an issue or two to ideas on *justice*.

Thereafter we shall turn to specific nonscriptural ideas taught in trusted places in Calvinist circles.

F. N.

Machiavelli, on Property and Women

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), the Italian political philosopher, famous for his realism, has always appeared to us to have been a worthy candidate for conversion to Calvinism. Machiavelli accepted various ideas based on observation and objective reasoning which are taught in Scripture as divinely revealed. When he does that, he gives his rationalistic reasons for his conclusions and those reasons generally appear sound.

We have outlined in the foregoing that a government is valid only if it operates on principles stated in the Decalogue. Machiavelli expressed himself differently but said essentially the same thing. This is what Machiavelli wrote in Chapter XIX in his *The Prince*; the title to this chapter is "That We Must Avoid Being Despised and Hated":

. . . The prince [Machiavelli refers to any ruler] must, as already stated, avoid those things which will make him hated and despised; and whenever he succeeds in this, he will have done his part, and will find no danger in other vices. He will chiefly become hated, as I said, *by being rapacious, and usurping the property and women of his subjects*, which he must abstain from doing, and whenever one does not attack the property or honour of the generality of men, they will live contented; . . . [Emphasis supplied.]

Two things, Machiavelli declares, will cause a prince to be hated, namely, rapacity of a prince consisting in "usurping the property and women of his subjects." Note, now, how Machiavelli agrees with Scripture on what should be the foundation for a stable government:

The Second Table of the Law

1. Honor father and mother.
2. Shalt not kill.

Machiavelli

1. (Not covered.)
2. Be not rapacious, which involves violence forbidden by commandment forbidding killing.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3. Shalt not commit adultery. | 3. Abstain from usurping women of subjects. |
| 4. Shalt not steal. | 4. Abstain from usurping property of subjects. |
| 5. Shalt not lie. | 5. (Not mentioned, but the principal purpose of lying pertains to property and women and so is indirectly covered.) |
| 6. Shalt not covet property, wife, etc. | 6. Same as 3 and 4. |

In order to survive as a ruler, according to Machiavelli, a ruler must neither be hated nor despised. To avoid being hated you should, says Machiavelli in his own way, obey the commandments in the Second Table of the Law.

Machiavelli, the most astute of all political philosophers, really endorses the idea that a government should basically be founded on the Second Table of the Law.

This, of course, does not involve us in any way with any other ideas Machiavelli may have written.

F. N.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

SEPTEMBER, 1955

NUMBER 9

Contents

	Page
We are In Favor Of Justice For The Laboring Man	241
A Cause For Continued Amazement	243
A Great Banker's Thought	247
A Lament	248
"We Must Obey God Rather Than Men"	251

We Are In Favor of Justice for the Laboring Man

We make no secret that we are hostile to some labor unions as they operate in America. We have reasons for our opposition to certain labor unions.

1. They openly subscribe to the principle of *coercion*, which violates the commandments of God; see July, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM; and

2. Even when they *in principle* do not subscribe to *coercion*, it is the *common practice* of many unions to engage in threats, violence and coercion. Honest men know that. Such unionism is the worst prevalent evil in American society.

Our readers may make an incorrect inference from the foregoing statement against which we wish to guard. The incorrect inference is that we are unfriendly toward the wage and salary

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

earner and unsympathetic to their problems. Some readers may infer that we are "capitalists" and exploiters and uncharitable.

We are not saints, but we have no toleration toward the grinding down of the weak, the poor, the unfortunate, the very young and the very old. We are mindful of the many curses in Scripture on those who exploit the poor, the widows, the orphans and the distressed. We believe Scripture and fear its warnings.

Karl Marx declared that capitalism (the system of private property approved by Scripture) "exploited" the workers. Therefore, he declared that property, especially such property as is used for production (land, factories, etc.), should all be collectively owned; and consequently no interest or dividends should be paid, that is, there should be no "return" on capital to a capitalist. All income received by the capitalist (the owner of the means of production) was "exploitation" of the laborer! The man who owned capital took a slice of what the laborer produced. (We cannot here consider the reasoning by which Marx reached that conclusion.)

Originally the church disputed Marx's idea. That idea was revolutionary compared to the old teachings of the church. But gradually Marx has prevailed. Today many theologians agree that capitalism unjustly takes something away from the worker. In other words, the worker does not get all that he should get.

Some theologians say that capital should get *nothing*. Then the conclusion *seems* to follow that if the capitalist gets anything, he must be doing so by robbery, by fraud, by force or by exploitation of the laborer. If so, it would clearly be *sin*.

More conservative theologians will say that capital should not get "too much" of what is produced; further, that capital formerly got "too much," and that in the past the worker was generally exploited; finally, that capital should get less than formerly and that there should be a "just" distribution between capital and labor. This second attitude is the prevailing one in the Christian Reformed church.

The Calvin Forum is the magazine of the faculty of Calvin College and Seminary. The editor is Dr. Cecil De Boer. *The Calvin Forum* has frequently passed moral judgments on various

political, economic and social problems. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM addresses the following questions to Editor De Boer. These questions are easy, but they pertain to the *most controversial moral question* of the age — the return to labor and the return to capital. What is the answer of *The Calvin Forum* to the following:

1. Is capital entitled to any return?
2. Should that be a *just* return?
3. How determine what is a *just* return?
4. Does the return on capital exist because capital is productive? If so, is capital entitled to the *whole* return on its productivity?
5. Is capital entitled to part of what labor produces or is the laborer entitled to *all* that he produces?

A Cause for Continued Amazement

Thirty-five or so years ago we subscribed to *The Princeton Theological Review*, and continued to read it until it discontinued publication. Its successor is *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1. *The Evangelical Quarterly* describes itself as a "theological review, international in scope and outlook, in defence of the historic Christian faith." We have read *The Evangelical Quarterly* from its first issue with pleasure and profit, and recommend it to our readers. The well-known Professor F. F. Bruce, M. A., of Sheffield is the editor.

We were interested to read in the July, 1955, issue of *The Evangelical Quarterly* the following reference to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. (The first two sentences are quoted from the January, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

"The churches will be ineffective in mission work unless they are willing to declare boldly and loudly that

prosperity follows the Christian religion as his shadow follows a man. Why should anyone adopt the Christian religion if it does not pay to do so?" "Reactionary!" the reader exclaims. But no; it is progressive — at least, it is the view of the newly organized "Progressive Calvinism League." The organizers are not scared of criticism; they quote a recent number of *Calvin College Chimes* to the effect that "the League seems to have no want of religious enthusiasm, it has ample audacity and no little presumption, it has a most ambitious programme and is assumed to be well financed; it lacks only discerning thought, an understanding of Calvinism, and a real message for the Christian Reformed citizens of Hadleyburg." Obviously a controversial enterprise. Readers who wish to know more about the League, or to see its monthly organ, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, should communicate with it at 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, as the editor of *The Evangelical Quarterly* notes, is not sensitive to a college student magazine (edited under the close supervision of the faculty) declaring that the founders of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM (1) "lack discerning thought, (2) an understanding of Calvinism, and (3) a real message for the Christian Reformed citizens of Hadleyburg." We have long been aware that our "thought" is not too discerning; we genuinely regret it and also that the public has discovered it. And we do not have an "understanding" of Calvinism either, if by Calvinism is meant what is taught in certain schools. And in regard to the "citizens of Hadleyburg" we may some day return to that.

But our real interest in the notice in *The Evangelical Quarterly* is the reference to our Declaration Five which reads:

- (a) Promote confidence that prosperity obtained in a free market society is the result of obedience to the law of God; and (b) discontinue all apologies for that prosperity and all policies which will undermine that prosperity.

In the accompanying text in our first issue we wrote what Professor Bruce quotes:

The churches will be ineffective in mission work unless they are willing to declare boldly and loudly that prosperity follows the Christian religion as his shadow follows a man. Why should anyone adopt the Christian religion if it does not pay to do so?

Professor Bruce is apparently typical in his reaction to our six Declarations. The Declarations do not seem especially doubtful, except Declaration Five, just quoted. And that surprises us. We thought our idea was scriptural. For family devotions we recently read Deuteronomy 7 and 8. Here are some relevant passages on reward for obeying God and punishment for disobeying God:

Deuteronomy 7:9-16. Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations, and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them.

And it shall come to pass, because ye hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, that Jehovah thy God will keep with thee the covenant and the lovingkindness which he sware unto thy fathers: and he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee; he will also bless the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy ground, thy grain and thy new wine and thine oil, the increase of thy cattle and the young of thy flock, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

Deuteronomy 8:19,20. And it shall be, if thou shalt forget Jehovah thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations that Jehovah maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish; because ye would not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah your God.

We ask: Did Moses or did Moses not associate prosperity with adherence to the Hebrew religion? We believe our Declaration Five agrees with what Moses taught.

One hundred and eleven years ago a son was born in a German manse, son of a minister and grandson of two ministers. The boy is known to history as Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), hater of the Christian religion, founder of the idea of the superman, and prophet of German imperialism and aggression. We are, of course, as unsympathetic to the final thought of Nietzsche as anyone could be. But the case of Nietzsche interests us. How could he turn out as he did, reared as he was in devout evangelical circumstances? Our answer to that is that Christianity became associated in Nietzsche's mind with helplessness, and nonsuccess, and passivity toward any kind of power. A religion which taught defeatism in this life, and taught escapism through the life-to-come, possibly became a terrifying thing in his mind. To him Christianity may have been synonymous with failure, which indeed is what many Christians teach. His reaction was extreme, namely, a rejection of the *whole* of Christianity. What he should have rejected was only a Christianity which associated itself (incorrectly) with continual defeat and failure in this life. We do not "explain" Nietzsche by saying he was an agent of the devil, although the inevitable result of Nietzsche's philosophy has been and always will be catastrophic to the world. We believe a mistaken attitude among Christians associating Christianity with misery, failure and disgrace was *one* cause for Nietzsche's attitude. Instead of attacking Christianity generally as Nietzsche did, we are disposed to declare what we believe Scripture declares, as was quoted from Deuteronomy 7 and 8, namely, Christianity is not fundamentally a religion of failure in this life.

The promises of reward and the threats of punishment in Deuteronomy 7 and 8 are not ordinarily, in our thinking, *direct* acts of God. We consider that there is an obvious law of cause and effect operative in Moses' scheme of things. Moses taught "freedom" and "noncoercion" except that certain evils should be forcefully resisted (see the Decalogue). "Freedom" as defined by Moses meant the operation of what is known today among social scientists as a "free market economy." (We hope to show

that relationship more fully later.) It is because a supernatural factor is erroneously considered by many Christians to be the *only* factor which is operating to cause prosperity to follow on obedience to God, that there is no real confidence in the earthly rewards of the Christian religion by ordinary cause and effect. Men should have confidence in what Moses wrote for *two* reasons, namely, (1) the operation of ordinary cause and effect will make prosperity follow active obedience to the Christian religion (except there be interference from what is coercive); and (2) the providence of God can eventually be counted on even to overcome the exception (which was just expressed parenthetically).

We thank *The Evangelical Quarterly* for their kind news item recognizing our existence. The editor is right; we are not publishing a message which is noncontroversial. Some publications specialize on affirming the "positive" aspects of Christianity, that is, they merely reiterate what Christianity is, and do not criticize what may endeavor to pass as Christianity but is not Christianity. We shall devote a major part of our space to what we think Christianity is not. Of course, we shall not in such a program be attacking the teaching of infidels or non-Christians, but what is alleged by Christians to be Christianity.

A Great Banker's Thought

The introductory paragraph in the Last Will and Testament of J. Pierpont Morgan, the famous American financier (1837-1913) is quite unusual. Of all who read this, probably not one has such a paragraph in his Last Will. We quote from Frederick Lewis Allen's *The Great Pierpont Morgan*, (Harper & Brothers, New York, copyright by author, 1948):

I commit my soul into the hands of my Saviour, in full confidence that having redeemed it and washed it in His most precious blood He will present it faultless before my Heavenly Father; and I entreat my children to maintain and defend, at all hazard and at any cost of

personal sacrifice, the blessed doctrine of the complete atonement for sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, once offered, and through that alone.

In the same book there is a report on Morgan's attitude toward the Scriptures at the close of his life (his seventy-sixth year). It involved wholly accepting Scripture or wholly rejecting it, a rather consistent attitude characteristic of a powerful and acute mind. We quote from page 269:

Or, better still, you might hold in your mind's eye a glimpse of Morgan at home, in the West Room of the Library, going over the morning's mail at the desk and sorting it into two piles, the letters that must be attended to, and those that can wait. Belle da Costa Greene, the devoted young librarian, remonstrates with him at the size of the pile of letters that can wait. He answers that he has found that if you leave letters alone long enough, they "die out." After a while he asks Miss Greene to read aloud to him from the Bible as he sits in the red plush chair in the corner, and specifically requests the story of Jonah and the whale. She asks him if he really believes it. He answers stoutly that he does; that if the time ever came when he could not believe every word in the Bible, he could believe none of it.

A Lament

The earliest issues of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* began with religion and ethics. In the August issue we dealt partly with religion and ethics and partly with a new question, one in the field of political science, namely, the relation of government to men. The remainder of this issue will be almost entirely in the field of political science — on the same question as was opened up in the August issue, to wit, what is the relation of government to men.

It will become evident that we hold views which have been haughtily and, we think, unjustly attacked in the past by Christian statesmen and theologians. It is not reasonable for the purpose of a spurious unity to let those unjust and uninformed attacks stand unchallenged.

It is our conviction that the basic ideas of some of our great predecessors are so wrong that it is not possible to build on the foundation which they laid. Despite their being stalwart and devoted Christians we cannot use their ideas as a defense against erroneous modern secular ideas. Our predecessors themselves were sufficiently in error so that we are constrained:

1. To disassociate ourselves from their errors.
2. To defend our own ideas against their attacks, because we are assured that their ideas are irreconcilable with our ideas.
3. To attack their ideas as they first attacked ours. Their errors would never have needed to have been mentioned had they not attacked our ideas. But everyone will be confused if we ignore charges against our views which charges are by men highly regarded among orthodox Christians.
4. To show that their errors are illogical, and plainly to be seen by all.
5. To show that their errors are contrary to Scripture, *correctly interpreted*.
6. To show that their errors are contrary to sound social science, and constitute a form of irrationalism.
7. To show that their errors are discredited by experience — and that what they teach can be neither good religion nor good science, if experience is a sound test (which we believe it is).
8. To show finally that their errors are irreconcilable with the basic American tradition. Their errors are medieval and Continental.

The unsound views regarding the relation of government to men to which we refer are fairly common among Christians except the most elementary and evangelical Christians. These latter are still in that elevated frame of mind of obeying God rather than men, and so they escape the errors of their more sophisticated religious brethren.

But in the milieu from which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has arisen it is simplest if we refer to the specific predecessors in our own small milieu (Reformed; specifically Christian Reformed in America, and *Gereformeerde* in the Netherlands). The two predecessors to whom we shall refer especially are Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, a significant Dutch statesman of a generation ago, and Abraham Kuyper, a Dutch theologian and politician who about fifty years ago was for a time premier of the Netherlands.

We are admirers of these men. In many ways they were marvelously right. But that does not make them right on everything. We shall, therefore, examine their ideas objectively. If they had not attacked fundamentally sound ideas (on which the greatness of the United States is actually based) we might have left their ideas rest in peace.

It will be especially necessary to challenge the ideas of Abraham Kuyper as unscriptural, as logically indefensible, and as harmful to society.

We do not, of course, go along completely with the comment of the late Professor Kirsopp Lake, of the Yale Divinity School, that the revival of orthodox Christianity in the Netherlands in the Nineteenth century (the Secession of 1834 and the Doleantie of 1887) represented a primitive and generally ignorant and back-woods revival of Christian orthodoxy. But when Abraham Kuyper branched out from elementary Christianity to doctrinaire statements on political, social and economic questions, the uncomplimentary idea of Professor Lake was somewhat in order. (However, the proper rejoinder to make to Lake is that the most sophisticated and rationalistic representatives of modern Christianity have been as wrong as or more wrong on *social science* questions than was Abraham Kuyper.)

"We Must Obey God Rather Than Men" (Acts 5:29b)

(Readers of this article should be acquainted first with the article in the preceding issue (August, 1955) entitled, "The Powers That Be Are Ordained of God.")

Scripture nowhere teaches that we must obey a bad government, or cooperate with a bad government by obedience. The more plainly professing Christians declare they will not obey a bad government and act accordingly, the sooner their religion will restore its fading reputation. Instead of making a clear-cut declaration that they should not and will not obey a bad government, Christians talk about "obeying the powers that be" (Romans 13:1).

In our August issue we called attention to a gravely erroneous interpretation of Scripture by Calvinists (and Christians generally), namely, the erroneous interpretation that the instruction of the Apostle Paul "to obey the powers that be" means that men should obey *bad* governments (as well as good governments) and should actively cooperate with bad governments by the act of obedience. We showed that the command of Paul applies only to obedience to *good* governments.

The Apostle Peter in his first epistle (Chapter 2:13) also admonishes obedience to government, but in that connection he makes clear that he too is talking only of *good* government, the kind that shows "vengeance on evildoers" and gives "praise to them that do well." He does *not* talk about a government "praising evildoers" or showing "vengeance to them that do well."

The rule stated by Paul and Peter, as mentioned in the foregoing, is a limited rule. It applies only to a special circumstance and not to general circumstances, namely, the special circumstance of a *good* government.

But the Apostle Peter, in the incident related in Acts 5, stated the *universal* principle governing the relationship of governments to men, namely, the simple and comprehensive rule, we must obey God rather than men. We shall devote space in this issue to that great and universal rule.

There Are No Pipe Lines Of Power Whatever From God to Governments

Every allegation or implication that a government, whether good or bad, has a pipe line by which proper power is channelled to it directly from God is false. The people who make such allegations are especially the people who possess power presently, and who do not want to lose it. Only the nonreflective and those who are fearful accept such an allegation.

If God is accepted as being *good*, then it is illogical to assume a direct power pipe line from God to a *bad* government. Common sense should make clear to all that any claim by a *bad* government to power, simply on the ground that it is *from God* is false. Authority, that is the *proper* exercise of power, depends not on visible or invisible pipe lines from God, but on the exercise of power *according to the commands of God*. It is not the *source* that in any instance validates power, but the *manner of exercising* that power that validates it.

There Are No Special Laws In Scripture For Governments

There are in Scripture no commands to governments which

1. Differ from commands to individual men, or
2. Give governments a larger range of permissible activities than individual men have.

There is no dualism in Scripture, consisting of one set of rules for individuals and another and broader set of rules for governments. Men are forbidden to kill, steal and tell lies; governments are nowhere in Scripture authorized to kill, steal and tell lies.

Men are authorized to use coercion and force to resist evil, especially the evils of violence, adultery, fraud and theft. They have no authority as individuals to go beyond the resistance of evil; neither have governments.

The great law of neighborly love is binding on all men; the same law is (at least partly) binding on government. When men employ government to control violence, adultery, fraud and theft

they do not grant to that government rights which they themselves do not possess, but they merely transfer to a central agency for the sake of economy of effort that which they possess in their own right.

Any doctrine of the *proper power* of government cannot then go beyond the doctrine of the *authority* of an individual. The principles of morality for government are necessarily in harmony with the principles of morality for individual men. Those principles for men are: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

In the February, March, April and May issues we defined the meaning of the commandment, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. We defined the commandment as:

1. Doing no harm to the neighbor (who stands for all men);
2. Showing forbearance and forgiveness;
3. Being motivated by goodwill;
4. Extending charity; and
5. Proclaiming the gospel.

The foregoing, we declared, constituted the Biblical requirement of loving the neighbor. But the foregoing does *not* require that we *like* or *enjoy* the neighbor. The moment that the Biblical law of love is extended so that we *must like and enjoy* what we do not like, life is no longer worth living *because freedom is gone*. And Scripture, if we understand it, certainly does not restrict proper liberty. We intend, in fact, to show eventually that the Decalogue of the ancient Hebrew religion, which declares itself to be a revelation, is a Magna Charta for liberty as no subsequent document has ever been.

The difficulty about understanding the term *love* as used in Scripture is that the term cannot keep itself free of the connotation of *liking* rather than loving, scripturally defined. Then the idea of *liking* is extended grandiosely to liking equally; then the conclusion is brought forward that if we do not like everybody equally and are not willing to associate with everybody equally in time and space — that then we are not observing the Christian or Biblical law of love. We make no secret of our opinions: we

like well-informed people *more than* ignorant people; we like new automobiles *more than* old automobiles. And when the sanctimonious shake their head disapprovingly about our likes and dislikes, we laugh. Our answer is: we are required to love our neighbor but not necessarily to *like* him. And even if we liked everything and everybody, we are not required to like them *equally*. And the reason why it is permissible not to like, and permissible to like unequally, is very simple — the phenomenon of liking, of *free choice*, of *liberty* is derived from the *variety* in creation. The world is infinitely varied. Each man can select out of that world what *he* can enjoy *most*. If he cannot carry a tune and cannot distinguish the notes in a concert, nobody has any business making him attend concerts or making him sing; and if a great musician cannot design an automobile and does not wish to do it, that is his business and none has any authority to inflict on that musician a life he does not wish to live. All this brings us to the obvious conclusion: if as individuals we may not impose *choices* on each other beyond the restraint of evil, thereby denying and destroying freedom, *neither may any group of individuals* do that, *nor any government*.

We repeat an earlier statement, namely, that the possession of *power* by a government does not give a government *authority* to do what an individual is morally forbidden to do. We shall show later that many Christian and especially Calvinist political philosophers have violated that rule and have conceded that governments or groups may do more than an individual may do, thereby authorizing a dualism in morality between men as individuals and men as groups. Readers are reminded of Declaration Four of the Progressive Calvinism League which reads:

- (a) Promote a single rule of morality; and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.

In fact, there can be no real doubt that governments and groups may not do so much as an individual may do. When several people get together on taking a vacation not one of them can do everything exactly as he only wishes. He must make concessions to his associates. He must surrender his wishes in some degree, or otherwise that will be the last joint vacation which he

takes with the group. Group freedom of action and government freedom of action is less than individual freedom of action. A government and a group may act only within the range of common interest for all the participants. The "common denominator" for a large group is more limited than for a small group and for a small group than for an individual.

Of the five items constituting neighborly love listed on page 253, we do not believe a government should be active in proclaiming the gospel (number five in the list). Nor are we certain that number four is also a government function. (We plan to expand on this in the future.)

When we declare that a government has *less proper range* of action than an individual has, it will certainly be clear that we do not agree with many Calvinists who say that a government may do more than an individual may do.

Individual and neighborly love as defined by Scripture are our basic standards, the foundation on which we build the social structure as a whole. The foundation for a government is narrower. No man should delegate nor can he delegate *all* of his obligations regarding neighborly love to any group nor to any government. We agree with the great founders of the United States of America — they set up a government of *limited* powers. Neither the federal government nor any state government was permitted to assume *all* the powers — the liberties to act — which an individual citizen possessed. The founding fathers were great and wise men.

Twisting The Foundation Of Neighborly Love And of Government

Scripture states the rule on neighborly love very simply; it says: Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*. Of course, the whole meaning of this statement depends on what is meant by *as thyself*. (See the February, March, April and May issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.) But sanctimonious members of the churches do not like that alleged "selfish" and "earthly" standard; they recoil from a standard "as thyself." Here are some of the propositions that they substitute for the plain teaching of Scripture:

1. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as God loves us.
2. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as we love God.
3. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as God loves the neighbor.
4. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as the neighbor *individually* thinks (demands) that we should love him.
5. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as the neighbors *collectively* say (demand) that we should love him.
6. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as the government demands that we should love him.
7. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as various sphere sovereignties declare that we should love him.

All of the foregoing seven propositions are basically different from the Biblical proposition, to wit, thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*. They are not only un-Biblical but also contrary to common sense; impractical; some are immoral; all are pious. But men who advocate adherence to the foregoing rules sanctimoniously resent the idea that the self-love, or more accurately the *personal choices*, of a sinful human being can be the standard for morality!* They consider the exercise of free personal choices to be sinful! PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM does not intend to outdo Scripture in making demands on frail mortal men. We are not fond of piosity.

In addition to the positively unscriptural revisions of the law of brotherly love which have been listed, there are also the befuddled revisions which are motivated by the same idea, namely, that the free choices of sinful, mortal man should not be the standard for relationships among men. These befuddling revisions may be cast in the form of: Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as God wishes us to love ourselves*.

To love our neighbor as "God wishes us to love ourselves" implies that we should not love ourselves as we actually do, and that therefore the actual standard is false, or in other words the great commandment should read: Thou shalt NOT love thy

*The confusion about defining *as thyself* as self-love and selfishness rather than as *the exercise of personal choices* needs separate consideration. This is a matter of maximum importance in order to remove a whole mass of confusions.

neighbor as we actually love ourselves, but as we ought to love ourselves. Scripture does *not* teach that pious but somewhat silly idea.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM cannot bring itself to go along with any unscriptural or befuddling or sanctimonious definition of neighborly love.

Whitehead On Different Foundations To Philosophies

Alfred North Whitehead, the secular philosopher so popular in some Calvinist circles, had some insights with which it is not reasonable to disagree. One insight that Whitehead had was this: what appear to be *small* differences in elementary, basic ideas cause *colossal* differences in the resulting philosophies. Change *only a little* the foundation of a philosophy, and then the superstructure necessarily becomes enormously changed. Change only a little, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and all morality changes with it.

The foundation of society and of all relations among men is either the exact Biblical law of neighborly love, or a variation of it. That little law of neighborly love should control the character of the social, political and economic structure. But change that law of neighborly love, by substituting something else for the two words, *as thyself*, and thereby giving it a non-Biblical or a fanciful or a befuddling interpretation, and then what? Get away from what Scripture plainly teaches and you will have a wholly different (and disastrous) social, political and economic structure.

We now ask: what did various social, political and economic philosophers, Christian and non-Christian, teach about the relationship of men to government and government to men? We shall begin with a Dutch statesman, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, and a Dutch theologian and politician, Abraham Kuyper.

Groen On The Power Of Government

Groen (1801-1876) is practically unknown to Americans, and a few words of explanation are necessary so that what is said about Groen's ideas may be understood.

Groen was an only son in a distinguished family, and saw life from the viewpoint of an aristocrat. He applied himself to politics, historical research, and devotion to the royal Dutch House of Orange. He did not concern himself with economics but with politics. He had no real interest in economics. His mind was fixated on political problems created by the ideas underlying the French Revolution and the conduct of the leaders of the French Revolution. Aristocratic Groen hardly caught up with the economic aspects of the industrial revolution and with the "social question." He speaks to this generation really then only on the question of the relation of men to government, that is, in the field of politics.

Modern orthodox Dutch Calvinism is dominated by the ideas of Groen on the relation of men to government. If Groen was right, one of the following conclusions is unavoidable:

1. The founders of the United States were wrong in their political philosophy; or
2. Groen misunderstood the principles on which America was founded; or
3. Groen was self-contradictory in his own ideas, basically in agreement with the United States but writing as if he were in disagreement.

Our belief is that Groen seriously misunderstood America, and that his political thought suffered from a fatal internal contradiction.

Groen's famous book is his *Ongeloof en Revolutie* (Unbelief and Revolution). It is an attack on the ideas of the French Revolution. No American can read it except with astonishment at its great insights and its serious inconsistencies. It is not practical to cover all phases of Groen's thought. We merely list ideas.

1. Groen felt akin to William Pitt and Edmund Burke, the great *liberal* English statesmen. He admired and praised them. But at the same time he attacked political *liberalism*. Groen must have been wrong on one or the other count. If Pitt and Burke

were right, political liberalism was right, because that is exactly what Pitt and Burke were, political *liberals*. The position Groen took was obviously inconsistent.

2. Groen defends in Chapters III and IV of his famous book the idea that the "state" was naturally *patrimonial*, that is, was developed out of the hereditary land holdings of a dynasty. In later revisions of his book he retreated from this position. However, he did not retreat enough to alter the original text, but only to add amending footnotes. See in this regard in the latest edition of *Ongeloof en Revolutie* edited by Professor H. Smitskamp (T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands, publisher) what that editor writes in the footnote on page 41. Of course, no American can be sympathetic to ideas which stamp with approval the hereditary title of kings and princes as if ordinary men are natural subjects. Groen held the idea that hereditary rulers had a pipe line of power from God.

3. Groen escapes a fatal error by a peculiar device. He believed that a ruler did have "power from God." But over a period of time, the wretched people, crouching beneath the ruler, wrested rights, by blood and agony, from the rulers. Those "acquired" rights became contractual and inviolable. Because those rights had been obtained and existed, the old historical order appeared far better to Groen than the Revolutionary order (that of the French Revolution). Groen saw that the Revolution had wiped away not only the hereditary monarchy *but also the acquired rights of the subjects*. He was against the Revolution because it destroyed the monarchical system, but even more so because it destroyed the *historical rights of subjects*. Both the old monarchical system and the new French Republic basically claimed *unrestrained* power over individuals. Groen did not attack *that basic error*. He accepted it, because he misinterpreted Romans 13. What he really objected to was that the Revolution *also* swept away *ancient privileges*. These he did not consider to be *original* rights but only *acquired* rights. What American could agree to that? Our idea is that no one has "patrimonial rights" over us whether a monarchy or democracy. We believe we have our own *original* rights, and do not have to wait until we *acquire* those rights. This is another way of saying that no government has proper power, or authority, over us by heredity or by ancient or recent conquest.

4. So monarchical were Groen's ideas that he declared: "Certainly, Calvinist doctrine never led to a republican system of government" (page 115). Troubled with the Calvinist record of rebellion and Calvin's own republicanism in Geneva, Groen defends his own view by saying that republicanism may have been perpetrated by Calvinists but is not really Calvinist doctrine (page 114). He even quotes Calvin (our translation and italics):

... And what were Calvin's political ideas? As citizen of Geneva he preferred a republic, but he advised subjects not to insist on their rights as citizens (*sic!*). In the *Institutes*, Book IV, Chapter 20, Section 8, Calvin wrote: "But if those to whom the will of God has assigned another form of government, transfer this [authority, or rights as citizens] to themselves so as to be tempted to desire a revolution, the very thought will not only be foolish and useless, but *altogether criminal*."

To take the risk of changing government is declared in this quotation from Calvin to be "criminal." We believe there is enough bias in Groen's liking for monarchy to make the general impression he gives of Calvin's ideas invalid. Here is the larger quotation from Calvin's *Institutes*, Book IV, Chapter 20, Section 8 (our italics):

... I shall by no means deny, that either aristocracy, or a mixture of aristocracy and democracy, far excels all others; and that indeed not of itself, but because it very rarely happens that kings regulate themselves so that their will is never at variance with justice and rectitude; or, in the next place, that they are endued with such penetration and prudence, as in all cases to discover what is best. *The vice or imperfection of men therefore renders it safer and more tolerable for the government to be in the hands of many, that they may afford each other mutual assistance and admonition, and that if any one arrogate to himself more than is right, the many may act as censors and masters to restrain his ambition.* This has always been proved by experience, and the Lord confirmed it by his authority, when he established a government of this kind among the people of Israel, with a view to pre-

serve them in the most desirable condition, till he exhibited in David a type of Christ. And as I readily acknowledge that no kind of government is more happy than this, where liberty is regulated with becoming moderation, and properly established on a durable basis, so also I consider those as the most happy people, who are permitted to enjoy such a condition; and if they exert their strenuous and constant efforts for its preservation and retention, I admit that they act in perfect consistence with their duty. *And to this object the magistrates likewise ought to apply their greatest diligence, that they suffer not the liberty, of which they are constituted guardians, to be in any respect diminished, much less to be violated: if they are inactive and unconcerned about this, they are perfidious to their office, and traitors to their country.* But if those, to whom the will of God has assigned another form of government, transfer this to themselves so as to be tempted to desire a revolution, the very thought will be not only foolish and useless, but altogether criminal. If we limit not our views to one city, but look round and take a comprehensive survey of the whole world, or at least extend our observations to distant lands, we shall certainly find it to be a wise arrangement of Divine Providence that various countries are governed by different forms of civil polity; for they are admirably held together with a certain inequality, as the elements are combined in very unequal proportions. All these remarks, however, will be unnecessary to those who are satisfied with the will of the Lord. *For if it be his pleasure to appoint kings over kingdoms, and senators or other magistrates over free cities, it is our duty to be obedient to any governors whom God has established over the places in which we reside.*

Calvin certainly did not share Groen's preference for monarchy. Calvin insisted on the resolute defense of liberty. We ascribe Calvin's abhorrence to revolution to *practical* grounds, that is, rebellion is not justified to change from a good monarchy to a republican system. We consider the last sentence quoted from Calvin in the foregoing to be potentially ambiguous, especially

when read in the light of what precedes it; Calvin advised "strenuous and constant efforts" to preserve liberty. (We do not subscribe to the idea that Calvin said the last word on everything nor on this specifically. He does not "cover" many points at issue. By his thought he built a great cathedral, but many alcoves were left unfinished. We believe in *progressive Calvinism*.)

5. Groen does not entirely ignore the great law that we must obey God rather than men. Groen admits that under this law rebellion is permissible, but only under one set of circumstances, namely, the rebellion may be only to establish freedom of conscience, not to correct earthly injustices (see page 116 of his *Ongeloof en Revolutie*.) He declares that the *only* reason that those of the rebels in the Eighty Years' War to free the Low Countries from Spain who were Calvinists resorted to rebellion was to preserve *freedom of conscience*. In other words Groen declares that it was the position of those of the famous Dutch rebels who were Calvinists* that "the powers that be must always be obeyed" except in those matters of conscience which pertain to worshipping God. This means that a Calvinist should obey God rather than men in matters of the First Table of the Law, but not necessarily in matters of the Second Table of the Law. You could properly, according to this view, rebel in order not to go to a particular church, but you could not properly rebel to resist injustice to yourself or your fellow men. According to this you may not rebel when you wish to resist the rapacity of a prince in the form of "usurping the property and women of his subjects." *That* would be unscriptural rebellion! Groen's idea on the range of proper rebellion we consider narrow and un-Biblical and impractical. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM believes in *always* obeying God rather than men. But Groen takes his narrow position, we believe, only because he considers those who possess power in their capacity as rulers to be practically sacrosanct.

6. Groen was unwilling to consider a government to be a creation by men. To him a government was a creation by God. He considered that a government would be unstable if dependent on the mass of men. He was willing to recognize as valid *existing* governments (monarchies), whether founded by violence, purchase,

*By no means all were Calvinists.

marriage or fraud and when continuing only by heredity. He looked upon such situations with favor, because in the environment he knew, the subjects of those rulers had gradually acquired some "rights." Those rights he considered great blessings. He was against revolution because with the obliteration of an old regime, hard-earned existing *privileges* of subjects also would be obliterated. There would be a new tyranny against which elementary rights would only gradually be restored at the cost of great danger and maybe of life.

Groen believed in a pipe line of power from God to a government. And how did he "correct" for that basic error? He resorted not to Scripture nor to logic but to history. In the *historical process* subjects had *acquired* rights. Those rights were contractual, and valid and sacred. Because those rights had been developed, liberty had been developed. But liberty was not something *original* with men; it was *derived*, acquired by historical process — by the very rebellions to which Groen objected!

Groen in general permitted the commandment, obey the powers that be, to overrule the commandment, we must obey God rather than men. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM reverses the priority. We believe that the commandment, we must obey God rather than men, should overrule the commandment, obey the powers that be, because this last rule pertains only to *good* governments. (See August, 1955, issue.)

Groen founded his ideas on government on the basis of parental authority, the Fifth Commandment, thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that is, on authority as arbitrarily given by nature or by circumstance. We found authority on a *logical* basis, namely, on very good basic laws which soundly control the *policies* of governments, namely, the *whole* Second Table of the Law — especially the laws against violence, adultery, theft and fraud (Commandments Six to Nine), that is, we found governments on the specific laws defining neighborly love.

Governments which violate the law of neighborly love (thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, as defined by the Second Table of the Law) need to be resisted legally and constitutionally if

such opportunities exist, and if not, they must be resisted by force. We must obey God rather than men — ALWAYS.

Groen meant well. He ended up not far from wrong. He reminds us of a traveler who wishes to go from Paris to Amsterdam. The route is straight and simple. But the traveler first goes to New York and then back to Rotterdam. He never quite reaches Amsterdam. Nevertheless, he has arrived in Holland — after much waste motion, going around the two long sides of a triangle, when one short side was available. Groen does the same. He first creates a great problem for himself by allowing for *arbitrary* power to government. That is the trip to New York. Then he retreats to a corrected and responsible power by a corrective historical process, namely, rights acquired by the very rebellion to which he objects. By this idea he travels back from New York to Rotterdam. Note that his corrective process is not an appeal to Scripture but to history. Groen's first error was a misunderstanding of Scripture; his correction consists in a neglect of Scripture.

We lay Groen's great book *Ongeloof en Revolutie* aside. No one can read it without awareness that Groen was a statesman and a prophet. The man had a perspicuous insight into current affairs, and a clairvoyant view on the ultimate harvest of the ideas of the French Revolution. He probably never had the slightest apprehension that the Anti-Revolutionary Party which he founded would some day (in 1955) practically be operating on the basic principle of the French Revolution, namely, that the state is a power which may regulate the lives of men *beyond* the rules of the law of brotherly love outlined in the Decalogue. (The evidence on this must wait.) In a sense Groen himself was at fault. Here is a summary of his basic errors:

1. He confused the unsound Rationalistic Individualism of the French Revolution with the sound Anti-Rationalistic Individualism of England and the United States. (See June, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)
2. He had such a preference for monarchy that he was prejudiced against a republican system.
3. His preference for monarchy was related to his application of the principle stated in Romans 13 to *all* governments rather than to good governments only.

4. He corrected the error in number three by being genuinely devoted to hard-won liberties and privileges, which wretched subjects obtained not on the basis of Scripture but on the basis of what was previously described as rebellion against proper authority and a violation of Scripture. But once obtained by force, by literally wresting it from the "powers that be," then it was valid!

5. He misunderstood the principles underlying the republic of the United States. He identified those principles with the principles of the French Revolution.

Abraham Kuyper And His Sphere Sovereignty

Groen at least was a historian. He had the great benefit of sticking to history and the historical process. He was at least talking about the reality of "privileges" and "rights" fought for and obtained by oppressed subjects. Kuyper was a theoretician; he appealed neither to history nor to Scripture nor, we believe, to logic. In a manner parallel to Groen, Kuyper came to a partially corrected conclusion, but if Groen arrived in Rotterdam from Paris only by the round about way of New York, Kuyper outdoes Groen by attempting the trip from Paris to Amsterdam by going first to San Francisco and then returning to London. Amsterdam was his destination; unlike Groen, he did not quite reach Holland but only London.

Kuyper in matters of the theory of government followed what appears to have been his regular pattern — twin errors which approximately offset each other. Kuyper's twin errors in this instance were:

1. Governments have arbitrary powers and must be obeyed, because the powers that be are of God. (This is Groen's old error over again); and

2. The restoration of the liberty that was destroyed by number one is accomplishable by *sphere sovereignty*.

We shall now devote some attention to *sphere sovereignty*.

Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), well-known to all Netherlanders but to few others, was originally a theologian in the Dutch state church (*Hervormde*). Returning to orthodox religious ideas,

he led an exodus out of the state church in 1886. (There had been an earlier exodus, known as the Secession, in 1834. Eventually the two movements merged except for some splintering.) Kuyper then became a publicist, a founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, and a politician. He was Groen's successor as head of the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Groen was never able to get the Anti-Revolutionary Party (in airplane lingo) "off the ground." Kuyper was not only able to do that, but by coalition with the Catholic party, was for a considerable time premier of the Netherlands. Kuyper was, then, in his day, a man of importance in his small country.

On October 20, 1880, the Free University of Amsterdam opened its doors. The official celebration was highlighted by the inaugural address of the first Rector, Dr. Abraham Kuyper. The title of the address was: "*Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring*." The title is customarily translated as *sphere sovereignty*, which will mean nothing to an American unless it is explained. (The idea of *sphere sovereignty* is unknown to the English-speaking world. It is our opinion that that entails no loss. Americans of Dutch descent will do wisely to desist spreading the idea of *sphere sovereignty*.)

The *spheres* to which reference is made are the family, the church, the school system, the economic order, etc. Various smaller *spheres* would be the labor union movement; or employer groupings, as the United States Chamber of Commerce; the baseball leagues; or the Society for the Advancement of Colored People. Society, in Kuyper's thinking, consists of: (1) the government; (2) individuals; and (3) collective groupings (*spheres*) as illustrated in the foregoing. (We omit at this time a critical analysis of the *definition* of a sphere.)

The *spheres*, Kuyper affirmed, had *sovereignty*. In a sense the family was sovereign, the church was sovereign, the educational system was sovereign, etc. These *sovereignities* were, by definition, in whatever the crucial aspect was, independent of interference by that greatest sovereignty of all, the state. The state, according to *sphere sovereignty* had no business interfering in religious affairs; nor might the state act in a manner to encroach on the independent, sovereign domain of the family. Nor might the state inter-

fere in the educational process in a manner to supersede the parents' own proper authority in the education of their children.

Sphere sovereignty was a concept designed to place a boundary to the dangerous, expansionist sovereignty of the state. To prevent the state being *all-sovereign*, smaller, autonomous sovereignties were declared to exist. And as sovereignty for the state comes direct from God by a power pipe line, so sovereignty for each of the spheres comes direct from God by its own pipe line. When in politics we talk of establishing a *balance of power* so that no political unit becomes too strong, we do the same thing practically that Kuyper was alleging theoretically. Americans, in a sense, established *sphere sovereignty* between the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branches of government, for the same purpose as Kuyper imagined his *sphere sovereignties*.

Why did Kuyper need the idea of *sphere sovereignties*? He *did* need it. He caused his own need. Kuyper did exactly what Groen did. Kuyper first set up an irresponsible government in the form of a power pipe line from God, completely detached from the *whole* Second Table of the Law, and resting *only on power*, as allegedly authorized in the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue only. (See August, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.) Having created too big a government — too sovereign and too irresponsible a government — he was compelled to develop some counterweights.

It is interesting that Kuyper was not satisfied with the counterweights Groen used, viz., the historically *acquired* rights of subjects. Maybe Kuyper thought that too prosaic, too individualistic, and maybe he realized that there was an internal inconsistency that Groen had overlooked — rights *wrested* from government and *thereafter* valid, but not valid originally according to the theory.

And so a *theoretical* justification for some kind of liberty was needed. Kuyper's solution was *sphere sovereignties*.

The idea of sphere sovereignty is *unnecessary*. If the original idea about government had been sound it would not have been necessary to develop these *sphere sovereignties*. In our earlier metaphor telling how Kuyper wanted to get from Paris to Amsterdam, we said he first went to San Francisco (which symbolically

indicated his erroneous ideas on the sovereignty of government); and that then he backtracked to London (which was his development of his imaginary ideas on sphere sovereignty). He never arrived at true liberty which in our metaphor was designated by Amsterdam.

Not only is the idea of sphere sovereignty *unnecessary*, it is also *unscriptural*. Nineteen hundred years after Christ and 3,400 years after Moses the idea of *sphere sovereignty* is discovered and is presented as an idea worthy of a rectoral address at the dedication of a new Calvinist university. But where in Scripture is the doctrine taught? Any declaration that Scripture teaches sphere sovereignty is fantasy. That is not the skeptical idea of an American. Van Riessen in his recent book, *De Maatschaapij der Toekomst* (The Society of the Future) (T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands, publisher) writes (page 87), "Scripture of course presents no theory of sphere sovereignty. It would be foolish to expect it."

According to Kuyper, the sovereignty of the state and the sovereignty of the spheres are directly from God, as per Romans 13. In both cases, the idea is eliminated that the sovereignty of the state or the sovereignty of a group is derived from ordinary men wishing to obey the Decalogue; in both cases the *individual* is outside of consideration. The individual is insignificant. Kuyper sets up his system without there being much importance to obtaining the "just consent of the governed" — about which the founding fathers of America talked in the Declaration of Independence. To Kuyper, sovereignty is *from God* directly by a pipe line. All pipe lines of power are, for Kuyper, from God to the gigantic *group*, the state, or to smaller *groups*, any sphere. Van Riessen, summarizing his own favorable idea of the doctrine on sphere sovereignty in the book just mentioned wrote on pages 85 and 86 (our translation):

The authority of a sphere is not derived from another sphere, for example the authority of the state from the authority of the church. It exists according to its own nature and in accordance with a commission from Him, who is unrestricted sovereign, Christ, to whom God gave all power in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 2:10; Ephesians 1:21; I Corinthians 15:17,28.)

We come then, with Kuyper, to the conclusion, that nowhere on earth is there supreme authority, nor an absolute, nor an irresponsible authority. Christ divides authority among the various functionaries in the several spheres. They owe direct responsibility to Him. Their authority pertains to their respective spheres and goes no further.

This is the standard idea of a pipe line of power from God, and the pipe lines go to groups and to their officials only. The *individual* is the forgotten man in this scheme of things. An American cannot easily grasp an idea as this idea of *sphere sovereignty*.

This pipe line of power system fascinates us. Consider the throne of God. Pipe lines, big and small, run from that throne to all sphere sovereignties, to the Russian government and to the American baseball leagues, for example. There are millions of pipe lines because there are millions of spheres. And they change frequently, one sphere merging into another, or disappearing; or a new sphere developing, as for example the television industry. And so pipe lines must be changing too.

The pipe lines for sanitation, water and heating in a building as the Pentagon in Washington are exceedingly complex; similarly, in a great building as the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. Special plumbing architects are employed, we are told, on such projects. We understand the need.

But all such plumbing architecture is amateurish compared to this power pipe line system of sphere sovereignty. When we contemplate the system we understand that Abraham Kuyper was the greatest pipe line architect in the history of mankind. The plumbing architect for any of the great buildings does not compare. Consider the long hours of drafting a pipe line system for a great building. And here by one flash of the imagination, a limitless, flexible, perfect pipe line system, with no power lost at any defective connection!

Groen kept the pipe line system simpler. As far as we know, he had pipe lines going only to governments. He did not seem to know about *sphere* pipe lines. Our ideas are closer to those of Groen than to those of Kuyper.

We are not in the least critical of what Kuyper was endeavoring to accomplish. He was nobly endeavoring to do what Groen had attempted; having first ripped the foundation out from under liberty, he was trying to find a sure substitute against the destruction of liberty by encroachment by the government. He did not genuinely limit or "box in" the power of the government *by making it always contingent on obeying the Decalogue*. Having granted too much power to government, he felt he had to frustrate too broad and too dangerous an exercise of that power. All this is obvious to independently thinking Netherlanders, also, although they do not free themselves entirely of the fantasy of sphere sovereignty. Van Riessen in the book previously quoted writes on page 88 (our translation):

Occasionally you get the impression that Kuyper feared the power of the state. Sphere sovereignty as a defense mechanism against the sovereignty of the state, there you have it — a summary of the events of history.

Kuyper endangered and destroyed the safeguards against liberty when he misinterpreted Romans 13. Having created that theoretical problem, there appeared to him to be no theoretical solution at hand except the spurious concept of sphere sovereignty.

This sphere sovereignty was so important for Kuyper's system that it seems he wrote somewhere that the achievements of Christ were necessary to establish this sphere sovereignty. Imagine the incarnation and the atonement as related to the sphere sovereignty of the American baseball leagues!???

In later issues, in a supplementary manner, we shall analyze the definition of the word *spheres*, and shall raise questions about the epistemological problems associated with Kuyper's "group" approach, that is, his collectivistic approach rather than a sound individualistic approach to basic problems in the social sciences. An erroneous epistemology generally vitiates Kuyper's approach to social problems.

What has been written in disagreement with Kuyper was necessary for an understanding of his errors. Kuyper himself wrote critically and even contemptuously of views held by his contemporaries (which happen to be views we hold today). If he

was privileged to be critical, why should not the same privilege be accorded to others.

The Quest For Liberty

What did Rousseau seek? and Groen van Prinsterer? and Abraham Kuyper? They sought and we all seek the same objective — liberty.

Rousseau sought it in the people's revolution. He destroyed effectively the erroneous argument for power piped from God via kings, the pipe line system known as the "divine right of kings." But he immediately re-established the old system in the form of a people's government with as much arbitrary power for that government as the kings had ever claimed. A *source* of power which Rousseau considered good, namely, the people, seemed to him to justify as much power for government as the *source* claimed by the old monarchies, namely, God. But once power was granted or existed, the restraints on power which give liberty were not on hand. It was basically the lack of those restraints which made Groen an opponent of the French Revolution. Groen attacked the French Revolution sincerely on the ground that it was against God and legitimate power (*Ne dieu, ne maître*; no God, no master); it was a mock fight. The *real* issue was not the source of power, but the manner of exercising that power.

To get the right manner of exercising power Groen said rights and privileges needed to be established which were inviolable. They had gradually been developed in the monarchies. They were not allowed for in either the theory or the practice of the French Revolution. The *real* fight that Groen fought was to re-establish the restraints on power which the Revolution swept away. His real fight was not about *ne dieu, ne maître*, but about liberty.

In that fight he did not declare that the Decalogue controlled; no, but historical rights and privileges. And he failed to show that the kinds of rights and privileges which were historically obtained would almost certainly be manifestations of the laws in the Decalogue. In fact, they were. Scripture and experience coincide. But Groen saw primarily experience, and did not realize that experience in the form of history was only a specific manifestation of the universal laws in the Decalogue.

Kuyper sought the same objective — liberty. He was, as Groen, partly blind to the inherent error in the idea of the divine right of kings, but ignoring Groen's solution (thereby indicating he thought it was inadequate) he developed the idea of sphere sovereignty. Like Rousseau, Kuyper says sovereignty rests in persons collectively, but Kuyper adds a supplementary idea, namely, segmented collective sovereignty (spheres). Unlike British and American thinkers, Kuyper does not consider sovereignty as coming indirectly through individuals. Kuyper gives no consideration to individuals as individuals — as a practical source of the delegation of power. Power is from God; and only and always to groups. The offsetting groups, the division of power and the balancing of power between them, constitutes the means to achieve liberty.

But Rousseau, Groen and Kuyper all abandon liberty before they defend it. They first establish a dangerous power — above the Decalogue, because it has POWER *directly* from God or from the people. If none of them had first granted too unrestricted power, they would have protected liberty effectively instead of destroying liberty as the French Revolution did, or only defending liberty as a rear guard action as Groen and Kuyper did.

Liberty is properly defended by heeding Scripture, towit: We must obey God rather than men. A government should admit it is bound by the Decalogue and citizens should insist on their government being bound by the Decalogue — and we shall have liberty.

*(To be continued next month under the title,
"The Quest For Ramparts For Liberty.")*

(All articles in this issue are by F. N.)

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

OCTOBER, 1955

NUMBER 10

Contents

	Page
We Believe It Right That They Threw Daniel Into The Lion's Den	273
Challenging Prevailing Ideas On Brotherly Love, On Obedience To Government, And On Justice	279
Could Eve Talk?	281
We Line Up With Sixteenth Century Dutch Calvinists Rather Than Modern Dutch Calvinists	283
The Quest For Ramparts For Liberty	284

We Believe It Right That They Threw Daniel Into The Lion's Den

One of the great Hebrew prophets was Daniel. He lived during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon in the fifth century before Christ. At that time Darius the Mede was king (522-486 B.C.) of the Median and Persian empire.

Under the circumstances that existed we believe it was the right thing to do to throw Daniel into the lion's den. If we had been a contemporary we would (once things had gone as far as they had) not have resisted throwing in Daniel despite his age, fine character and genuine and courageous devotion to his God.

Readers should note our qualifications, namely, *under the circumstances and once things had gone as far as they had.*

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Responsibility for any article is restricted to the author whose initials or name follows the article. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students, \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

Daniel, as counsellor and administrator for Darius, had become too powerful in the opinion of his fellow counsellors and administrators. As Daniel was not a corrupt politician nor corruptible, his jealous rivals decided to trap him. They had observed Daniel's habit of advertising his act of praying, first kneeling and then praying before an open window facing toward Jerusalem and his fatherland which he would not see again. And so they had a "law passed" that nobody could pray (ask for anything) from God or man for thirty days except from King Darius. They persuaded Darius to sign the law.

There can be no question that this was a legal statute for the people of the Medo-Persian empire of which Daniel was a subject and a public official. The law, according to many Calvinists, should have been obeyed, because the Apostle Paul says (Romans 13:1):

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the *powers* that be are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.

Daniel, however, deliberately disobeyed the formal law of the Medo-Persian empire. He boldly advertised his disobedience by continuing to pray before his open window facing toward Jerusalem. Not only did Daniel disobey, but he flaunted his disobedience before everybody. Why did he not take a vacation in his prayers? Why did he not at least close his window? He could easily have made up the loss of prayers for thirty days by praying longer after the thirty days had passed. He knew very well that thirty days is not a long time (in the life of a man possibly more than seventy years old). If governments have a pipe line of proper power, direct from God according to the Divine Right of Kings, or direct from the people according to Rousseau's ideas of popular sovereignty, or from God according to the *apparent* answer to Lord's Day XXXIX of the Heidelberg Catechism of the Christian Reformed church, then Daniel was a sinner when he disobeyed the law of the Medes and Persians, which "changeth" and "altereth" not.

Daniel's personal self-excuse may have been that he was required to "obey God rather than men." But God had nowhere declared that Daniel should advertise his act of praying; nor to have an open window toward Jerusalem.

Let us for the moment make a traditional approach to the problem.

It is inescapable that there are two laws in Scripture which frequently clash, as if they were two automobiles each going 65 miles an hour which collide head on and whose occupants fly through the windshields. The one law is: "be in subjection to the higher powers . . . ordained of God"; the other rule is "obey God rather than men." (Of course, there is no conflict when the "higher powers," that is, governments, obey the commandments of God. That means that there are *good* governments.)

A conservative denomination as the Christian Reformed can continue its existence for almost 100 years and not have the clarity or firmness in all that time to amend one of its standards so that instead of saying a government must *always* be obeyed it would say that governments should be obeyed only when they do what is right. To this day it teaches that every citizen should (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XXXIX):

. . . bear patiently with their [the government's] weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand.

What was the matter with this man Daniel that he did not act accordingly, and stop his ostentatious praying? (The reader will understand that that is not our opinion because we do not believe we should obey governments rather than God. We advertise that we believe God should be obeyed rather than men. See the August and September, 1955, issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. We were merely expressing the first reaction of some Christians.)

We put a caption on this article, to wit: "We Believe It Right That They Threw Daniel Into The Lion's Den." We are not, however, in any way pleased with the law that the Medes and Persians passed. Further, we do not criticize Daniel for continuing his habit of advertising his prayers. We consider Daniel to have been wholly within his rights and not at all obligated to "bear

patiently with their [the government's] weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." Those are *not* the reasons why we are pleased that they shoved an old man over the edge of the lion's pit to his expected doom.

But once Daniel had involved himself as he was involved we would not have hindered those who pushed him in. This needs some explanation, and gives us an opportunity to make a vital point.

Darius must in many ways have been an admirable man:

1. Darius had the ability to choose between capable and stupid men. He picked Daniel promptly as his top assistant. And there can be no doubt that Daniel was a right smart man. Stupid men do not choose smart men. The stupid employer suffers from an inferiority complex if he has an employee who is abler. He does not want an abler man around.

2. Darius immediately realized that he had been trapped into signing a bad law. Scripture (Daniel 6:12-18) tells the story as follows (our capitals):

Then they [the other jealous and malevolent counsellors and administrators] came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree: Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall make petition unto any God or man within thirty days, save unto thee, O king, shall be cast in the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, WHICH ALTERETH NOT. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel who is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou has signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him. Then these men assembled together unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O King, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that NO DECREE NOR STATUTE WHICH THE KING ESTABLISHETH MAY BE CHANGED.

Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. *Now* the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; **THAT NOTHING MIGHT BE CHANGED CONCERNING DANIEL.** Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep fled from him.

3. Note, too, Darius' attempt to save Daniel. Darius had a sense of justice and he had courage. Nor was he unfeeling. He could not sleep that night.

Withal, Darius was undoubtedly a very worthwhile person. He was not craven nor contemptible. He did not desert a good man because it would have been politic to do so. He was neither an opportunist nor a coward. He had undoubtedly risen to the top of the heap because he was a *man*.

Nevertheless, in this affair Darius was piling mistake on mistake. He should never have signed the decree against prayer. Secondly, he should not have tried to violate the *constitution* of the Medes and Persians. By *constitution* we mean the super-law that they had to which Darius refers and to which his counsellors refer, namely, the great law that once a law of the Medes and Persians had been signed by the king *that everybody was then under the law even the king himself*. That law we consider a tremendous principle because it makes in this respect all men "neighbors" and treats them *equally*, which is absolutely essential to the law of brotherly love.

But the minute Darius discovered that his brilliant and influential favorite, Daniel, was in trouble, he set out to evade the basic constitution of the Medes and Persians, namely, the prohibition that a law could not be "altered" so that it would apply to one person but not to another person. The constitution required that the law was to be universal — *UNALTERABLE*. Hear the nobles haughtily challenging the king:

Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

We hold that it was more important that Daniel be cast into the lion's den and the *constitution* (the basic law) of the Medes and Persians be honored, than that the constitution be violated and *an exception be made for Daniel*.

That *constitutional law* of the Medes and Persians was a great law. It was a law to defend liberty and to restrict injustice, by preventing the persecution of enemies by making the law apply to them but favoring friends by relieving them from obedience to the law.

When a law was passed by the Medes and Persians those who passed the law knew that the law would apply to themselves as well as to all others. There were to be no exceptions. The natural consequence of that was that the legislators would not ordinarily pass a law which might hurt themselves. Except in unusual cases, as this law against praying during thirty days which trapped Daniel, the basic law was an excellent law:

1. It contributed toward care and honesty in making laws.
2. It made all men equal before the law.
3. It made it difficult to discriminate against *A* and to favor *B*.

It is regrettable that laws must sometimes prove to be harsh as in this case of Daniel. The natural tendency is to wish to avoid harshness by making exceptions to the law. That is what Darius was trying to do — to favor Daniel. There is no record that he tried to save anybody else who was entrapped by this thirty-day law against prayer.* Darius was trying to save a personal favorite.

It is much better that the law be universally applied even when it operates harshly than that the law be variably applied. To apply the law universally is a basic safeguard of liberty; to apply the law variably is to introduce eventual inevitable tyranny. Harshness

*The law in this case was practically a Bill of Attainder, a law passed against one man.

of the law and even injustice in the law are to be preferred to variability of the law.

One reason why the Medes and Persians were a great people is because they had a *constitutional* law, towit: laws applied *equally* to everybody and that not even their king could change that.

The *only* reason why we are reconciled to casting Daniel in the lion's den is because the basic law of the Medes and Persians defending liberty was far more important than the life of one old man, although he was a great and good man.

For a fuller understanding of this see the later article in this issue entitled, "The Quest For Ramparts For Liberty" and continuations in later issues.

Challenging Prevailing Ideas On Brotherly Love, On Obedience to Government, And On Justice

In the first issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we restricted our field by declaring that we were concentrating only on the Second Table of the Law, on the relations of men to men, as controlled by the great law of brotherly love, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. It is essentially out of our field to concern ourselves with the First Table of the Law. We have more than enough to do in the limited field we have selected.

We are now far enough along in the first year of our publication of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to realize that we are presently aiming to do three things:

1. Discredit a sanctimonious and hypocritical definition of the law of brotherly love, and substitute for it the simple and practical Biblical law of brotherly love. See the February, March, April and May issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM for preliminary treatment. (We are by no means finished with the analysis.)

2. Discredit a confused vacillation among Christians about the doctrine when to obey a government and when to disobey. There are two rules in Scripture and *as practically always interpreted* they face in two directions and are antinomies (*an tin' o mies*, that is, contradictions). The two rules are "obey the powers that be," that is, whoever the government is, and "obey God rather than men." The churches generally live by the former commandment and by exception live by the latter. (It is so much easier!) We consider the church no longer a "salting salt" as long as it permits in practice obedience to men to take precedence over obedience to God. Respect for the church falls low when Christians prattle about "obeying the powers that be" when those powers are evil. (We are in this issue beginning our third instalment on this subject of the relation of men to government, that is, the instalment on the subject of political liberty.)

3. Discredit the present definition of the Christian churches on what is justice. We plan to show that what some leaders in orthodox churches teach about justice is in contradiction with what Scripture teaches about justice. Probably major space will be devoted to this subject of justice in the November and December issues. But we cannot now be sure what our space problems will permit.

Readers will become aware (1) that we consider orthodox churches to be intellectually confused on these questions; (2) that the fallacious ideas which are current on brotherly love, on the authority of government, and on justice are subversive to a good society; and (3) that real leadership by the church in practical moral matters will be dependent on the church shaking off its intellectual lethargy on ethical and social problems, abandoning sanctimony, and courageously telling the world ideas which are unpopular.

The orthodox Christian churches are full of error on practical questions. Progress will consist in getting rid of pious errors regarding brotherly love, liberty, and justice. Eventually our readers will understand what we mean by *progressive Calvinism*.

We are informed, as others are, that membership records of the churches are "favorable." Such records are of little significance. Churches admit members on the basis of (1) a vague declaration

regarding belief, (2) occasional attendance, and (3) some payment of contributions. But travel the world and what do you learn? This: there is little real interest in the church or its teaching; insignificant conformity to its rules; no expectation of discipline or respect for it; no improvement expected in the conduct of new members — bold profanity, nonobservance of the Sabbath, irregularity, use of coercion and fraud whenever those means are considered fruitful; and unconcealed and uninhibited covetousness.

Membership increases due to the biological factor of increased births or a payment to a church budget (a tax deductible item) are of small significance.

The churches (with a few exceptions) are steadily losing real ground. They deserve the consequences of their teachings. It is to be expected that more ground will be lost.

There are some church formalities left — christening, marriages and burial services. Beyond that the church means very little to many people. Why should it? Part of the message of the church is of a non-Christian origin. On such matters the label only remains Christian.

Could Eve Talk?

Adam was somewhere in Eden. Eve was brought to him. Could she talk already?

There has been a mortal dispute for many years between those who believe in creation and those who believe in evolution. There are some hard-to-believe aspects of both. The events are shrouded in the unknown and in some part in the apparent unknowable.

There is, we believe, some utility in endeavoring to reconstruct early events. Religious and nonreligious men have been working at it for thousands of years.

The creation account is about as abbreviated an account as any could be of an epochal event. Moses used less than fifteen

hundred words to describe creation. Undoubtedly his ignorance was great. He did not undertake to provide details.

We propose to ask some questions about creation. We are asking our first question.

It is clear from the account in Genesis that Eve could not sew. She had no clothes. Believing in a creation, we cannot hold that women have changed greatly. We cannot believe she would have appeared on the scene without some finery, if she could have woven fabric and sewn garments. It was, too, only a question of time, namely, change of the seasons, before she would urgently need some covering to keep warm.

It is equally probable that she could not cook. Despite her practical uselessness, Adam seems to have been glad to have her around, and she seems to have been glad to stay.

Moses makes it perfectly clear that Adam, despite his capabilities, was unshaven, was a stone-age man, and had had nobody with whom to talk. He was supposed to "dress" the trees in the Garden. His tools could have been nothing but pieces of stone — if he had those. He could not have had any metal knives, saws, hoes, sheers. His *stone* instruments could have hardly done him much good — assuming he had any. Probably the "dressing" consisted in breaking off twigs with his bare hands.

Things did not have names. Language depends on having names for things, that is, nouns. It was an *event* when Adam named the animals which would seem to have been part of the beginning of language. It would seem to be reasonable that neither Adam nor Eve could talk about animals (or anything) until they had names (nouns) for those real things. It appears, therefore, that Adam developed language. Did Adam learn to talk while he was alone? Is language learned? Would he have needed to learn to talk if Eve had never appeared?

There is no question that *later* Eve was able to talk; but could she talk *when she came to Adam*? Did she learn from Adam, or did they learn together how to talk? Was early talk much more than a system of grunts?

If there were subhuman ancestors in the evolutionary sense (which we do not believe) they could not (being subhuman) have taught Adam and Eve to talk.

And one more question: If Eve could not talk, how fast did she learn?

Theorists for evolution are working constantly on reconstructing the events of creation. Why not endeavor to reconstruct details according to the creation theory? It might be helpful for a sound view of the present world.

We Line Up With Sixteenth Century Dutch Calvinists Rather Than Modern Dutch Calvinists

Dr. Friedrich A. von Hayek, famous economist and author (well known to the public for his *The Road to Serfdom*, University of Chicago Press, a book which everyone should read), in one of his lectures this summer in Cairo under the auspices of the National Bank of Egypt, said (page 5, "The Political Ideal of the Rule of Law," 1955):

In the modern world, general human liberty, as distinguished from the liberties that are the privileges of the few, hardly existed before the England of the seventeenth century.

But Hayek has a footnote to the foregoing. It reads:

A fuller account of this development ought to give more attention to sixteenth and seventeenth century developments in Holland of which too little is known outside that country and of which I am largely ignorant. But I suspect that they had more direct influence on English thought than is commonly realized.

Those are kind words for Netherlanders of 300 years ago. We believe that development of more information will bear out Von Hayek's note.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, as we make some attempt to advertise, has a Dutch background. The founders of the Progressive

Calvinism League are of Dutch stock. As such we have long realized that as American Calvinists we are more akin to the freedom-loving Calvinists in the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than we are akin to the interventionist-minded twentieth-century Calvinists in the Netherlands.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is *sympatico* with the freedom-loving patriots of the Low Countries (Catholic and Calvinist alike) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but we are unable to warm up to the wholly-different economic and political ideas of many of the present-day Dutch Calvinists, some of whose leaders are basically committed to government regulation and not to liberty.

That basic attitude on the part of Dutch Calvinists will be denied, and, of course, there are exceptions as, for example, the attitude of the group known as The Stichting Johannes Althusius (which takes its name from a man to whom Hayek refers). See July, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, page 204. But the mass of Dutch Calvinists today appears to have a different (and deteriorated) social, political and economic philosophy from what their forebears had three or four centuries ago.

Groen van Prinsterer, whose heart in matters pertaining to liberty was in the right place, correctly ascribes much of the sixteenth and seventeenth century greatness of the Netherlands to the great principles of liberty, firmly believed in by Netherlanders at that time. Groen also correctly ascribed the decline of the significance of the Netherlands in large part to the loss of devotion to those principles.

We salute our great sixteenth and seventeenth century forebears.

The Quest For Ramparts For Liberty

Because there will be references to two earlier articles on the general subject of liberty, readers are advised to read those articles first. One article appeared in the August, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, page 218, under the title, "The Powers That Be Are Ordained of

God," and the other appeared in the September, 1955, issue, page 251, under the title, "We Must Obey God Rather Than Men."

In actual history, governments do not always act according to the commandments of God. When governments require citizens to act contrary to the commandments of God or treat citizens contrary to such commandments, a grave practical problem arises. Generally, the churches have engaged in two pretenses, namely, (1) the pretense that there is very little conflict between the commandments of God and of a government, whereas in fact there is a conflict; and (2) the pretense that men must be obeyed rather than God, because "the powers that be are ordained of God." The fiction is that only on rare occasions does a government violate the commandments of God, and then a citizen has the duty of "bearing patiently with the weaknesses and shortcomings" of government. Possibly — so the position of Christians seems to be — under the most exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to "obey God rather than men." But for an ordinary Christian such a situation is so unusual a circumstance that it really lacks, in our enlightened age, any practical importance. That seems to be the view of many Christians.

Honest and clear-headed men of the world have looked at the situation differently. There is the well-known statement that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." The words "eternal vigilance" mean something different from "bearing patiently with the weaknesses and shortcomings" of government.

Readers will understand that we believe in "eternal vigilance" and that for us the controlling rule is, obey God rather than men. For us that is the "categorical imperative," the universal, binding-on-all rule.

* * *

In what follows there will be nothing new in regard to the principles of liberty. The basic ideas about liberty,

although lost to most of this generation of Calvinists, are old and well-known. What follows is really only a re-statement of basic principles in a form designed to rebut false principles advanced in the name of religion, specifically in the name of modern so-called Calvinism. The great treatises on liberty will do a far better job in defense of liberty than this presentation which is really only an argumentum ad hominem, that is, an argument directed to certain people, and intended at least to be valid for them even though the argument is not considered to be valid by others to whom it is not addressed. It is admitted that this argument for liberty is based on the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures, a foundation which many men do not accept as authoritative or even reliable. The argument here for liberty is not primarily a rational argument but an authoritative argument. For the full argument for liberty readers are referred to the classics.

To avoid as much as possible difficulty in reading this article an anecdotal, rambling style has been adopted.

The broad subdivisions of this little attempt to promote liberty are two; they are:

- I. The Mechanics of Liberty, and
- II. The Substance of Liberty

By "mechanics of liberty" we refer to the devices and practical institutions men have developed to safeguard liberty. By "substance of liberty" we refer to the field of activity in which freedom may not be restrained against A by B or by a combination of men as B, C, D, E and F.

I. THE MECHANICS OF LIBERTY

**What is Necessary for a
Government to be Legitimate**

Benito Mussolini, whose economic ideas were basically the same as those of John L. Lewis and of Abraham Kuyper (they all have favored syndicalism; see June, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 170-172), while dictator of Italy in the 1930s

became displeased with a historian who fled to Switzerland, Guglielmo Ferrero. As Benito was quite an athlete and very vain about his physical skills, he apparently decided he could get rid of Ferrero by challenging him to a duel; a good duel and there would be no Ferrero left to trouble Benito.

It is possible that under ordinary circumstances Ferrero might have accepted the challenge. I have no knowledge whether he was a good pistol-shot, or a good swordsman. But Ferrero declined the challenge. The reason was that Mussolini had specified that the duel was to be fought *in Italy*. Ferrero, considering, I suppose, that he would be running more than one risk if he went to fight the duel, was a very prudent man when he declined the challenge. Had he accepted it, he would have run at least three risks:

1. He might have been arrested, tried and executed by Mussolini's government before a duel could have taken place; or assassinated;
2. He might have lost the duel itself; or
3. He might, if he had defeated Mussolini, have been arrested after the duel and then have been tried and executed.

And so there was no duel between Mussolini and Ferrero.

In 1941 Ferrero had already written eleven or more books. He was at that time engaged in writing a trilogy (a series of three books in the field of history). The first has the French title, *Aventure, Bonaparte en Italie, 1796-97*, which was translated into English under the title, *The Gamble*. The second has the title, *The Reconstruction of Europe*, with the subtitle, *Talleyrand and the Congress of Vienna, 1814-15* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1941). (The third book was to have a French title, *Pouvoir*, which is the French for *power*. We do not know whether it was published.) We shall in what follows restrict ourselves to what Ferrero writes in the second book, *The Reconstruction of Europe*, a book concerned with how order was established in Europe after the chaos caused by the French Revolution and Napoleon. The well-

known American columnist and author, Walter Lippmann, in March, 1941, made this comment about the book: "I consider it by far the most useful book that has been published since the war began: in no other have I found so much enlightenment as to how this war can eventually be brought to a conclusion." Although we differ radically from Lippmann on many matters, we concur that Ferrero's book is very helpful. We recommend it to those interested in the kind of subject covered by this book.

In *The Reconstruction of Europe* Ferrero declared that after World War II Europe would have to be reconstructed as it had to be reconstructed in 1815 after the Napoleonic wars. Ferrero believed the Congress of Vienna did a good piece of work. He declared it was good enough to give Europe 100 years of peace. And, strangely, the hero of the book is a Frenchman, Talleyrand, who is popularly considered to have been a calloused statesman and diplomat.

Ferrero published the book in 1941. Four years later World War II ended. Mussolini who had challenged Ferrero was dead. The American newspapers showed Mussolini's body hanging upside down, ludicrously, like old-fashioned, long underwear on a clothesline. Hitler, too, was dead. As Ferrero had foreseen, the problem of reconstructing Europe after Mussolini and Hitler was in 1945 as necessary as the same problem had been 130 years earlier after Napoleon. And Ferrero declares: here are the basic principles that must be observed or there will be no real "reconstruction."

The interesting question is: did the men who made the peace after 1945 follow as sound principles as those who made the peace in 1815? Whether Ferrero was still alive in 1945 or is still alive, we do not know. But we are sure that among the negotiators of the peace of 1945 there was not one who had such a sound view of government and of legitimate power as Talleyrand had in 1815.

We propose to summarize Ferrero's book briefly.

A

Ferrero first asks: Why did the leaders of the French Revolution and later Napoleon attack all the other nations of Europe

and fight with everybody, putting all Europe through a horrible blood-bath. Why? Ferrero's answer is that they were *afraid*. It is *fear*, according to Ferrero, and not primarily lust for power, which motivated the excesses of the French Revolution and of Napoleon. The Revolutionists and Napoleon were afraid of something and of somebody, and so they attacked. They did not wait to be attacked; they were too apprehensive. They were afraid because they were evil, namely, employing violence (in violation of the Sixth Commandment). They were eventually afraid of the effects of their own use of force. They fought because they were at heart filled with terror.

Someone may ask: What has that to do with what the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures say about liberty; I thought you were planning to advance an argument for liberty which would be accepted by Christians because it was a Biblical proposition. Our answer is that we are not unhinged from Scripture at all. Ferrero is only saying what Solomon said almost three thousand years ago: "The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). The inevitable "price tag" attached to the doing of evil is an evil conscience and as a result subjective *fear*. Only doing what is right gives an easy conscience, and real courage, and eliminates the impulsion to further violence and coercion. Wherever there is evil, there will be fear; and wherever there is fear, there will be coercion; and wherever there is coercion, the Sixth Commandment in the Decalogue is violated (the commandment against killing and violence generally). (See Ferrero's book, Chapter I, entitled, "The Great Panic.")

B

The hero of Ferrero's book is Talleyrand. His full name was Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord. (Born in 1754 into an ancient and illustrious family. *Lame*. Unsited for war and so destined by his family for the Church, against his wishes. Became priest and abbé at Périgord. Led a scandalous life. His mother would not see him anymore. His father, on deathbed, asked king to make young Talleyrand a bishop. Made bishop at 34. Elected to the French States General (parliament). Went along with French Revolution as a renegade nobleman-churchman. Introduced bill stripping Church of its properties. When 37 years old resigned his

ecclesiastical connections. Fled from Revolution to England and then to the United States. At age of 41 (in 1795) returned to France and through the influence of Madame De Staël became Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Revolution. Participated in the events of 18 Brumaire establishing the so-called Counterrevolution. At age of 48 married pretty divorced woman 40 years old who had been his mistress for four years. Served Napoleon in creation of his empire. Alone knew the key to the only way to establish a good peace after the Napoleonic Wars. Nobleman, churchman, libertine, opportunist, and generally hated and feared, but withal a great man who understood better (we believe) what the Christian religion teaches than many who profess it and who lead exemplary lives.)

It will do little good to endeavor to defend that part of his conduct which was evil, and we shall not attempt it. But it can be "explained." The three main charges against him are (1) his hostility to the church; (he is said to have rebelled against it because his family had *forced* him to become a priest); (2) his immorality; (history tells us of many men who are steadfast in adversity, do not waver under great trials, never lose control of their emotions, but are guided by imperturbable good judgment — except they are not proof against a woman); (3) his service as an opportunist and eventual renegade first to the Church and the Old Order in France, then to the Revolution, then to the Counterrevolution, and then to the Napoleonic Empire; how could a man, except he be a conscienceless one, serve in succession such a series of irreconcilable programs to all of which he was in some degree opposed? (We have observed that the wisest among men do not quickly resign and withdraw from major events, but stay on because they are often more able to do what should be done by continuing than by withdrawing. Such men are willing to pay the price, namely, be tarred with the reputation of being a hypocrite. Talleyrand was one of the most hated and despised men of his day.)

Let us look beyond the man's personal faults and see what was good about his ideas.

C

The principles involved in the relationships of men to governments were in a fiery crucible during Talleyrand's life, as they

would have to be in the life of any man prominent in the last days of the Old Regime in France, the Revolution, the Counterrevolution, the Napoleonic Empire, and in the peace that followed. Talleyrand not only lived during that time, and he was not only a participant, but he was in some respects the greatest European thinker on the questions involved.

First, it should be mentioned that he was a product of genuinely pre-Revolution thinking. He had adopted the ideas about the "law of nations" which were developed in the eighteenth century (before the time of the theorists of the Revolution). Talleyrand never subscribed to the basic premises of the Revolution. He began with the same premises as did a great Netherlander (whom we have mentioned in earlier issues), namely, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer. On many fundamental problems of right and wrong, of the relations of men to men, and of men to government Groen and Talleyrand were agreed. We proceed to summarize Talleyrand's ideas.

D

Talleyrand, according to Ferrero, was in basic revolt against the ideas of the Revolution and of Napoleon. Ferrero calls the principle underlying the Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, the principle of *adventure*; Talleyrand had called it the principle of *enterprise*. By those terms Ferrero and Talleyrand meant the same thing, namely, the principle of the use by government of *force*, of *coercion*, of *violence*. Over against that principle Talleyrand represented, according to Ferrero, the principle of the *constructive mind*, the principle that is *opposed to force*, *opposed to coercion*, *opposed to violence*.

On that we believe Talleyrand to have been wholly right. Here are extracts of what he wrote in his famous *Memoir* when he was in England as a refugee from the Revolution; he was then 38 years old; (our italics):

"True pre-eminence, the only one both useful and rational, the only one worthy of free and enlightened men, consists in being master in one's own house, and never in possessing the *ridiculous ambition for mastery over others*"; that "all territorial aggrandizement, all those

usurpations by means of force and cunning which an old and illustrious tradition had concealed under the names of *rank*, of *consistency of policy*, of superiority in the order of powers, are naught but cruel games of political folly, untrue estimates of power, whose real effect is to increase the expenses and difficulties of the administration and to diminish the happiness and safety of the people in favor of the fugitive interest or the vanity of those who govern." (Page 19.)

Ferrero interprets Talleyrand's idea in his own (Ferrero's) words, towit: "All thoughts of aggrandizement by the Old Regime must be abandoned. France must remain within her natural boundaries and make no alliances with any great power. He declared an alliance is rational and just only when it is limited to a *reciprocal defense act*."

Let us convert Talleyrand's ideas into Biblical language.

1. The policy of "adventure," that is, appeal to *force*, *coercion* and *violence* is destructive, and contrary to the Sixth Commandment in the Decalogue, namely, thou shalt not kill, which obviously in a broad sense is a commandment forbidding coercion and violence.

2. The proper use of *force* is severely restricted, namely, to self-defense. This is what Moses taught long ago, towit, you can do what you will in your relations toward other men *except you may not harm them by coercion, adultery, fraud, theft*. (See March, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.) The use of violence, for Talleyrand, could not properly go beyond self-defense. In that regard he was merely following Moses. Talleyrand called it a ridiculous ambition to strive "for mastery over others."

3. What holds for men as individuals holds for governments (men collectively). The moral law of God applies to *all* phases of life, not merely to men individually. Governments may not make alliances except for "reciprocal defense."

4. Governments are not naturally good. They frequently use force and cunning. And what is pretended to be for the public good is really for the "fugitive interest or the vanity of

those who govern." Here is a realistic statement of the "total depravity" of man. Everyone is tempted to do what is wicked, *rulers* as well as those who are ruled. A *naturally* beneficent government is a fiction, and men will not establish liberty by leaving the defense of liberty to the government.

When after victories by the armies of the Revolution the Treaty of Campo Formio was signed, Talleyrand wrote the following to the Directory, the body which was then the administrative head of France (our italics):

. . . the Treaty of Campo Formio and every other treaty we have signed are nothing but military capitulations by the enemy of little permanent worth. The rivalry, momentarily subdued by the amazement and consternation of the loser, is not of a nature to be definitely ended by *force of arms, which is transitory, whereas hatred lives on.* (Page 22.)

Hear how the renegade nobleman-churchman expresses in his own words the same idea that Scripture teaches; he says: "force . . . is transitory, whereas hatred lives on." Talleyrand was telling the Directory in its hour of triumph that its program was wrong and would eventually come to grief. Away with force, and do away with the causes of hatred! Does modern Calvinism teach equally clearly what Scripture teaches? Of course not. Today the leaders in orthodox Calvinist denominations do not criticize the use of force, but say it "has not been proven from Scripture to be sin" to use coercion. And how can liberty exist when general coercion is an admitted principle?

E

To Napoleon in his hour of triumph Talleyrand in remonstrance wrote as follows (our italics):

Sire, three centuries of civilization have bequeathed to Europe a law of nations for which, in the words of a famous writer, human nature will never be grateful enough. This law is founded on the principle that *nations should in time of peace do each other the most good, and in time of war the least possible harm.*

Talleyrand refers to the Law of Nations. And he states the law admirably: Do to your neighbor the most good and even in disputes the least possible harm. He ascribed Europe's greatness to this Law of Nations, and he was probably right. The tribes in central Africa have observed no Law of Nations but have devoted much of their time to mutual extermination.

What is this Law of Nations? It is nothing more than what the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures teach as being the law of brotherly love. The Law of Nations is a practical application of the law of brotherly love to international affairs.

Ferrero discounts the idea that the Law of Nations was a specific set of rules. Instead he indicates it was a distinct "approach" or attitude toward justice and peace in international affairs. The Law of Nations consisted of wise and humane general rules which had the purpose of restricting the use of coercion and violence between states. Ferrero declares that appeal to coercion and use of force in international affairs does more harm to the aggressor than to the victim. He alleges that that is exactly what the outcome of the aggression of the French Revolution substantiated.

The Law of Nations did not envisage that its laws would be imposed by force. To the contrary, a fundamental concept was that statesmen should be wise enough to accept those laws voluntarily, and that in doing so they would not only be working for the welfare of their own country but for the welfare of other countries and of all mankind.

The Law of Nations warned statesmen against hatred, vengeance, cruelty, fraud, theft, covetousness in either war or peace. What is this other than a return to the elementary ideas of the Second Table of the Law?

We are reminded of what Grotius in his *Law of War and Peace* wrote (Peace Book Company, London, 1939):

The saying of Tacitus is very applicable in regard to the use of victory: "Excellent are the conclusions of those wars where pardons are the characteristic of the final terms." And . . . there is the letter of the dictator Caesar:

"Let this be a new way of conquering: to protect ourselves by mercy and generosity." (Page 81.)

And Grotius also quotes Sallust as saying that the ancient Romans followed this principle:

Our ancestors, most religious of men, took nothing from the vanquished except liberty to do wrong. (Page 79.)

No workable Law of Nations will ever be anything else than the application of the Second Table of the Decalogue. The Law of Nations is not unhinged from scriptural morality. Morality, in contradiction to what the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures teach (correctly understood), simply does not exist.

The Law of Nations, as does the Law of God, has, of course, a *rational* foundation. Ferrero puts it plainly: "abuses of force in relations between states . . . *do more harm to the states committing them than to those upon whom they are committed* — as the Revolution had just proved."

Moses said the same thing when he warned, "Your sins will find you out."

F

We come to the question regarding what is necessary for a government to be legitimate. To this question neither Talleyrand nor Ferrero gives the answer that a government is legitimate merely because it possesses power. Both men carefully avoid the proposition that the existence of power, the ability to coerce, is proof that a government is "ordained of God," which is the proposition often foolishly and erroneously deduced from a statement of the Apostle Paul in Romans 13.

In the preface of his book Ferrero summarizes the purpose of his book and its principle proposition.

The purpose of his book is to show that the basic idea of Talleyrand in 1815 is the same basic idea to which the world would be obliged to conform at the end of World War II, if real peace was to be established after that war, caused as it was by the usurpations of Lenin-Stalin, of Mussolini and of Hitler.

Ferrero says regarding World War II that the cause of the war was to be found in the internal structure of several of the principal European states. Those states had become "revolutionary" states, that is, they were states based on *force* and *coercion* and *violence*. Those states did not permit "opposition." They did not have really "free elections." To Ferrero and to Talleyrand (whose thinking Ferrero is tracing and admiring) the resulting governments lacked "legitimacy." They were not valid governments. They were "usurpations." Because they were usurpations they were unstable. Because they were unstable they were beset by "fears," the fears common to all men whose consciences are ill at ease. The use of coercion by such governments (usurpations) breeds more coercion. Every evil deed arouses a new frenzy of fear, which the usurpation believes can be warded off only by a new use of force, namely, a new attack on citizens within or a new attack on neighbors around.

According to Ferrero's thesis, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini (remember Ferrero was a refugee from Mussolini's Italy) could not keep the peace any more than Napoleon a hundred and forty years earlier could keep the peace. Nor could peace be restored, nor would it be permanent, unless the principle underlying all usurpations (the principle of coercion and force and violence) was repudiated, and instead of having usurpations or revolutionary states, there would be instead "legitimate" governments.

The question is: what makes a government legitimate? To this question Talleyrand by his own solitary thinking had found an answer which Ferrero considers to be the right answer.

For a state to be legitimate (and consequently stable and peaceful and not bedeviled by fear), it must be based on a principle that is wholly sound. That principle is that the "right of opposition" must be respected. As a supplementary principle, not separable in this age from the principle just mentioned, there must be "free elections." These two inseparable principles — the right of opposition and free elections — are the foundations on which today governments in the Western World must be founded in order to be "legitimate."

It is true that "elections" were permitted in Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany and there are from time to time elections in

Russia and its satellites. But these are not free elections. In Russia there is only one list of candidates. And even if there were more than one set of candidates, the modern usurpatory, illegitimate governments do not permit free elections in the sense that a voter can *without fear* go to the polls and vote for the party not in power.

The principles of free elections and of the right of opposition assume that there is a majority and a minority. The majority has the right to govern, but the minority has the right to its own opinion, and the right to express it, and to obtain converts for it, and to vote for it. The minority must feel it has the liberty to work to become the accepted majority. The present (1955) surviving Revolutionary governments (those behind the Iron Curtain and associated with Russia, and other governments as the recent Peron government in the Argentine) make a farce of free elections.

It is because the right of opposition (and in this age, the right of free elections) is so universally recognized as a requirement for a government if it wishes to be considered legitimate that the revolutionary states are very solicitous about employing the pretense of free elections in order to be able to declare (although it is false) that they *represent* their people. Russia and its satellites and China and Peron's Argentine all call themselves *people's* democracies or some equivalent term.

Talleyrand noted that as Napoleon's empire was tottering people basically misunderstood what was wrong. Everybody was saying that they were fighting against a man, a usurper, a menace; they did not in the least understand that the issue was not a man but a principle — the issue of usurpation versus legitimacy of government. What Talleyrand observed could also be observed in Hitler's day and Mussolini's day, and can be observed in the United States even today in regard to Russia and its satellites. Men speak as if they were fighting a man, a Stalin or a Malenkov or a Khrushchev, whereas they should speak of fighting a system, a principle, namely, the principle of usurpation which is the principle of coercion.

Talleyrand, therefore, did not consider the Europe organized by Napoleon to be a Europe that could ever attain a stable peace.

The Napoleonic Europe was a Europe based on compulsion. To become stable and peaceful the principle of compulsion would have to be abandoned and in its place the old principle of legitimacy would have to be established, and the principle of legitimacy is the antonym — the exact opposite of the principle of compulsion — namely, it is the principle of noncoercion, of voluntarism, of persuasion, of freedom in elections, of the right to oppose. Deny the right of opposition and you have a usurpation and an illegitimate government.

It may be believed by some that on such a principle pre-Revolution France had an illegitimate government, and that therefore the old monarchy of France should not have been restored in 1815. But we refer readers to what we have previously written about Groen van Prinsterer in the September, 1955, issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*. Groen van Prinsterer, we said, primarily opposed the French Revolution because it washed away the hard-won "liberties" and "privileges" which the people had obtained from their sovereigns. What was this other than Talleyrand's principle of the right of opposition. The possession of "rights" referred to by Groen was just another name for the right to oppose a government in the acquisition and defense of those rights. The "rights" were a specific form of the right of opposition. Groen and Talleyrand were in political philosophy close kinfolk. And they were both magnificently right on this main issue.

In his correspondence during 1815 Talleyrand referred to the idea that a government might be legitimate because it was from God. He declared that in earlier times religious sentiments were strong enough and exerted enough influence so that it was easy for the people to believe that the sovereign power came from above. But Talleyrand, ex-priest and ex-bishop, declared that so little religiosity remained, that religious opinion regarding legitimacy of the government was no longer able to sustain a government on the ground that it had a divine origin (or, in our language, a pipe line of power from the throne of God).

But if people were no longer able to respect a government because they no longer believed it was a government with a divine origin in that sense, what, Talleyrand asked, was necessary in order that the people would respect the government. His answer was

worthy of a churchman. He answered: "It must indispensably be so constituted that people will have no cause to fear it in any way," that is, it would not be a dangerous, or menacing, or unjust, or tyrannical government. The Apostle Paul described exactly the same kind of government as Talleyrand described, although Paul uses different words. We quote from Romans 13:3: "For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldst thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same." This is exactly the kind of government to which Talleyrand refers, namely, a legitimate government.

Talleyrand was a rationalist as well as a man educated in the principles of the church (although no longer within the church nor faithful to it). He gives his reason why a government should not terrorize its citizens. He declared that it was as much to the interest of the sovereign as to that of the subject that the power be so constituted as to cause no fear to a citizen conducting himself properly. A government whose citizens fear it if they do wrong is a good government; a government whose citizens fear it if they do what is right is a bad government. (Regarding what is "right" and "wrong" see later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM where the *substance* of liberty is being considered.)

We do consider Talleyrand to have been wrong on one item. He indicates that the doctrine of the "divine right" of government is a Christian doctrine. That has indeed been the actual *history* of the attitude of the church. That is still the medieval idea of the Christian Reformed church. But the two ideas are not logically related nor scripturally related; it is possible to interpret Scripture correctly and when that is done there is no silly allegation about the "divine right" of government in itself (*per se*), but only a derived legitimacy of a government obtained by obedience to the Second Table of the Law. That is the good government to which Talleyrand referred — a government so constituted that people will have no cause to fear it in any way (except the people engage in evil).

Eventually, through Talleyrand's efforts, Louis XVIII was restored to the throne of France. Talleyrand was no fearful courtier, but instead expressed his ideas plainly to the new king. In

effect he said: You are the king; you are the lawful king; but you are not infallible; you have no pipe line directly from God; there previously were ancient rights and privileges which protected your subjects (shades of Groen van Prinsterer!); but many of these have been swept away by the tidal wave of the French Revolution; there is now only one way to govern to protect the people; and that way is to surround yourself with *representative* institutions which have incorporated in them the right of opposition, which is guaranteed by the fact that there are really free elections. Free elections plus the right of opposition plus a government protecting the rights of citizens will give a kingdom (or any government) a legitimate title to the exercise of government. Talleyrand added that the Revolution should have given the right of opposition to the people in France (as a substitute for their ancient privileges) but that the Revolution had failed to do that. Talleyrand said: It is now up to you as the new sovereign to do what the Revolution failed to do.

Those are plain and honorable words.

Let us now ask ourselves: *what makes a government legitimate, and worthy to be obeyed?*

Is it *power* as if there were a pipe line from God? No.

Is it *power* by the strength of victory and terror and usurpation? No.

Is it *power* in any threatening sense at all? No.

Is it *power* in the sense that a majority can coerce a minority? No.

Instead, a government is *legitimate if it permits opposition*, and opposition can be peaceful (that is permitted) only when there are free elections. Deny the right of opposition and you deny peaceful elections. Deny peaceful elections and a government can only be founded on *force*. Force is a violation of the Sixth Commandment, thou shalt not kill (or coerce), (except such force as is necessary to resist evil). A government to be legitimate must not *command* obedience; it must *earn* obedience. Such a government is based on voluntary submission by intelligent citizens. Such a government is based on the most ancient code of the Hebrews, a law declared in the Scriptures to be directly from God.

A legitimate government is not *directly* from God. A legitimate government, in so far as its policy regarding *power* is concerned, is *indirectly* from God. For a government to be legitimate it *must* conform to the Sixth Commandment. The legitimacy of a government stems *directly* only from the Sixth Commandment.

Of course, if might (power) makes right, if power gives authority, if there is a direct pipe line of power from God to some man or men, if governments are not themselves under the law of God — then it is possible to declare that *every* government must be obeyed, because it is "ordained of God." Then we merely confuse the matter when we say that we must "obey God rather than men."

All governments based on mere *power* are governments based on some kind of usurpation, namely, a usurpation alleged to be legitimate because it allegedly comes (1) from God or (2) from the people. But such a government cannot be from God unless it obeys the Sixth Commandment, and it cannot be from the people unless it permits free elections.

None of the present totalitarian governments is legitimate and none of them needs to be obeyed. (When and how to disobey is another matter and is a *practical* question.) They are all usurpations. They all violate the Sixth Commandment.

Exactly in proportion as the government of the United States extends its power beyond what the law of brotherly love permits (and it has made indefensible extensions) it may and should be disobeyed. Exactly in proportion as social institutions, as the labor unions, appeal to coercion in violation of the Sixth Commandment they are usurpatory and evil and should be resisted. (See July, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 178-195.)

Few of the churches throughout the world testify against these usurpations. They are confused and pusillanimous institutions.

Ferrero became a refugee in Switzerland. At the end of his book he tells a simple anecdote which is not erasable from my mind. Here it is:

In the Swiss city in which he had found refuge he occasionally saw a spectacle that appeared symbolic to him and impressed him deeply. The city had a two-party system, with, of course, periodic

political campaigns. Before election time both parties would be campaigning and there would be parades and processions by both parties, each going down the streets separately with their own bands and flags. Ferrero notes that the two groups were opposed to each other. They represented differences of opinion and rivalries. The two parties were not made up of angels without a fault, but of mortal men, anxious and excited and determined to win.

Nevertheless he observed that they marched in an orderly manner. A few policemen stood idly by doing nothing. They were not even armed nor were they unfriendly, although they belonged to one party or the other.

And how could it be kept peaceful? Ferrero declares that that was accomplished by having an understanding between them, namely, that they would settle their differences by persuasion and not by coercion, by voting and not by swords, by peaceful elections and not by civil war. It was agreed that the majority would have their way and have their representatives in office. A difference of one vote might determine who would be the majority. But they all were prepared to abide by that. And the minority would lose no personal rights and suffer no personal danger from having been unable to get enough votes to become the majority.

Ferrero calls the situation just described a convention; and a very fragile one, a convention or custom as easily wiped away as a web of silk threads. This convention or agreement Ferrero does not consider to be the convention of men who are afraid or timid or unprepared to fight. He considers this convention to be one representing the finest judgment, a convention which keeps men from falling upon each other in mortal and hateful combat.

For Ferrero it is one or the other — force or nonforce; persuasion or violence; if force is abandoned the policy must be one of peace and persuasion; if peace and persuasion are abandoned, the only alternative is coercion.

Ferrero has no illusions about man. He fully understands the violent passions to which mankind is subject. He also realizes that failure to restrain those passions — thereby permitting violence, adultery, theft and fraud — will cause the whole social order to come toppling down in ruin. Permit men to do wrong or permit a

government to do more than restrain what is wrong and you unleash fear and covetousness. Gone are peace and confidence and co-operation. In their stead are terror and violence. And the more men become afraid the more they resort to coercion. They no longer rely on a method which was characteristic of the famous Dutch prince, William the Silent, who accomplished most of his great deeds by use of "powerful reasons why" for doing what ought to be done.

In Ferrero's thinking the whole purpose of the right of opposition and of free elections was to maintain order without having recourse to violence. And being a philosopher he did not wish to have society regulated in every detail by formal laws made by the state, but in order to maintain order he wished a maximum reliance to be placed on

moral, ritual and religious laws, laws of prudence and wisdom, which individuals and groups impose upon themselves without physical coercion, by means of a reciprocal moral pressure. In other words, silk threads rather than iron fetters. Self-discipline is the highest form of the constructive mind. A great civilization is merely a system in which the process of self-discipline has become more and more complex and refined.

The foregoing completes our basic thoughts on that phase of the "mechanics of liberty" which consists in determining the "legitimacy" of a government. Following Talleyrand and Ferrero our thought is: a government is legitimate when it acknowledges that it is a creature of men, and when it gives sincere evidence of that acknowledgment by operating in an atmosphere of unrestricted right to *opposition*. Note that we do not say a government is legitimate when it *grants* the right of opposition. The right of opposition is antecedent to the government and above the government and is not a grant from a government. Such a view of government and the legitimacy of government is a far cry from "bearing patiently with a government's weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand," unless this is interpreted to mean that we are obligated to be patient in a non-coercive society, that is, that we are patient as a minority who may become a majority. We wholly reject the idea that we should be

"patient" about evil when the opportunity of opposition (persuasion and freedom) is denied.

If someone is apprehensive that we are neglecting to say that government is *from God*, our answer to that is that we fully agree that a government is from God, but our agreement means that we hold that there is no direct line from God to a government but *only an indirect line*, namely, the line *through the Decalogue*. For a government to be *from God* it must be based on the principle of noncoercion, that is, on agreement and not on force; it must be based on voluntarism and not on coercion; it must acknowledge the right to "oppose" peacefully and not only by rebellion, because if the right to peaceful opposition is denied the right to forceful opposition is always still more denied.

A government as well as men has the obligation to be *meek*, that is, *to avoid coercion on all matters*, except the restraint of overt evil. Such a government rests in a very special sense on the basic idea of the Sixth Commandment (Thou shalt not kill), which in the broadest possible sense forbids force, violence, coercion. A government itself eschewing coercion and prohibiting the use of coercion by individuals or groups of individuals is a government which may claim that it is "ordained of God." None other may do that. None other is based on Scripture. And none other is in accordance with the basic ideas of Christ in regard to meekness.

In our opinion all governments based on *coercion* (except to restrain overt evil) are anathema in the sight of God. And in our opinion all admonitions to obey such governments are admonitions in conflict with the "categorical imperative" for all Christians: "Obey God rather than men."

F.N.*

(To be continued)

*(All articles in this issue are by F. N.)

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

NOVEMBER, 1955

NUMBER 11

Contents

	Page
An Explanation Of The Selection Of Contents For This Issue	306
Wherein Talleyrand Was Greater Than Groen Van Prinsterer	307
Dr. Dirk Jellema On The Idea That Coercion Is Moral	310
Rev. Norman S. Ream On The Idea That Coercion Is No More Moral And Wise For Industry Than It Would Be In The Church	315
Mr. Joseph Gritter, Secretary Of The Christian Labor Association On The Idea That It Is Immoral To Stay Out Of A Union, And That Therefore Coercion Of Men Into The CLA Is Moral!	318
A Union Which Should Be Organized	321
Our Dutch Brethren Are Cutting Us Up	323
What Happened To The Daily Newspaper Abraham Kuyper Founded?	324
The Origin of <i>Trouw</i> , The Successor To <i>De Standaard</i>	326
Dr. Bruins Slot On The Authority Of Government	328

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Responsibility for any article is restricted to the author whose initials or name follows the article. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students, \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

An Explanation Of The Selection Of The Contents For This Issue

It is one thing to write in the abstract about "brotherly love" and about "obeying the powers that be" because they are "ordained of God." Some readers may not make a practical application of theoretic ideas on those subjects.

As readers know, we consider prevailing ideas among many Christians about *brotherly love* and *powers ordained by God* to be unscriptural, illogical and pernicious. But the assumption of readers may be that it is some distant "heretic" or pseudo-Christian whom we consider to be guilty, but that it cannot be members of a man's own group (in this case the Christian Reformed church*).

Simply for the purpose of making the problems (about which we are writing) realistic to our readers and relevant to everyday practical affairs, we are referring in this issue to a number of writings recently published by others. We believe that some of those writings contain serious errors although they are being promoted in the name of the Christian religion.

This issue is then a temporary interruption in our main presentation. We are loitering on our way in order to attempt to neutralize ideas which are in the air. Our ideas cannot live in such an atmosphere; those other ideas will not be able to live in our atmosphere.

First, we have a short follow-up article on Talleyrand and Groen in order to show that Talleyrand fathomed a basic general principle; Groen merely made a limited application. The end result of both in the particular instance is the same.

Then we turn to the subject of *coercion*. The right to *coerce* is accepted by men well known in the Christian Reformed church. That acceptance of coercion we consider a basic wickedness.

Then we turn to a little problem of ethics, namely, on how to conduct the controversy among us. We have a short article on

*This happens to be the denomination to which the writer belongs. It would have been irregular for him to have mentioned any other denomination by name. He does not believe that most denominations are any better in these matters than the Christian Reformed. The church named is mentioned merely for illustrative purposes.

"Our Dutch Brethren Are Cutting Us Up." We could write a similar article entitled "Our American Brethren Are Cutting Us Up."

We ourselves do not mind being "cut up." We are against a peace based on silence about wickedness and folly.

We do not think that people outside our milieu (group) will think less of us because we tell each other what we think.

We are unsympathetic to those who cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

We tolerate complacently much of the anger and abuse directed toward us because we realize that our opponents cannot yet fully understand our basic premises.

F.N.

Wherein Talleyrand Was Greater Than Groen van Prinsterer

In the October issue we referred to the basic agreement that exists in the ideas of Talleyrand and Groen (see page 298). In a brief note we wish to emphasize that agreement, by the paradoxical method of calling attention to the difference in their thought.

Groen stressed the existing hard-won *rights* of citizens as defense mechanisms against government tyranny. Those "rights," once they had been wrested from the government were, for Groen, inviolate. Groen emphasized *possession* of rights already acquired. He never stated the more basic principle on how those rights had been or were to be *acquired*. Clearly, there was no "root" to Groen's rights. Those rights were flowers that were beautiful and untouchable in maturity. But, for Groen, there had been no legitimate germination, sprouting, or growth. Over these prerequisite processess there is for Groen a dark cloud of suspicion of evil, namely, a rebellion against the "powers that be" which are "ordained of God."

Talleyrand was a more profound political thinker. Whereas Groen found only the flower, Talleyrand discovered the whole plant on which the flower must grow if it is to exist. That plant is the "right of opposition."* Groen, misunderstanding the Apostle Paul in Romans 13 was afraid of the idea of the "right of opposition." The "right of opposition" apparently seemed to Groen to be a violation of a statement in the Heidelberg Catechism which Groen undoubtedly devoutly believed, namely, that all men ought to "bear patiently with [a government's] weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XXXIX.)

Groen's "rights" which he considered priceless were nothing more than the specific fruit of past, specific "oppositions."

Let us now contrast the ideas of Talleyrand and of Groen.

<u>Groen</u>	<u>Talleyrand</u>
1. Groen thought in terms of existing, historical rights.	1. Talleyrand thought in terms of the origin of rights in a dynamic society.
2. Groen thought in terms of specific rights obtained by <i>past</i> opposition.	2. Talleyrand thought in terms of a general and ever-present right of opposition.
3. Groen was reluctant to make a claim to a right not already admitted by government, because such a claim would be an apparent violation of Romans 13.	3. Talleyrand boldly stated his principle of the right of opposition, even to men who in their own hearts were opposed to the idea of the right of opposition, such men as the leaders of the French Revolution, Napoleon, Louis XVIII, and other crowned heads of Europe.

*The granting of the right of opposition *alone* does not make a government legitimate. There are other requirements which we shall specify later.

4. Groen never realized that his interpretation of Romans 13 involved a violation of the Sixth Commandment, namely, a concession that a government had a certain *power*, that is, the *general* right to coerce.
5. Groen's government would involve a generally *coercive* society, in which some coercion was restricted and restrained by certain specific rights.
6. Groen restricted the requirement of "meekness" to citizens, and did not apply the principle to governments.
7. Groen did not dare *always* to follow the rule of obeying God rather than men.
4. Talleyrand, although a renegade churchman, clearly understood that it is a basic principle of morality that *all coercion is evil* except the limited coercion permitted to restrain evil. (See the October, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)
5. Talleyrand's society would be a *voluntary* society (in the full and unrestricted sense) in harmony with the Sixth Commandment.
6. Talleyrand applied the requirement of "meekness" to everybody — governments, and government officials as well as to citizens.
7. Talleyrand in regard to government never failed to follow the principle that *coercion* is evil, and he realized that the *right* of opposition was a basic acknowledgment that coercion is evil and should be annulled by the right of peaceful opposition.

The founders of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are *very* great admirers of Groen. Basically he was reaching to grasp liberty. But his thought, unfortunately, was shackled by a misinterpretation of Romans 13. As a result Groen saw only a few great trees of liberty (certain rights); Talleyrand saw the whole forest of liberty.

F.N.

Dr. Dirk Jellema On The Idea That Coercion Is Moral

Is It True That "Blessed Are The Meek"?

Our readers know that we consider a "union shop" to be in violation of Biblical morality, because it is contrary to the Sixth Commandment, Thou shalt not kill, which means in the accepted sense it has had from the time of Moses, Thou shalt not coerce (force your will on your neighbor).

In the New Testament the same idea is expressed by Christ "positively," namely, Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5). The term "meek" does not, in our opinion, refer to weaklings or cowards, but to people who have relinquished a claim to *forcing* their neighbors or *coercing* them, and instead are resigned to relying on *persuasion*, and who permit *disagreement* or opposition, and who rely on *reasonableness* as did William the Silent, Prince of Orange, who (according to Groen van Prinsterer) was "full of powerful reasons why" for doing things; this great prince was, in our opinion, "meek" in the Biblical sense, that is, he was prepared to live by the Sixth Commandment.

Four Kinds Of Shops

A "union shop" should be defined. We shall do that by listing four kinds of "shops," using the term shops in the sense of manufacturing or commercial companies.

1. First, there is a *nonunion shop*. In such a company the employees are not banded together in a union. They deal directly as individuals with their employer about employment, pay, promotion, resignation, discharge, grievances, etc.

2. Secondly, there is an *open shop*. In this case some of the employees are banded together in what is called a union, that is, they delegate to certain associates or outsiders the responsibility of bargaining for them with the employer about employment, pay, grievances, etc. But other employees in the same company do not join the group, but remain aloof and deal for themselves individually with the employer. An employee in such a company is free

to join or not join the union. In the United States a union certified as the bargaining agent now bargains for nonunion members as well as union members. (To join a union has a price tag attached to it consisting of the requirement of paying monthly dues to the union. The economic question whether paying dues is a sound investment or not is not being considered here.)

3. Thirdly, there is a *closed shop*. In a closed shop the situation is as follows:

(a) The union and the employer have agreed that he will not hire anybody unless the potential employee has first joined the union. This gives real *power* to the union; if the union officials do not like a man they may refuse to admit him into the union, and then of course the employer cannot hire him, and so the man cannot get the job he may want.

(b) The employee *must* pay union dues. If he will not, he is stricken from the union list and then the employer is obligated to discharge the employee. In theory, a so-called "conscientious objector" is sometimes permitted to pay his dues to a union sick benefit fund, but in practice this is practically a dead letter. A conscientious objector is looked on with suspicion and hostility. Life is hardly liveable in such a shop for such an employee.

4. Fourthly, there is a *union shop*. This is identical with a closed shop, except that an employee is not obligated to join the union *before* employment, but within thirty or sixty days after employment. The union shop compared to a closed shop gives an employer freedom to select employees and permits an employee at least to get a job even though the union officers may not like him or may have had a friend of their own in mind to get the job. But from then on the situation is identical with the closed shop; the employee *must* join the union; he *must* pay dues (or its equivalent); he *must* abide by what the union bargains for him. If he will not submit to that coercion, the employer is obligated to discharge the employee.

Those Wicked "Right-To-Work" Laws Of Seventeen States!

The closed shop was made illegal by the Taft-Hartley Act of the Federal government of the United States. Many union leaders are unhappy about that. But the Taft-Hartley Act does allow for the existence of a *union shop*.

However, seventeen states have laws forbidding union shop contracts between employers and unions. These laws are known as "right-to-work" laws, that is, they are laws which permit you to get and hold a job without being compelled (1) to join a union, (2) to pay union dues, or (3) to leave it to union agents to represent you in dealings with the employer. These "right-to-work" laws are exceedingly unpopular among some union leaders and some "Calvinists." These men demand the repeal of those "wicked" "right-to-work" laws so that a man cannot get work unless he joins the union and pays dues and lets the union represent him in all matters pertaining to earning a living.

Dr. Dirk Jellema's Letter In "The Banner"

Reverend Edward J. Tanis has for many years been an esteemed departmental editor for *The Banner*, the official weekly publication of the Christian Reformed church. In the September 23, 1955, issue of *The Banner*, Tanis had an article entitled "Are They Slaves" which Jellema interpreted as being in favor of "right-to-work" laws. Jellema considers "right-to-work" laws undesirable, and Tanis apparently felt constrained to publish the following in *The Banner* under date of October 7, 1955, (page 1194):

Dear Rev. Tanis:

Your *Banner* article of September 23, entitled "Are They Slaves," gives a somewhat misleading impression, doubtless inadvertently. You seem to favor the so-called "right-to-work laws" on the grounds that constitutional freedoms are otherwise infringed. However . . .

First, the courts have decided that if a majority of employees in a given plant freely vote to set up a bargaining association (union local), and agree with the

employer that all future employees should become members, no constitutional rights are violated.

Secondly, the "right-to-work laws" are opposed by labor especially because they forbid such a set-up, the so-called union shop. Now, the union shop is favored by the CLA, and is expressed in some of its contracts.

Third, most unions, including the CLA but also most AFL and CIO unions, make provisions for conscientious objectors. Such people are carried as purely nominal members and do not have to pay dues to the union: the dues are contributed to a charity of their choice.

Fourth, in speaking of the power of the labor unions, it should be remembered that only a minority of American workers are organized in any union.

Hence, it seems to me, your article gives a rather misleading impression.

* * *

Dirk Jellema

Jellema's opinions as expressed in the foregoing are the opinions of a man of note. (1) He is a graduate of Calvin College (1947); he has his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Wisconsin (1951); (2) presently he is in the department of Social Studies at the Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, Ohio; (3) he is a co-founder of the new *Guild of Calvinist Scholars*, which was organized in April, 1955; he is the editor of the *Notes*, published by the Guild; and (4) he is also a brain-truster for the Christian Labor Association, many of whose members are also members of the Christian Reformed church. He is a department editor of the Association's *Christian Labor Herald*, namely, of the department, "Religion and Labor."

Jellema's Argument Against "Right-to-Work" Laws

Jellema presents four arguments against state "right-to-work" laws. They are:

1. The law courts have decided that a union shop violates no constitutional rights.

2. The CLA favors the union shop, and has it in some of its contracts.
3. If you do not wish to pay dues to the union you can contribute the dues money to charity.
4. The power of a union is not great because the majority of all Americans are not yet in a union.

Let us consider Jellema's arguments.

Jellema's argument Number One. The courts may or may not have decided what Jellema quotes, but assume that they did. We imagine that Jellema would argue that the courts are the "powers that be"; that the powers that be are "ordained of God" and that therefore the decisions of the courts in this matter must be obeyed. Not only that, such decisions are apparently in Jellema's opinion the right decisions. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM holds to the exactly opposite idea. The union shop is a coercion, a direct, unqualified violation of the Sixth Commandment. And we also hold that it is more important to obey God than to obey men.

Jellema's argument Number Two. Here Jellema argues that coercion (*geweld*, in Dutch) is all right because the CLA believes in it and officially practices it. As Jellema is undoubtedly influential in the CLA, this in effect is saying coercion is all right because Jellema advises the CLA that coercion is all right.

Jellema's argument Number Three. This is the argument that you can sugar coat coercion by making charity compulsory. We believe that what is forced out of a man is no longer *charity*. The essence of charity is that it is a *voluntary* act. The Christian religion once taught that God wanted voluntary worshippers; not men as driven by a lash. What *merit* is there in compulsory charity? And who can be assured that if a man gives \$48 in a year under compulsion to charity in lieu of paying union dues he may not otherwise set \$48 less aside for charity. This charity contribution is a phony. Actually so few men dare to refuse to pay the union dues that the "charity relief valve" is no real relief valve. The union detests you if you will not pay dues. Few men have the fortitude to stand up under hostile opinion.

Jellema's argument Number Four. We are unable to grasp the logic of this argument. What significance can it have for a specific man who is being coerced by a specific union that most people are not now members of unions? Apparently it says that if on a dark and lonely road you are waylaid by a murderer he is not a danger to you and his power need not be feared because there are not many actual murderers in the world!

Jellema does not use a single Biblical or economic argument. His arguments are based on (1) legalism; (2) the example of a labor association that calls itself Christian; (3) an alleged escape device; and (4) poor logic.

The simple fact is that Jellema is arguing in favor of coercion. He is arguing as positively against the plain teaching of Scripture as any man can argue. Scripture says: blessed are the meek; Jellema argues: blessed are the aggressors and the coercers.

There are also powerful clergymen who support the same idea, and who argue that "it has not been proven from Scripture to be sin" to perpetrate the coercion involved in a union shop. (See July, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

The plain truth is that some leaders in the Christian Reformed church have lost their moral bearings. They no longer hold to the most elementary explanation of the Sixth Commandment. They favor coercion or at least tolerate it. They teach it as a moral (!) principle in their schools. They favor it in a labor association manned by members of the Christian Reformed church.

We consider the basic idea which is involved — the idea that coercion is Christian morality — to be a damnable iniquity and a moral heresy.

F.N.

Rev. Norman S. Ream On The Idea That Coercion Is No More Moral And Wise For Industry Than It Would Be In The Church

The following are extracts from an article by Rev. Norman S. Ream, pastor of the First Methodist congregation in Neenah, Wisconsin. The article was first published in *Faith and*

Freedom, (monthly magazine published by Spiritual Mobilization, 1521 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 17, California).

We Respectfully Desire Our Rights

Should every individual in our country be compelled to join a church? Let me argue in favor of this for a moment. It would benefit the work of the churches: they would get more income: they could do more good. When church leaders spoke out on social problems, they could speak with more authority if all people were church members. If the church helps all persons in the community, then all persons in the community should be forced to help the church. The church wants no "free riders."

In spite of these persuasive arguments most thoughtful men will reject compulsory church membership. They will say that goodness cannot be forced. They feel that compulsory membership would weaken the church, not strengthen it. The experience of established churches in Europe shows them how compulsory membership actually lowers attendance.

Many who respect compulsory church membership favor compulsory membership in labor unions. To combat compulsory union membership, 17 states have passed "right-to-work" laws. These laws seek to guarantee a workingman's right to join or not join a union as he pleases — just as he has the right to join or not join a church as he pleases. A great cry has been raised against these "right to work" laws in certain circles. Let us look into them, and see what can be said for them, as well as what can be said against them.

* * *

"You Have No Right Not to Join"

* * *

The "right to work" laws are meant to secure the freedom we have been discussing. They are meant to guarantee a workingman's freedom to work at the job of

his own choosing. "Right to work" laws do not guarantee anyone a job. They do not deny the right of an employer to fire an employee. They do not deny the right of an employee to join a union. What they try to do is guarantee to each man the right to take any job offered to him which is mutually agreeable to him and to his employer — without being required to enter a union against his will.

* * *

"Right to work" laws are opposed by union leaders because they give the workingman the right not to join a union. The union leaders do not argue against a right to join a union, but they argue vociferously against a man's right *not* to join.

But doesn't the right to join imply free choice, and if man is to have free choice shouldn't he be free not to join a union? Can a man be said to have a right if he is not free to exercise it both affirmatively and negatively?

* * *

Free Riding Can Stop

One could with equal logic argue that the right not to join a church would "subvert religious peace, exploit man's need to worship, and deluge the community with religious irresponsibility. "Right not to join a church" laws do not make Christians; they only victimize the individual worshipper and make his organization ineffective."

When applied to the church this is obvious nonsense. Is it less nonsensical when applied to unions?

The churches have proved that they are healthier when membership is not compulsory. Are unions afraid to try to prove their health? A return to voluntary methods of collecting members would prove the union's true worth; it would show how much unions are desired by workingmen who give their approval voluntarily.

* * *

**Mr. Joseph Gritter, Secretary Of The
Christian Labor Association
On The Idea That It Is Immoral To Stay Out
Of A Union, And That Coercion Of Men
Into The CLA Is Moral!**

The following has appeared on page 1322, of the November 4, 1955 issue of *The Banner*, the official English language weekly magazine of the Christian Reformed church. In this article, entitled "Social Responsibility," the department editor of *The Banner* introduces a letter from Mr. Joseph Gritter.

Social Responsibility

The letter below, with my own comment [as department editor] appended, is placed in this department because the letter of Dr. Dirk Jellema, of the Case Institute of Technology, also appeared in this department. Mr. Gritter is secretary of the Christian Labor Association, with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is also the editor-in-chief of the *Christian Labor Herald*.

Dear Rev. Tanis,

In the October 7 issue of *The Banner* you published a letter of Dr. Dirk Jellema in which the CLA is mentioned twice in connection with the union shop question and the so-called "right to work" laws.

It is true that the CLA has negotiated union shop contracts, although it always provided protection for conscientious objectors. The CLA wishes that it were not necessary to have union shop clauses in contracts.* But it has found out by sad experience that it is not possible to maintain a union without it, even among Christian employees. Under the laws of our nation the union that has bargaining power bargains for all the workers, and if it does not maintain a majority among

*This differs from Jellema's statement that the CLA "favors" union shop contracts.

the employees as members of the union it will eventually lose its right to represent the workers and the organization will fall apart.

That is due to a lack of social consciousness and an unwillingness to assume moral obligations. Too many workers, Christians too, will gladly reap the benefits of what a union has gained for them too, but they refuse to share in the obligations which must be borne to make such union action possible. In any plant such unorganized workers can soon ruin the union.

The CLA has taken the position that when people refuse to meet their moral obligations, thereby endangering what others by devoted and strenuous efforts have built up, they must have a very good, conscientious reason why such refusal should be honored. Especially for Christian men and women, who through their organization have promoted justice, and enjoy also protection against an organization which they do not desire, when they observe that their gains and protection are being destroyed by certain obstreperous characters who are purely selfish, the question arises whether it is justifiable to tolerate such destructive work, and whether it is not a *duty to demand* of such people that they become cooperative in the promotion of mutual interests, always of course honoring the convictions of those who have real conscientious objections.

It is not correct that most of the AFL and CIO unions honor conscientious objections. In a few cases conscientious objectors working in a plant when a union shop contract goes into effect are allowed to continue working provided they agree to pay an amount equal to the union dues into the union's sick benefit fund and pledge not to work in case the union calls a strike. But that does not apply to new employees who are hired, generally.

As to the so-called "right to work" laws, they are indeed aimed at destroying union shop contracts. Actually such laws should be named "right to work unorganized" laws, since that is their purpose. Everything depends upon

what principles motivate the proponents. The exercise of the "right" to work unorganized in a place where the majority in the employees' unit have decided to be organized in a union which promotes the best interests of all, depends upon the principles, or lack of them, underlying such exercise. It is not as simple as some people think. For a Christian the question is whether he has a social and moral obligation to join with others in promoting justice, and whether he as a Christian is not duty-bound to give support to the organization that promotes his best interests too? Only one reason can relieve him of such obligation and duty: the conscientious conviction that he would be sinning by joining the organization because of unchristian practices of which it is guilty!

J. Gritter, Secretary, CLA

Gritter's proposition is very simple, namely, individuals who [allegedly] enjoy the benefits [?] of the labor movement are under obligation to support that movement.

Our challenging reply is as that of Rev. Ream, previously quoted: society benefits from the "church"; the church then may demand (if Gritter's argument is sound) that *everybody must join the church*. Gritter argues for the union to be permitted to do what the church has come to see is wrong for itself.

Then the argument proceeds. If men should "not join a labor organization [such as the CIO] because its practices are contrary to the law of God, then they are duty bound to join a labor organization which does honor those divine laws." (The foregoing is quoted from the editor's appended summary.) The assumption is that the CLA "does honor those divine laws." It is our opinion that the CLA is suffering from a serious hallucination if it considers itself Christian. Gritter has plainly outlined that he believes in the right to *coerce*, which positively violates the Sixth Commandment and also Matthew 5:5 which reads, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. He cannot believe that, if he believes in coercion. For him Scripture could read: Blessed are they that coerce, for they shall inherit the earth.

The CLA does have some of the incidental characteristics of a Christian organization. But those are not really significant.

Many of its members attend church services, have been baptized, have been admitted into the church on profession of faith, send their children to a Christian private school, observe the Sabbath. But that does not make an association to which those individuals belong a Christian association.

The CLA also condemns *grave acts of violence* by unions, and presumably the CLA does not commit grave acts of violence — murder, assassination, arson, destruction of property, mayhem, etc. It is very much to the credit of the CLA. Nobody will dispute that, except men who extend the principle of coercion to violent coercion as well as legalistic coercion. Such union leaders go further than Gritter; but he and they believe finally in the same basic principle of coercion; *it is only a question of degree*.

There are a whole series of economic fallacies in the thinking of Gritter. He neither interprets Scripture correctly nor understands economics. We shall come back to the economic fallacies of Gritter later.

Gritter is, however, not considered to be out of bounds by the Christian Reformed church. On page 1339 of the same issue of *The Banner*, there is a list of "Accredited Causes," recommended for "financial support." The second name on the list is the CLA. THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH BELIEVES IN PROMOTING AN ORGANIZATION WHICH OPERATES ON A PRINCIPLE WHICH THE CHURCH ITSELF WOULD NEVER DARE TO ACCEPT, NAMELY, THE PRINCIPLE OF COERCIVE MEMBERSHIP.

F. N.

A Union Which Should Be Organized

Unions have several legitimate functions. One of those functions pertains to wages. A union is certainly entitled to and *should* operate in a manner *so that an employer cannot exploit his employees*.

We look around. Are there such instances today? Is there any employer who is genuinely exploiting his employees by paying those employees less than the going wage?

We know of one current flagrant and disgraceful case of exploitation.

We refer to Christian school teachers, who are employed, mostly, by members of the Christian Reformed church.

Why does the CLA fail to operate where its duty is the plainest, namely, in a case where the exploitation is the worst? The answer is, we believe, that it will be unpopular for the CLA to organize a union which will result in costing the *members* of the Christian Reformed church some money.

Christian school teachers may wish to

1. Organize a Christian school teachers' union.
2. Elect some tough bargaining agents.
3. If necessary call a strike, and put up a mass picket line. The Supreme Court has said that a picket line is an instrument for "free speech!"
4. Affiliate with the CLA under its *union shop* contract, as it is alleged that it has not been proven to any Christian Reformed synod from Scripture to be sin to have a coercive union. Then nobody can be a Christian school teacher unless he (she) joins the union. Remember how Gritter describes people who wish to profit (?) from a union but will not join.

Let nobody take offense at this. Why should a Christian school teacher have less "rights" than a carpenter or an electrician or a manufacturing employee?

We are not giving the evidence of "exploitation" of teachers. It is too obvious. Drive up to a Christian Reformed meeting of some kind and pick out the poorest automobiles. Those belong, you will discover, to some poor teacher being "sweated" by the members of the church, by their "brethren."

We tell a simple anecdote. Five years ago a young girl whom we know worked as a typist and filing clerk. She decided she wanted an education. She worked her way through college. She decided to teach in a Christian school. Five years have passed in which salaries generally have risen because of inflation — that infernal device by which the poor or ignorant are robbed without

their understanding what has happened to them. And the girl has had four years of college. She got a job all right. She earns the same pay today as a Christian school teacher that she earned as a typist — despite inflation, five years of more maturity, and four years of struggling through college.

We offer our services to Christian school teachers to organize a union operating on Biblical principles. We offer the same services to another professional group, second in line in regard to being sweated; we refer to ministers.

We trust readers will understand that in regard to a few of the foregoing suggestions we are not *wholly* in earnest. But on the main issue — exploitation — we are in dead earnest; Christian school teachers are the most-exploited group in America.

F.N.

Our Dutch Brethren Are "Cutting Us Up"

We expected it and it has happened. Our Dutch brethren are "cutting us up." We criticized them; they are criticizing us.

Who started it? *We did not.* We admit to striking a counterblow. The sequence is: Abraham Kuypers and his successors struck at us first; *they* started it; we struck back; and now the current leaders of Dutch Calvinism are promptly attacking us.

We are not asking for sympathy.

**Calvinism: Parochial,
Provincial And National**

With the passing of time and increasing maturity we have come to realize that we are not Dutch Calvinists but *American* Calvinists. We are not really interested in spreading a peculiarly Dutch brand of Calvinism. We are glad to take from Dutch Calvinism what appears superior, but we do not swallow it whole.

There was a controversy in the early church about circumcision. The Apostle Peter was for universal circumcision — for gentiles

as well as Jews. The Apostle Paul was against it. We believe it was the late Professor J. Gresham Machen who said that the requirement of circumcision among gentiles would have been a serious handicap to the spreading of Christianity. There was something *parochial* or *provincial* or at least *national* about circumcision. We feel the same way about *Dutch Calvinism*. There is something parochial or provincial or, at least, national about it. It lacks the wide sweep of the universal.

We have observed with some amusement, how American Calvinists react to the trotting out of the Dutch brand of Calvinism. Almost universally, the presentation is received with cold politeness. The Christian Reformed church has not been effective in the American environment, and it is not ever likely to be unless it discards some peculiarly Dutch ideas which are basically neither part of Calvinism, nor Biblical, nor palatable to an American. We are proud of our Netherlands' origin, but are not out to spread a Dutchy Calvinism.

F. N.

What Happened To The Daily Newspaper Abraham Kuyper Founded?

Abraham Kuyper in his prime, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, founded a daily newspaper and gave it the name, *De Standaard*, which corresponds to the English *standard* in the sense of a battle flag, or ensign or regimental colors. *De Standaard* was the Calvinist daily standard fluttering at the head of the Calvinist religious forces in the Netherlands.

De Standaard is not published anymore. It had a policy during World War II which was its undoing. After occupation of the Netherlands by Hitler *De Standaard* followed a policy of "not resisting the lawful government." What was that "lawful government" (*wettige overheid*)? Hitler's occupational army! That policy of nonresistance to Hitlerian Germany caused great injury to the struggling underground resistance movement.

When the regular Dutch government was restored, it prohibited the continuation of the publication of *De Standaard* on the ground of its dubious conduct during World War II.

We consider that to be a disgraceful ending for a once-famous Dutch Calvinist daily newspaper, founded by a devout and well-intentioned man.

The opposite idea of resistance is collaboration. Was collaboration necessarily the result of disloyalty or treachery? We do not believe that that follows. We do not consider our Dutch Calvinist brethren to have been quislings — by intent.

Behind their tragic nonresistance policy, which in effect became collaboration with Hitler, was a pious, erroneous idea. That idea was that the powers that be must be obeyed because they are "ordained of God." Hitler was not to be resisted because he was ordained of *God*. What an idea!

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has previously made it clear that it does not consider God as licensing any particular government by a pipe line from his throne to that earthly government. God (in our opinion) sanctions only *good* governments, that is, governments basically based on the *revealed will* of God (the Decalogue) and not evil governments connected by an alleged mystical pipe line with God. (See September, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 251 and following.)

It is sad to see how unsound ideas have led to bad morality. We are admirers of a famous Frenchman, Blaise Pascal; he wrote:

Man is but a reed, — the weakest thing in nature,— but he is a reed that thinks. It is not necessary that the whole universe should arm itself to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But if the universe should crush him, man would still be nobler than that which slays him, for he knows that he dies; but of the advantage which it has over him the universe knows nothing. Our dignity consists, then, wholly in thought. Our elevation must come from this, not from space and time, which we cannot fill. Let us, then, labor to think well: this is the fundamental principle of morals.

For Pascal man's dignity consisted in man's ability to think well; and to think well was "the fundamental principle of morals."

Our Dutch brethren have been unable to think well on the question of the relationship of government either to men or to God. For them the rule was "obey the powers that be" because they are "ordained of God," which rule (as they erroneously interpreted it) nullified the universal rule, which reads, "We must obey God rather than men." Although we have had some hesitancy about accepting Pascal's statement (that to think well is the fundamental principle of morals) we believe it is applicable at least in this sad history.

F.N.

The Origin Of "Trouw," The Successor To "De Standaard"

Not all Dutch Calvinists were during World War II so confused in their thinking as the editors of *De Standaard*.

There were some real Calvinist *men* in the Dutch underground resistance against Hitler. One of them was a young man named Speelman, son of a Reformed preacher. Speelman helped to organize an underground paper which took the name of *Trouw*. (*Trouw* is the Dutch word for faithfulness, or loyalty, or devotion. The name was well chosen.) Speelman may be described as the "powerhouse" or driving force behind the publication of *Trouw*.

Eventually, the Germans captured Speelman. He was, as the Dutch say, *gefusilleerd* — shot by a firing squad. A young man as this one is worthy of a high rank in the halls of fame. We salute him.

After the war *Trouw*, despite its struggling, underground origin, was converted into a daily, and became in effect the successor of *De Standaard*. It has become an important daily newspaper.

There is no official connection between *Trouw* and the Anti-Revolutionary Party of the Netherlands, the super-Calvinistic party in the Netherlands. *Trouw* is not specifically Calvinist, but is a "Christian-nationalist" type of publication with strong emphasis on the "nationalist" characteristic.

Nevertheless, the close relationship between the Anti-Revolutionary Party and *Trouw* is not a relationship which should be minimized. The editor-in-chief of *Trouw* is Dr. J.A.H.J.S. Bruins Slot, who is a representative for the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Lower House (*Tweede Kamer*).

As an opposition newspaper immediately after the war, *Trouw* has had an admirable record. Later, when the Anti-Revolutionary Party veered its course away from one of opposition to the party in power (which was socialistic), there was also (as was to be expected) a corresponding degenerative shift in the attitude of *Trouw*. This shift was natural, the editor-in-chief being a member of the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

We have before us the September 8, 1955, issue of *Trouw*. On the front page in the left column — the main editorial position — there is a column and a half editorial in a contemptuous vein about PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. The editorial is not signed, which we assume indicates that the editor-in-chief, Bruins Slot, wrote the editorial himself. As a responsible leader of one of the Calvinist political parties in the Netherlands we can rely that his views are typical of many of the members of the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

The outstanding *general* reaction which we have to the editorial is this: Bruins Slot has reverted to type; he has returned to the erroneous ideas that discredited and disgraced *De Standaard*; he is back to the position that a government, good or evil, has a mystical relationship with God (a) which is far more important than the relationship of government to men; (b) which requires that the government *must be obeyed* because it has a pipe line from God; and also (c) which involves the idea that a government has "special powers" beyond what mere men can give it. These are the intellectual errors which caused the shameful end of *De Standaard*.

What is written against PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in a paper as *Trouw* is, we believe, something that we should not ignore. We expect constant guerrilla attacks but believe it damaging to our prestige to let what Bruins Slot has written stand unanswered.

We have an additional reason for working over Bruins Slot's ideas. It was inevitable that Bruins Slot would be quoted, especial-

ly by men who disagree with our ideas but do not wish to undertake for themselves openly the responsibility for disputing them. For example, Reverend William Haverkamp has in his department in *De Wachter* already quoted extensively from Bruins Slot's editorial. *De Wachter* (*The Watchman*) is the official Dutch language newspaper of the Christian Reformed church. When a leading daily in the Netherlands assails us and an official Christian Reformed weekly promptly reprints part of what was said against us we owe it to our readers to give our rejoinder.

Haverkamp apparently believes that Bruins Slot has a wonderful inheritance (*erfdeel*) of ideas from Kuyper on the relationship of government to men and to God. He comments that Bruins Slot is not willing to trade his intellectual inheritance for our ideas.

Haverkamp has incidentally revealed a very basic insight. He senses that Bruins Slot represents traditional ideas, namely, Abraham Kuyper's ideas; they are ideas for which the defunct *De Standaard* also stood. They are peculiarly *Dutchy* ideas which should not be admitted into any universal, world-wide Calvinism.

Bruins Slot makes three general charges against us:

1. Errors in regard to facts, or obvious errors of interpretation;
2. Wrong ideas regarding the *cause* of American prosperity;
3. Wrong ideas on the *authority of government*.

Those three basic charges are all supercharged with an elevated contempt regarding which we have already commented.

Because we are "on that subject" we shall begin with Bruins Slot's ideas on the *authority of government*.

F.N.

Dr. Bruins Slot On The Authority Of Government

Bruins Slot, editor-in-chief of *Trouw*, leading Dutch Calvinist daily, accepts the idea that the authority of a government is

directly from God. In order that the issue between us be clear to everyone we declare that the authority of no existing government is *directly* from God.

Let us see where Bruins Slot's ideas lead him. We shall quote that part of his editorial against us which covers this subject. He first declares that we have understood very little about the French Revolution, or Abraham Kuyper, or the Free University of Amsterdam, or the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Then he proceeds:

Let us take just one example. The expression, "a standard of living worthy of a human being" (*menschwaardig bestaan*), even though it can be understood in a Christian sense, is certainly not a Kuyperian expression. Kuyper to the contrary spoke of man as an image bearer of God. And when one speaks in that manner it becomes evident that it is possible to speak not only in respect to the relationship of Government to People, but really that one should speak of the relationship of Government to God. And then the peculiar inherent authority (*eigenaardige gezagsfunctie*) of Government, (regarding which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM speaks so slightly in connection with the French Revolution and regarding which it calls the idea socialistic) comes to stand at the apex, the very forefront. But the writer in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM fails exactly by not mentioning that. He recognizes no peculiar, inherent authority (*eigen recht*) of government. He sets government on a mere equality with each temperamental individual.*

*Because of the importance of this statement and to remove questions of doubt about the translation, we here give the Dutch original.

"Want om maar een ding te noemen. De uitdrukking 'menswaardig bestaan' al kan deze ook best in christelijke zin worden opgevat, is geen Kuyperiaanse uitdrukking. Kuyper sprak veel meer over de mens als beelddrager Gods. En als er zo over gesproken wordt is het duidelijk dat men hierover niet slechts kan spreken in de betrekking van Overheid en Volk, maar dat men er juist over moet spreken in de betrekking van de Overheid tot God. En dan komt juist de eigenaardige gezagsfunctie van de Overheid, die dit blad in verband met de Franse Revolutie zo bagatelliseert en voor socialistisch uitkrijt, op de eerste plaats te staan. Maar daar spreekt de schrijver juist niet over! Hij kent geen eigen recht der Overheid. Hij stelt de Overheid op één lijn met elk willekeurig individu!"

There are many basic propositions in the foregoing. We believe they are all fallacious and pernicious despite the religiosity of the statement.

Let us take first the most obvious statement in the quotation, namely, this proposition, that a government has an inherent peculiar authority beyond what any man has. What necessarily follows from that? This, namely, that no government can be *from men*. Why not? Because, if a government were derived from men, it could have only the authority those men originally had. A government derived from men might have less authority than the authority of its individual citizens; or it might have equal authority. But no government with such a human origin could have more authority than the grantors had. *A* cannot give *B* \$1,000 if *A* does not have the \$1,000. If a government is from men, the maximum authority of a government is limited to what those men originally had.

The idea of Bruins Slot (which he indicates he got from Abraham Kuyper) is that a government has very definitely a greater authority, a "peculiar inherent authority" above any "temperamental individual" citizen. This greater authority can come from one source only, according to his and Kuyper's theory, namely, directly from God.

We have here that old idea again, a pipe line of *power* direct from the throne of God to every existing government, good or bad, and every sphere sovereignty. That *power*, for example, was piped directly from God to Adolph Hitler! You will remember that *De Standaard* did not positively reject that infernal proposition!

The traditional thinking in the United States has been wholly contrary. The Continental Congress, which on July 4, 1776, signed the Declaration of Independence, propounded an altogether different doctrine. In their second paragraph, in order to explain their claim to certain inalienable rights (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) they wrote:

Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Here is a theory that no power of a government can go beyond a human grant. This theory is in irreconcilable conflict with the idea of Bruins Slot that there is a greater power in government than ever existed in the men who are governed.

We agree with the Continental Congress of 1776, and we disagree with Bruins Slot. He is wrong and pious. The Continental Congress was merely right. It is to be hoped that piosity is not permitted to sanctify error.

Everything stands or falls on this simple question: does a government have more authority than its citizens? If so, it must have got that greater authority from some greater source than the citizens. The only greater sources are God or Satan.* Satan is never considered by Calvinists to be the source of governments; (governments are manifestations of the "common grace" of God!). Therefore, Hitler had a "peculiar inherent authority" directly from God! Now we can realize clearly how *De Standaard* came to follow the course it did during World War II.

Grant the foregoing to Abraham Kuyper, to *De Standaard*, to the Anti-Revolutionary Party and to Bruins Slot and where do you end up? Here are four propositions that follow naturally from Bruins Slot's major idea:

1. God has restricted individual men by and to the Ten Commandments.
2. But God has given to government more authority or rights than individual men have.
3. Therefore, governments have direct authority to go beyond the Ten Commandments, that is, they may violate the Ten Commandments.

*A person reading this manuscript with some amusement worked out the obvious syllogisms:

1. The powers that be are ordained of God;
2. Satan is one of the powers that be;
3. Therefore, Satan is ordained of God!

Then he outlined the succeeding syllogism:

1. All the powers ordained of God must be obeyed;
2. Satan is a power ordained of God;
3. Therefore, Satan must be obeyed!

To help those who object to these conclusions but who do not know how to prove that they are wrong, we may later analyze the fallacy in the first syllogism.

4. It is exactly that right to violate the Ten Commandments which constitutes the purpose for claiming a "peculiar inherent authority" for government.

Hitler, you see, was operating quite within his "rights" derived directly from God. Concentration camps, firing squads, lies, violence, wars, oppression — all these are the products of the "peculiar, inherent authority" of government. Men are bound by the Decalogue; governments are not!

Bruins Slot accuses us of staying at what seems to be the somewhat foolish and un-Christian level of the relationship of government to *mere men*. That is not pious enough for him. He is loftier. He (following Abraham Kuyper) puts the whole discussion on the level of the relationship of government to the great God of the universe. We repeat part of our quotation from Bruins Slot:

Kuyper to the contrary spoke of man as an image bearer of God. And when one speaks in that manner it becomes evident that one [should not speak of the relationship of government to men] but really that one should speak of the relationship of government to God. And then the peculiar inherent authority of government . . . comes . . . to the very forefront.

What is really being said here? Here are Bruins Slot's two main ideas:

1. Man is an image bearer of God.
2. Therefore, government has a peculiar, inherent authority direct from God.

Is there any *logical* connection? Grant that Man is created in the image of God. Is that a ground for government having a "peculiar, inherent authority" over such an "image bearer"? On first thought, *just the opposite conclusion would appear to be warranted, namely, because man is an image bearer of God, therefore, no government could possibly have a peculiar, inherent authority over him*. Not only is that a natural first thought, but it is a common sense last thought. By what erroneous, circuitous reasoning does Bruins Slot come to his contrary-to-common-sense conclusion?

Let us endeavor sympathetically to follow the man's thought. It goes something like this:

1. Because man is an image bearer of God, therefore, man is entitled to something. As Bruins Slot is considering what we wrote in earlier issues about a *living wage*, in which connection we used the customary Dutch expression, *menschwaardig bestaan* (a standard of living worthy of a human being), it will be clear that that *something* to which a man is entitled pertains to the natural things of this life.

2. In order to obtain that *something* pertaining to the natural things of life to which we are entitled, we should therefore have more protection than the Ten Commandments of God give us. However, assume that men are not sinful in their brotherly relations, that is, that they do not exploit their neighbors. Or assume that men, although inclined to be sinful in their brotherly relations, are nevertheless restricted by a government which *fully enforces* the Ten Commandments, *but does no more*. Such a government would be operating under the Ten Commandments just as men should. Such a government would be on an equality with men in the sense that the rule for individuals was also the rule for the government. Such a government would not have any grounds whatever for claiming a peculiar inherent authority. And such a government could be derived from mere men (as the Declaration of Independence indicates). That men violate the Ten Commandments and that governments do not enforce the Ten Commandments is (it seems to us) no necessary grounds for going beyond the Ten Commandments and for saying that God authorizes the breach to be plugged by giving to government some super powers. Why not simply continue to insist on enforcing the Ten Commandments. Do that, and what more do you want?

3. But Bruins Slot nevertheless wants some *extra* powers for a government which extra powers can be used to do something for man, the image bearer of God. Those extra powers are intended to redistribute "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Grant that *A* observed the Ten Commandments faithfully; that means that he did not exploit his neighbor, was forbearing, engaged in charity, etc.; grant that the government polices *A* in regard to not exploiting his neighbor; and grant that it also polices *B* and *C*

and D. But nevertheless the end result is that the backward nations of the world, the spendthrifts, the drunkards, the easy going, improvident and shiftless all over the world do not all have a living wage, a *menschwaardig bestaan!* The rest of men (according to our assumption) observed the commandments of God. What they own is morally theirs, either they have not sinned in getting what they have or the government has in their case at least enforced the Decalogue to restrain them. But there are still these "image bearers of God" who do not have a living wage (a *menschwaardig bestaan*) in whatever peculiar Biblical sense that Abraham Kuyper meant it. And what now should the government do and what power should it have?

4. In order to enforce *beyond the Ten Commandments*, the redistribution of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" a government, according to Bruins Slot and Abraham Kuyper, must have a "peculiar, inherent power."

Personally as primitive Christians and as thorough-going Americans we object to the doctrine of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot. Neither of these men, we believe, has a firm grasp of the concepts of justice or of liberty. If what they teach on the relationship of government to God and of government to men is Calvinism, then we are not Calvinists. We never have been; are not now; and intend never to be.

The ideas of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot have not been widely accepted in America (until the latest 25 years). They were not accepted, thank God, by the founders of this country. It can be demonstrated that everywhere where the ideas of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot on this subject have been accepted the progress of mankind has been hindered.

We have no intention of letting the ideas of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot be promoted in America. For us to be tolerant of their ideas would involve us in a fatal inconsistency. We have begun the PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM movement with six basic Declarations. Declaration Number Four reads:

(a) Promote a SINGLE rule of morality ;and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.

By "groups" we have particularly *governments* in mind (but also those absurd *sphere sovereignties* which we shall analyze some other time). In contrast to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot hold to a *double* standard of morality, one rule for individuals and another for individuals collectively.

Let governments enforce the Decalogue. They will then need no authority beyond the Decalogue. They will need no pipe line from God sending them extra-Decalogian powers. They will need no apologists as Abraham Kuyper or Bruins Slot with their medieval ideas of some mystical authority derived from God and going to the biggest rogues in history — such as Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini. What good for mankind ever came from the Bruins Slot idea that a government has a "peculiar, inherent authority"?

* * *

We call attention to an untrue statement of Bruins Slot. He says that PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM "sets government on a mere equality with each *temperamental* individual." We have never written anything of the sort. We painstakingly have declared that a government must be bound by the Decalogue. Is the Decalogue *temperamental*?

* * *

Eventually, we shall analyze policies of the government of the United States and of other governments. And when we do that, what shall we find? We shall discover that just what is wrong with the world is the (a) violation of the Decalogue *by governments* on a claim that they (b) have certain legitimate special powers to do just that, or in Bruins Slot's words, they have "peculiar, inherent authority." God, in our opinion, never established special pipe lines to certain people in order to authorize them to frustrate the Ten Commandments.

* * *

In future issues we shall take up the second major idea of Bruins Slot, namely, that America is prosperous just by pure

"luck." It is that part of the Bruins Slot editorial against us which Haverkamp quotes approvingly. Haverkamp, obviously in the Dutch tradition, does not make an "American" approach. We plan to analyze especially which commandment in the Decalogue is being violated by this other argument of Bruins Slot.*

F.N.

Information About 1956 Subscriptions

Subscriptions to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are on a calendar-year basis. We shall be much pleased if you will renew your subscription for the coming year, 1956. Use convenient return envelope.

We are also interested in *new* subscribers for 1956. It will not be practical to become a subscriber in 1956 without having read the 1955 issues. To be a *new* subscriber for 1956 requires purchase of the 1955 issues which we are having bound in paper covers. *New* subscribers for 1956 can subscribe for a total of \$4: paperbound for 1955, \$2; and future issues in 1956, \$2. Paperbound copies to *nonsubscribers* are available at \$3; clothbound copies at \$4.50.

In appreciation of present subscribers we shall send them a paperbound book FREE, if they will return their copies to us; for a *cloth* bound book there will be a \$1.50 charge.

*(We shall be glad to send to any reader who can read the Dutch language well, a photostatic copy of the whole *Trouw* editorial against PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

366 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12

Progressive Calvinism

Copyright, 1955, by Progressive Calvinism League

VOLUME I

DECEMBER, 1955

NUMBER 12

Contents

	Page
A Survey Of Our First Year	338
Praxeology	341
What We Would Understand By "Conditioning"	347
Scripture Does Not Stand Alone	350
Individualism Is Compatible With Glorifying God	352
Christian Reformed "Intellectuals"	354
A New Lucubration	356
The Bruins Slot Proposition That The United States Has Become Prosperous Through Luck	358
Did "Luck" Make Holland Prosperous In Its Golden Age?	364
The Commandment Of God Which The "Luck" Idea Is Intended To Frustrate	367

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Responsibility for any article is restricted to the author whose initials or name follows the article. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year (for students, \$1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

A Survey Of Our First Year

This issue, the twelfth, completes the first year of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Let us look back.

What has been our interpretation of the Calvinist situation? It is as follows: (1) An awareness that Calvinism is presently making very little impression on the world about it. (2) A realization that Calvinism's effectiveness appears to be decreasing and that it has probably not yet come to the low point to which it is likely to fall. (3) An opinion that the *conservative* wing of Calvinism is complacent and will continue to be complacent in the sense that it will not re-examine itself to discover shortcomings which handicap Calvinism today more than formerly. (4) A conclusion that proposals under the name of Neo-Calvinism are not basically derived from the Christian religion but from secular sources. (5) The conviction that the trouble with Calvinism is not the people who will not accept Calvinism and who deride it, but that the trouble with Calvinism is Calvinism itself. (6) The conclusion that two of the several things that are wrong with Calvinism are its sanctimoniousness about brotherly love and its acceptance of the principle of coercion in violation of the Sixth Commandment.

It was to be feared that such a diagnosis would not be acceptable to most Calvinists for the reason that it does not blame somebody else — the devil, the world, the flesh, the neighbor, the government, an enemy.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has set out to work on Calvinism and not on the "world" around Calvinism. Such a project was destined, when it was begun, to be unpopular and resisted. To blame Calvinism itself for its difficulties was sure to be interpreted to be disloyalty to Calvinism, contentiousness, unbrotherliness, stupidity and ignorance, conservatism, and proof that the self-critic was not a Calvinist and ought to be put out of Calvinism.

And then when we added the word *progressive* to our title we incurred a penalty from two sources: the conservatives suspected us; and the Neo-Calvinists disputed our right to the term because we did not accept *their* ideas on how to make Calvinism progressive.

So much for certain characteristics of our program and the environment in which we have operated. What have *we* done, and *how* have we worked?

Our record for the first year is not too gratifying. We are disappointed. How did we go about stirring up the situation?

Abraham Lincoln said, "If you wish to convince a man, first persuade him you are his friend." We have not worked hard enough at trying to persuade Calvinists that we are their friends.

We have abruptly and bluntly challenged the ideas of many people. However, we had a reason for that policy. That reason was that we expected otherwise to be frustrated by being deliberately ignored. We have observed that the calculating men in positions of power among Calvinists do not rush into any situation; they wait; apparently they say, "Let us see what happens; if there is nothing to it, it will die a natural death; and sooner or later these critics may make a mistake; then we will take them to task. If they continue, we can always decide later what to do." There is merit to prudence and calculation of that kind. But in order not to be frustrated by such neglect PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has followed an *aggressive* policy. We shall continue it, and we plan to become more specific.

When we look back over the past year with disappointment, we are not blaming anyone other than ourselves. *We* are at fault. We should pursue our course with further self-criticism. On that basis we do not have doubt about the final outcome. If we work long enough on ourselves. Solomon's words will become true for us, "When a man's ways please Jehovah, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:8).

But such an "approach" on our part should not be interpreted to mean that we shall cease and desist from attacking what we consider to be basic errors and heresies in Neo-Calvinism. The trouble with Calvinism is the *basic content* of its moral message and not how skillfully or clumsily it presents that message. Much of the modern message of Calvinism we consider to be conspicuously wrong because it involves both incorrect interpretations of Scripture and reasoning errors. We cannot bring ourselves to appear to be reconciled with ideas which we consider unscriptural and incorrect.

If it is possible to relieve Neo-Calvinism of the worst of its unsound ideas, we plan to endeavor to do some promotional work for Calvinism. But we are reluctant to do that among our neighbors as long as part of the message which has a Calvinist label is contrary to common sense and to Scripture. (We have in mind such ideas as *brotherly love* when that term is given a sanctimonious, unscriptural meaning; or the idea that *all* governments are "from God" in the sense that they have the approval of God, and *therefore* should be obeyed, etc.)

Let us express a further disillusionment which we feared, but against which we hoped. The conservatives in the Christian Reformed church are reluctant to join us. They suspect us. They realize we are *progressive*. They hardly want any changes. They are afraid of our "changes." We refer these conservative Calvinists to our first twelve issues. Have we stayed strictly with Scripture? If not, where did we deviate? We have handicapped the increase of our reader list by sticking so close to Scripture. Non-Calvinist readers are annoyed by our references to Scripture and our attention to the peculiarities of the Christian Reformed Calvinists.

We are also disappointed, as we were almost certain that we would be, at the response from the youth in the Christian Reformed church. Many are staying with the "Neo-Calvinism" taught in denominational schools. It would have been naive to have expected the contrary. Members of the Christian Reformed church are assessed to pay for the education of the youth of the denomination. With that education those assessed to finance it may perchance strongly disagree. Against that big assessment machinery providing large financial means, and systematic instruction, an enterprise as PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will not initially make much progress. It is almost a forlorn hope.

But if PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM continues, it may prove to be a small stone loosened from the top of a mountain, and as it goes down it may loosen other stones, and more, and more, until there may be an avalanche. It is possible that the valley may be buried. What passes for Neo-Calvinism may not then exist any more. If the small stone *we* are loosening does not do it, some other stone by someone else will do it. Truth, we trust, prevails eventually

because the world has been so organized that it is impossible basically to survive on the basis of indubitable error. What does not harmonize with Scripture — Scripture being assumed to have a special origin — *finally* cannot survive.

We make a direct appeal to all — conservatives, Neo-Calvinists and youth, and also non-Calvinists — to read what we have published and shall publish, as something well-intentioned for the promotion of the Christian religion.

F.N.

Praxeology

You may never have seen the word *praxeology* before. You will probably not be able to find the word in your dictionary. It is pronounced *prax e o'logy*.

Praxeology is the science of "human action." That is a definition which unfortunately will not mean much to many people. Let us endeavor in a popular way to give the term more meaning. We are interested in doing that because PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is operating almost entirely in the field of praxeology, the field of human action.

Consider the very well-known idea of morality. The idea of *morality* obviously is inseparable from the field of human action. When we talk *morality*, we are merely appraising *human action* from a particular viewpoint.

But let us proceed. The now-rather-standard way of subdividing the sciences is as follows:

1. *Physical Sciences* : Astronomy, Chemistry,
Geology, Physics, etc.
2. *Biological Sciences* : Botany, Zoology,
Physiology, etc.
3. *Social Sciences* : History, Political Science,
Economics, Sociology,
Psychology (also under
Biological Sciences), etc.

4. *Humanities* : Languages, Arts, Philosophy,
Mathematics, etc.

Where in this classification is praxeology which we have described as the science of human action? Let us return to the four major divisions in the foregoing, and let us set up a table which will show how praxeology fits into the picture.

<u>Customary Classification</u>	<u>The Classification We Are Using (Borrowing)</u>
Biological Sciences	Biological Sciences
Physical Sciences	Physical Sciences
Social Sciences	Praxeology
Humanities	Humanities

From the foregoing, readers will learn that *one* definition of *praxeology* is that it is another name for the *social sciences* collectively. The social sciences, too, deal with certain phases of *human action*.

But why select a difficult name to replace an easy and customary name? Two fundamental reasons for a preference for *praxeology* are that the term is genuinely broader than the term, social sciences, and it approaches the real subject matter in a more-unified manner than does the latter term.

Praxeology covers action that has *individual* significance as well as action that has *social* significance. This is an important difference. The term, *social sciences*, is a term which is inadequate for covering the whole field which a comprehensive term for human action should cover.

The doings of men can be viewed from a *social* viewpoint; they can also be viewed from an *individual* viewpoint. Certainly some action can have a purely *personal* aim, just your *own* choice and your *own* satisfaction, that is, pure individualism. (We refer to action which aims to please yourself, but without exploiting your neighbor.)

To be a *social* scientist may imply that you hold all human action must be for one other person, or for several other people, or that all human action must be looked at as merely part of a

collective whole. When we accept the term, praxeology, we mean that thereby we are not restricting our approach to human action to a *social* approach but that we also include an *individualist* approach. The founders of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are in that specific sense praxeologists; we are definitely interested in interpreting human action from an individualist viewpoint even more than from a social viewpoint.

To many Calvinists the idea that we consider ourselves Calvinists *and* praxeologists will appear sinful. When they hear that human action can properly be *individual as well as social*, they become angry. For them, a man who has purely *individual* purposes is a sinner, really untouched by the grace of God. The "progression" by which you become a sinner if you are such an individualist is easy to trace once you have become aware of the pattern of the accusation. Here is the rambling method by which you are kept out of good Neo-Calvinist society;

- (1) You are not *social* minded.
- (2) If you are not social minded, then you lack brotherly love.
- (3) If you lack brotherly love, then you are an individualist.
- (4) If you are an individualist, you make your own choices.
- (5) If you make your own choices, you are pursuing your self-regarding interests.
- (6) If you pursue your self-regarding interests, you are selfish.
- (7) If you are selfish, you are an exploiter of others.
- (8) If you are an exploiter of others, you are a capitalist.
- (9) If you are a capitalist, you are not a Christian.
- (10) In fact, neither capitalism nor communism is Christian.

- (11) But Christianity is beautifully situated midway between these two extremes.
- (12) Christianity is the Middle-of-the-Road. Add two sins or two neutralities together, capitalism and communism, and divide by two, and you have the pure *perfection* of Christianity!

The foregoing is a pretty fair approximation of the conclusion of Abraham Kuyper and his followers. He repudiated *both* capitalism and communism. He declared that he steered between those two undesirables. His position, he thought, had none of the disadvantages of capitalism, but all of its good points; his position, he also thought, had none of the disadvantages of socialism, but all of its good points.

The method to accomplish that Middle-of-the-Road course was to be in-between. That *inbetweenness* consisted, in turn, in two phases — (1) keeping the appearance of capitalism and (2) introducing the basic principle if not the reality of socialism. The customary word for such a system is Interventionism — the government, having a pipe line of power from God justifying such intervention, leaves life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness *nominally* in your name but *regulates* it, little or much as the government in its sovereign right decides, by having laws that interfere and bureaucrats who manage. Hitler was a *full-fledged* interventionist. The German term for full-fledged interventionism is *Zwangswirtschaft* (a coercive society). (A Dutchman would translate that as *Dwang maatschappij*.) Abraham Kuyper believed in just the right (?) degree of *dwang maatschappij* (coercive society). He was a *moderate* Hitlerite.

In some denominational schools of Calvinist churches in America they teach an identical doctrine. Not capitalism; oh no; it is sinful or neutral. Not socialism; oh no; it is sinful or neutral. Instead, they teach interventionism — a God-given *dwang maatschappij* (coercive society) with the right to coercion — contrary to the Decalogue — piped right out of the bottom of the throne of God. But, naturally, only beneficent and welfare-producing coercion!

When we describe *praxeology* as the social sciences viewed from the viewpoint of the individual and including individualistically directed action as well as socially directed action, we are giving a *popular definition** which we obtained from a young person. We were sitting at a Thanksgiving Day dinner table and we substituted the word *praxeology* for *social sciences*, and then added the further explanation that *praxeology* means *human action*. It was then that the young person at the table spontaneously interrupted with the idea that *praxeology* covers *individually-motivated* action as well as *socially-motivated* action. He had had a flash of real understanding.

The term, *praxeology*, can be used to name certain sciences collectively, as political science, history, economics, sociology, but it can also be used to integrate (tie together) those sciences. For many *social* scientists their particular brand of the social sciences is an independent science not basically related to the other social sciences; for them, the social sciences have no basically unifying principle. But *praxeology* becomes more than a collective name when the common, universal *cause* of all human action is realized, namely, that human action has an end, a purpose, in mind which is, in turn, dependent on some "value" which the acting person sets upon that purpose. *All life then becomes a question of VALUES.* And the difference between the conduct of one man from the conduct of another man is because the first man's *valuations* are different from the second man's valuation, both as to ends and the means of those ends. Everything becomes a question of *values*, nonmonetary as well as monetary. *Praxeology* covers, therefore, not only *all* human action rather than merely *social* human action; it also has the only real unifying principle or explanatory principle for all the sciences covering human — that is, purposeful — action. The *common denominator* of *praxeology* is human *values* which are all related to each other, jostling each other around for higher ranking, each one at the expense of another. In that sense all the social sciences are merely aspects of the basic science pertaining to human action, namely, *praxeology*.

Praxeology analyzes two things, human *aims* and the *means* to attain those human aims. It does *not* set out to appraise those

*For an exact definition of *praxeology*, see Ludwig von Mises' *Human Action*, Chapters I through VII.

aims by declaring what those aims *ought* to be. The aims are left unrestricted; how those aims are ranked (which is to get preference over another) is something for the individual to decide. Praxeology merely ascertains the aims, and then analyzes the *means* used to attain the *aims*. The analysis has a very simple principle, namely, are the means suited to the declared end, (*without coercion*, and if coercion is attempted, will the coercion be effective for attaining the end).

The specific praxeological science which has concerned itself with *values* is economics. The concept of praxeology is broader than the popular idea of economics. Economics has (unfairly) been described as the study of values in the *material* field — the field of wealth and property. Praxeology distinctly covers the whole field of values, spiritual, cultural, material — in short, all values, because all those *values* affect and determine human action.

There is a world-famous economist who has systematically broadened the approach to economics to a praxeological approach. His name is Dr. Ludwig von Mises (pronounced *Mees' is*), presently at New York University. Mises has published a book entitled, *Human Action* (copyright by Yale University Press, 1949, New Haven, Connecticut, USA, \$10). It has a sub-title, *A Treatise in Economics*. In order to re-orient economics on the much broader base of praxeology the first 140 pages of this massive and superb text on economics (or praxeology) is devoted to the idea of praxeology as such and to the appropriate epistemology (method for such a science). This epoch-making text is worth intense study by whoever knows how to read well. (Others should limit themselves to Mises' more popular works.)

Six or seven years ago the editor of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM republished a magazine article by Mises, entitled "Middle-of-the-Road Policy Leads To Socialism." He sent it to the preachers in the Christian Reformed church and to many others. As long as he has copies left he will be glad to send them to whoever is interested. That booklet is a common-sense analysis to show that interventionism (which was a pet praxeological idea of Abraham Kuyper; which is the official program of the Anti-Revolutionary Party; and which is the basic content of much of what is taught in the praxeology departments at Calvinist colleges and universities) is

unsound. The argument by Mises is a *rational* argument; he shows that *granted the aim in mind* the interventionist means [which always entail *coercion* in violation of the Sixth Commandment—FN] to accomplish that aim are not suitable to accomplish it but accomplish the contrary. Therefore, the means selected, interventionism, must be wrong — it employs means which are unsuitable to accomplish its own declared purpose.

To someone as this writer, *that* approach (which is purely rationalist) has a further meaning, namely, beyond its convincing rationalism there is the fact that it rejects as unsuitable that kind of action which Scripture declares is contrary to the law of God. On all practical matters we hold that the means which Scripture prescribes are just the means which are the most suitable to attain the human ends which we value highly. For Scripture, *noncoercion* is the proper means to attain the end; for Mises, the *free market* is the proper means to attain the end. Moses makes a *moral* approach; Mises make a praxeological approach. Moses and Mises speak of the same thing; they differ only in the use of different words.

F. N.

What We Would Understand By "Conditioning"

If somebody, or an event, or an idea is associated in your mind with something else, that *association* of ideas will affect your liking or disliking that somebody, event or idea.

The smell of food when you are hungry, makes your "mouth water"; the saliva flows more freely. Pavlov, the famous Russian psychologist, tried the experiment of ringing a bell when food was brought to a dog. Eventually, the dog associated *food* with the *sound* of the bell. When Pavlov finally did not bring food but rang only the bell, the dog's mouth began to drip saliva. The dog had been "conditioned."

Parents similarly "condition" their children. My father conditioned me (besides other things) (1) to oysters and (2) to the idea of the "glory of God." He conditioned me so that I

have never been able to like oysters, and I have always been suspicious of this *glory of God* business.

We shall take the simpler case first, namely, oysters, because it will help to make clear what the "conditioning" was in regard to the idea of the *glory of God*.

The family then consisted of four — parents and a seven-year old son and a five-year old son. The mother liked oysters. The father did not. For once, on a certain day, the main dish was an oyster stew.

The father was equal to the occasion. He called to the attention of his young sons the big "eyes" that the oysters had. How gruesome to eat those big eyes! My five-year old imagination functioned wonderfully. Those oysters were finally nothing but eyes. My mother's effort at counteracting the eye idea was futile. I could not eat oysters then, and it has always been an effort since to do so. I was "conditioned" *against* oysters. I do not remember that there was ever another attempt at having an oyster stew in that household.

In a similar manner my father conditioned me against a certain kind of idea regarding the *glory of God*. That conditioning was far more complex but equally effective. Any mention of the idea of the *glory of God* in certain contexts affects me just as the "eyes" of the oysters in an oyster stew always affect me.

My father was a descendent of Secessionists, that is, of *orthodox* Calvinists who under considerable hardship and some persecution separated from the *nominally* Calvinist state church in the Netherlands, in 1834. The Secessionists were mostly simple folk. They were interested in their personal salvation, and in showing their thankfulness for a hoped-for salvation by grace through obedience to the revealed commands of God. To put it honestly, they were very much interested in *themselves*, in their own salvation. At any rate, so I believe.

Fifty years later (in 1886) there was another exodus out of the state church of the Netherlands. It was known as the Doleantie (the wandering away from the state church). This movement was led by Dr. Abraham Kuyper. But, in this instance, according to

an opinion which my father held, the emphasis was that you should not be so much interested in your own salvation as you were in the *glory of God*. The idea was that what was not purely for the *glory of God* was tainted with sin. My father not only could not bring himself to accept that exclusive emphasis but he was allergic to it and resisted it.

My earliest memory of the distrust of my father in regard to the very prominent mention of the *glory of God* was one Sunday morning. Maybe I was ten or twelve years old. I was walking home with him from the Sunday morning service. The preacher had preached that everything had to be for the *glory of God*, and that salvation had that prime purpose. Salvation was not to save men but to glorify God.

Undoubtedly, in a sense, my father fully agreed to that, but equally, undoubtedly, in a sense he disagreed. And in front of a neighbor's residence, one block from home, on a pleasant Sunday morning, he told his young son that he was very much interested in *his own* salvation, and that he thought there was nothing deficient or sinful about it, and that any preacher who preached that we should be interested in the glory of God *only* if we were to be without sin in the matter was talking beyond reality and common sense.

From that occasion and others like it I was conditioned against any emphatic statement that the motivation of man should be, unalloyed by anything else, purely the *glory of God*.

The discovery of what is meant by the *glory of God* has become an activity which never ceases to continue to greatly interest us. What is meant by the glory of God? At times, we have thought that the term, *as used*, had no meaning whatever; just three meaningless words; a cliché (kleeshay), a mere term by which words are a substitute for thought and for meaning.

The Apostle John in his old age developed considerable doubt about the genuineness of the faith of some people, who *talked* about their knowing God. But John wanted some evidence beyond the talk. He said, show me the evidence in the form of obedience (I John 2:3-6).

Similarly we say: what is meant by the *glory of God*? To live for the glory of God consists in what?

A reader may ask: what are you driving at? Our answer is: the *talk* about the *glory of God* appears to us to be somewhat affected by two things, namely, confusion and sanctimony. Further, it is our belief that a sound praxeological analysis will help reduce that confusion and sanctimony. What should we all clearly realize when we think in terms of human action? To live to the *glory of God* is, after all, human action.

F. N.

Scripture Does Not Stand Alone

Scripture *never* stands alone. Scripture is *never* accepted as sufficient revelation. It *cannot* be sufficient revelation.

Scripture is always supplemented by nonscriptural knowledge. If there was no knowledge besides what is in Scripture, Scripture could not be understood. Any claim to the complete sufficiency of Scripture is false.

Nobody has sensibly ever taken Scripture as the all-sufficient source of all knowledge. Men have lived who believed that they did that, but they were suffering from hallucination.

Scripture is necessarily supplemented by *observation* and *reason*.

The *observations* may be naive and inexact observations or they may be "scientific" and "exact" observations. But the observations must be there.

The reasoning may be logical or the reasoning may be fallacious. But the reasoning must be present. Nobody of good judgment accepts isolated statements in Scripture, apart from context and the *whole* teaching of Scripture. Reason is always applied.

In any event the understanding or the misunderstanding of Scripture will be affected by the character of those nonscriptural *observations* and independent *reasonings* of men.

This brings us to the asking of a very important question.

Should modern Calvinism supplement its knowledge from Scripture by naive and primitive observations or by scientific observations?

Let us cite a case — the rising and the setting of the sun. Naive observation is that the sun rises and sets, and makes a gigantic journey from east to west every day; and in a mysterious way it returns during the night to its original starting point in the east and repeats its journey during the succeeding day.

It would mean nothing to readers if Scripture spoke of a rising and setting sun, if observation did not reveal a sun and its movement. Any message from Scripture, therefore, which refers to the sun and its movement must refer either to the naive observation just described, or must refer to some other observation, for example, the scientific one, that the sun does not rise or set, but that the earth rotates on its axis.

Scripture, it seems to us, necessarily employed the use of naive observation when only naive observation existed. That was its only means of being intelligible to men of that day. But should the interpretation of Scripture today by us be associated necessarily with naive observations, or should it be associated with scientific observations wherever those observations are reasonably established, and have fully superseded naive observations, as, for example, in regard to the sun?

At once, when a question of that kind is asked the assumption is that the relationship to which we refer is limited to the relationship of Scripture to the physical and biological sciences. There is, in our illustration of the sun, such a relationship to a physical science. But by our question we really have specifically in mind an altogether different relationship, namely, the relationship between Scripture and the social sciences, or as readers will now understand we prefer to put it, *the relationship between Scripture and the sciences of praxeology.*

We are reluctant to bind Scripture today to primitive, naive observations in the field of praxeology (human action); instead *we wish to relate Scripture to the most modern praxeology.* (That is one reason why we selected the word *Progressive* which appears in our name.)

When we relate Scripture to the praxeology we accept we discover that we are not tearing down Scripture but are building it up and making it more meaningful.

Scripture and the brand of praxeology we accept, where they cover the same field, agree and enrich each other. If you will be a regular and careful reader of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM you will, we believe, be delighted to discover what we mean.

F.N.

Individualism Is Compatible With Glorifying God

Human *values* determine all human action. What are legitimate human values?

(1) One set of *values* is that you must act purely for the glory of God.

(2) Another set of *values* is that you must act purely for God and for your fellow men. (The real idea is that when you act for your fellow man you are really acting to the glory of God.)

(3) Another set of *values* is that you must act for the glory of God but that there are many legitimate collateral purposes, secondary to the glory of God. One of those collateral purposes we have just mentioned — sacrificing yourself for your fellow men. There is another which it is dangerous to mention, namely, that you yourself are *individually* a collateral purpose to the glory of God, and that you may — *without sinning in the least thereby* — do something *for yourself*. The development of your own individual personality, the determination of your own individual personal choices, according to this idea, are tolerable and approvable by God, and are consequently not sin.

A typical hyper-Calvinist often has a pretended set of values as in the paragraph (1). A typical neo-Calvinist often has a set of values as in the paragraph (2). If it is possible to hold to the set of values mentioned in paragraph (3) and still be a Calvinist, then the writer is a Calvinist.

A man may consider that a human being has a certain *value* in the sight of God, namely, that he is created in the image of God with rationality and capacity for moral action; that, as such, he is *more than a mere tool or instrument of pleasure for the Creator*; that therefore (so a man may hold) man is a collateral end in himself as well as an actor in the larger framework of society and as a worshipper of the Creator. Why should men believe that God regards man merely as an instrument of pleasure for himself in the same manner as some men regard women merely as instruments of pleasure — an attitude which is widely condemned and not accepted by half of the human beings in the world?

There is a view of practical affairs in this life, in the field of praxeology, which is known as Individualism. That term was long the traditional term used as an antonym (the opposite) of Socialism. Largely because of the writings of Abraham Kuyper, Individualism has among Dutch Calvinists or Calvinists of Dutch origin a bad reputation. Individualism (of all kinds) is therefore rejected in Dutch Calvinist circles. But we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are Individualists. We are reluctant to let stand uncriticized a view of Individualism which in effect makes all Individualists moral reprobates and outcasts. Individualism is basically a declaration that at least in some degree a man is an end in himself; (surely, only a subsidiary end in the mind of a religious person, *but still an end*). Most of a man's action may be purely for himself — individualistic — and *not* for his neighbor — *and while purely for himself it can be as much to the glory of God as if it were purely for the neighbor. If some action purely for the neighbor is to the glory of God then something purely for the self is equally to the glory of God, because Scripture does not rate the self lower than the neighbor, because, the law is to love the neighbor as the self and not more than the self.*

All this is interesting in connection with praxeology, which pertains to human action, that is, to *all* human action, that which is personally self-directed action as well as to social action. Praxeology, as a science, then does not, in our thinking, move from the area of virtue to the area of sin when it goes beyond social action to individual action.

This individualism does not make us in the least anti-social, nor, in our opinion, sinners. It can easily be shown how neo-Calvinism puts a false stigma on Individualism by perpetrating an unjustified "extension."

Professor Ludwig von Mises in his *Human Action*, page 143, begins his chapter on "Human Society" with a short paragraph:

Society is concerted action, cooperation.

But a *genuine* neo-Calvinist will not accept so limited a statement; for him the paragraph should read:

Society is concerted action, sacrifice.

There you have the extension — the sanctimony of going from *cooperation* to *sacrifice*, from *individualism* to *social action* (sacrifice for the neighbor), from the *Capitalism* of the founders of the United States to the *Interventionism* of Abraham Kuyper, of the Free University, of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, and of the content of some of the teaching in Calvinist colleges in this country.

Why is *cooperation* insufficient as the *foundation* of society? Why does a wholly new foundation, *sacrifice*, need to be put under it? We shall eventually aim to show that society cannot be *founded* on sacrifice. It can only be *founded* on cooperation. Neither can it have both foundations.

Individualism, as morally defensible, stands on the idea that it is not sin to look out for yourself; or falls with the idea that it is sin.

F. N.

Christian Reformed "Intellectuals"

What is an "intellectual" or, as the expression now goes, an "egghead"?

Thirty years ago the word often used was *intelligentsia*. That term has been replaced by *intellectual*. It is quite something to be known as an "*intellectual*." It puts you above the "masses" or the "mass man."

The best short definition of an *intellectual* is that he is a "dealer in secondhand ideas."

A dealer in secondhand merchandise does not deal in new merchandise. Everything is second, third, fourth, or, say, tenth hand. The same is true of a typical "intellectual." He has no *new* ideas; his ideas are second, third, tenth and twentieth hand.

In the Christian Reformed church, for example, the present-day intellectuals are repeating the original ideas of Kuyper, Bavinck and Geesink. The fact that our intellectuals are informed on what Kuyper, Bavinck and Geesink taught makes our contemporaries "intellectuals." But what they are repeating is now all old stuff. Secondhand, etc.

Occasionally, there is an intellectual who graduates into another class. He is an original thinker. He has a new idea. Everybody knows that there are thousands of intellectuals but only a few original thinkers.

The intellectual is a very important person. He is the human agency by which ideas are popularized. The intellectuals constitute the machinery for spreading ideas. They are not the real *source* of ideas.

Intellectuals include preachers, teachers, writers, doctors, businessmen, farmers — anybody who informs himself on past or current ideas *and disseminates them*. Depending on his judgment, his secondhand stock of ideas has some pretty good and valuable parts in it; or what he has should be picked up by an electric crane and loaded on cars for the blast furnace.

A Christian Reformed *intellectual* in this decade (the 1950s) is a man who knows prevailing secular and religious ideas floating around the world; who selects what he likes best; who gets out a christening font, and then christens any idea which he accepts as neo-Calvinism. The secondhand idea he has picked up may be valuable or it may be junk.

As an agency for spreading ideas he is an *intellectual*, an egg-head, and as such he performs a very important function.

We are interested in the ideas of the intellectuals in Calvinist ranks. We hope to swing an electric crane over the pile of secondhand ideas of those intellectuals.

F.N.

A New Lucubration

That is the right word, *lucubration*. It means a laborious, overtime study of a clumsy and puffing sort. Somebody working overly hard on an easy problem and taking himself very seriously in regard to that work is, shall we say, *lucubrating*.

The intellectuals in some Calvinist churches have a new *lucubration*. That new *lucubration* consists in anxiety why their denomination is of very little importance in America and agitating that we must do something about it. Basically, few Americans know about the smaller Calvinist denominations or respect them.

Now read the "intellectual" publications within certain denominations and hear the intellectuals grunt with effort, and pant with anxiety, and strain themselves with yearning for recognition in America. They want their denomination to be in the statistics of church life; and to practice the fine arts; and to have *c u l t u r e*. They wish the denomination to be appreciated and recognized.

People who are really well adjusted do not worry about such things. Great men rest their significance on their deeds and not on popularity. Such new *lucubration* is therefore additional evidence of an obvious fact, namely, that the strident intellectuals in Calvinist churches have a deep-seated inferiority complex..

And what is wrong? The trouble is with the Calvinists themselves. Epictetus (*Ep ic te' tus*), the Roman Stoic philosopher, set forth our problem plainly when he wrote:

The first difference between one of the vulgar and a philosopher is this: the one says, I am undone on the account of my child, my brother, my father; but the other, if ever he be obliged to say, I am undone! reflects and adds, *on account of myself* . . . If we always . . . , whenever we are unsuccessful, would lay the fault on ourselves, [we would improve ourselves.] But we set out in a very different way from the very beginning. In infancy, for example, if we happen to stumble, our nurse does not chide us, but beats the stone . . .

Epictetus, Book IV, Chapter 19

The thing for the intellectuals of a Calvinist denomination of foreign origin to do is not to complain about its acceptance by Americans, but to be concerned about the content of their message. There must be something wrong about the message of these intellectuals — for America.

The intellectuals in Calvinist churches of Dutch origin have little to offer America that is unique. What have they brought over from the Netherlands?

1. Calvinist orthodoxy. That, however, existed widely in America long before the newer Dutch Calvinist denominations appeared on the scene. There is nothing unique in that.

2. An exceedingly primitive cosmology. That is not an asset but a liability. It quenches the confidence of well-informed men.

3. To offset a primitive cosmology the Calvinist intellectuals have developed a peculiar doctrine known as "common grace," a necessary corollary to naive notions of cosmology and society.

4. A sanctimonious definition of *brotherly love*, basically borrowed from Karl Marx.

5. A modern reversion to the ancient idea of the "divine right of kings" recast in an impressive form, namely, that *all* government has the approval of God (as a manifestation of "common grace") and must be obeyed.

6. An educational idea that schools should be private, that is, should be controlled by parents and not by the state. But *that* idea is really a *liberal* idea which stems less from Dutch Calvinists than from their political opponents. Political liberals and Catholics in the Netherlands have promoted the idea of private education as well as the Calvinists have. However, this is, we believe, the *one* idea that Dutch Calvinists can contribute to America in a genuinely significant fashion.

The intellectuals in the denomination are undone — not by America, nor by their enemies, but by themselves. They might profitably give heed to what has just been quoted from Epictetus.

The program of Calvinist intellectuals is designed to make their denomination important to America. Their apparent modern-

ization program will eventually be found to be ineffective for the following reasons:

1. Their new definition of brotherly love is not based on Scripture, but on the Marxian law of brotherly love. (See February, March, April and May issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

2. They implicitly believe in the same idea as their Dutch brethren do that government has "authority" beyond the Decalogue. Breathing hard, they are endeavoring to outrun the Marxians on subjects on which the Marxians are disturbing the whole world including the part which is called the "free world."

3. They have clasped practically every popular *ism* of the age to their bosom as a neo-Calvinist thought. In the process of Dutch-Calvinizing America, they are de-Calvinizing their inherited ideas.

The intellectuals in some Calvinist denominations lament that we are, as Epictetus says, *undone*. By whom? By others? Or are we undone by ourselves — by our own intellectuals? Let us not as the nurses of children who have fallen over a stone, beat the stone. It is time that we give thought to beating ourselves.

F.N.

The Bruins Slot Proposition That The United States Has Become Prosperous Through Luck

There is a Dutch daily newspaper of a Christian sort named Trouw. On its front page on September 8, 1955, it ran a column-long editorial to warn its readers against ideas in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. The editorial was probably by Dr. J. A. H. J. S. Bruins Slot, the editor-in-chief, a Calvinist politician representing the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Lower House in the Netherlands.*

Bruins Slot makes three main points against PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM:

*See November issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 326-328.

1. *The relationship of government to men is not important, but the relationship of government to God is. (We answered that proposition in our November issue, on page 328 and following.)*

2. *The United States is prosperous by luck — by favorable circumstances. We struck it rich, without really deserving it.*

3. *The editor of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is superficially and erroneously informed. We shall not devote space to an answer. However, the general contempt manifested by the article is worthy of future separate treatment. We shall at that time not limit ourselves to Bruins Slot, but shall include others and ourselves. Personally, we do not think well of this contempt business, but we are not less-guilty than others and shall certainly not be the first to complain.*

We are in this issue analyzing Bruins Slot's proposition that America is prosperous because of luck.

America's Luck

Bruins Slot wrote as follows (our translation*):

First we would like to call attention to the fact that this magazine [PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM] wishes to estab-

*Because we are open to being charged with an incorrect translation, the original follows:

Allereerst willen wij er de aandacht op vestigen, dat dit blad typisch "Amerikaans" wil zijn. Het omgeeft de "free enterprise"—gedachte met een soort van Amerikaanse mystiek, waarbij "unrestricted prosperity" en "free enterprise" als twee zijden van één medaille worden gezien. Deze gedachte, dat "onbeperkte welvaart" en "volledige ondernemingsvrijheid" onlosmakelijk aan elkaar verbonden zijn komt speciaal in extreem republikeinse kringen in Amerika meer voor, zonder dat men er zich rekenschap van geeft, dat dit verband mogelijk geweest is door de bepaalde omstandigheden van dat land in een bepaalde tijd toen er enorme expansiemogelijkheden bestonden voor iedereen, zonder dat daarbij rechtmatige belangen van anderen behoeften te worden gekrenkt.

Mede door een, ook overigens wel begrijpelijk, Amerikaans zelfbewustzijn komen verscheidene Amerikanen er toe om uit datgene, wat in Amerika in een bepaalde tijd en onder bepaalde omstandigheden practisch niet slecht werkte, een algemeen geldend dogma af te leiden.

lish that it is typically American. It surrounds the "free enterprise" idea with a sort of American mysticism, whereby "unrestricted prosperity" and "free enterprise" are viewed as two sides of the same coin. This idea that unrestricted prosperity and free enterprise are inseparably tied together is prevalent in certain extreme Republican** circles, without there being recognition of the fact that that relationship was possible by a combination of circumstances in a particular country [United States], in a particular era of enormous expansion potentialities for everybody, without there being thereby any necessity to resort to the violation of the legitimate interests of others.

Further, by an understandable American self-consciousness, some Americans come to accept, as if it were a universally valid dogma, a system which in a specific set of circumstances did not work out badly.

The Reprint of The Editorial in "De Wachter"

The Christian Reformed church maintains a Dutch-language newspaper as one of its *official* publications. The name of this weekly is *De Wachter* (The Watchman). One of the Department Editors of *De Wachter* is Reverend William Haverkamp, pastor of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. The foregoing paragraphs plus a few more are quoted by Haverkamp in a recent issue of *De Wachter*.

Haverkamp adds this comment of his own (our translation):

We see that the aforementioned writer [the editor-in-chief of *Trouw*] is not ready to trade his inheritance [of ideas] with what PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM offers.

Undoubtedly Haverkamp agrees with Bruins Slot that we are somewhat provincial in our "Americanism" and that we are wrong to ascribe American prosperity to the political and economic system we have here; we should have ascribed American prosperity to luck.

**The assumption by Bruins Slot that the editor of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is a Republican is erroneous. He has always been a Jeffersonian Democrat; never a Republican nor a New Deal Democrat.

Haverkamp, as an old friend, refrains from quoting Bruins Slot's more contemptuous remarks about PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. We thank him. He does not quote any part of Bruins Slot's ideas on the relationship of government to God, which we analyzed in the November issue.

Bruins Slot's Opinion About The Cause Of American Prosperity

We admit that we ascribe the prosperity of the United States to "free enterprise," using the term in the customary sense of a free market society.

But Bruins Slot has a different explanation. It is that American prosperity was pure luck. He says it in a roundabout way, but that is nevertheless what he says. He says that free enterprise just happend by chance to be associated in America with prosperity, but that the real explanation of American prosperity consists in:

- (1) a favorable combination of circumstances;
- (2) a particular era of potential expansion;
- (3) in which everybody could be prosperous without necessarily trespassing the (assumed) legitimate interests of others.

In short, America has been prosperous by *luck*, under special circumstances which as an exception permitted freedom from government interventionism. Bruins Slot clearly indicates that if luck had not been with us, then in order to have had prosperity *and also justice*, we could not have retained a free market society, but we would have required an interventionist society, the kind Abraham Kuyper favored, and which came to its full flower in the German *Zwangswirtschaft* (coercive society, *dwang maatschappij*) of Hitler.

Over against this "luck" theory of Bruins Slot (and Haverkamp?) as an explanation of the prosperity of the United States, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has an altogether different theory. Our theory is expressed in our Declaration Five which reads:

- (a) Promote confidence that prosperity obtained in a free market society is the result of obedience to the law of God; and (b) discontinue all apologies for that prosperity and all policies which will undermine that prosperity.

We have made several references in previous issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to this Declaration, but have not been able nor shall we be able to develop our ideas fully on that subject until sometime in the future. (See, however, pages 12-13, 149-152, 243-247 in the January, June and September issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

We shall at this time make a series of statements summarizing our thought.

1. We are confident that God through the universal validity of His moral law *does* reward the good and punish the evil. There are exceptions, but they are exceptions and not the basic pattern. The exceptions are caused by the unpredictable* events in the natural world, and by violation of the law of God by individual men and by men collectively (especially governments).

2. The basic characteristic of a society organized according to the law of God is the absence of coercion (in other words, obedience to the Sixth Commandment), except that there be that coercion which is used to keep men from open evil — violence, theft, fraud, adultery (the Second Table of the Law).

3. That is the kind of noncoercive society (avoiding coercion as forbidden by the Sixth Commandment) that the Founding Fathers of this country set up. Probably it was the most noncoercive society, and certainly it was one of the most noncoercive societies that has ever existed.

4. The prosperity of the United States is, we believe, *exactly because that kind of society was organized*. We consider that original American society to be based on the law of God far more than the government of the Netherlands was at any time under the premiership of Abraham Kuyper, because Abraham Kuyper promoted an interventionist society (involving coercion) and not a free society. Read his works if you doubt it. The man had confidence in bureaucrats and laws beyond the Decalogue.

Luck? Wherein did our luck consist? Natural resources? Russia in its great land expanse has more natural resources than we have. Are the Russians prosperous? If natural resources explain prosperity, why were not the native American Indians pros-

*Unpredictable from the viewpoint of men.

perous? Did the settlers bring over great wealth? Most of them were from the poorer classes in Europe; many brought nothing along and were poverty stricken. Were these people smarter than others? We certainly doubt it. But why their spectacular prosperity? Our answer is:

1. The government of the United States left them FREE. They could be individualists, that is, they could pursue their own interests. And here, in this land, to pursue your own choices and your own interests was not considered SIN. The result was great resourcefulness, industry and thrift. *That* promoted prosperity.

2. The government of the United States did another thing. It made the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" SAFE. Because title to property was safe, people saved. Savings went into *capital*, the "produced means of production." The accumulation of "capital" became great per capita (per person). *That* is the real reason for America's unusual prosperity. It was "capital" and not natural resources that made us prosperous. And capital would not have been accumulated so rapidly in an interventionist society, which is a non-Biblical society, as it was accumulated in a capitalist (free market) society, which is a Biblical society.

The original United States government merely followed the path Moses laid out in the Second Table of the Law, and its people became prosperous. But that idea is obnoxious to a modern Anti-Revolutionary Party man in the Netherlands, as Bruins Slot, (and Haverkamp?). Bruins Slot's whole political creed is interventionism. But there was originally practically no interventionism in the United States. Interventionism — law on law, bureaucrat on bureaucrat, line on line, precept on precept, tax on tax — that is *his* sure way to prosperity. We did not have that interventionism here; nevertheless, we became prosperous. Therefore, there is for him only one other explanation left for our prosperity — LUCK!

To complete his argument against our views, which is that prosperity in the United States has been the reward of having a government founded in reality on the Law of God, he adds his paragraph that the view we have just expressed is not a "univer-

sally, valid dogma." However, that is exactly the "dogma" which we hold:

1. It is for us a "universally valid dogma" that the law of God gives freedom and security;
2. America's government was *de facto* founded on principles based on the Law of God, and so we have been free and secure;
3. Therefore, we have been prosperous; and also
4. Therefore, it is also for us a "universally valid dogma" that *every* nation which will organize itself according to the great Law of God will eventually be prosperous and secure.

That is for us a "dogma." If it is not true, Scripture can be demonstrated to be unreliable on this subject.

F.N.

Did "Luck" Make Holland Prosperous In Its Golden Age?

Groen van Prinsterer, the great Dutch historian, attributes the prosperity of the Netherlands in its "Golden Age" to sound religion. Groen's proposition essentially is that true religion had the effect of contributing to sound ideas, that sound ideas contributed to good conduct, and that good conduct resulted in the prosperity of the Golden Age of the Netherlands.

Could it be that Groen was wrong about that? Could it be that the Golden Age of the Netherlands was merely a favorable combination of circumstances, or in simple language, pure luck? Assume for the moment that we allege that.

We submit to all Netherlanders and to all Americans of Dutch extraction that the foregoing is as reasonable a proposition as the proposition of Bruins Slot that the United States has been prosperous by pure luck.

There were, indeed, similarities in circumstances for the two countries.

The Dutch had been prostrated by 80 years of war. The Americans, on the other hand, had come into a poverty stricken land of the Indians; there was not a house on this continent. In short, both Dutch and Americans began with handicaps, although they began with different kinds of handicaps.

They both began their prosperity with a new-found liberty. The Dutch had thrown off the oppressive yoke of Philip II; the Americans eventually threw off the restrictions the British wished to apply.

Both Dutch and Americans began under difficulties and developed a minimum of restrictions on liberty. Did they become prosperous by *luck*?

Liberty, we hold, is an essential for prosperity. Liberty, we also hold, is a basic teaching of Scripture; all that Moses ever forbade, in regard to this life, was "the liberty to do wrong"; he merely specified as far as human relations were concerned that violence, adultery, theft, fraud and covetousness are taboo; **EVERYTHING ELSE WAS LEFT FREE**. Moses did not say you can do only this and this and this, as all interventionist and socialist governments say; no, he said, you may do **EVERYTHING** except that you may not exploit your neighbor. No man ever used a better method of legislating for liberty than Moses; all he did was to specify a few things you may not do. Paul taught an identical doctrine in the New Testament (Romans 13:10a) when he wrote "Love worketh no ill to the neighbor." Interventionism and socialism specify what you may do; the rest is forbidden. Why? The government has that "peculiar, inherent power" piped from the throne of God to tell you *in detail* what you may or may not do! (See November issue.)

It was not interventionism that made the Dutch prosperous in their Golden Age nor made America great; it was *freedom*, with freedom defined as by Moses and as confirmed in the New Testament, freedom rightly and not sanctimoniously understood.

When emigrants from the Netherlands have come to this country in the 45 years (in which period this writer has had the opportunity to observe them), they undergo a short spasm of wonderment. Then suddenly it is as if somebody injected something

into them. They go to work as beavers. Or to change the figure of speech, they spin the tires of their automobiles on the pavement in what we call a jack-rabbit start, as of some young man off to see his girl friend. What has caused that sudden and astonishing burst of effort? *Liberty*. Those immigrants have suddenly discovered that the "sky is the limit." They have discovered that they can work *as they please*. They have discovered that they can "get ahead." This is a *new* land for those Dutchmen *because of its liberty*.

But at once they begin to "cover up." They begin to hold back information to relatives in the Netherlands who cannot or do not wish to come here. Their prosperity, their own personal unfolding Golden Age, may make those relatives covetous and angry and hostile. Therefore, many immigrants to America do not inform their Dutch relatives. And they cover up another way; they do not tell their Dutch relatives how great freedom has been and still is here. It would discredit the official dogma of interventionism of devout Calvinists in the Netherlands.

But coming back to Dutch prosperity in its Golden Age, we would, it seems to us, be as reasonable when we say that past Dutch prosperity has been because of luck, as Bruins Slot is when he declares that American prosperity is just luck.

Actually, of course, *we* do *not* declare that Dutch prosperity in its Golden Age was because of luck. We declare just the contrary; it was because there was a political, social and economic order *in accordance with the law of God* that Holland had its Golden Age — its great deeds, by its Tromps, De Ruyters, Evertsens and great commerce; its De Witts, Grotiuses and William the Thirds and great freedom; its Rembrandts, Vermeers, Jan Steens, Frans Halses, Ruysdaels and great art; its Vondels, etc., and great poetry. But begin to suppress the kind of freedom which is specifically required by the Second Table of the Law, and inevitably deterioration sets in.

That, we think, is the idea which Scripture teaches. That is just the opposite of what Bruins Slot teaches, if we understand his basic principles. He believes in luck and a regulating government. We do not.

J.V.M. and F.N.

The Commandment Of God Which The "Luck" Idea Is Intended To Frustrate

Is it possible that there is an unconscious motivation for advancing the idea that the United States has been prosperous through *luck*? We believe that there is.

That unconscious motivation is envy and covetousness.

It is really for many churchmen in this age a mistake to say that there are Ten Commandments. For many of them there are only nine. The Tenth Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet . . . anything that is thy neighbor's," is a dead letter. We recommend, therefore, to those who would be modern-minded that they hereafter speak more accurately by saying, The *Nine* Commandments.

Not only is personal covetousness rampant, group and collective covetousness are considered meritorious and "Christian."

Pressure groups are seldom groups protecting their legitimate interests (as the Bible defines legitimate interests) but are groups coveting for themselves something that they hope to extort from another group or from society at large. The very term, *pressure* groups, indicates coercion is an essential part of their program. What is wanted but that cannot be obtained by voluntary exchange — genuinely voluntary on both sides — involves coveting.

If *A* obtains prosperity because he has basically operated according to the law of God (no violence, theft or fraud), then he has no material obligation to *B* except charity. But if *A* has prosperity *by luck*, and if that luck is under the providence of God, then *B* may appear to have a good moral claim on *A* for material goods.

The greater the rôle of luck in getting prosperity, the weaker the claim of anyone retaining his prosperity for himself. If prosperity is the result of luck *only*, then there is not anything to be said morally or logically in defense of private property.

Many of the people of the world consider American wealth to be the result of luck. We Americans are therefore, they conclude, not entitled to it *for ourselves*.

That, we believe, is also the subconscious motivation behind Bruins Slot's idea about American prosperity. We obtained prosperity basically by luck; and so the rest of the world has a good claim on it.

Away with the Tenth Commandment!

F.N.

Information About 1956 Subscriptions

Subscriptions to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are on a calendar-year basis. We shall be much pleased if you will renew your subscription for the coming year, 1956.

We are also interested in *new* subscribers for 1956. It will not be practical to become a subscriber in 1956 without having read the 1955 issues. To be a *new* subscriber for 1956 requires purchase of the 1955 issues which we are having bound in paper covers. *New* subscribers for 1956 can subscribe for a total of \$4 (paperbound for 1955, \$2; future issues in 1956, \$2). Paperbound copies to *nonsubscribers* are available at \$3.

In appreciation of present subscribers, we shall send them a paperbound book FREE if they will return their copies to us.

A Better Translation

In the November issue (page 329) we translated the Dutch words *willekeurig individu* as "temperamental individual." It has been called to the writer's attention that in this instance a better translation would probably be "random individual."

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM LEAGUE

866 East 166th Street
South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER:

If change of address on file, notify us on Form 3547 (for which postage is guaranteed).

If not deliverable, check reason in spaces below. Return postage guaranteed.

- ☐ Returned at sender's request
- ☐ No such Post Office in state named
- ☐ Moved—left no address
- ☐ Refused
- ☐ Unclaimed or unknown

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.
Permit No. 12