

# Progressive Calvinism

Volume II

1956

**ESSAYS ON THE  
PEERLESS MOSAIC LAW**

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South Holland, Illinois

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LUDWIG VON MISES . . .

*It is certainly true that our age is full of conflicts which generate war. However, these conflicts do not spring from the operation of the unhampered market society. It may be permissible to call them economic conflicts because they concern that sphere of human life which is, in common speech, known as the sphere of economic activities. But it is a serious blunder to infer from this appellation that the source of these conflicts are conditions which develop within the frame of a market society. It is not capitalism that produces them, but precisely the anticapitalistic policies designed to check the functioning of capitalism. They are an outgrowth of the various governments' interference with business, of trade and migration barriers and discrimination against foreign labor, foreign products, and foreign capital.*

*None of these conflicts could have emerged in an unhampered market economy. (Pages 680 and 681.)*

—MISES, *Human Action*

EUGEN VON BOHM-BAWERK . . .

*Political economy is even yet one of the youngest sciences, and it was still younger in the time of the classical economy, which in spite of its name "classical," given as the event proved, too soon, was only an incipient embryonic science. 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 political economy was not discovered, even by the classical school. Their greatest fault was that they were fore-runners; our greatest advantage is that we come after. We who are richer by the fruits of a century's research than were our predecessors, need not work by different methods, but simply work better than they.*

\* \* \*

*To be sure, the classical economists well knew to what point all their explanations must be traced — to the care of mankind for its own well-being, which, undisturbed by the incursion of altruistic motives, is the ultimate motive-force of all economic action.*

—BOHM-BAWERK, "The Austrian Economists"  
*Annals Of The American Academy Of  
Political And Social Science, January 1891*

*Few are ready to recognize that the rise of fascism and nazism was not a reaction against the socialist trends of the preceding period but a necessary outcome of those tendencies. (Pages 3 and 4.)*

*The point which is so important is the basic fact that it is impossible for any man to survey more than a limited field, to be aware of the urgency of more than a limited number of needs. Whether his interests center round his own physical needs, or whether he takes a warm interest in the welfare of every human being he knows, the ends about which he can be concerned will always be only an infinitesimal fraction of the needs of all men.*

*This is the fundamental fact on which the whole philosophy of individualism is based. It does not assume, as is often asserted, that man is egoistic or selfish or ought to be. It merely starts from the indisputable fact that the limits of our powers of imagination make it impossible to include in our scale of values more than a sector of the needs of the whole society, and that, since, strictly speaking, scales of value can exist only in individual minds, nothing but partial scales of values exist — scales which are inevitably different and often inconsistent with each other. From this the individualist concludes that the individuals should be allowed, within defined limits, to follow their own values and preferences rather than somebody else's; that within these spheres the individual's system of ends should be supreme and not subject to any dictation by others. It is this recognition of the individual as the ultimate judge of his ends, the belief that as far as possible his own views ought to govern his actions, that forms the essence of the individualist position. (Page 59.)*

*There is no other possibility than either the order governed by the impersonal discipline of the market or that directed by the will of a few individuals; and those who are out to destroy the first are wittingly or unwittingly helping to create the second. (Page 199.)*

—HAYEK, *The Road To Serfdom*

*Things that can be placed in a causal connection with the satisfaction of human needs we term useful things. If, however, we both recognize this causal connection, and have the power actually to direct the useful things to the satisfaction of our needs, we call them goods. (Page 52.)*

*Thus human economy and property have a joint economic origin since both have, as the ultimate reason for their existence, the fact that goods exist whose available quantities are smaller than the requirements of men. Property, therefore, like human economy, is not an arbitrary invention but rather the only practically possible solution of the problem that is, in the nature of things, imposed upon us by the disparity between requirements for, and available quantities of, all economic goods.*

*As a result, it is impossible to abolish the institution of property without removing the causes that of necessity bring it about — that is, without simultaneously increasing the available quantities of all economic goods to such an extent that the requirements of all members of society can be met completely, or without reducing the needs of men far enough to make the available goods suffice for the complete satisfaction of their needs. Without establishing such an equilibrium between requirements and available amounts, a new social order could indeed ensure that the available quantities of economic goods would be used for the satisfaction of the needs of different persons than at present. But by such a redistribution it could never surmount the fact that there would be persons whose requirements for economic goods would either not be met at all, or met only incompletely, and against whose potential acts of force, the possessors of economic goods would have to be protected. Property, in this sense, is therefore inseparable from human economy in its social form, and all plans of social reform can reasonably be directed only toward an appropriate distribution of economic goods but never to the abolition of the institution of property itself. (Pages 97 and 98.)*

—MENGGER, Principles Of Economics

# Declarations of the Progressive Calvinism League

## I.

(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.

## II.

(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.

## III.

(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.

## IV.

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

## V.

(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.

## VI.

(A) Promote a program for this life (1) which will be distinguishable (antithetical) from a nonfaith 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.

*If you subscribe to the foregoing Declarations and wish to become a member of the Progressive Calvinism League, write for a membership blank. Your signature, together with \$2 for annual membership fee (\$1 for students), will make you a member of the League and the recipient of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM for one year.*

## Foreword

Many of the articles in the 1956 issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are about the matchless laws in the Second Table of the Law of Moses. That explains the selection of the title for this volume.

Volume I, *Essays Against Sanctimony And Legalized Coercion*, should be read before reading Volume II. Paperbound copies are available at \$2, (or \$1 for students).

Readers will discover that PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is in the historic Calvinist tradition. We have a "cloud of witnesses" on our side — the Puritans and the other Calvinists of the Golden Age of Calvinism, whose achievements are part of the imperishable glory of Calvinism.

But we represent more than mere traditionalism. Christianity, and that branch of it known as Calvinism, needs to be made relevant to the practical affairs of the modern world. That relevancy we attempt to accomplish by two policies: (1) faithfulness to the teaching of Scripture; and (2) careful synthesis of the teaching of *sound* modern praxeology (social sciences, especially economics) with the teaching of Scripture.

Our orthodoxy does not consist in repeating the statements of those who were, recently or long ago, "authorities" of some sort on Calvinism, as if modern Calvinism consisted merely in the repetition or exegesis of their ideas. Our base is Scripture and the praxeological sciences; not some highly regarded man of the past.

We consider knowledge of sound praxeology to be required of Calvinists if Calvinism is in this age to be influential in solving modern problems. We quote Professor Ludwig von Mises:

People may disagree on the question of whether everybody ought to study economics seriously. But one thing is certain. A man who publicly talks or writes about the opposition between capitalism and socialism without having fully familiarized himself with all that economics has to say about these issues is an irresponsible babblers.\*

Calvinists do unhesitatingly undertake to judge on the greatest practical issue of the day — Capitalism versus Socialism. But it

\*Ludwig von Mises, *The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality*, p. 47.

is obvious that many of them are uninformed on both (1) the teaching of Scripture regarding the relation of men to men and of men to things, and (2) the laws discovered by modern praxeology.

In an Open Letter\* to Dr. John C. Bennett of Union Theological Seminary of New York who is one of the aggressive promoters of the Social Gospel, the Reverend Mr. Edmund A. Opitz writes (our italics):

After perusing the books of the social gospellers and the welfarestaters, and after conversations with you and with men professionally engaged on one or the other of the various church councils for social action, I am forced to conclude that the reason why the libertarian case is not taught in seminaries is that *the case is not known in theological circles!* Neither is it a fashionable mode of thought among our intelligentsia; the climate of opinion is unfavorable to it.

The real meaning of the Law of God — which teaches a great and wonderful freedom or libertarianism — is as unknown in many "Christian" circles today as it was unknown in the time of King Josiah (645-608 B.C.), when the priest Hilkiah found a copy of the Law during the renovation of the temple, and astonished Josiah with what it taught.

The essays in this volume are designed to direct attention (1) to the modern validity of the ancient Mosaic Law; (2) to the modern validity of the rest of Scripture which all has its foundation in that Law; and (3) to the harmony which exists between those two and *sound* modern praxeology.

If Calvinism will restore itself by a return to its first principles, it can again become a great influence in the world. If it does not return to its first principles, it will continue to decline in influence and prestige.

However, if it returns to its first principles it will find itself, not in the rear ranks of the battle line of the somewhat absurd social gospel, but in the forefront of a *genuine and desperate* fight for righteousness. If Calvinism lacks the courage to become militant again, it should not seek to rediscover the truth.

\**Truth In Action*, Spiritual Mobilization, September 15, 1952.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM submits each month 32 pages of reading material. It takes about an hour to read one issue. The whole volume for a year can be read in about twelve hours.

We lack space for the presentation of contrary ideas. This does not mean that we are reluctant to consider any questions about or contradictions to what we have presented. We are prepared to respond, in public debate, at any reasonable place and time, to any proposition or argument against what we have written.

In regard to anything concerning which we may be in error we shall be pleased that we are shown in what respect to amend our ideas.

South Holland, Illinois  
December, 1956

## Errata

### Page

- 38 Seventh line should begin: "Lord *Acton*."
- 187 Last sentence of second paragraph should read: "And such declining prices will prove to *be* beneficent for everybody."
- 188 Second sentence of third paragraph should read: "Whenever a country is on *a* paper money standard conservatism is folly."
- 198 Last line of first paragraph should read: "economists (Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, *Mill*, etc.)."
- 259 Last line of article should read: "*the* Christian Reformed church have departed from that tradition."
- 320 Chodorov quotation is independent of "Correction" and should be separated from it.
- 377 Second sentence of first paragraph should read: "This is the most valuable of any publication in the field of money and credit."



# Progressive Calvinism

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## Why We Feel We Should Begin With "Morality"

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM addresses itself to religious people, especially ministers and educators interested in religion.

The business of such ministers and educators is the promotion (among other things) of ideas of "morality." (*Morality* is a particular viewpoint from which to appraise "human action." Regarding human action, see the December, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. The science of human action is praxeology.)

Readers who are ministers and Christian educators will not be primarily interested in the *science* of praxeology (the sciences usually called social sciences), but in the *morality* of praxeology.

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If then we would approach the praxeological sciences from the science viewpoint rather than the morality viewpoint, we would lack a good connecting link for arousing the interest of ministers and of Christian educators.

*Morality* is believed by some people to be contrary to the science of praxeology. Such people, if they must choose between a presumed Christian morality and praxeological science, choose "morality."

But before choosing, at least two things should be carefully investigated:

1. What is morality?
2. What is praxeological science?

We can begin by *assuming* a conflict between those two. We can immediately "take sides." You are for morality and we are for science, or vice versa.

But rather than to assume such a conflict, it is preferable to keep an open mind and to get information regarding those two questions — what is morality, and what is praxeology.

What if it should become obvious that there is no conflict between genuinely Christian morality and sound praxeology?

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM doubts that there is a conflict. If there nevertheless appears to be a conflict, then (1) an erroneous interpretation of Scripture is being used to teach an unsound morality, or (2) a pseudo-science of praxeology is being accepted; or (3) both. This may be a naive idea of a real harmony; but naive or not, we hold it.

From what we know of neo-Calvinism (1) some of its interpretations of Scripture are erroneous, and (2) it accepts a popular praxeology which is not sound praxeology and only popular economic and political mythology. Much of neo-Calvinism has lost its hold on Scripture and it does not know a sound praxeology.

We continue in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in our second year primarily with *morality* because it is of especial concern to the kind of religious people whom we are addressing.

## **"The Spirit Of The Lord Moved Him"**

Have you ever heard an agnostic use the term — "the spirit of the Lord moved him" or "came upon him" and mean the words seriously? We have.

That term can be used with a very simple meaning, namely, that you go all the way based on your premises (assumptions). That involves, of course, that you come to be known as an "extremist"; that means that you insist on others being held for the *full* consequences of their ideas; that means that you yourself are willing to go all the way — and take the full consequences — of your own premises. There are not many people of that stripe. There are not many people, in that sense, whom the spirit of the Lord has moved. In fact, in circles where Calvinism has become feeble, (which happens to be generally the case) you are considered to be "unbrotherly" and "unloving" if you are prepared to be thoroughly consistent and logical and uncompromising; or Biblical.

The great prophets of the Old Testament were such extremists, moved by the spirit of the Lord. They were "one idea" men. They were "fanatics." Most "nice" people backed away from them. Why not worship both Jehovah and Baal? Why not compromise in brotherly fashion between two opinions? Why butcher anybody at the brook Kidron at the foot of Mount Carmel?

The spirit of the Lord is often defined to be a brotherly love which consists of compromise. But a lucid and honest — and sounder — agnostic has a harsher definition of the idea, "the spirit of the Lord came upon him," namely, consistency and commensurate courage.

In our youth there was an older businessman from Omaha who (although he had no religion) frequently used a Biblical expression. He talked of going all the way from "Dan to Beersheba." Dan was at the northernmost tip of Palestine and Beersheba was at the southernmost boundary. The expression, therefore, meant belief and action which would go *all* the way.

Those who wish to accompany us in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM should be "Dan to Beersheba" men. We go all the way, and we are

fully aware that there is some very rough country between Dan and Beersheba. We have not yet come to the "hill country of Ephraim" or other rough terrain.

fn

## The Alternative Foundations Of Society

Some years ago we toyed with the idea of writing something for which we projected the title: "The Foundation Of Society." Nothing ever came of it; the cares and the turmoil of life and the trifling details of existence consumed our time. But we have never lost interest in the idea.

On what is society founded?

The societies of men have more than one foundation. No human society has ever existed which had some unalloyed single foundation. Societies are predominately organized on one principle or another. We list three distinct foundations for society, namely:

1. Cooperation
2. Coercion
3. Sacrifice

1. If a society is to be *Christian* it must, we believe, be founded primarily on COOPERATION, and not an coercion nor on sacrifice. There can be a controlled alloy of coercion — namely, that coercion which is designed to restrain overt evil. There can also be a modest alloy of sacrifice — that is, charity which may properly account for, say, 10 percent of society. But — and do not be shocked — by and large not much more. A society based on cooperation is a society that is voluntary and that is generally noncoercive. It is a *free* society. In such a society men are allowed to determine their own *values* and to pursue them and freely exchange goods and services to maximize their obtaining the good things of this life. The only coercion present is to restrain clearly defined evil; and the only charity present is designed to assist the stricken and unfortunate and the fallen; but there should be no charity to encourage the wastrel or the willfully ignorant or the improvident.

2. The second type of society is one which is generally founded on *coercion*. In this case coercion is not limited to restraint of evil, but is extended to compel the doing of what is declared to be good. What is declared to be good may or may not be good. That depends on people's *values*. What one man says is good and for the general good, another man may declare to be not good nor for the general good. But *somebody* decides; the strongest and craftiest. What is *good* in practical reality, therefore, is nothing more than the values and objectives and means of whoever has the *power* to have his way. Now if *A* coerces *B*, then *B* must make a sacrifice. *B* is compelled to sacrifice (surrender) his own values and objectives and means for *A*'s values, which are intended for the welfare of *A* himself or the welfare of *C* and *D* and *E*. *B* complies with *A*'s demands because he cannot successfully resist. A coercive society, then, must have in it, by definition, as much sacrifice as it has coercion. But it is an unwilling sacrifice. A society based primarily on coercion is known as an Interventionist society. The strong arm of the government generally *intervenes*, that is, it regulates and especially coerces. Such a society is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture.

3. Then there is a third society. It is the "ideal" society. It is a utopian society. We refer to the society founded on *sacrifice*. In such a society you love your neighbor so much. Indeed you show your love to God by sacrificing yourself for your neighbor! This sacrifice is, in theory, altogether different from the sacrifice extorted in an interventionist society. This is supposed to be a *voluntary* sacrifice. This society is basically different from a cooperative society and a coercive society, because this society is a wholly theoretical society. It does not exist anywhere for any length of time. (The cooperative and coercive societies do exist; they are at least real; they are *actual* societies.) The Hebrew-Christian religions have never taught that society should be founded on sacrifice — on 100 percent voluntary charity. Moses nor Christ ever in principle went beyond the tithe. Extend the tithe; become more and more pious about society; and finally you will have arrived at a theory that society is founded on sacrifice. The only trouble is that it is all false. It is impossible to have such a foundation and survive. In fact, the societies based on sacrifice have usually been described and advocated by men who hated the

Hebrew-Christian religions. They were not satisfied with the teachings of those religions. The teachings of those religions were not sanctimonious enough to suit them. Many churchmen who seem to believe that the strength of religion lies in exaggeration have adopted the idea that society is founded on sacrifice. This holds true of men who call themselves neo-Calvinists. Moses in Deuteronomy 13 talked of "dreamers of dreams." The term is by implication derogatory. All so-called Christians who talk of a society founded on sacrifice — a utopian society — are "dreamers of dreams" who do not speak for the Lord. The societies about which they talk are not able to survive. In Deuteronomy 18:21-22 Moses declares:

And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.

All advocates of utopias speak presumptuously. The churches, by the way, are full of them.

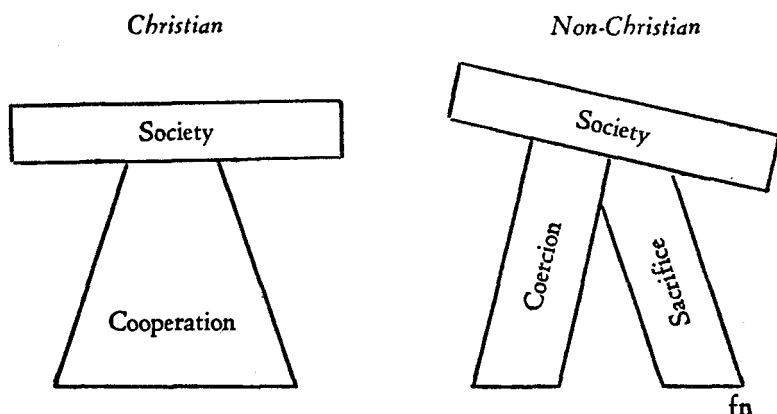
We intend to analyze from many viewpoints the deficiencies and evils of societies founded on coercion and sacrifice. We shall demonstrate that many societies allegedly founded on principles derived from the Christian religion are in reality a combination of coercion and sacrifice. The pious mask that presents its front to the world is sacrifice, "love" for the brother. Behind the hypocritical mask is the reality of coercion. One of the greatest menaces to Christianity is its obvious confusion and its hypocrisy and its sanctimoniousness on this subject.

We shall also demonstrate that societies founded on cooperation, and not on sacrifice, (and with only the coercion which is defensive — to restrain evil) are the only societies worthy of the name *Christian*. Strangely that kind of a society is accused in the most-pious neo-Calvinist circles of being non-Christian.

On the questions of the foundation of society we consider religion to be upside down with reality and upside down with morality.

We draw a simple diagram to illustrate our ideas:

1. A sound society is founded on *cooperation*;
2. A vicious, unstable, destructive society is founded on a combination of *coercion* and *sacrifice*. The two, coercion and sacrifice, always eventually go together, with sacrifice as the pretty facade for the combination.



## A First Look At Present Christian Education

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM\* is unreservedly committed to the cause of Christian education. The founders are the products of the Christian home and school in the United States or in the Netherlands. Never in our lives have we entertained the thought that this was a disadvantage; on the contrary, we are conscious that our Christian school education was decidedly a favor which we received of the Lord in a Covenantal way.

*\*Note to non-Christian Reformed readers on the question of who has the primary responsibility for the education of children—the parents, the church or the state.*

When the question is asked: *Who* is primarily responsible for the education of children, there are three stock answers: (1) the state; (2) the church; or (3) the parents. All three, state, church and parents, have in the history of men made large contributions to education. The great role of the church in the Middle Ages is a case in point. The great role of the public schools of the states in the United States is a case in point.

The really correct answer is, we believe, that the *parents* are primarily responsible for the education of their children. The responsibility of the parents outranks that of church and state (although the interests of the latter two are admitted to be very important). The consequence of the idea that the *parents* should

When the writer came to this country as a young man, he was pleased to notice Christian school activity and a consecrated willingness to contribute liberally to the cause. Parents and their friends contributed for the organizational work, for the buildings, for equipment, and they kept this up year after year. But the greatest contribution was made by consecrated men as the B. J. Benninks, the brothers Van Der Ark, the Fakkemas, the A. S. De Jongs and many more who devoted their lives to the cause. Their remuneration? Well, that was nothing about which to boast; never more than a subsistence wage; very often (by comparison with others) less than that.

But the writer is being carried away. I wanted to say I have been a patron of Christian schools in the U.S.A. since 1913. I assisted them for several years before I had my own family. I contributed as well as we deemed it possible when the children came and we sent them to the Christian school. One year we had seven children in the school, comprising about 12 percent of the total number of pupils. We are still grateful to all the people who helped make it possible for our children to have Christian school training. We are also thankful that we subsequently were able to help others to carry their financial burdens.

My heart was filled with admiration for our fathers in the U.S.A. and in the Netherlands who developed the Christian school

as parents be responsible for the education of their children entails the acceptance of the idea of *private* schools as distinguished from either state or church schools.

The procedure by which to establish *private* schools is for like-minded parents (who agree reasonably well on what kind of education and environment they wish their children to have) to organize a "school society" for such a purpose. This idea was the foundation for the founding of many colleges from Harvard University on. If the idea is sound for colleges, it is equally sound for grade and high schools. This general idea on schools is not at present widely accepted in America.

Probably nowhere has this independent school idea (that is, independence of the schools from the state) been worked over more thoroughly than in the Netherlands. There religious-minded folk (Catholics and Reformed) joined hands with "political liberals" (people who believed in limited government) to establish a school law which does not coerce anyone to send his child to a particular school. There were three individual motivations at work, or combinations of the three: (1) the Catholics wanted "freedom" for their church schools; (2) many of the Reformed wanted "freedom" for their parental schools; and (3) the genuine political liberals, many of whom may have been secular-minded, favored "freedom" because they had definite ideas regarding the impropriety of the



system, which has become our heritage. We brought something marvelous to the shores of the U.S.A. when we brought over our ideas about Christian schools organized by parents (to supplement the idea of the government financed and controlled public schools). It took much courage and much faith to get this started and to keep it up. But the Lord has blessed our efforts and we now have a growing private Christian school system. Further, we are being instrumental in arousing other American Christians to establish Christian day schools controlled by the parents. The National Union of Christian Schools has 177 schools (1954 annual), and Dr. Mark Fakkema, with his National Association of Christian Schools has now 127 schools (1954-55 Directory) in its constituency. Both organizations are adding to their number each year. It is indeed cause for great gratitude what has been accomplished by so small a group for the cause of Christian day schools. *Soli deo gloria.*

Is it time for us to rest on our laurels? Far be it from that. We have only begun. We mentioned above that we now have a growing system. But we did not say that the system's motors are well oiled and running smoothly. On the contrary, it is the opinion of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM that the motors of our Christian school system are not well oiled nor running well. We will point at some deficiencies and will suggest a remedy.

One deficiency is our manner of dealing with members of the teaching staff. We begin a race for the available teachers after the first of each January. Teachers being in great demand but in short supply have no trouble finding a job, but the school boards have trouble filling the vacancies. And by the time school opens again, several places have not been adequately filled or remain unfilled. What is the outlook for the future? It is going to get state dominating education.

Americans of Dutch extraction are prone to think that the ideal freedom of the school system in the Netherlands is a product of "Reformed" thinking. That is an error or an evidence of egotism; Catholics, Protestants and non-Christians all have made their essential contribution to the success of the idea.

But this foreign idea—*freedom* of the school system—is a great idea and we wish to promote it vigorously in America. The idea has probably never been adequately explained to Americans; the time is become more propitious for study and eventual acceptance of the basic idea. The United States, a land of freedom, took an inconsistent and nonlibertarian trend when it adopted a state school system modeled on that of nonlibertarian Prussia.

EDITOR'S NOTE

worse from year to year. Why? Because of an increasing under-supply of teachers. Why should a young man or woman go to school for 16 years to prepare himself (herself) for a teaching career? Teaching is not so remunerative as the job of a driver of a bread truck or a store clerk or a milker's job, all of which jobs require less scholastic training.

Young men, as a rule, cannot afford financially to go into the teaching profession. The problem is not quite so acute for the temporary young woman teacher. She will have to meet the problem of low salary only until she "finds her man," provided the "man" is not of the same teaching profession. If he is, she will probably continue to be the auxiliary meal ticket until the children arrive. From then on they are in for a low if not sub-standard of living until the husband throws in the towel, quits the profession, and gives the sale of Fuller brushes or patent medicines a whirl, or finds himself a place in the world of business.

Am I exaggerating? I am afraid not. Am I overlooking the fact of the "high calling" of the Christian educator as compared to the aforementioned jobs of truck driving, selling, milking? I am not. But why should we businessmen and holders of well-paid jobs expect the Christian school teacher to be satisfied with a subsistence wage because his profession is one of "high calling"? His daily need for adequate shelter and food is just as urgent for him as our daily needs are urgent for us. We are duty bound to make better provisions for our teachers for the present and the future, including a pension system that is more adequate than the present system.

From the foregoing you will note that we are concerned about the teacher problem. The phase of his adequate salary and pension has been mentioned. Two other phases need mention. First of all, the teacher's own training. We like to take for granted that at home, church and school an adequate foundation has been laid for the Christian world and life view of the teacher. Now comes the teacher's professional training. We frown upon normal training of less than four years of college. Less training does not give the teacher a chance to give the best that is in him (her) professionally, and the four-year course is more likely to settle his mind on a purposeful determination to devote his life work to the cause of education.

Where should we train our teachers? At the present, many are trained in Calvin College. That has for years been our main source of supply. A hopeful sign for the future teacher supply is the opening of the Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. This northwestern Iowa school will undoubtedly supply us with a number of teachers. It is probable that our people on the West Coast and those on the Atlantic Coast, as well as the people in Denver, will eventually follow the example of the Iowans.

Certainly our teachers should be trained in decidedly Christian colleges. We want them to be Covenant-conscious men and women committed to (in our specific case) Reformed views.

Every group of Christian parents will wish to guard against infiltration in the ranks of its teachers of people who do not subscribe to their own positive Christian tenets.

We shall now proceed to say a few words about organizational work and school management. But are we within bounds when we undertake to write about the organization of societies and schools and of proper management? The writer believes that individuals who have had extensive experience can lay claim to some measure of qualification. The writer has a background of two score years in business, besides many years of board membership in farm cooperatives, corporations and various societies. The editor of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* also has been in business for many years. Of a truth that kind of background does not give us the *brevêt* of an oracle on educational matters, but we have ideas with which we want to acquaint others. We do it at no cost to others (in our own paper), and we invite others to voice their ideas on various subjects to us in concise form, in order that our Reformed community can have the benefit of the independent thinking of our professional and business men on various subjects with which we plan to deal. Write to me; use the address of John Van Mouwerik, Route 2, Box 67, Redlands, California. (The readers should understand that we cannot place *lengthy* letters on various subjects in *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*. But we shall be happy to refer to and quote from letters from readers.)

In future issues of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* we hope to deal with problems of organizing Christian school societies, concise sets of by-laws, generally suitable for all school societies; the need

of separate high school societies; the need of bringing into practice the admonition of Luke 14:28-30; the need of the development of good standard practices in school management. Let everybody benefit by the experience of the pioneers. Let the less efficient be willing to learn from the more efficient. Let there be good guidance in the building of schools, the furnishing of schools and the purchase of books and other supplies. Let there be a school administration expert (not primarily a school teacher, but a man making a business approach), appointed to serve the whole Christian school movement on this score. We plan to write on these subjects in future issues. In case readers have interesting contributions to offer, we shall be glad to receive letters from them.

jvm

## Abraham Kuyper's Unscriptural And Unsound Ideas On Tariff Protection

### Calvinism Has Been Alleged To Be Pro-Capitalism

Calvinism as a set of ideas has historically been considered to be very favorable to the development of capitalism and prosperity; consider, for example, Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber\* goes so far as to attribute the flowering of capitalism to Calvinism. (Some day we may critically examine Weber's argument.)

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is unqualifiedly *capitalistic*, and in that sense we may be just another piece of evidence in support of Weber's theory. (By *capitalistic* we mean that we believe in a genuine *free market* economy; we are against the coercion of markets or of society generally (except to restrain the evils prohibited in the Second Table of the Law). But modern *neo-Calvinism* is wholly different from our type of *progressive Calvinism*. We *progressive Calvinists* are in the reputed Calvinist tradition, as described by Max Weber; *neo-Calvinism* (in our opinion) is not in any such *capitalistic* tradition; to the contrary, it is in the *interventionist* tradition which by its nature develops *coerced* and not *free* markets. (Interventionism eventually leads to socialism.\*\*)

\*Max Weber (1864-1920) was a famous German historian and sociologist.

\*\*See article with that title in *Planning for Freedom* by Ludwig von Mises, Libertarian Press, South Holland, Illinois, 1953, \$1.50.

To show how neo-Calvinism has a trend toward interventionism, toward illogical policies and toward bad morality we shall consider the attitude of Abraham Kuyper toward the very practical problem of Free Trade versus Tariff Protection.

### What Is Meant By Free Trade And By Protective Tariffs

There are two possible attitudes toward imports (goods shipped in from a foreign country) into your country — (1) you are willing to let such merchandise come in *freely* and without charging a penalty (which penalty is known as a tariff); or (2) you are desirous of prohibiting the import entirely or of handicapping it by making the merchandise subject to a tariff. (What is shipped in is charged a *duty*, that is, money has to be paid for the privilege of bringing in the merchandise.) The first is known as *Free Trade*; the second is known as a *Protective Tariff*.

A *protective tariff* is designed to "protect" certain domestic producers. The reason which people believe justifies a protective tariff is as follows: what is shipped into a country and consumed takes business away from someone within the country who otherwise would have manufactured and supplied equivalent merchandise. A government organized to "protect" its people is, on this reasoning, justified in trying to keep out foreign merchandise or at least to handicap bringing it in, in order presumably to safeguard the livelihood or prosperity of its own citizens.

A country's citizens consist largely of employers and employees and their dependents. A protective tariff may be established to "protect" the business of the employers and the employment of the employees. By "protecting" both employers and employees a state appears to be "protecting" all its citizens, because the "protective" (?) tariff "protects" against cheaper merchandise available from abroad. That is the argument.

From time immemorial men have favored protective tariffs, (or even stronger restrictions on trade such as importation only on the basis of licenses which are difficult or impossible to obtain). On *first* thought the argument for protective tariffs sounds reasonable and advantageous. But experience and careful reasoning can easily demonstrate that protective tariffs are harmful and that free trade is universally beneficial.

## The Great Classical Economists On Free Trade

The men whose arguments for free trade are famous — and conclusive — are the well-known English economists, who are known as the classical economists — Adam Smith, David Ricardo and their associates and successors.\* The economic argument for free trade is completely and demonstrably sound.

One hundred fifty years after Adam Smith, Dr. Abraham Kuyper took a position in favor of a protective tariff. Kuyper had become a politician and was for a while even premier of the Netherlands; however, he retained his position as an emeritus minister and theologian. Kuyper, when he went into politics, either (1) abandoned the principles of morality taught in Scripture, or (2) he did not understand the application of the simple rules of brotherly love to practical affairs. (Our opinion, of course, is that the latter describes the fact; Kuyper did not understand either a praxeologically sound nor Biblical social and economic order.)

We shall pursue the following natural course; we shall

1. Present the evidence that Abraham Kuyper was in favor of Protective Tariffs and against Free Trade, (without having a logical reason for his attitude);
2. State the *moral and scriptural* arguments for Free Trade and against Protective Tariffs; and
3. Summarize (very briefly) the *economic* argument for Free Trade and against Protective Tariffs, an argument which (as always when sound) agrees perfectly with Scripture.

### Abraham Kuyper On Protective Tariffs

Abraham Kuyper, who was born in 1837, was already an old man when in 1916 and 1917 he published his two-volume work,

\*We accept some but by no means all of the ideas of Smith, Ricardo and their associates and followers; on Free Trade these men were as right as rain. Ricardo on the question of international trade demonstrated conclusively in his great Law of Association that two nations, one poorer and higher cost in the production of *every* item, are nevertheless both benefited by free trade. For a clear summary of Ricardo's Law, see Ludwig von Mises' *Human Action*, pages 158-163.

*Anti-Revolutionaire Staatskunde* (Anti-Revolutionary Statecraft), (J. H. Kok, 1916 and 1917, Kampen, Netherlands). These two volumes of 728 and 654 pages are surely the product of Kuyper's most mature thought. We are reminded of the book by the famous wartime French premier, Georges Clemenceau. He summarized his sceptical thought when already very old in a book which he named *In the Evening of My Thought*. We are here dealing with the ideas of Abraham Kuyper on tariffs "in the evening of his thought."

We quote first from Volume I, pages 526 and 527, where Kuyper writes (in all cases our translation):

The fight about the tariff, which was so influential in the election of 1913 . . . was fought out almost entirely on the basis of the [selfish] *interests* of the respective groups. Unquestionably the tariff question is susceptible of scientific analysis, and the basic issue whether international trade should lead to free trade or tariff protection is an extremely important economic problem . . . The scientific study of this question can never lead to general conclusions,# which will indicate the right choice for a particular nation at a particular time. If we had international regulation, which would make a decision for all nations at once, then an absolute choice, provided it applied alike to all nations,# could be imagined. As such international regulation does not exist and cannot be expected, and as each nation must decide for itself, the decision cannot absolutely be determined by considerations of principle, but note should be taken of the trade practices of other nations.# This is the more valid for our Country [Netherlands], because excepting England, there is no other nation on the face of the earth which has Free Trade, and because the income derived from tariffs has steadily been increasing here. That being the situation, the fight about Free Trade and Tariff Protection, although scientifically discussed in academic lecture halls, was settled in the [Dutch] Election [of 1913] purely according to the [selfish] *interests* of the several groups in the citizenry. The opponents of tariff increases fright-

#All quotations marked (#) contain a grave error which we do not have the space to refute.

ened the inhabitants in all manner of ways about a resulting general price increase . . . In this manner many voters were alarmed about the effect [of a tariff increase] on their pocketbook . . .

In Volume II of his *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatskunde* Kuyper writes similarly (see page 427):

Our party [the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party] has since 1878 advocated tariff increases, and finally made it part of its election campaign. At first this did not injure us [the Anti-Revolutionary Party]. Even though our election campaign made tariff increases an important issue, we nevertheless won a significant victory in 1901. In 1905 also our fight for tariff increases was only incidentally attacked by the liberal parties. This continued in 1909, when we were again able to unseat the Liberal Party with our election campaign. It was only in the election of 1913 that the Liberal Party seized the tariff issue as its main weapon, and, assisted by foreign importers whose importations were threatened and who spent huge sums, was able to defeat us. We shall have to take this into account hereafter. There is danger that campaign activity against tariff increases, similar to those successful against us in 1913, will be repeated, if we again reveal our program in our election campaign. It therefore appears prudent, based on the experience in 1913, to alter our method; henceforth, not to increase tariffs suddenly, but by segments; and to begin immediately if we are again voted into power . . .

Then Kuyper goes on to write that the Netherlands still has such low tariffs that it has the honor (*sic!*) to be considered a Free Trade country. He adds it may some day be desirable to eliminate all tariffs. Then he writes [Volume II, pages 428 and 429]:

. . . It must be acknowledged that the collection of import duties has been practiced from ancient times and that it is presently the practice of practically all nations. We have a reasonable right to require, that whoever re-



sorts to our markets to sell goods should be obliged to assist in the support of the state, considering that the sale of his goods is accomplished under the protection of the whole state apparatus. #

Further, at the bottom of Volume II, page 429, Kuyper declares:

The local advocates of Free Trade are under the definite obligation to demonstrate on what grounds of principle # the Netherlands is required to deviate from the practice [of Tariff Protection] which practice is followed nearly everywhere in the world.

Finally, Kuyper again treats the tariff problem under the caption of "Unemployment" on page 513 of Volume II. He writes:

The worst evil in the terrain of labor is unemployment; can the government also be held accountable for this evil? Undoubtedly, in part. # Excessive enthusiasm for Free Trade and for free movement of population can deprive men of work who would otherwise have it in abundance. # Free Trade can have as a consequence that many items are fabricated abroad so that there is no work to be done here. This can be observed in its simplest form in the case of lumber. If unsawed logs are imported, then the wages of sawing can be earned here. If, however, lumber arrives sawed, then the wages for sawing are lost here. The import from Germany, France and England is not matched by our export to those countries, at least not in respect to hand labor . . .

### **The Apparent Brotherly Anxiety Of Abraham Kuyper**

The anxiety of Kuyper about Dutch sawmill employes (who possessed the right to vote) was very natural and seemed to manifest a warm brotherly love for these men. The problem of these sawmill workers was that they were becoming unemployed or were threatened with unemployment. The reason for that was that there were various foreign sawmill employes beyond the Dutch border, who were also sawing wood. Either because those foreign

# All quotations marked (#) contain a grave error which we do not have the space to refute.

workers had better wood to cut, or worked harder, or were willing to work for less, more foreign lumber was being imported into the Netherlands and was being sold for less money than Dutch lumber. Neither a good politician nor a brotherly Calvinist could be indifferent to the assumed eventual plight of the Dutch sawmill employes! A sound political — and moral — and Calvinist program was certainly needed.

Kuyper revealed his solution of this political, economic and moral problem by indicating that the importation of foreign lumber should be handicapped and restricted by the imposition of a burdensome duty. To make the analysis which follows more readable we shall formulate Kuyper's general idea as a simple specific case of importing finished (sawed) lumber versus importing rough logs to be sawed in the Netherlands.\* (Prices and all specific details in what follows are not factual but solely for purposes of simplifying the problem for readers.)

If Dutch lumber had a market price of \$10 per 1,000 board feet and foreign lumber of \$9, then an import duty of \$4 would require that foreign lumber bring a price in the Netherlands of \$9 plus \$4 or \$13, which is three dollars more than the price of

\*We are indeed not undertaking to describe recent economic *history*, nor is the illustration we are using closely related to the specific features of the actual Dutch lumber trade. The basic facts are, however, as we have quoted them, namely, that Kuyper and his Anti-Revolutionary Party were systematically in favor of tariff protection and used the idea with mixed success in their campaigning. Rather than talk about free trade and tariffs in the abstract we could write more simply by using a concrete illustration. Rather than writing about vague people who favor protection, or the Republican party which favors protection, it was to our purpose to write about a *Calvinist* politician who certainly was in favor of a protective tariff and who in his old age wrote opportunistically about it. We are perfectly aware of *military* reasons for protective tariffs, and we are equally informed on tariffs to resist cartel dumping. But those were *not* the kind of problems that Abraham Kuyper was dealing with. He was dealing with the economic and the political, and not the military and monopolistic phases of international trade. In the compass of one small article we cannot cover all the complexities of international trade. We are here writing exactly and only to the specific issue to which Abraham Kuyper addressed himself. We are not declaring that Kuyper accepted Free Trade *in principle* or Tariff Protection. He backed away from that, as our quotations show; apparently he did not even vaguely understand international trade. But in regard to *actual practice* there can be no doubt about his position; he was *for* tariff protection; for exactly what motivations we do not know, but we assume his motivations were political.

Dutch lumber. On that basis no more foreign lumber would be imported unless the foreign sawmill workers and employers would drop their price at the Dutch border to \$6 (computed by using the Dutch lumber price of \$10 less the import duty of \$4, or \$6), which appears improbable if not impossible. (To reduce the return of foreigners on lumber from \$9 to \$6, or 33 1/3 percent would in all probability have put foreigners out of the lumber business in the Netherlands. That, of course, is exactly what Kuyper had in mind — the "protection" of Dutch sawmill workers by keeping out lumber sawn by foreign sawmill employes. Foreigners do not vote in Dutch elections.)

### The Unscriptural Morality Of Abraham Kuyper

There is, we are sure, some very bad morality in the Protective Tariff program of Abraham Kuyper.

1. In the first place, Kuyper did not recoil from hurting other people in the Netherlands for the benefit of the sawmill employes. If an import duty was imposed, then the consumers of lumber in the Netherlands would have to pay \$10 for Dutch lumber whereas before they had had to pay only \$9 for foreign lumber. From this viewpoint there was no gain to be obtained by Dutch sawmill employes *except at the expense of other Dutchmen*, namely the consumers. What virtuous *morality* is there in helping one man at the expense of another. Is this good Calvinist brotherly love? Is this the Christian religion? Is this Anti-Revolutionary *statesmanship*?

Kuyper was very much aware of this fact. He had lamented in one of the quotations (just given) that the Liberal Party had "frightened the inhabitants in all manner of ways about a *resulting general price increase*." This obviously refers to the fact that *A* and *B* are not benefited *collectively* if *A* gains only at the expense of *B*. The one gains; the other loses. There is no total gain. Kuyper, as many politicians, was faced with the problem of helping one man *at the expense of another*, in this case the sawmill workers at the expense of Dutch consumers. Any move to help *A* at the expense of *B*, and the use of coercion (by a law) to do that, is a plain violation of Mosaic-Christian morality. So

much for the first uncovering of presumed brotherly love and statecraft; Peter is being robbed to pay Paul.

2. In the second place, the import duty had the effect of hurting foreign sawmill employes. That was inevitable, if the Dutch sawmill employes were to be helped. Van Camp lives on the Dutch side of the border. Gustafson lives on the foreign side of the border. Both are sawmill employes, one in the Netherlands and the other in Sweden. Why not let them saw wood as they freely wish and sell the wood? But Kuyper is not satisfied with that. As a politician Kuyper wishes to hang a millstone (say of \$4 a 1,000 board feet) around the neck of Gustafson so that he cannot stay in the sawmill business. Why does Kuyper wish to hang that millstone around Gustafson's neck? For one reason only; to give the work to Van Camp (at the cost of \$1 a 1,000 board feet higher to the Dutch consumer). And why does he wish to do that? Just because Van Camp lives on the Dutch side of the border and votes, and Gustafson on the foreign side of the border and does not vote. The law of brotherly love, stated in Scripture, is it seems not a universal law for Kuyper but only a *national* law. It is for Kuyper's constituents. In plain language, Kuyper has scales for morality with two sets of weights; one set of weights for Dutchmen; another set of weights for Swedes (foreigners). Somewhere in Scripture there is a very unfavorable comment on the morality of different sets of weights. (Deut. 25: 13-16; Proverbs 20: 10 and 23.)

Last summer we were riding a plane from Pennsylvania to Chicago. A (religious) cleric took the seat next to us and interrupted our reading to talk. In the course of conversation he stated *his* principle, namely, your neighbor is *whoever is near you*; the farther away he is, the less he is your neighbor. For Kuyper that rule also held, except it was not so gradual as this youngish cleric was stating it. For Kuyper all you had to do was to cross a political border, and in the matter we have been discussing a man was by being one step farther away no longer a neighbor; just a foreigner.

We believe Scripture teaches something wholly contrary and very plainly, namely, that ALL men are our neighbors. That teaching was taught in what is probably the most famous parable in the world. Christ was the speaker. He had been asked a trick

question — "Who is my neighbor." The questioner undoubtedly held the same position as Kuyper was unconsciously applying, namely, not everybody is my neighbor. For the lawyer in ancient Palestine a Samaritan was not considered a neighbor; for a politician in the Netherlands a foreign sawmill employe was not considered a neighbor. But Christ spoke his parable: It is brief and tells a very plain story (Luke 10:25-38):

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he 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 said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

If the parable tells anything, it tells us that ALL men are our neighbors. For a Dutch politician the existence of a political

border apparently removes men from the list of "brothers." If this is neo-Calvinism, we are not sympathetic to it. An obvious defect in Kuyper's religion (pervasive in fact in all his practical thought) was that in his ideas on the tariff there was as much indifference for the foreign worker as "love" for the domestic worker. Is that brotherly love according to Scripture?

3. There is on this subject a third *moral* objection to the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary statecraft of Kuyper. He was clearly and deliberately violating the Decalogue. One law in the Decalogue is the sixth, which reads, thou shalt not kill. Obviously, that is a simplified expression of thou shalt not coerce (killing being only the most dramatic form of coercion). The New Testament does not repeal this law. In the famous Sermon on the Mount Christ declares he has come to fulfill the law, and that not "one jot or tittle" of the law shall ever be annulled. Christ puts the famous law of Moses against coercion in a positive form. Christ declared: Blessed are the MEEK for they shall inherit the earth.

*Meekness* may be considered to be patience under abuse and injustice. That is an unusual form of meekness. Are those patient people who take abuse submissively likely to "inherit the earth" (note that Christ did not say "inherit heaven")? There is no logic in believing that taking abuse will result in your inheriting the earth. But what must then here be meant by the term, *meek*? It must mean that coercion is not used, is abjured, is hated, and that instead all relations with the neighbor are without the employment of coercion, duress, force, threat, violence.

All kinds of coercion fall into either of two classes; they are legal coercions or they are illegal coercions. Coercion is just as much coercion when legalized by some unwarranted law as when illegal. *Coercion* is not converted to *meekness* by passing a law. Coercion is coercion whether protected by an evil law or whether condemned by a good law.

Kuyper had no hesitancy to urge the passage of a Protective Tariff law involving coercion. The coercion was the handicapping of the movement of foreign lumber to Dutch consumers at our illustrative price of \$9 a 1,000 board feet. That original movement was a *voluntary* one by both parties — which is a characteristic

that is absolutely essential if the requirement of *meekness* is to be met.

Let us define *meekness* versus *coercion* in business terms. *Meekness* means that coercion is not resorted to; if coercion is not resorted to, you let the party opposite you pursue his wishes; he does the same thing toward you. The resulting deal is voluntary; it complies with the requirement that you should be meek and that he should be meek. Voluntary deals are never made unless *both* parties gain (or at least sincerely believe that they gain). You would rather have the money which I have than the thing you have. I would rather have the thing which you have than the money I have. We trade. We *both* are convinced we are better off (and almost always we both are).

There are two hallucinations about buying and selling in voluntary business. One is that a trade is made only when the goods which are exchanged are of *equal* value. That was Aristotle's mistaken notion. The other hallucination is that one party gains *at the expense of the other*; a trade according to this idea inevitably involves a loss for one and a gain for the other. (This was Kuyper's nonsensical economics in this instance.) It is an absurd interpretation; the only instances in which this situation prevails are when there is fraud or folly. Fraud is forbidden by the Commandments and systematic folly results in a person being legally declared incompetent.

The really prevailing situation on voluntary exchanges is that *both* parties are *benefited*. That is an altogether different idea from either (1) equality to both or (2) loss to one. Trade generally means not loss to one, nor equality to both, but gain to both.

And this voluntary, free kind of trading — this *meek* trading — Kuyper was intent on frustrating. His means was to appeal to the personal interests of Dutchmen *against foreigners*. That would he maybe hoped, get him elected. And once elected he would pay the voters off by "passing a law," that is, frustrating free trading, weighting the scales against one of the traders (the man farthest away who had no voting rights in the Netherlands).

A law which hampers free trade is a coercive law. It violates Christ's command for meekness. It violates the Sixth Commandment in the Decalogue.

Curiously, Christ declared: Blessed are the meek for *they shall inherit the earth*. For us that has a very obvious meaning, namely, meekness (as defined according to Scripture) will result in prosperity. People (1) who avoid violence; (2) who produce what they can most economically produce (as the Swedes could at that time apparently saw lumber cheaper than the Dutch); (3) who then exchange without coercion their low-cost product for low-cost products produced by others — such people will inevitably be prosperous — they will “inherit the earth.” But that situation the leading neo-Calvinist of the Netherlands and his party wished to frustrate. And so they promoted Protective Tariffs.

In short, the ideas of Kuyper on tariffs against (lumber) imports violated the law of God flagrantly. There is nothing to be said, if morality is based on the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures, in favor of Kuyper’s interventionist policy of keeping out foreign lumber.

### The Unsound Economics Of Abraham Kuyper

But the theologian had turned politician. Granted that it is obvious from Scripture that Kuyper’s “morality” was not a scriptural morality, maybe as an economic politician he was very wise. Maybe the “science of human action”<sup>\*</sup> contradicts the morality of Scripture. Maybe when Kuyper moved from the arena of theology and morality to the arena of politics and economics — maybe he then had a sound praxeological<sup>\*</sup> reason to impose a tariff on foreign lumber.

But that is entirely fallacious. The most elementary knowledge of economics would have told Kuyper that there was in the final accounting only a loss possible to Netherlands from his course. The abandonment of morality in this case also involved the abandonment of genuine benefits and prosperity. The *immoral* course Kuyper followed was equally an *unprofitable* course. This of course is a necessary relationship, if “God is not mocked.” (It is also a necessary relationship if PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is correct

<sup>\*</sup>See December, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pp. 341 ff.



in its Declaration Five\* which says that prosperity follows obedience to the Law of God.)

1. In the first place, Kuyper's course made Dutch consumers of lumber poorer. Why should any politician want to keep out low-priced foreign merchandise — unless he just is not sensible? How could \$9 foreign lumber be anything other than a blessing to Dutch consumers, when the alternative was paying \$10 for Dutch lumber? The foreign lumber was \$1 *cheaper*; clearly that was an advantage. In fact, the cheaper imports are — the more you get for your money — the better. Say that foreign lumber could be sold for as little as \$7; would not that be a great blessing to Netherland's consumers? Then why harm people by increasing the price?

The argument for such free trade is so simple and conclusive that no sensible person can dispute it. Cheapness of imports is a blessing. Anyone still disposed to argue against cheapness of imports, and in favor of import duties in order to make the imports dear, is fitly answered if their case against cheap imports is carried to its final conclusion. Suppose the Swedes were not merely willing and able to sell their lumber at \$9; but at \$5; or at \$2; or at 50 cents; or (to complete the case) *give* the lumber to the Dutch *free*. To get something you want for *nothing* is so good nobody can argue against it. Every argument against *low-costing* foreign merchandise in favor of high-costing domestic merchandise is therefore nonsensical. A lower cost is indeed not so good as no cost at all; but if it is not sensible to dispute against a gift neither is it sensible to dispute against cheapness. The matter is merely a question of degree.

2. But, a reader may say, *that* is not the whole story. What about those poor Dutch sawmill workers who will lose their livelihood? *That* was Kuyper's pretended concern; and *that* has not been answered yet. Let us consider this argument.

\*The Declaration 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." See comments on this Declaration on pp. 12-13, 149-152 and 243-247 in the 1955 issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

What will happen when you look at the situation *as a whole*, in the large, and from the long view (which long view is also always the moral view)? This:

It is impossible in a *free market* economy that Dutch sawmill employes would be permanently thrown out of work. Oh, yes, they would be thrown out of work *as sawmill employes*, but they would surely get new work which would (all other things being equal) *give them better incomes than they previously had* as sawmill employes. This new work would *have* to be given to them in a free market economy. It is *inevitable* that it would be given to them. It is as sure as death. Let us follow the reasoning carefully.

The foreigners in this Kuyper lumber case were not fools. They would not ship lumber to Holland and get nothing back! They certainly wanted — demanded — something in return. They wanted to get back something which they wanted more than what they were shipping away. They would not ship lumber into Holland *without Holland shipping the equivalent to Sweden*.

But what if the Swedes wanted to ship *more* cheaper lumber than before; the answer is that then they would want *more* Dutch goods for themselves than before. If the Swedes would want more, then the Dutch would have to produce more. Who would produce that greater quantity of product? Who else than the displaced sawmill employes?

The only circumstance under which the Dutch sawmill employes will be permanently out of work is if the Swedes ship to Holland and want nothing back. But that would be idiocy on the part of the Swedes. That would be making a GIFT to the Dutch of everything shipped to them! Who would be willing to make such free gifts!

It is inevitable that trade must go both ways in goods or services (or *temporarily* in gold or foreign exchange). All foreign trade — as all domestic trade — is a TWO-WAY street. It *cannot* be otherwise.

But, a stubborn reasoner may say, granted all that, the Dutch will ship out merchandise on which the Dutch sawmill workers will not get the equivalent of their \$10 for lumber. In a *free mar-*

ket that is almost impossible. The detailed answer will depend on detailed prices and cost figures involving many products exchanged between Sweden and Holland, but one thing is certain, *in total the Dutch people will be ahead*. Holland will, it is absolutely certain, be benefited by this cheap Swedish lumber, and Sweden will be benefited by what she gets in return from the Netherlands. The international division of labor (which is cooperation\*) will benefit people as much as domestic division of labor does.

What will Holland ship to Sweden in exchange for Swedish lumber? Again, this answer requires detailed price and cost data, but this much can be said with assurance: what is shipped to Sweden will relatively be more profitable to Hollanders than log sawing. Holland will not be able to ship to Sweden anything except items on which Dutch costs and price ratios are better relatively than they are on sawmilling.

Sweden must get something back for its lumber; she must get something back which is better for her than the lumber she is shipping out; otherwise she would keep the lumber: and, of course, the Dutch will ship to Sweden only something on which they do better than by buying their own \$10 lumber. Holland will, therefore, ship out something on which it makes more money than on its own lumber. That is the condition necessary for all *voluntary* trade. (This is all related to the famous economic idea of the "division of labor," and exchange, and consequently COOPERATION, the binding cement of society; but to pursue this idea would be a digression from our present argument.)

Readers may be troubled at this point by what Kuyper wrote (as quoted earlier), namely:

If, however, lumber arrives sawed, then the wages for sawing are lost here. *The import from Germany . . . is not matched by our export to [her] at least not in respect to hand labor . . .*

Here Kuyper embraces the great fallacy that international trade does not balance out — that you can import more than you export. It is true he refers only to Germany (and England and France —

\*See earlier article in this issue entitled, "The Alternative Foundations of Society."

not quoted by us for simplicity's sake) but the idea is there nevertheless. He partially backtracks and corrects himself by saying, "at least not in respect to hand labor" which statement involves the same fallacy in a slightly different form; (we do not have the space now to consider this detail). The silliest thing for foreigners (against whom Kuyper is arguing) to do would be to ship to the Netherlands more goods than the Netherlands shipped to them (or elsewhere in multilateral trade) in return.

To what conclusions have we come:

1. Foreigners are benefited by sending Holland low-priced \$9 lumber. If they were not benefited they would not want to ship lumber to Holland.
2. The Dutch are benefited by the low-priced lumber they get.
3. Foreigners will insist on getting \$9 worth of Dutch goods back for every 1,000 board feet of wood sent to Holland.
4. The displaced Dutch sawmill employes can get and will get, directly or indirectly the work required to make that additional merchandise to be sent to Sweden in exchange for lumber.
5. *What* the Swedes take in exchange for lumber will be something the Dutch are willing to sell and ship out, because the price the Swedes are ready to pay makes it a good deal for the Dutch. Otherwise, neither lumber would come in nor its equivalent go out.
6. The whole transaction — if voluntary, and not coerced, and therefore moral, too — will be performed only because all parties are convinced that they benefit, which they do (unless there is a temporary miscalculation, but that cannot last long).

### The Founding Fathers Of The United States Versus Abraham Kuyper

Trade between Illinois and California exists *only* because the people in the two states benefit from it. There is no customs bor-

der between Illinois and California. Thank God the Founding Fathers were wiser and more moral and more scriptural than Abraham Kuyper and prohibited it in the Constitution. They forbade the establishment of custom barriers or tariffs between states. They included all of the United States\* in their "brotherhood." But Kuyper's brotherly sympathies were only good for one-fifth the size of Illinois. (Holland has about 12,000 square miles compared to about 60,000 square miles in Illinois). Outside those 12,000 square miles, men were not Kuyper's "brothers" and so he favored a law which violated the law of brotherly love. That same customs law which he wanted also violated good economics. That customs law of Kuyper against Swedish lumber hurt Holland and impoverished both Holland and Sweden.

God is not mocked. Violate morality and you violate sound economics.

Neither the morality of Kuyper nor the economics of Kuyper is defensible.

fn

## **An Old Farmer Who Was A Better Observer Than Abraham Kuyper (An Article In Defense Of New Hats For Women)**

The following is a reprint of an advertisement which is appearing in the daily papers for the account of the great advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson Company.

Benjamin Franklin who was an advocate of thrift (as we also are, in opposition to all Keynesian economists) makes two interesting points.

1. Austere living reduces the incentives to produce. The hope of luxury has merit. The hope of more pleasant living is a great and valuable incentive to work. (To be busy with work keeps many a man out of grave mischief, which is *one* reason why women prefer hard-working husbands. Let a husband work hard to pro-

\*The *international* protectionist policies of the United States are as indefensible as the policies of Abraham Kuyper.

vide his wife with luxuries. He cannot be doing two things at the same time.)

2. You cannot ship a lot of Philadelphia-made hats to Southern New Jersey unless Southern New Jersey gets busy and sends something back to Philadelphia.

If you will read the following interesting little story, you will stop being morose about all the hats your wife buys.

The difference between Abraham Kuyper and the Cape May farmer back in the eighteenth century is that Kuyper\* imagined foreign business *could* be a one-way street, and this farmer *knew* it did not ever work out that way. Goods or service *must* eventually flow both ways.

Observation is more reliable than theoretic (and mistaken) logic.

We are sceptical about any religion which is censorious about good living. See what Solomon says about a good wife in Proverbs 31:10-31 — and consider her as an owner of "carpets of tapestry" and "fine linen and purple," and with a household "clothed with scarlet." Franklin wrote:

I Have Not Yet, Indeed,  
Thought Of A Remedy For Luxury . . .

I am not sure that in a great state it is *capable of a remedy*; nor that the evil is in itself always so great as it is represented.

Suppose we include in the definition of luxury all *unnecessary expense*, and then let us consider whether laws to prevent such expense are possible to be executed in a great country, and whether, if they could be executed, our people generally would be happier, *or even richer*.

Is not the hope of being one day able to purchase and enjoy luxuries, a great spur to labour and industry?

May not luxury, therefore, produce more than it consumes, if, without such a spur, people could be, as

\*See preceding article.

they are naturally enough inclined to be, lazy and indolent? *To this purpose I remember a circumstance.*

The skipper of a shallop,\* employed between Cape May\*\* and Philadelphia, had done us some small service, for which he refused to be paid. My wife, understanding that he had a daughter, sent her a present of a new-fashioned cap.

*Three years after*, this skipper being at my house with an old farmer of Cape May, his passenger, he mentioned the cap, and how much his daughter had been pleased with it. "But (said he) it proved a dear cap to our congregation."

"How so?"

"When my daughter appeared with it at meeting, it was so much admired, that all the girls resolved to get such caps from Philadelphia, and my wife and I computed that the whole could not have cost *less than a hundred pounds.*"

"True, (said the farmer) but you do not tell all the story. I think the cap nevertheless an advantage to us; for it was the first thing that put our girls upon knitting worsted mittens for sale at Philadelphia, that they might have wherewithal to buy caps and ribbons there; *and you know that the industry has continued*, and is likely to continue and increase to a much greater value, and answer better purposes."

Upon the whole, I was more reconciled to this little piece of luxury, since not only the girls were made happier by having fine caps, but the Philadelphians by the supply of warm mittens.

We hope readers will understand the *real* point we are trying to make; when you buy, you must eventually also sell; if you import, you must eventually export. Trade is always a *two-way* street.

fn

\*An open boat; also a two-masted fishing boat.

\*\*A cape at the southern tip of New Jersey.

## Notice To Subscribers

The 1955 issues have been sent to the bindery. Immediately upon receipt of the bound volumes, copies will be sent to those who have placed orders. Bound copies will be sent to subscribers in 1955 *who return their individual copies* or who have reasons for making special arrangements. Otherwise copies will be mailed to them on receipt of \$1.00.

*New subscribers* (in 1956) can get a 1955 bound copy for \$2.00 (\$1.00 for students). Subscribers are not accepted for 1956 only, without the would-be subscriber having a 1955 bound copy. The reason is that there will be many references in 1956 to subjects covered in 1955, and readers will be confused unless they know the contents of the 1955 issues, or have access to them.

Subscribers in 1955 who have not renewed their subscription have been kept on the January, 1956, mailing list because they perchance have merely neglected renewal. The mailing list will be revised for the February issue. Service will be interrupted unless subscriptions are received before the February issues are published.

See enclosed subscription envelope for convenience in (1) renewing your subscription and/or (2) ordering a bound volume for 1955.

The subscription rate for 1956 is \$2.00 for the *calendar* year 1956 (\$1.00 for students). Subscriptions are not begun or ended for any other interval than the period January through December. This arrangement is followed in order to reduce labor connected with the subscription list.

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VOLUME II

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## A Reader's Reaction And Our Reply

When someone plays back a tape recorder all voices are identifiable and sound natural except your own; apparently, a man does not hear his own voice as others hear it. Similarly, others view a man on practically all matters differently from his own view of himself. It is frequently shocking to find out how exactly opposite someone regards what you are doing than you regard it yourself.

We in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM have been holding the opinion that we are *progressive*; but some readers now say we are *reactionary*. We consider ourselves extremely unworldly and idealistic in our ethical ideas, but others say that we are *materialistic*.

What are we, progressive or reactionary? idealistic or materialistic?

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We have received a letter which set us to thinking. What must these "reactionary and materialistic" ideas be which we are accused of having? And so we turned the pages of the 1955 issues and listed the major subjects about which we have written. It was personally profitable for us to do so. It gave us a perspective of the first year of our publication.

We quote the important parts of the letter we received, and we briefly list the ideas we have culled from our 1955 issues. Whether those ideas are progressive or reactionary, idealistic or materialistic is for the reader to decide. (It is not possible to do more here than merely outline what we have written.)

Progressive Calvinism League:

May I direct this letter to the snug little triumverate<sup>a</sup> . . . who seem to comprise the staff of the magazine, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

It was with mild interest that I read the 1955 issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. None of the articles were<sup>b</sup> really provocative — only pathetic examples of crass eclectic and syncretic attempts to apologize for material<sup>c</sup> and reactionary ideas. Seldom does one read such presumptive, pseudo-erudite and sophomoric drivel which claims for itself such span and depth.

\* \* \*

[Signature]

a-Should be *triumvirate*.

b-Should be *was*.

c-Should be *materialistic*.

We summarize seven principal ideas which must be the "material and reactionary ideas" of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to which the writer of the foregoing refers.

**God As A  
Moral Governor**

1. Firstly, there is that idea (1) that God *as a rule* rewards the good and punishes the evil in this life. If that is a materialistic idea, then we admit the correctness of the charge. The alternative ideas are (2) that God *as a rule* rewards the evil and punishes the good in this life; (3) that God is not the

*moral* governor of the universe, and that He is indifferent or inactive in promoting the good and resisting the evil; or (4) that He is unable to help the good or punish the evil. Which of these four alternatives (that God is moral, immoral, amoral or powerless) do so-called Christians wish to accept? There are no other alternatives.\* It is not reasonable to refuse to take a position in regard to the four possibilities we have mentioned. Regardless of the choices of others, we choose proposition number one—God rewards the good and punishes the evil, that is, He is moral. If the reader believes Scripture, let him read Deuteronomy 28 and see what Moses declares. In regard to this doctrine (that God rewards the good and punishes the evil) we may not be good neo-Calvinists but we are, we are very sure, in agreement with Moses. (Of course, we are not declaring absolute uniformity for the rule; we are only declaring that the proposition which we accept is the *rule*. The exceptions need explanation, in further detail sometime.) This Mosaic doctrine makes us *cheerful* Christians. We do not view the Christian religion as a melancholy and lost piece of business. Maybe the doctrine that God does not in this life reward the good and punish the evil (that is, that He is not moral now) is associated in some obscure way with a doctrine of Common Grace, which is held in varying forms in the Christian Reformed Church.

All this is, we suppose, very materialistic in the estimation of our critic.

### Competition Between Christianity And Socialism In Regard To Sanctimony

2. Secondly, we are steadily attacking *sanctimony* and "piosity." To attack sanctimony is, we suppose, also a materialistic idea. Whoever attacks an idea of brotherly love which goes beyond what Scripture requires is not spiritual enough nor idealistic enough. We have just finished reading a book by a famous philosopher in one of the great universities of the land which attacks Christianity as being an evil. And how can his charges be summarized? very briefly: the Christian religion teaches practical doctrines which are nonsensical and hypocritical; it talks piously but that piousness is foolish or insincere. There is enough truth

\*Except that there is no God at all.

in that grievous charge so that we should consider re-examining ourselves soberly as Christians and Calvinists and remove any grounds for just criticism. It is our belief that part of the difficulty of the church in this matter is that it has let itself be drawn into a trap by socialism-communism. Socialism-communism *does* have a sanctimonious, pious law of brotherly love, namely, From each according to his ability to each according to his need. The Christian law of love is much less extensive; it is merely, Love thy neighbor *as thyself*. To love him no more than you love yourself may be materialistic, unidealistic, non-Christian and non-Calvinist. Nevertheless, we will hold to the materialistic law of love in Scripture, Love thy neighbor *as thyself*. No more. No less.

### Doubt About Divine Right Of Every Government

3. Thirdly, we hold an idea which our critic would probably call a reactionary idea, namely, the idea that there is no such thing as the divine right of kings, nor the divine right of legislatures, nor the divine right of *any* government in the sense of a pipe line of power *directly* from God. We do not believe that a government has powers beyond enforcing the Second Table of the Decalogue and if it has no more proper power than that, then it does not need a special pipe line. Throughout all ages governments have made excessive claims for themselves. It is the making of just such excessive claims that is itself reactionary. We are, we admit, in the tradition of the Founding Fathers of the United States; they were determined to have a *limited* government. That is 150 years ago. We are reacting back to those ideas. In that sense we are reactionary. But we are not reacting back to practically all of the rest of the ancient history of mankind from the earliest time onward. Nearly all of that history was a sad story of governments making great claims for themselves — that they were directly from God or from the gods. It is true that individuals in the specific Calvinist group to which we belong, and also that individuals in associated Calvinist groups, believe *all* government to have a "divine origin" and *therefore* to be worthy of obedience and cooperation. Consider the recent attitude of some pious Dutch Calvinists who argued that Calvinism required that all Netherlanders cooperate with Hitler! Maybe *that* was progressive and not reactionary!

## **Cooperation With Evil**

4. Fourthly, we hold another idea which in the judgment of our critic may also possibly be reactionary; we are against cooperation with communism. There are "neo-orthodox" churchmen in the world who are tolerant of the idea of cooperation with communism. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is not in favor of cooperating in any way with the greatest butchers in the history of mankind — men who are false, cruel, violent. We plead guilty to that very reactionary idea. We think we are simply following Scripture, which warns against cooperation with evil men.

## **Coercion Versus Meekness**

5. Fifthly, we are against coercion of all<sup>a</sup> kinds, including coercion by labor unions. The latter is, we admit, a very reactionary idea, in the estimation of many people. We realize that some people believe that a union may properly promote its cause (1) by violence on the picket line, and (2) by coercing a timid employer not to keep on the payroll anyone who refuses to join the union and obey the dictates of the union leaders. We consider *all* such coercion evil. We are opposed to union coercion, church coercion, business coercion — all<sup>a</sup> coercion. The churches dare not coerce people into membership on the ground that the church does them some good; yet on the ground that the union does the worker some good, many churches approve of unions coercing workers to become members. *We* have a single rule of morality, namely, what is not valid nor wise for a church, is not valid nor wise for a union. If opposition to all<sup>a</sup> coercion is reactionary, then we are reactionary. We hold: "Blessed are the meek [those who do not employ any coercion] for they shall inherit the earth."

## **True Individualism**

6. Sixthly, we hold to ideas known as Individualism. The term, individualism, in the history of thought has unfortunately come to cover two contrary ideas, which can be designated as (1) French<sup>b</sup> individualism and (2) English and American<sup>c</sup> individualism. The French individualism is associated with the name of

<sup>a</sup>Except the coercion to enforce the Second Table of the Law.

<sup>b</sup>Or Rationalistic.

<sup>c</sup>Or Antirationalistic.

Rousseau and with the French Revolution. It was a *false* individualism. Various Dutch Calvinists have vigorously opposed that *French* individualism, and properly so. But *English* individualism was always basically irreconcilable with French individualism. There are great statesmen and economists and philosophers in the history of English individualism — Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Lord Acton. The greatest flowering of English individualism was the founding of the United States. And what do Dutch thinkers do? They fail to discriminate between (1) French individualism and (2) English and American individualism and by so doing throw a cloud of suspicion over the character of the government of the United States. But we have no such doubt; we consider this country's Founding Fathers to have adhered closer to the *principles* of the Christian religion than any government that any European country has had. We have, naturally, no patience with the confusion which consists in considering the individualism of Rousseau to be the same individualism as that of the founders of this country. But a disturbing thing is happening. Through another channel, as by a back door, some neo-Calvinists, who use the customary phrases against French individualism, are accepting the basic ideas of French individualism.

### Liberty Versus Equality

7. Seventhly, and finally, we are for *liberty*, and if it is reactionary to be in favor of liberty, then we are unquestionably reactionary. Genuine Biblical liberty has relatively few modern champions. The ideal of liberty has been replaced by the ideal of equality. God made people different one from another. One man can do something better; another can do something else better; and some men are better all around. Why God made people *different* — or as people insist on saying, *unequal* — we do not know, except that there is the rather obvious reason that if everybody were identical there would be no cooperation among men and no human society. Everybody would be self-sufficient. Society would have no bond or cement to hold it together. Because there is no advantage in cooperation, people would no longer have an inducement to cooperate; and no longer having that inducement, they would not cooperate. Society would be genuinely atomistic. But whatever God's reason for making people *different*, there is one thing of which men may be sure, namely, that they *are* differ-

ent. Those *differences* in people, according to modern theory, should be nullified. The purpose of the government is not to let freedom and lawful self-interest result in natural and voluntary combinations and in differences (called inequalities); no, the modern theory is that the government has a great function, namely to promote *equality*. That promotion of equality consists in nullifying the differences which the Creator created in men. But few people clearly understand that that is possible only by treating men *unequally* and by having unequal laws designed to bear differently on one man than on another. You treat *A* differently from *B* in order to make *A* "equal" to *B*; and you treat *B* differently from *C* in order to make *B* "equal" to *C*. There are no longer really "general" laws. Unequal laws are against the plain teaching of Scripture, and of course *liberty* is lost under such a system. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is against such a system. It considers such laws evil and accursed by God. We do not consider it to be a function of government to nullify the differences in creation by means of laws designed to bear unequally on people. If *that* is reactionary, then we are reactionary.

### Summary Of 1955 Writings

We summarize. Here are the seven ideas regarding which we have in preliminary form revealed our views during 1955. And in order to contrast them with other ideas we are setting up the contrary ideas:

#### PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM'S Propositions

(which are criticized as being  
"material and reactionary")

1. God is a *moral* governor of the universe, generally rewarding the good and punishing the evil.
2. We are against sanctimony; we believe in loving the neighbor as *ourselves*.

#### Contrary Propositions

(which others apparently think  
are idealistic and modern)

1. God is immoral, generally punishing the good and rewarding the evil; or is amoral\*; or is powerless.
2. We should love our neighbors more than ourselves, namely, From each according to his ability to each according to his need.

\*Neither moral nor immoral; indifferent.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>3. We are against "divine right" claims of <i>any</i> government, including a popular government.</p>  | <p>3. All governments have a certain "divine right"; there is a direct pipe line from God to them; that pipe line gives them powers beyond (contrary to) the Decalogue.</p>     |
| <p>4. We are against cooperation with evil men, especially communists, whose leaders have been the biggest butchers in the history of men.</p>                      | <p>4. There should be a policy of cooperation (as in the United Nations) between the contrary systems, capitalism and communism; and co-existence.</p>                          |
| <p>5. We are against all coercion of <i>all</i> kinds, except to restrain evil. We include under our condemnation coercion by unions.</p>                           | <p>5. Coercion is not sin. Coercion is to be permitted in order to "do good," and individuals and groups can take coercion into their own hands.</p>                            |
| <p>6. We believe in Individualism, rightly understood. We believe in it <i>in principle</i>. It happens that we think as the founders of the United States did.</p> | <p>6. All Individualism, including English Individualism, is selfish and godless, as was the French Revolution and French Individualism.</p>                                    |
| <p>7. We are for liberty, and against unequal laws.</p>   | <p>7. Equality is preferable to liberty. Equality is to be obtained by laws operating unequally. By such devices the differences created by God among men can be nullified.</p> |

In the left hand column are the ideas,\* which our critic calls "material and reactionary ideas." We believe his charge is incorrect. We believe we are neither materialistic nor reactionary.

\*Readers are referred to the 1955 issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM for more extensive and exact presentation of these ideas.



## Prevailing Contrary Ideas

The writer of the letter which we have quoted is a typical product, we believe, of the educational system of a Calvinist denomination. Does he reflect a *typical* attitude of many members of the denomination toward the subjects we have mentioned, namely, (1) religion must be unprofitable or at least unpleasant; (2) religion must put up as sanctimonious a front as socialism-communism does; the churches cannot afford to be outdone in sanctimony; (3) all governments *must* be obeyed; they have *divine* authority; (4) to tolerate and cooperate with communism is better than to refuse to tolerate or cooperate; (5) coercion (although a violation of brotherly love) is all right if it is done in the name of brotherly love; (6) there is really no difference between one system of ideas called Individualism which leads to socialism-communism, and a contrary system of ideas which is irreconcilable with socialism-communism; and (7) unequal laws are to be preferred to equal and general laws?

## The Typical Line-Up In Calvinist Denominations

There is reason to believe that the seven ideas which have been outlined in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in 1955 are disliked intensely by large and influential factions in Calvinist churches. Those factions appear to have become unsympathetic and ashamed of the old frame of ideas in their denominations. Those ideas lacked "culture." Simultaneously, these factions have absorbed the popular myths of the age in regard to materialism, brotherly love, individualism, and the authority of government. These outside ideas have now been joined to old Calvinism and we have *neo-Calvinism*.

"Conservative" factions have opposed all this, using the old shibboleths and passwords. But they are in retreat on many fronts; or rather they have become silenced on many fronts. Many of the "conservatives" are afraid to fight. Their opinions are revealed only in private conversations *confidentially*.

Into this situation PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has entered in a bold manner. It has taken neither a *neo-Calvinist* position which it considers as departing from Scripture and as pseudo-scientific; nor a stereotyped conservative position which it considers nonprog-

ressive. And what is the reaction? Anxiety on the part of the conservatives, and rage on the part of the *neo-Calvinists*.

Caution — prudence — is a sure hallmark of the wiser among men. The real leaders of *neo-Calvinism* have not, naturally, revealed their attitude. They are watching and waiting; who knows some heresy might pop up (anything *progressive* always runs the risk of "heresy"). But the attitude of *neo-Calvinism* may with ease be discovered from those who have been taught in its churches and schools, and who being less experienced, are less prudent.

The man from whose letter we have quoted at the beginning of this article is a case in point: reared in Grand Rapids, educated in Calvinist and denominational schools, and taught morality in its churches. As in others with a similar background the ideas of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM arouse his rage and his contempt.

There is a Dutch idiom which says: the apple never falls far from the tree, which means that children reflect the character of their parents; and that persons educated in certain schools reflect the character of their instruction. Does our critic by his letter reveal faithfully the character of his environment and his education?

### **The Bad Manners And The Folly Of Contempt**

Our critic writes us:

Seldom does one read such presumptive, pseudo-erudite and sophomoric drivel which claims for itself such span and depth.

Our critic may be right. We shall not dispute with him about his description of us. We are not disposed to believe that we prove ourselves to be right by declaring that we are competent. A man's self-opinion is well known to be very unreliable.

While we are not disposed to dispute the correctness of his description, we do question the wisdom of it. A denomination and its schools can possibly not be expected to teach manners, nor to give the reasons for morality; (if the church is "authoritarian" in its teachings, it can dispense with *logical* reasons for avoiding expressions of contempt).

Rather than to appeal to scriptural *brotherly love* (1) in regard to the manners of contempt, or (2) in regard to reasons for avoiding expressions of contempt, we shall quote two secular writers, neither of whom is eagerly claimed by the Christian religion, David Hume (1711-1776) and Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527). (Hume wrote an essay on *Miracles* which we do not recommend to churchmen, and Machiavelli gave advice on how to conduct a successful assassination.) We shall quote Hume on the *manners* of this contempt business, and Machiavelli on the *morality* (utility or nonutility, wisdom or folly) of contempt.

### Hume, On Manners

Hume, younger son of a poor Scottish gentleman, had to make his own way in the world, and when he turned to philosophy, history and literature his mother lamented that that gave evidence of an "uncommonly weak mind." Hume, in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*, page 244 (Hafner Publishing Company, New York, 1948), has written as good a summary, we believe, of good manners as has been written. It is as follows (our italics):

...in like manner...[because] of men's pride and self-conceit,...[there have been] introduced the rules of "good manners" or "politeness" in order to facilitate the intercourse of minds and an undisturbed commerce and conversation. *Among well-bred people a mutual deference is affected; contempt of others disguised, authority concealed, attention given to each in his turn; and an easy stream of conversation maintained, without vehemence, without interruption, without eagerness for victory, and without any airs of superiority. ...*

Hume ascribes the need for good manners to be the minimizing of the disturbing effects of *pride* and *conceit*. And here is his description of good manners:

1. *Mutual deference is affected* (pretended): you show respect to each other;
2. *Contempt of others disguised*: you avoid showing you think poorly of others;
3. *Authority concealed*: you ask your employee to please do something, instead of ordering him around;

4. *Attention given to each in his turn*: you make the rounds and talk to everybody at the party and not only to the great man or the charming lady;

5. *An easy stream of conversation maintained*: you do not sit by silently nor converse excessively; *without vehemence*: without raising your voice, profanity, threats or extreme gestures or grimaces; *without interruption*: waiting until the other person has finished; *without eagerness of victory*: without obviously trying to win an argument and thereby humble others; and *without airs of superiority*: implying that after you have spoken the discussion is ended.

### Machiavelli On The Folly Of Contempt

Machiavelli approaches the problem of *contempt* differently. He is not against contempt because it is bad manners but because it is "contrary to purpose." If a man shows contempt, he must have a purpose. The purpose obviously is to injure the person toward whom he shows contempt and to help himself. Smith and I have a dispute. Smith seeks public support; I seek public support. Smith shows his contempt for me in various ways; I show my contempt of Smith in various ways. Each hopes our contempt will injure the other. How much are both of us ahead? Nothing at all.

Contempt is not a form of argument. It is a means by which one man can show spite to another, and please people already on one's own side. But that spite and entertainment are really expensive. Machiavelli, in *The Discourses*, page 373, (The Modern Library, New York), writes a chapter entitled, "Contempt and Insults Engender Hatred Against Those Who Indulge in Them, Without Being of Any Advantage to Them":

I hold it to be a proof of great prudence for men to abstain from threats and insulting words towards any one, for neither the one nor the other in any way diminishes the strength of the enemy; but the one [threats] makes him more cautious, and the other [insulting words] increases his hatred of you, and makes him more persevering in his efforts to injure you. . . . A striking instance of this occurred in Asia, when Gabades, commander of the Persians, having for a long time besieged Amida and becoming weary of the siege, resolved to abandon it; and

having already broken up his camp, the inhabitants of the place came upon the walls, and, inflated with the thought of victory, assailed his army with every kind of insult, vilifying them and accusing and reproaching them for their cowardice and poltroonery. Gabades, irritated by this, changed his mind and resumed the siege, and his indignation at these insults so stimulated his efforts, that he took the city in a few days, and gave it up to sack and pillage. The same thing happened to the Veienti, who, not content with making war upon the Romans, outraged them with insulting words, advancing up to the very stockade of their camp to fling insults at them, thus irritating the Romans more by their words than their arms; so that the soldiers, who at first had fought unwillingly, now constrained the Consuls to bring on a battle, in which they made the Veienti suffer the penalties of their insolence. It is the duty, therefore, of every good general of an army, or chief of a republic, to use all proper means to prevent such insults and reproaches from being indulged in by citizens or soldiers, either amongst themselves or against the enemy; for if used against an enemy they give rise to the above-described inconveniences, and between the soldiers and the citizens it is even worse, unless they are promptly put a stop to, as has ever been done by prudent rulers. . . . Tiberius Gracchus, who in the war with Hannibal had been called to the command of a certain number of slaves, who had been armed because of the scarcity of freemen, ordered amongst the first things that the penalty of death should be inflicted upon whoever reproached any of them with their former servitude; so dangerous did the Romans esteem it to treat men with contempt, or to reproach them with any previous disgrace, because nothing is more irritating and calculated to excite greater indignation than such reproaches, whether founded upon truth or not; "for harsh sarcasms, even if they have but the least truth in them, leave their bitterness rankling in the memory."

Manifestations of contempt, according to Machiavelli, accomplish nothing. Contempt is against purpose.

Readers will have noted that our correspondent did two things: (1) that he made a double charge against our ideas, namely, that they were "material and reactionary"; and (2) that he wished us to know of his contempt. Readers will also have noted from the foregoing (1) that we felt obligated to answer the *charges* as well as we could, and (2) that we do not in any way *complain* about the contempt manifested toward us; we have merely quoted others to the effect (1) that the manifestation of contempt is not good manners and (2) that contempt has in history proved to be "contrary to purpose" and without utility; what our correspondent has written does not "offend" us in the least. fn

## How "Liberty" Can Destroy Liberty

Liberty is usually considered to be destroyed only by tyranny and violence. But there is a very real danger that "liberty" of a certain kind will itself destroy liberty. Let us consider a simple illustration.

Jones is a very devout man. He has studied "his Bible," and as a result he has developed a new brand of Christianity which he calls Jonesology. He lives in this free country of the United States and he organizes a church which he calls the Jonesist church.

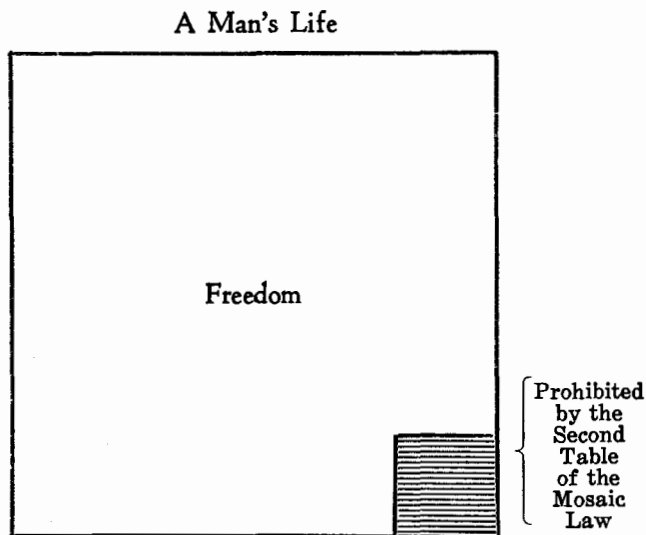
Let us assume that Jones and PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, although they disagree on many things, do agree on what the law means which reads, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Assume that we both agree that that means:\*

- (1) That we may not harm the neighbor;
- (2) That we may coerce him only to keep him from exploiting and damaging his neighbor;
- (3) That we must be forbearing if our neighbor injures us, and be disposed to forgive him;
- (4) That we must engage in charity; and
- (5) That we must endeavor to bring the gospel to the neighbor.

\*For details on what follows see February, March, April and May, 1955, issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

But beyond that, we are agreed that we are all free — Jones, we ourselves, and all our neighbors. Life, we believe, is mostly freedom, except that we do not have "freedom to do wrong." Looking at it rightly, there is so much happiness available in the great area where we do not wrong our neighbors, that we have plenty of room for loads of happiness.

On page 65 in the March, 1955, issue we showed a diagram to illustrate how small a segment of life was unfree (prohibited) and how large a segment was really free, *if we looked at life properly*. The only part not free was that part which consisted of "exploiting" our neighbor (by violence, adultery, theft, fraud and coveting). Here is the schematic diagram we used:



We have also conceded that there is properly one agency which can enforce that prohibition, namely, the state or government. The government is the one agency which we authorize to keep us from injuring each other. It is *sovereign*; it has what the Romans called *supra potestas*, that is, supreme power.

But a very disturbing event happens.

There is a neighbor named Brown. Brown decides he wishes to join the Jonesist church and he approaches the church board.

But after several interviews and discussions the board of the Jonesist church decides not to accept Brown's application for membership. The board declares that Brown's ideas do not agree with Jonesology. All negotiations fail. The Jonesist church will not accept Brown.

Brown becomes very dissatisfied. He lives in a Jonesist community. He feels and is in a large degree excluded from Jonesist social life; from the Jonesist church; from the Jonesist school. Brown declares he is being treated as a "second-class" citizen in his community. He protests to the public generally. And he appeals to the state, the government. He complains that his "liberty" is being restricted. Jones and PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM and everybody, so he declares, are agreed that we all have full liberty to do anything we please *except to harm the neighbor*. He further declares that he is not harming Jones by wishing to join Jones's church. Therefore, so Brown reasons, Jones and his fellow members have by an agreement, by an organization, by a *mutual contract*, restricted his (Brown's) liberty. He (Brown) cannot do what he wishes to do. The so-called "free area" for the enjoyment of life (the area outside the exploitation of the neighbor) is no longer really free to him. In fact, when he looks around he sees all kinds of organizations on all sides which have restrictions — restrictions which pertain to religion, education, wealth, color, age, nationality, race, employment, abilities.

Brown thinks it over and talks to himself in this manner: Scripture says I have a magnificent free area in which to enjoy life, namely, all of life except robbing my neighbor of life, wife and wealth, but these neighbors of mine have engaged in an unbrotherly deception. I am willing to abide by Scripture, but not by that further restriction which consists of my neighbors contracting among themselves against me on this and that ground, so that everywhere I see signs which read, "Stay Out," as numerous as signs which read, "Stay off the grass."

By Scripture I have lost a small amount of freedom (the freedom to exploit my neighbor); but by the "contracts" which my neighbors make among themselves they have effectively excluded me from a lot of other things. This must be wrong. It must be a violation of my legitimate liberty. I therefore wish to get a law passed saying that I may not be kept out of the Jonesist church,



nor out of anything else to which I wish to belong. And I shall accuse the Jonesist church of violating Scripture because it will not admit me; Scripture actually says that everybody in the churches should be "one" — "branches" all of one "vine." Unless the government gives me relief, it is *unjust*; unless the Jonesist church board members admit me, they are *unbrotherly* and do not love me as themselves.

Brown engages in propaganda. He succeeds in getting a law passed that there may be no discrimination *because of religion*.

Wonderful; there are now no more any "second-class" citizens not good enough for the Jonesist church! The law requires that Brown be admitted; if he did not accept Jonesology before he was admitted, it is now the problem of the church to persuade him that Jonesology is just right. If they cannot persuade him, it is too bad but there is nothing to be done about it.

However, the Jonesist regular people do not like it, even though they finally admit the Browns and all others as the law requires.

Later the Jonesists move. They hold another drive. They build a new church. Everything seems peaceful and lovely.

Then Brown moves into that new neighborhood. Again he demands admittance. Because the law requires that his "liberty" may not be restricted, he is again admitted.

The Jonesists move again. They begin all over. But it is futile. Brown and others follow.


The Jonesists ask themselves: what has happened to us? We desire liberty to do what we wish. But our liberty is gone. No two of us can agree to something but a third man calls out "No fair." In fact, all our real liberty is gone, or seems to be gone, in order to give someone else some sort of liberty. We cannot live our own life anymore. Can there be something wrong with our belief regarding what Scripture teaches? We thought it taught *freedom* except that we might not do wrong. But now we see that that seems to mean that there can be no freedom which restricts anyone else's "freedom." Obeying Moses, we excluded exploiting our neighbor, but now we learn that "brotherly love" seems to require that we

never collide with our neighbor's *wishes*. Our "freedom," Brown says, has destroyed his freedom; and his "freedom," we are certain, has destroyed our freedom. There is, therefore, no real freedom left. Freedom is a mirage, a pretense and a deception.

We can now re-draw our symbolic chart of life to illustrate the situation which has developed.

### A Man's Life

In this area you may not do anything which conflicts with any *wish* of your neighbor. Only then are you just and brotherly. You may not pursue your own choices because to do that involves "discrimination" and makes others "second-class" citizens. This great area of *Freedom* is now supplanted by *Equality*, or more correctly stated, by the *Tyranny of Every Neighbor's Wishes*.



{

Prohibited  
by the  
Second  
Table  
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Mosaic  
Law

The Jonesists talk to Brown. They say: somehow or other, your liberty seems to destroy our liberty; and our liberty in turn seems to destroy your liberty. What really has happened to us?

What has happened is very simple. By means of a *false definition of liberty* real liberty has been destroyed in the names of *justice* and *brotherly love*.

The Jonesist church case is not a fantasy. Ideas as Brown's are widely accepted. Because of strange definitions of *liberty*, *justice* and *brotherly love*, there is frequent unfavorable mention in magazines circulating in the Christian Reformed church of "second-class citizens," which is as spurious an idea as can be promoted in the name of religion.

If there is any place, time and organization in which *liberty* needs to be defined, it is in the United States, presently, in the Christian Reformed Church.

What indeed *is* liberty?

(The remaining articles in this issue present some preliminary and very partial answers.) fn

## **A Great Netherlander Who Had One Answer To The Problem Of "Liberty" Destroying Liberty, Namely, Sphere Sovereignty**

Abraham Kuyper, Dutch theologian and premier, had an answer to the kind of problem outlined in the preceding article. Kuyper's answer consisted in saying that there are "sphere sovereignties."

The natural question to ask is: what is *sphere sovereignty*? We shall answer that question by taking Kuyper's own description as it appears in his two-volume work entitled, *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*, Volume I, pages 265 and following.

Kuyper declares that a government receives its sovereignty directly from God. Having declared that much, he immediately sets out to restrict that great and direct sovereignty of the government by declaring that there are other sovereignties which are equally directly from God. Kuyper writes (our translation):

With great earnestness and force it is necessary not only to protest against the alleged omnipotence of the state, but also to resist it. That alleged omnipotence of the state is the most unbearable tyranny that can be imagined. A group of men of coercive temper, by flattery and deception, by beglamouring with promises, discovers how to obtain support from the masses, and promptly seats itself on the throne of God and conducts itself as though omnipotent, in order to give free reign to love of power and to covetousness. ...we are exposed to the

great danger, under the high sounding name of state sovereignty, that progressive inroads are made on our personal and social liberty.

One of the three specific reasons which Kuyper gives for *limited* sovereignty of the government is as follows:

The sovereignty, exercised by men through delegation [from God] is subdivided. It extends over many and various spheres (areas) and has in each sphere a special character. There is the sphere of the Family, the sphere of the Church, the sphere of Science and Art, the sphere of Technique and Research, the sphere of Commerce, Production, Agriculture, Hunting and Fishing; and finally the sphere of free, Social Organizations. . . . In each of these spheres, sphere sovereignty must be acknowledged, and those who exercise it must defend that sovereignty with tooth and nail. Adjacent, in part subordinate to these, there is the Official Sovereignty of Law and Justice, represented by the State. Although this Official Sovereignty has certain proper powers to protect formally the mutual relations of the other spheres, and thereby make possible orderly human society, it may never present itself as having a sovereignty from which the sovereignty of the other spheres were merely derived. This is never the case. The sovereign authorities of the family, of the church, etc., are derived as directly from God as is the sovereign authority of the government. The Government does not create the other sphere sovereignties, but must limit itself to recognizing them, and where in public they ask for support or where they conflict, to regulate between them, in order to promote their growth or avoid conflict. No more.

Kuyper then goes on to outline in further detail the character of the five major sovereign, autonomous spheres he has mentioned in addition to the State sphere, to wit:

1. The Family;
2. The Church;
3. Science and Art;
4. Economic Life;
5. All Social Organizations.

(The sixth sphere is, of course, the State.)

Kuyper was obviously a man who was interested in *liberty*. His sphere sovereignty scheme of thought was especially designed to protect liberty.

When someone outlines a system which divides sovereignty and splinters it into six divisions, he is obviously greatly limiting the sovereignty of any of the six. Kuyper goes further; in his thinking the five big spheres are all subject to further subdivisions (and of course the sixth is subdivided too between national, provincial and city government). The economic sphere is not *one* sphere but many. The social sphere is subdivided into innumerable sub-spheres — all sovereign — spheres as small as baseball leagues. If a baseball league is *sovereign* as an independent social sphere, then the government has no business, according to Kuyper, to regulate a baseball league. That is why Kuyper emphatically declares as we previously quoted him that:

With great earnestness and force it is necessary not only to protect against the alleged omnipotence of the state, *but also to resist it. The alleged omnipotence of the State is the most unbearable tyranny that can be imagined.*

In the long and troubled history of the human race various thinkers have set up ideas to protect liberty. Those ideas and the institutions that result from those ideas are the practical ramparts of liberty. Some of these ramparts are merely ideas; they are not *practical* means to protect liberty. *Constitutions* and *representative government* and *equality before the law* are examples of *practical* ramparts to liberty. It cannot be alleged that Kuyper's protection of liberty had such practical features. His scheme protected liberty by *an idea*, namely, subdivided and equal and multifarious sovereignties. It is only an idea. But ideas control men. As Scripture says: As a man thinketh in his heart so he is. If men will think in terms of (1) limited government sovereignty, (2) widely diffused sovereignty, and (3) sovereignties developed *voluntarily* (that is voluntary families, voluntary churches, voluntary science and art, voluntary economic life, and voluntary social organizations) then there will be great and wonderful freedom.

The interesting question can now be asked whether Kuyper's idea on sphere sovereignty has an answer for the impasse into which we reasoned ourselves in the preceding article. The reader will remember that Brown was able to get the government (one sphere) to pass a law controlling a church matter (another sphere), that is, one sphere lording it over another. Can this "liberty" of Brown supported by the state destroy liberty of the church, if society is organized according to Kuyper's scheme of thought?

The answer is an unqualified *No*.

Kuyper has escaped the circular reasoning outlined in the preceding article by two specific ideas:

1. Whereas the reasoning in the preceding article permitted any man to force his way into any organization or sphere by means of a government law that he could not be excluded (discriminated against), Kuyper declares that the government may not intrude on intra-sphere matters. On that basis Kuyper has denied all right of a government to interfere in family, church, intellectual, economic and social life. He has made the most sweeping rejection that can be made of the claims of men who argue as Brown did in the preceding article.

2. Not only has Kuyper denied that a government may legislate to control a sphere; he declares the sphere basically un-touchable, sovereign, a law unto itself. A sphere therefore is self-regulatory. It sets its own standards of admission and operation and exclusion. Kuyper accepts a principle that a church can by its standards exclude anybody it wishes to exclude, and that it is no business of the government to interfere. Sovereignty implies independence; independence implies freedom of choice; freedom of choice unavoidably involves discrimination. By his idea of sphere sovereignty Kuyper authorizes discrimination; by sphere sovereignty he denies the right of the government to prohibit discrimination in any sphere.

Probably the most interesting thing is the *extent* of Kuyper's independent spheres, namely, the family, the church, the intellectual world, economic life, and social life. This covers *all* man's activities outside of the restraint of evil which is a government function. In fact, Kuyper by his spheres has left all of life free to voluntary organization.

When Kuyper made sphere sovereignty a fundamental part of his thought he was a true champion of liberty. (In his further thinking, he unfortunately favored various forms of economic interventionism. Economic interventionism is obviously inconsistent with sphere sovereignty, and there is the further inconsistency of implying that some of the five spheres have less liberty than the church sphere.

The *true* followers of Kuyper have seized and promoted the idea of Kuyper regarding sphere sovereignty. They teach it as one of his great and wonderful ideas. The pseudo-followers of Kuyper teach his interventionist ideas. It must be admitted that the pseudo-followers can quote interventionist ideas of Kuyper. But they are not, we believe the *real* followers of the *real* Kuyper. The trouble is that Kuyper himself failed to observe *complete* consistency. fn

## Happiness, Liberty, Discrimination

This is a statement in favor of happiness, liberty and discrimination.

### Happiness

There is only one ultimate nonpersonal abstract good, namely, happiness.

That is what the living strive for. One difference between a stone and a man is that a stone does not strive; man does.

The purpose of all striving is to attain a satisfaction or remove an uneasiness or, in other words, happiness.

In I Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul talks about three great virtues — faith, hope and love, and declares love to be the supreme virtue. But why should love be a supreme virtue except it promotes happiness? Paul was talking about *means* and not *ends*. Of the three *means* to happiness, love, he declares, is more abiding than faith or hope; the single *end* is happiness.

The Heidelberg Catechism begins on a note that refers to happiness. It asks: "What is my only *comfort* in life and in

death?" The question clearly relates to a sense of security which is called *comfort*, and comfort is merely stable and secure happiness.

The Westminster Catechism begins by asking: "What is the chief aim of man?" — and answers, "To know God and *enjoy* Him forever." This equally has the meaning that happiness is the greatest thing in the world; otherwise, why speak of eternal enjoyment.

Whenever love is mentioned as the greatest thing in the world, it signifies that it is the greatest *means* in the world to the real *objective* of all living things, namely, happiness.

When anything no longer strives for happiness, it has reverted to its material, nonliving components. A live man strives. A man's dead body no longer strives. It has become as a stone or dust.

Men by their mortal and finite constitution cannot ever be perfectly happy in this life. If a man were perfectly happy with everything as it is, he would not move, eat, sleep, think, act. Why would he? He presumably is already perfectly "happy." Perfect happiness is therefore inconceivable in this life.

Religion is considered by many people to be a rather glum business; there is little happiness in it, according to their observation. Indeed, religion often looks painful or is professed by some who seem to say, I'm saved, but you are not. It is sometimes hardly possible to tell whether they are selfishly happy about themselves or somewhat maliciously at ease about the bad future they estimate that their neighbor has.

True religion, it appears reasonable to believe, should promote happiness and should manifest such happiness. The real objective of all living is happiness. (We are not discussing to what extent that happiness depends on spiritual values and to what extent on material values.)

## Liberty

When the getting of happiness is understood to be what it is, namely, the purpose of all living and acting, then helplessness is a very great evil.



Helplessness can be in the form of feebleness, that is, lack of strength or power. Helplessness can also be not feebleness but obstruction of some sort, that is, strength without liberty. The obstruction can be the physical circumstances of life, such as limited food supplies, or heat or cold, or something that our fellow men do to obstruct us, frustrate us, and by such frustration make us unhappy.

If happiness involves striving and if things and fellow beings obstruct and frustrate us, then what we all want is maximum liberty — at least maximum liberty for ourselves, if not for all men. It is inevitable that we mortals will seem to be "in each other's way." Men then finally come to the conclusion that much can be done for general happiness by having certain rules by which everybody must play. The rules are never properly designed to reduce liberty and action because happiness is unattainable without wide liberty to choose and to act.

And so men come to love liberty to such an extent that they declare with Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death."

Liberty does not consist merely in living in a republic or a constitutional monarchy. These are usually (but not always) lands of liberty. A republic or a constitutional monarchy may pass many restrictive (interventionist) laws and so frustrate liberty.

The Christian church, which ought to promote happiness and also liberty as a means to happiness, does not always promote liberty. In fact, the church can be one of the greatest agencies for tyranny. All the church needs to do to become a perfect spiritual agency for tyranny is to define *brotherly love* so that a man has no liberty for himself anymore. His neighbor has claim after claim on him, in the name of *brotherly love*; you must live for your neighbor! If so, it is a tyranny.

And so coercive law can destroy liberty; but, in addition, brotherly love (mistakenly understood) can equally — even more effectively — destroy liberty.

Examine the world around us and ask what is happening. The answer is: (1) government by coercive laws and (2) churches by sanctimonious ideas on brotherly love are everyday curtailing liberty

— and are in the process of destroying happiness. This situation in the churches is practically universal, and is equally true of conservative Calvinist denominations.

Consider the primitive example we have given of Jonesology and of Brown in the second article in this issue. We presented the case as one in which the government declares the Jonesist church might not have the liberty to refuse to accept Brown as a member, and so apparently discriminate against him. He was "authorized by law" to force his way into the Jonesist church, school life and social life. But on all sides there are churchmen who say the same thing in the name of religion. *Brotherly love*, they seem to believe, disqualifies preferences and likes and dislikes. Love demands, according to this definition, perfect "equality." Therefore, brotherly love, they conclude, requires that Brown must not be excluded from the Jonesist church, if Brown wishes to get in. Brown must in no way be frustrated in his liberty, or brotherly love is thereby proved to be lacking.

Abraham Kuyper, when he worked through his ideas of *sphere sovereignty* (see preceding article), was developing his own theory of liberty. He was struggling for a concept of freedom. For him undoubtedly, as for all others, freedom was a great agency to accomplish the chief end of all the living, namely, happiness. His sphere sovereignty might be called sphere liberty.

All men subscribe to wanting happiness. Whenever they limit liberty, they declare the purpose of that limitation to be the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Communists, socialists, democrats, anarchists, all these want happiness — their own if not all men's. All prize *their own* liberty; they all want their own way. If they cannot persuade men, they have an inclination to resort to force.

The foundation of liberty, however, is not force but meekness, which is an unreadiness to coerce. "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

### Discrimination

Whereas *liberty* is a prerequisite to *happiness*, the unrestricted *right to discriminate* is in turn a prerequisite to liberty. The right

to discriminate is the right to choose according to your own good pleasure (except you may not commit an injustice, that is, violate the Decalogue).

The word *discriminate* means to choose or select. It is a broad term. It is *necessary* and *unavoidable* to choose and select — to discriminate — in this finite world, in which everything is varied and limited. It is not possible to be considered human and not to discriminate. It is even possible to say that plants “discriminate.” A sapling standing in the shade of other trees “struggles” for sunlight by growing unduly tall and slender. It “discriminates” — chooses — seeks — the sunlight. It “discriminates” against the shade. Every positive choice has a negative counterpart; every preference involves a discrimination against something.

The word *discriminate* has in late years acquired a bad flavor. There are three kinds of discrimination which are under special attack: discrimination on the basis of *religion*, discrimination on the basis of *race*, and discrimination on the basis of *nationality*.

We wish to challenge the validity of objections to these discriminations. We see no reason why men should not discriminate on grounds of religion, race, or nationality, if they wish. We wish to present the case for the right of *any* and *all* discriminations except discriminations which involve injustice (violation of Second Table of the Law).

The antidiscrimination campaign in the wide world is, in a sense, led by or promoted by communists. (Some churchmen rather glibly repeat what the communists say.) But this antidiscrimination campaign by communism is a false front. It is easy to decry *religious* discrimination among the denominations, when in fact you yourself deny the validity of any religion; that is a discrimination (choice) against *all* religion and is as much a discrimination as any choice among religions. It is easy to decry *race* discrimination and be known to have liquidated about two million *kulaks* (prosperous farmers) who did not wish to be collectivized. It is easy to decry *national* discrimination and be a government which is discriminating against and systematically exploiting all its satellites.

The antidiscrimination campaign of the communists is nothing else than a *discrimination campaign of its own kind*. But its own

discrimination campaign is masked under the pretense that it is nondiscriminatory. Every person alleging that he is nondiscriminatory is self-deceived or insincere. The communists are not deceived; they are insincere. It is impossible not to discriminate. The conditions of life require discrimination.

What, if any, discrimination is forbidden? The discrimination that is forbidden is the discrimination that involves injustice. And in our thinking injustice is discrimination which involves coercion, fraud and theft. All other discriminations are, we submit, permissible. We definitely favor discriminations based on religion. We see no reason why someone else may not discriminate, if he wishes, on grounds of race or nationality. That is their proper freedom — avoiding always injustice. Whether we would be willing to go along with them or not is an entirely different problem.

Why should not someone discriminate against (choose against) neo-Calvinism or Progressive Calvinism or against any Calvinism if he wishes? Why should not neo-Calvinism oppose Progressive Calvinism if that is the inclination of the neo-Calvinist? Why should not a Calvinist favor a Calvinist, if he wishes? Why should not a Jew favor a Jew, if he wishes? Why should not a Catholic favor a Catholic, if he wishes? Why should not a native favor a native, if he wishes?

Why should a Catholic be urged to hire Protestants and Jews and Mohammedans, if he prefers Catholics? Why should not a religious man be permitted to favor a religious community, and why should not an irreligious man be permitted to favor an irreligious community?

All churches who truly believe their religion has real meaning actually do discriminate on the grounds of religion, that is, on the grounds of their own specific rules and practices. You cannot get into the Catholic church on your terms; only on hers. You cannot get into a vital Protestant church on your terms; only on her terms.

If that freedom to set terms is denied any organization, then there is a denial of sphere sovereignty. According to the doctrine of *sphere sovereignty*, every group is a sovereign sphere in its own matters. According to that brand of sociology, a social *sphere* can

decide and do what it pleases (except violate the Second Table of the Law.)

But, it will be alleged, there *is* an injustice involved in the setting of standards which admit one and exclude the other. Some people because of those standards become "second-class" citizens. *Fortunately*, we are all in some regard second-class or tenth-class citizens. Let us be thankful that our neighbors have some qualities we do not have, and that they can have the satisfaction of doing something we cannot do. That sustains their morale.

Consider a choral society. Say that I wish to join. Suppose I consider myself to be a wonderful prospect for the choral society, although the fact is that I cannot carry a tune and have no sense of rhythm; (these happen to be the *facts*). Aside from that, I am a wonderful singer! The choral society is, however, *discriminatory*. They have *arbitrarily* set up the standard that members must be able to carry a tune and keep time. Those discriminators! They have made me a second-class citizen! Call the police! Injustice is being done me!

But is it not all absurd? God made us all different; (let us avoid the unpleasant term, *unequal*). Why should I not be willing to stay out of that choral society? But if a great campaign is organized that there shall be no discrimination on the ground of religion, race, nationality, or *musical ability*, it will not be long before the choral societies will decide that they must accept me, or otherwise they will be perpetrating an injustice on me and making me a second-class citizen.

Discriminations are of two kinds:

1. Discriminations against something you do not like which is *alterable* in the person who has that characteristic.
2. Discriminations against something you do not like which is *unalterable* in the person who has that characteristic.

Men will generally say that it is *just* to discriminate against the alterable characteristics but that it is unjust to discriminate against unalterable characteristics.

Assume a girl is dirty, unsanitary, smells. You stay *at a distance* from her. You discriminate against her company. Most people will say that your attitude is not immoral: "Let her take a bath. We do not blame people for avoiding her." And so people declare no injustice has been perpetrated. Her uncleanness was correctable; her plight — unpopularity — is her own fault.

In fact, all improvement among men depends on fellowmen showing their disapproval — discriminating against — unattractive *alterable* characteristics. The churches discriminate against sin. When they stop discriminating against sin, they might as well disband, except to perform weddings and officiate at funerals.

But the *moral* crux of the problem of discrimination is the discrimination against *unalterable* characteristics. Is it moral to discriminate against *unalterable* characteristics regarding which a man is helpless? Here is where the race problem becomes so sensitive. A man with a white skin cannot do anything about it; a man with a black skin cannot do anything about it. Why discriminate against (choose against) a man for that for which he has no remedy, for an unalterable trait that is unattractive to you and maybe others? Here is where cruel injustice appears immorally to intrude itself into the situation. But is it injustice?

If the writer has made an earnest effort to carry a tune and keep time (which he has) but is unable (which happens to be the fact), is an injustice done him because he is "discriminated" against by a choral society which discriminates against a trait he had which is unalterable for him? Of course not. Justice does not consist in denying reality or the facts of life; injustice is not identical with recognizing reality (that I cannot sing).

And so we hold — in the name of happiness, and in the name of liberty, and in the name of the right to discriminate — that there is no more "injustice" in discriminating against an unalterable trait than against an alterable trait; neither is an injustice. For us, every discrimination is valid except a discrimination involving injustice.

And whoever believes in *sphere* sovereignty also must believe in liberty to discriminate against either *alterable* or *unalterable* traits.

We aim at happiness and insist on having liberty and the universal right to discriminate. We believe in *freedom* to discriminate on the basis of religion, race, nationality, ability, age, sex, industriousness, thrift, beauty — on every basis that the human mind can think of, *except injustice*.

One thing should be noted extraordinarily carefully. We have not declared ourselves in favor of all specific discriminations; we have only declared ourselves in favor of *freedom* to discriminate except to discriminate unjustly.

We recommend to all Calvinists that same attitude toward complete freedom in regard to discriminations.

Unavoidably, the next question that presses for attention is the question: What is *injustice*? Certainly, that is a very fundamental question. fn

## The Tyranny of Brotherly Love

Ancient history, as once taught in small country towns, in the United States, involved two contrasting ideas: (1) tyrants and (2) free peoples. As a youth we learned to abhor tyrants — individual men who were wicked, siezed power, oppressed people.

Today tyranny is described by a less personal word, namely, dictatorship. The emphasis has shifted from a man to a system.

But a new type of dictatorship is arising. Let us contrast it with the earlier two:

1. An old-fashioned tyrant (in an ancient city state).
2. A modern dictatorship operating through a huge state apparatus.
3. A dictatorship of "brotherly love," which makes every man a tyrant over all other men.

This dictatorship, or tyranny, or oppression in the name of brotherly love needs a brief explanation so that nobody will fail to realize that it is entirely different from ancient tyranny or from modern dictatorships.

Readers are referred to the drawings on pages 47 and 50. What was believed to be a free area in the first drawing turns out

in the second drawing to be an area of "tyranny in the name of brotherly love," a "dictatorship of the neighbor," and "anarchism by which all voluntary associations are destroyed." This is *not* a despotism of *one* man, nor a despotism *originally* stemming from a bureaucratic state apparatus, but an all-inclusive moral claim of *every* man on *all other* men. The claim is advanced in the name of the Christian religion, of morality, of love, of liberty, of equality and of justice.

It is this sanctimonious claim which underlies the various references to "second-class citizens" which appear occasionally in *The Banner*, one of the official magazines of the Christian Reformed church (particularly the department entitled, "Other Churches in the News" by Rev. Peter Van Tuinen); and which appear in *The Reformed Journal* and in *The Young Calvinist*, magazines circulating extensively in the Christian Reformed Church.

Brown, pursuing *his* liberty and demanding "equality" and "justice" (in the second article in this issue) was exercising a tyranny over his neighbors, a tyranny condemned by Abraham Kuyper's *sphere sovereignty*.

If the term *sphere sovereignty* is used to designate freedom, what term shall we coin to designate the contrary idea, namely, of tyranny in the name of brotherly love, a tyranny masking under the guise of Christianity, justice, equality, nondiscrimination, liberty?

We shall be glad to get suggestions for a name for this new anarchic tyranny. fn

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## Religion And Culture

The word *culture* can mean the general characteristics of people which distinguish them from other people. People in every age have had their peculiar culture. But the word can mean more, namely, not your characteristics which make you what you are, but your *superior* characteristics which put you *above* other people, so that they admit that you are *cultured*. We are using *culture* in this second sense, namely, having that culture which enables you to claim that you have something which sets you apart from and above others; for example, you are educated, or talented, or wise, or something.

There are several ways to manifest the acquisition of culture: (1) you study philosophy; or (2) you accept as unchallengeable the hypotheses of science; or (3) you take to psychiatry and psychology, sociology, social work, or some popular brand of economics; or (4) you specialize in the fine arts — music, painting, sculpture, poetry, dramatic art; or (5) you devote yourself to social life, entertainment and fine manners and keeping up with the Joneses — “society life.” Add one or more of these to Christianity (and Calvinism) and then you have “culture” as well as religion.

If you have “come up in the world” and cannot claim some culture (as just outlined) you ordinarily will not be happy. You will develop an inferiority complex. You will be nervous that you will be labelled a *Christian*, without the additional label that you are also a philosopher, or a scientist, or a business tycoon, or a society leader, or an artist.

Before the modern age, the outstanding cultural label aspired for was philosophy. To be a *philosopher* as well as a Christian (or theologian) was the top of the mountain. That is changed today; science has taken the place of philosophy; but among some isolated Calvinist groups aspiring to culture, ancient Greek philosophy still is supreme as that addition to Christianity which gives the possessor of the two (Christianity *and* philosophy) that something which is named *culture*.

In such naive groups it is not *modern* philosophy which is the supplement to Christianity by which culture is attained; instead

it is *ancient Greek* philosophy. It is not even the down-to-earth philosophy of Aristotle, but the imaginative philosophy of his predecessors, Socrates and Plato. And so we get a somewhat regular pattern among some groups of Christians about as follows:

1. Simple Christianity; then
2. Christianity plus the philosophy of Plato; later
3. Christianity plus psychiatry, or sociology or science, or *modern* philosophy, etc.

Socrates and Plato were two of the greatest of all the sons of men. They were cast in the mold of intellectual giants. Their ideas make interesting and delightful reading. But we shall contrast them with Moses to show how great a lawgiver Moses was.  
fn

## Moses, Greatest Lawgiver Of All Time

Moses lived about 1520-1400 B.C. He was born to Hebrew parents who were taskpeople of the Egyptians. He was adopted by a daughter of Pharaoh and brought up in the Egyptian court.

His life is divisible into three periods, each of 40 years. (The Jews used 40 years to designate the span of a generation; the three phases may, therefore, be either exact or approximate time.) The three phases were:

*First forty years:* Reared in Pharaoh's court in Egypt and treated as an Egyptian prince. Killer of an Egyptian engaged in coercion.

*Second forty years:* A refugee in the southeast corner of the triangular Sinai peninsula east of Egypt. Here he was a sheep herder, probably thinking hard on all the "problems" of life, and possibly trying to draw up rules of right and wrong.

*Third forty years:* An advocate and agitator in Egypt for his own people, the Hebrews. The leader of the exodus of the Hebrews out of Egypt. He sur-

vived as leader for 40 years, until the Israelites had conquered the land east of the Jordan, leaving the main part of Palestine west of the Jordan to be conquered by his successor, Joshua.

Undoubtedly, Moses made the most of his Hebrew and Egyptian opportunities in order to get superior training. He will have been innumerable times in the Egyptian temples of Isis and Osiris; he will have pondered about the God of his ancestor Abraham, the great original thinker in his own day on *monotheism* — that there is only *one* God, a God not to be seen and who is not material. Moses will have asked himself who were right — the Egyptians with their many Gods, or the Hebrews with their *one* God? He undoubtedly came to a clear conviction that his ancestor, Abraham, was right and not the Egyptians.

Probably, too, he must have done considerable traveling as an Egyptian prince, particularly in the Egyptian army. It is possible that he knew the terrain of Palestine and its approaches "like a book." On various trips he may have noted the gross immorality of the Amorite nations in Palestine.

Palestine has had a varied political history. At various times one of three distinct patterns prevailed: (1) Palestine was independent; or (2) she was completely or partially subordinate to a great Mesopotamian power to the north; or (3) she was completely or partially subordinate to Egypt to the south.

In the years prior to the exodus and the conquest of Palestine by the Hebrews, Palestine was under the general domination by Egypt. That is known from secular history. Egypt had governors and agents stationed in Palestine. Occasionally, an army of Egypt traversed Palestine. No great power was permitted by the Egyptians to arise in Palestine. The country was divided into small city states.

Scripture gives the same picture. Joshua reports:

And I [God] sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. (Joshua 24:12.)

The passage is meaningless unless the reader knows what is meant by "hornet." The hornet was the symbol or crest of the Pharaohs. Probably, therefore, in the text which has been quoted *hornet* refers to the armies of the Pharaohs and their repeated forays into Palestine. Those armies of the Pharaohs (the hornet) by periodically traversing the Palestine area had weakened the various governments in Palestine. That general weakening made the conquest of Palestine by the Hebrews easier — even possible, humanly speaking.

This Palestinian situation would not be unknown to a prince of the Egyptian court as Moses had been. Probably it was a common subject of talk in the court circles in which Moses moved. Such knowledge would later be of great advantage to Moses as leader of an exodus and as the strategist for a campaign of conquest.

Regarding Moses's personal qualities, the evidence is impressive. He was an exceedingly mild and nonviolent man — the  *meekest* of his generation; a hard worker, but not an especially good organizer. He was an adventurer from the desert who could handle himself well enough so that Pharaoh apparently never seriously considered having him assassinated — which might have been considered by Pharaoh as an easy solution to the problem Moses was creating. He was a man of great courage, trying the apparently impossible and seldom despairing; the greatest leader of any exodus in all time. Undoubtedly, too, he had a magnificent contemplative mind, a mind not idle for 40 years in the desert, but trying probably to develop a brief statement of the "great" moral laws. What are they? How could they be summarized?

There are two tests of Moses as a lawgiver:

1. Is he a reliable guide on *practical* questions — the Second Table of the Law; and
2. Is he a reliable guide on the *grand, unsearchable problems* of life — is there a God, what is He like, how must He be served — the First Table of the Law?

We are considering only the first of these two.

The Jews, since Moses, have ever recognized the unique character of the Decalogue as inspired by direct revelation. The Ten Commandments were to them timeless and universal — the greatest glory of Israel. What philosophy contributes to the glory of Greece, the Law of Moses contributes to the glory of the descendants of Abraham. fn

## Moses, On Adultery

Moses was 40 years old when he killed an Egyptian quarreling with an Israelite, and then fled.

Having killed the Egyptian, Moses buried him in the sand, undoubtedly swore the Israelitish witness to secrecy, and pretended that he himself was innocent. A few days later he discovered to his consternation that the Israelite had been loosemouthed and talked.

Moses fled east and south to a desolate wilderness 600 miles away inhabited by few people. There he attached himself to a local celebrity with *seven daughters*, and without delay made a deal to marry one of the daughters, Zipporah.

Imagine this Hebrew and ex-Egyptian prince, in exile from his people and his native land, and far from the lavish court in which he grew up, now married to a dark-skinned desert woman and begetting children in his middle and old age (his 40th to 80th years); squatting in the simmering desert heat in the shadow of rocks and scrub trees; and pondering about Egypt and its men and women, and himself and his wife. There he sits, squinting his eyes across the blazing desert sands trying to settle in his mind definitely what the rule should be controlling the relationship between men and women.

During the exodus he eventually, under the guidance of God, comes up with one simple rule: *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

He allows no exceptions. He makes the same rule for *everybody*. He does not say: *Thou shalt not commit adultery, but some of that is all right if you are a strong man or a handsome*

woman. He does not say that kings may commit adultery, or philosophers, or the rich, or old or young. He makes one broad unqualified *prohibition*.

He does not say that adultery is all right in order to breed up the stock of human beings, as it is possible to breed up horses into thoroughbreds. He was indifferent to any eugenics program, that is, the program to improve human beings by a certain kind of breeding.

He does not prohibit, but he does regulate polygyny. He does not bobble on that subject, as the various churches do today who must cope with the problem in Africa and elsewhere. On this subject Moses was an intense realist.

He recorded stringent laws against incest, condemning the marriage of his own father and mother who were an uncle and niece.

He revealed a realistic insight into the problem of widows, and provided for their well-being by promulgating his unusual levirate laws.

We have here, then, a remarkable combination of laws on the relations between the sexes. Nothing more simple, uncompromising and realistic has ever been published by anyone else.

We plan first to contrast these basic sex rules of Moses with the far more complex — shall we say “cultured” proposals — of Socrates and Plato. fn

## Socrates And Plato, On Promiscuity

Promiscuity is unrestricted sex relations between the sexes. Promiscuity exists among most animals.

It is probably correct to say that a general tendency towards promiscuity exists among humans. But there is a counter-tendency toward monogyny. A man may wish to be promiscuous himself but he wishes his wife to be monogamous. A woman may wish to be promiscuous herself but she wishes her husband to be monogamous. (This double rule will not, of course, work well.)

There is, too, another considerable difference between people in regard to monogyny and promiscuity. Women demand support in return for sexual access (a perfectly reasonable demand). Men cannot, however, *generally* support more than one wife and her children. Supporting even one wife and her children is a chore (very worth-while) in itself.

It is the stronger and abler men who can think in terms of having more than one woman. It is the more attractive women who have the greatest prospect of a connection with more than one man. There is, therefore, a subtle psychology excusing a prince or a powerful man and a charming and handsome woman in regard to multiple sex relations. Why not? It can be argued that the stronger, abler and more handsome should breed more than the weaker, less competent and the ugly. (This is private eugenics — improvement of the race by selective breeding.)

When a man or woman endeavors to justify multiple sex relations, a self-estimate of superiority is one of the most common arguments used. Nevertheless, in societies influenced by Hebrew ethics this is only a subjective, private justification for multiple sex relations. It is not accepted by public opinion nor brazenly advanced.

The great Greek thinkers, Socrates and Plato, thought differently about this. Their ideas on sex relations are outlined in *The Republic* (in *The Works of Plato*, translated by B. Jowett, The Dial Press, New York), the famous book by Plato on how society ought to be organized. This was their plan:

1. Society should be divided into three major groups:
  - a. Workers (who would essentially be slaves)
  - b. Guardians (soldiers)
  - c. Rulers (philosopher-kings)

2. The second and third groups, the soldiers and the philosopher-kings, would have no marriage. The men in these two top groups would have the women in these groups *in common*. Children born of these groups would be taken away from their mothers and would become unknown to them and to their fathers. This breeding would be done for the benefit of the State.



We have here a program of bold eugenics, and a deliberate promiscuity among the upper classes. These upper classes would in the Socratic-Platonic plan be wholly communistic — eat together, sleep together, have the use of property together.

A few quotations will describe the Socratic-Platonic plan.

The law . . . is to the following effect, — “that the wives of our guardians [*guardians* here refers to the two upper classes, the philosopher-kings who are the rulers, and the guardians who are the soldiers] are to be common, and their children are to be common, and no parent is to know his own child, nor any child\* his parent.” (Page 187.)

The wiser and braver that you are the more women you can have.

That the brave man is to have more wives [sexual intercourse] than others has already been determined: and he is to have first choices in such matters more than others, in order that he may leave as many children as possible. (Page 214.)

The children of the inferior people will be destroyed. (This is generally known as infanticide.)

The proper officers will take the offspring of the good parents to the pen or fold, and there they will deposit them with certain nurses who dwell in a separate quarter; but the offspring of the inferior, or of the better when they chance to be deformed, will be put away in some mysterious, unknown place, as they should be. (Page 191.)

Socrates and Plato have here provided for the destruction of the offspring of the inferior parents and the deformed children of the upper classes.

The upper classes are expected to breed heavily between the ages of 20 and 40 for women and 25 and 55 for men. The references in the following are to the men and women in the two upper classes only.

A women . . . at twenty years of age may begin to bear children to the State, and continue to bear them to

\*This completely annuls the Fifth Commandment. If you do not know your father and mother, you cannot honor them.

forty; a man may begin at five-and-twenty, . . . and continue to beget children until he is fifty-five.

\* \* \*

Any one above or below the prescribed ages who [begets or bears children] shall . . . have done an unholy . . . thing.

\* \* \*

This applies, however, only to those who are within the specified age: after that we allow them to range at will . . . And we grant all this, accompanying the permission with strict orders to prevent any embryo which may come into being from seeing the light; and if any force a way to the birth, the parents must understand that the offspring of such a union can not be maintained, and arrange accordingly. (Pages 192, 193.)

The rulers [philosopher-kings] are, according to the foregoing, to have complete charge of breeding in the upper classes. After 40 for the woman and 55 for the man they may be completely promiscuous — they may "range at will." However, no children are to be born to or survive from such promiscuity. The two ways to prevent children from surviving are (1) abortion — "strict orders to prevent any embryo which may come into being from seeing the light"; and (2) infanticide again — such children cannot be retained, and the "parents [must] arrange accordingly."

The sex program of Socrates and Plato consists in the following: eugenics, promiscuity, abortion and infanticide.

What could have motivated Socrates and Plato to outline this beautiful plan as far as the *objective* was concerned, namely, the improvement of the race; and this atrocious plan as far as the *means* were concerned — namely, promiscuity, abortion and infanticide? That becomes an interesting psychological problem.

The answer appears obvious. They personally wanted access to many women. Their scheme involved the rulers being philosopher-kings. They themselves were to be the philosopher-kings. And they themselves would help breed up the stock — the wiser and braver a man was, the more women with whom he could cohabit.

We have here a case of eugenics being the excuse for personal license in sex matters, and personal license is excused on the ground of a self-appraisal of personal superiority.

In fact, Socrates admits that his scheme is a delightful thought, something that a philosopher-king could "day-dream" about, namely, the possession of more women than in a Moham-medan heaven. This is what he says:

. . . Yet grant me a little favor: let me feast my mind with the dream as day dreamers are in a habit of feasting themselves when they are walking alone; for before they have discovered any means of effecting [accomplishing] their wishes . . . they would rather not tire themselves by thinking about possibilities; but assuming that what they desire is already granted to them, they proceed with their plan, and delight in detailing what they mean to do when their wish has come true . . . (Pages 187, 188.)

"Feasting his mind . . . day dreaming . . . assuming that what they desire is already granted . . . delight in detailing what they mean to do when their wish has come true . . ." In short, we have here a classic case of the sub-conscious being rationalized — all for the alleged sake of eugenics, and the "welfare of the state."

The sexual scheme which Socrates and Plato outlined has always seemed immoral to us. The two upper classes were to have sexual liberties denied to the masses. Here was to be a society with a plain double standard. The underlings were not to be promiscuous; but the overlords were to have that liberty. We have wondered how long the two systems could exist side by side — restraint among the masses; no restraint among the elite. We assume that the masses would imitate the elite. All of the Socratic-Platonic society (we think) would soon be promiscuous.

When we try to place ourselves in the Socratic-Platonic society, *we* never put ourselves in the class of the workers. Nor do *we* put ourselves in the class of the soldiers. *We* positively imagine *ourselves* in the class of the philosopher-kings. That combination entrances us — to be a ruler (one of the kings) *and* a philosopher. In the Socratic-Platonic society *we* would have all the privileges of the philosopher-kings.

We are not exceptions, we are sure, in regard to the class in which we visualize ourselves. Possibly one of the reasons why philosophy is popular in denominational colleges is that the professors and the students in philosophy imagine themselves to be philosophers. And as philosophers in an ideally organized society, they would be kings.

It is then not difficult to explain why there are *Plato Clubs* on college campuses but never *Moses Clubs*. fn

## A Few Rational Arguments Against Adultery

Moses, we have explained, was against all promiscuity and adultery. Socrates and Plato, the great Greeks, were in favor of promiscuity for the two ruling classes.

Granting as we do that Moses obtained his law from God which would make it *authoritarian*, are we to conclude that the law was not also logically necessary? Or do *authority* and *reason* coincide in this matter?

We are inclined to believe that Moses considered the rational arguments (1) against adultery and promiscuity and (2) in favor of chastity and monogyny to be conclusive. Then *reason* and *authority* would become identical for him. Here are some of the rational arguments which we believe may have occurred to him.

1. The average man will not support a woman who does not belong to himself *exclusively*. If a woman will carelessly give a man sexual access, he suspects she will do the same to another man. If she does, a child may be born who belongs to another man. *Men will not support other men's children. Men will not regularly support a woman who they believe to be promiscuous; they will only intermittently support such a woman.* (See Hume's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, "Of Chastity and Modesty," page 127, Hafner Publishing Company, New York, 1948.) A man will support a woman through thick and thin if he believes she has been (or at least then is) his exclusive possession. In this regard women

are no better than men. If Mr. A begets a child by Mrs. B, Mrs. A will not (ordinarily) take the child and rear it. She will practically always insist on letting Mrs. B rear the child. She will not (except in unusual cases) tolerate Mrs. B's child in the same house or environment with her own children. We remember reading somewhere the comment by a psychiatrist that it appeared to be an unchangeable phenomena that men will *never* really forgive and forget a sex deviation by their wives, and vice versa. To have women in common or men in common may appear like a glorious public park, but practically everybody would rather have a ten foot square garden of *his own*. The smaller which you alone possess is better than the larger owned in common. In short, human psychology cannot tolerate promiscuity and no successful society can be organized on the basis of promiscuity. Neither men nor women are tolerant or nonjealous.

2. Promiscuity is apparently not what it is often imagined to be. The authority on this is Solomon. He had many wives. He must have known the approximate "satisfaction" to be got from relative "promiscuity" (because of his polygamy). If we read Proverbs correctly, Solomon says that *there is no more pleasure to be got from the second woman than from the first.\** If that is the fact, then there is no good reason for mankind to prefer promiscuity to monogyny. It is true, Solomon quotes a woman as saying "stolen waters are sweet" but he adds the immediate comment that she is a "deep ditch," a destroyer, and the road to sure ruin.

In regard to the permanent satisfaction to be derived from a strange woman, we remember some information we acquired early in life. We had employment in a fashionable residential area. Inexperience in the work and the quantity of work which needed to be done kept us in the office far into the late hours of the night. Then we would walk to our sleeping quarters a mile or more away.

Our employer had a friend whom we had learned to know — a famous ex-football player. His name was known from coast to coast. He was a popular idol. Even today it will be recognized by a new generation as a great name in football. One night we

\*Proverbs 5: 18-23.

saw this man walking on the other side of the street slightly ahead of us. He, too, was on his way home. We increased our walking speed and began to angle across the street in order to catch up with him. He heard our footsteps. It seemed that he immediately increased his gait, but we gained on him. Then his heavy, powerful figure stopped, silent, waiting. When near to him we said hello and identified ourself. His figure seemed to rise out of the ground from a half-crouching position, and he greeted us with obvious intense relief. He had assumed we were intending to rob him.

We walked on together. He was so unnerved that he was talkative. He had spent the evening with a woman downtown. He began to complain. He was annoyed at the lack of *permanent* satisfaction. He declared that afterward a man had a feeling of "revulsion" toward the woman and he wanted to know whether that unpleasant reaction was universal. We admitted we could not inform him. But his inquiry did result subsequently in our giving a broad meaning to what Solomon wrote. Women who are promiscuous possibly generally cause a feeling of "revulsion" in the man which does not help in promoting their keeping the man. We assume that the only circumstances in which a man does not have a subsequent feeling of revulsion is toward a woman of whom he is the sole possessor. Otherwise, if a marriage must experience the shock of repeated revulsions, it will not have much stability.

3. Marriage is essentially for the *protection* of women and children. Granted that men and women need monogyny for their *psychological* satisfaction, it is the women and children, especially and additionally, who need monogyny for their *physical* protection. A man will neither support currently nor accumulate funds for the use of a strange woman and strange children.

4. Actual adultery or promiscuity are, of course, far more disturbing than suspicion, but the latter is almost ruinous in itself. If a woman merely suspects her husband, she readily justifies a subsequent irregularity on her own part; and vice versa. Solomon makes reference also to women pulling their houses down (Proverbs 14:1); to give even remote grounds for suspicion is to destroy the stability of her secure control over her mate. The smarter the woman, the more discreet.

We come then to a choice between Moses versus Socrates and Plato. There is an unbridgeable gulf between their ideas. We consider the ideas of Socrates and Plato on sex relations to be destructive of society. We consider Moses a superb lawgiver. His rule is very brief: Thou shalt not commit adultery. Great and prosperous and stable societies apparently need that rule.

We believe that the lonely desert thinker on this subject (in so far as it was his thinking) completely out-thought two of the greatest of the Greek philosophers. fn

## Socrates And Plato, On Justice

We have already referred to Plato's *The Republic*. This book, which is one of the most famous in all literature and thought, is devoted to the question, *What is justice?* Obviously that is a tremendously important question.

In the February issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we recorded our general attitude toward *discrimination*, namely, that we believe in completely free and unrestricted discrimination, by anybody *except* that there is one class of discriminations which is prohibited, namely, discriminations involving *injustice*.

We are not, as most people, opposed to discrimination on the basis of religion, race, nationality, sex, wealth, wisdom, beauty, virtue, and any other standard. On all these matters we claim complete freedom. But cutting across all these standards that most people set up (but which *we* do not set up) is an entirely different classification, namely, the standards of *justice* and *injustice*.

*Justice* and *injustice* are terms which can be related to religious terms, namely, *justice* can be equated with *righteousness* and *injustice* can be equated with *sin*.

In proportion as denominational leaders of Calvinist churches begin to talk against discrimination on the basis of religion, race, nationality, etc., they have subtly shifted base. They are no longer

talking about the simple appraisal of every act as *righteous* or *sinful*, or as *just* or *unjust*. They are no longer working on the basis of a religious and moral *antithesis*. Indeed, it is believed that many who are indisposed to emphasize *the* antithesis, namely, of the evil versus the good as the term is used in the Christian religion, are the same people who have shifted away from justice versus injustice and from righteousness versus sin over to those altogether different bases of classification, namely, religion, race, nationality, class, sex, etc.

We are not "progressive" in the sense that we like the change from the simple antithesis of right versus wrong (or virtue versus sin, or justice versus injustice) over to bases of classification which do not permit simple *moral* judgments.

In a definite sense, then we go back to Scripture which is a Book on justice and virtue, and also to a book as Plato's *The Republic* which covers the same subjects. The great ancient Hebrews and the great ancient Greeks at least could state the *problem* correctly, namely:

*How discriminate according to justice and injustice, or according to the good and the evil?*

They did not befuddle and complexify and confusilate themselves with a diversity of classifications which instead of helping to solve the problem actually make a solution more difficult. The question is not the validity of a discrimination on the basis of race, for example, but on the basis of *justice*.

When, then, the trend of the thinking of leaders in Calvinist churches is away from the single standard of *sin* (or injustice) to the multiplicity of standards, namely, religion, race, nationality, class, etc., then we consider that trend to be a downward one. If care is not exercised, the members of Calvinist churches will certainly become confusilated.

We have grouped Socrates and Plato together. Socrates (470-399 B. C.), pop-eyed, squat, ugly and poor, was originally a sculptor in ancient Athens who turned to the search for knowledge and wisdom and to teaching. The Delphic oracle said he was the wisest of all men because he knew that he did not know. He is the first in the series of three men, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who are at the peak of the pyramid of fame as Greek philosophers.



Plato (427-337 B.C.) was a pupil of Socrates. It is not possible for us to separate the ideas of Socrates from Plato. Socrates (as far as we know) left no writings. Plato, in contrast, wrote many books, and in many of them he writes in a dialogue style, in which dialogue the speakers are Socrates and his pupils or others. It is difficult (for us) to distinguish therefore between what Socrates thought and what Plato thought. Plato implies that the ideas are Socrates's ideas. But Plato does not repudiate those ideas. We therefore believe that *The Republic* faithfully reflects the ideas on justice and injustice of both Socrates and Plato. (In what follows we shall use their names interchangeably.)

### What Is Justice?

*Justice* may be considered narrowly. Suppose two men have a dispute and are unable to agree. They then go to a judge. He "judges" between them, presumably according to his best opinion, of what is *justice* in this specific case.

But many men and women never appear during their whole lives in a court as contestants. They might then say that justice is not a broad problem, at least it has not been broad enough ever to touch them.

Plato and Socrates speak of justice in a much broader sense. They consider everything in life to be a question of justice. Your position in life is a question of justice. All of your relations to others are a question of justice. How society is organized and holds together is a question of justice. Who rules and who obeys is a question of justice. Who has much worldly goods and who has little worldly goods is a question of justice. Justice is different from mere legal relationships. Justice is what is *really* due you rather than what is legally due you. Justice is broader than the statutes and laws of the land.

Moses, it will be remembered, succeeded very well in regard to the problem of a *simple* statement of the law. It had to be simple to become universally usable. Socrates and Plato worked on the same problem. They, too, had to have a simple definition of justice in order to make it usable.

Here is the definition of Socrates and Plato on justice; the quotation is from a dialogue of Socrates and Glaucon (*The Republic*, pages 153-155), (our italics):

*Socrates:* You will remember the original principle which we were always laying down at the foundation of the State, *that one man should practice one thing only, the thing to which his nature was best adapted: — now justice is this principle or a part of it.*

*Glaucon:* Yes, we often said that one man should do one thing only.

*Socrates:* Further, we affirmed that *justice was doing one's own business, and not being a busybody . . .*

*Glaucon:* Yes, we said so.

*Socrates:* *Then to do one's business in a certain way may be assumed to be justice.* Can you tell me whence I derive this inference?

*Glaucon:* I can not, but I should like to be told.

*Socrates:* Because I think that justice is the only virtue which remains in the State when the other virtues of temperance and courage and wisdom are abstracted; and, that justice is the ultimate cause and condition of the existence of all of them, and while remaining in them is also their preservative . . .

\* \* \*

*Socrates.* Let us look at the question from another point of view: Are not the rulers of the State those to whom you would entrust the office of determining suits at law?

*Glaucon:* Certainly.

*Socrates:* And are suits decided on any other ground but that *a man may neither take what is another's, nor be deprived of what is his own?*

*Glaucon:* Yes; that is their principle.

*Socrates:* Which is a just principle?

*Glaucon:* Yes.

**Socrates:** Then on this view also justice will be admitted to be the having and doing what is a man's own, and belongs to him?

**Glaucon:** Very true.

**Socrates:** Think, now, and say whether you agree with me or not. Suppose a carpenter to be doing the business of a cobbler, or a cobbler of a carpenter; and suppose them to exchange their implements or their duties, or the same person to be doing the work of both, or whatever be the change; do you think that any great harm would result to the State?

**Glaucon:** Not much.

**Socrates:** But when the cobbler or any other man whom nature designed to be a trader, having his heart lifted up by wealth or strength or the number of his followers, or any like advantage, attempts to *force his way* into the class of warriors, or a warrior into that of legislators and guardians, *for which he is unfitted*, and either to take the implements or the duties of the other; or when one man is trader, legislator, and warrior all in one, then I think you will agree with me in saying that this interchange and this meddling of one with another is the ruin of the State.

**Glaucon:** Most true.

**Socrates:** Seeing then, I said, that there are three distinct classes, *any meddling of one with another*, or the change of one into another, is the greatest harm to the State, and may be most justly termed *evil-doing*?

**Glaucon:** Precisely.

**Socrates:** And the greatest degree of *evil-doing* to one's own city would be termed by you *injustice*?

**Glaucon:** Certainly.

**Socrates:** This then is injustice; and on the other hand *when the trader, the auxiliary, and the guardian each do their own business, that is justice, and will make the city just.*

How simple! Justice is doing what you are fitted to do. Injustice is doing what you are not fitted to do.

Is this too *simple* a definition of justice? We do not think so. The definition has, we believe, as far as it goes, some extraordinary merit.

We shall not, however, *finally* accept this definition.      fn

## The Merits Of The Socratic-Platonic Definition Of Justice

It would be a grievous error to fail to appreciate the extraordinary merit of the Socratic-Platonic definition of justice, namely, that "justice is doing one's own business."

Socrates in the earlier parts of the dialogue in *The Republic* has developed the fundamental idea that there is a great advantage in a society from *specialization in tasks*. A man working *only* on making shoes will become expert; another working *only* on growing food will become expert. And so Socrates provides for a society in which there is "division of labor."

This clear awareness of the advantages of "division of labor" is one of the great Socratic-Platonic insights. It took another 2,200 years before another thinker appeared on the scene who was able to make the idea still more important. This was Adam Smith who explained the idea of the "division of labor" with such clearness and force that British and western society was transformed by it. Smith made clear that if "division of labor" was good for people *within* a country, the principle holds equally for people *across national boundary lines*; therefore, free trade (as Adam Smith so clearly stated) was a boon, a sound policy, an enricher of life.

Society exists primarily because of the advantages derived from the division of labor. If people were not able to produce more by division of labor than otherwise, then *society* would never get beyond family units. The family would exist for biological

purposes. But the further development of society would be nullified unless there was division of labor. Men would not become experts. Not being experts, they would have no reason to exchange. Not being interested in exchange, they would be indifferent to their fellowmen and to their society.

Some religious leaders have erred grossly in connection with this "division of labor" idea. Abraham Kuyper, Dutch Calvinist theologian and prime minister of the Netherlands, for example, never understood that the *international* division of labor was a fragmentary part of the *general concept* of division of labor, and that *therefore* basically free trade was a sound and moral principle. (See January, 1956, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

Or consider the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, probably one of the greatest charlatans and false prophets in the history of men. He had a program of weaving his own loincloth, growing his own rice, thatching his own hut — in short, not more but less division of labor, doing everything as much as possible himself. This was a return to the "simple life" and self-sufficiency, and less division of labor. There is no better way to insure that 100,000,000 Hindus are to die of starvation than literally to carry out Gandhi's reactionary program. It is only a high division of labor in the world which will support as many people on the face of the earth as exist today.

Socrates and Plato 2,300 years ago had a much sounder idea on the economics of society than Gandhi, or for that matter, than many social reformers and devout Christians or Calvinists of the present age.

Progress in society depends on a *further increase* in the division of labor, a further specialization, a further exchange, a greater interdependence, a greater (be not shocked) fraternity among men, more brotherliness, or in *our* language, more brotherly love in exactly that *cooperation* which exists because of the division of labor. We believe in being *progressive*, that is, that there be more and more division of labor; we do not wish to retrogress to a former state of less division of labor or to be static and have the present degree of division of labor. When we hear preachers from their pulpits extol the simple life, we dissent. When they complain about the monotony of work resulting from becoming experts and

high producers and therefore exchangers of goods, we regret that they have never read Plato's *The Republic*, or far better, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. When they advocate less division of labor, they in effect wish to substitute 16 hours of *variety of work* for six days a week and 52 weeks a year (4,992 hours) in place of eight hours of *specialized work* for five days a week and 50 weeks (2,000 hours). We consider that to be a poor trade.

There are two kinds of skills recognized in the Socratic division-of-labor principle: (1) natural differences in talents, and (2) acquired differences in skills.

Socrates and Plato acknowledge both kinds of differences. That is the same as saying that they were deliberate, unqualified *discriminators*. In the February issue we wrote about not being able to sing (no sense of tone or of rhythm), but nevertheless demanding admittance to a choral society — (falsely) in the name of justice. That is exactly the principle underlying the program promoted almost universally throughout the world *today*. There is no real emphasis on *fitness* as a basis for deciding (discriminating) what a man should have or do. The emphasis is that you should not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, nationality, etc. (even though you may believe that those factors affect *fitness*, at least *your* idea of fitness). You get then a whole set of collateral standards for *justice*. Socrates, however, kept it simple; just *one* standard, namely, fitness. (This is the same basis on which modern *laissez-faire* economics is based.)

There is a curious note missing in Socrates's program for justice. That missing note is the note that there should be equality. Socrates does not say that justice consists of *equality*. *Fitness* as a standard is the opposite of *equality*. It is in fact the injection of the idea of *equality* into the picture which nullifies the fitness principle. I may wish to be a member of a choral society, even though I am unfit because I cannot carry a tune, but if they exclude me I may raise a cry of *injustice* because I do not have "equality" with those who can sing.

But Socrates and Plato were operating on just the opposite principle from equality. They wished to organize society on *differences* and not on *likenesses*. This is a profound insight on their part.

What is the root principle that Socrates and Plato were using? This: people are created different; *differences* determine what they should do; their *differences* constitute their *advantages* and *not their disadvantages*. On the basis of their differences they can in every case, without a single exception, always and forever be proved to be ahead if there is a free division of labor. This is equally true for the less talented as well as for the highly talented. There are no exceptions to this principle. Justice and not equality then does the best for them, and also the best for society.

In short, Socrates and Plato have here a great magnificent definition of justice.

They did not, however, realize fully how sound and advantageous their principle was. It took an Adam Smith and a David Ricardo and a modern Mises to make that infinitely clearer and cogent. fn

## **The Demerits Of The Socratic-Platonic Definition Of Justice**

From what has been written in the previous article it might be concluded by readers that the society based on the Socratic-Platonic idea of justice is indeed the ideal society, as Socrates and Plato declared positively that it was. That conclusion is erroneous.

The Calvinists in the Netherlands several decades ago put out a Christian encyclopedia, which they called *Christelijke Encyclopaedie*, (J. H. Kok, Kampen, Netherlands). Such an encyclopedia could not, of course, ignore the great Greek philosophers, and we have read the articles on Socrates and Plato in this encyclopedia.

The article on Plato was written by Prof. Dr. T. Hoekstra. In that article Dr. Hoekstra has this summary paragraph (our translation):

This State of Plato is a coercive\* state, in which there was no place for freedom of the individual.

\**dwangstaat*.

A *coercive* state? And justice is supposed to exist in a *coercive* state? There is something wrong here.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has devoted considerable space in various 1955 issues (May, July and November) outlining the obvious idea that *coercion is sin*. Our reasoning was simple. The Sixth Commandment in The Decalogue reads: Thou shalt not kill. This is the simplest possible formulation of the general idea of *not coercing*. For us then, the commandment could almost as well read: Thou shalt not coerce. This same idea is formulated in positive form, in the New Testament, when we read in the Sermon on the Mount: Blessed are the meek [who do not coerce], for they [believe it or not!] shall inherit the earth. We recoil then from the Socratic-Platonic definition of justice, if it involves, as Dr. Hoekstra declares, *coercion*.

In fact, *everyone* who reads Plato's *The Republic* will realize that Socrates and Plato have outlined a *coercive* state. None of us, if he himself has carefully read *The Republic*, needs Dr. Hoekstra to point that out. We come then to this series of ideas: (1) coercion is sin (and injustice), (2) Socrates and Plato outlined a so-called ideal society based on coercion; (3) therefore, the ideal(?) society which they outlined is an evil society (and unjust). But it was exactly a *just* society which they set out to define. What is wrong?

The answer is that it is not the *goal* that is wrong but the *means* to attain the goal. The goal is that everybody should find his proper place in a society because there is division of labor (or functions); *but the real question is HOW?* In the preceding article we only explained the *objective*, the *goal*, the *end* result aimed at.

The answer of Socrates and Plato is that there are to be *philosopher-kings*, who are to determine and regulate *everything* in this society, that is, they are to determine what each person is to do and *for what he is fitted*; that he must do. This regulation (today we would call it interventionism) pertains to the work that each person is to do, the marriage or mating of each individual, the education of each individual, etc. — in short, it pertains to everything.



The philosopher-kings in the Socratic society are supposed to be above all base self-interest. This is supposed to be avoided by having property in common and women in common — that is, communism in the possession of women and of goods. These philosopher-kings do everything for the "welfare of the State," that mystical body which supposedly is knitted together by the bonds of love for all.

The Socratic-Platonic means to attain the goal has two characteristics irreconcilable with the Biblical position (or any realistic position). These two characteristics are:

1. The *use of coercion* by the philosopher-kings; and
2. The *assumption of the existence of intellectual capacity to determine (plan, control, intervene in) everything* in society; this is a hubris, a piece of boundless and inexcusable intellectual arrogance, as if men were gods to be able to regulate everything.

In regard to the use of coercion in the Socratic society it should be noted that coercion is extended to compel the doing of what is considered to be good in a positive sense. It is obviously quite another matter to consider coercion to be proper in order to prevent certain acknowledged evils from being perpetrated on a neighbor. It is one thing to have a law forbidding (coercing) me from defrauding my neighbor by gross misrepresentation; it is quite another thing to have a law *commanding* (coercing) me to do some "positive good" (whatever that may be!) for my neighbor.

Who can decide on a positive good which might be done for a neighbor? There are three separate answers:

1. *I* can decide myself what I want to do for my neighbor or what I do not want to do.
2. The *neighbor* can decide what I must do for him, whether I wish to or not.
3. *Third parties* (separately or collectively, like the State; usually collectively, of course) can decide for both of us — me and my neighbor.

If the second prevails, it is theft or violence. If the third prevails, it is the same thing but is believed by nearly everybody to be different because it is *called* welfare. But both two and three are *coercion*. They involve compulsion. They are sinful. They are unjust. The only position which has any moral value whatever is the first.

Beyond the coercion there is a worse sin, to wit, *pride*. Men who arrogate to themselves to decide what is good for others (beyond the restraint of evil as defined in the Decalogue) are playing at being GOD. *They* know better. They know better than every man for himself. The judgment of a few philosopher-kings is better than the aggregate individual judgments of all men. The mastery of individual detail which only all men individually can master will be taken care of by the broad rules of the philosopher-kings or by their direct meddling into every matter.

This conscienceless intellectual arrogance, this hubris, of the philosopher-kings is a violation of the First Table of the Law. Men are to supersede the Supreme Being as the governor of the affairs of men. What God did not undertake to regulate, some finite philosopher-kings will undertake to do.

Calvinists will reject this whole scheme of Socrates and Plato:

1. They will abhor the coercion that is involved.
2. They will deny that any philosopher-king can be omniscient enough to regulate everything; and finally,
3. They will be realistic enough to discredit any claim of philosopher-kings of being so good, so nondepraved, as invariably to work for the welfare of all.

The grand plan of Socrates and Plato turns out to be a damnable coercion, an inexcusable intellectual arrogance, and an unrealistic denial of total depravity.

In fact, Karl Marx and Lenin and Stalin have merely put into effect exactly what Socrates and Plato recommended. Plato's "republic" is merely Stalin's "people's democracy" with 2,300 years between them. In principle they are both the same thing, a coercive state, a *dwangstaat* as Dr. Hoekstra calls it.

It may well be asked whether in denominational colleges Plato's *The Republic* is equated with Stalin's communism as in honesty it should be. fn

## Moses, On Justice

We have previously in this issue contrasted Moses and Socrates-Plato on the question of sex morality. On that question we unqualifiedly follow Moses, as being a more realistic and benign lawgiver.

But can we also follow Moses on the *general principle* for the organization of society, that is, in regard to his ideas of *justice* or *righteousness*, as distinguished from the ideas of Socrates and Plato? We shall answer that question briefly and emphatically.

We believe that there is no significant difference between the ideas of Moses and the ideas of Socrates and Plato in regard to the goal of society — namely, *justice* (or as Moses would say, *righteousness*). Both, we believe, would accept the definition given by Socrates — the idea that justice is that everybody should find his proper place and get his proper due. Moses may not have been so explicit about stating the goal as Socrates and Plato, but the methods Moses prescribed are exactly suited to that end, and so the idea of justice *as a result* is clearly the same for both the Hebrew and the two Greeks.

But then they part company. The difference between them on the *means* to accomplish the objective is an unbridgeable, irreconcilable difference.

Socrates and Plato propose *coercion*. Moses proposes complete freedom, noncoercion, "meekness."

We are here face to face with the wholly unique character of the Mosaic law. It is not a law "to do good"; it is instead a law "to restrain evil." Socrates proposed a state which would accomplish the good; Moses proposed a state which would restrain the bad.

In order to restrain the bad Moses said: honor father and mother; avoid coercion; do not commit adultery; do not lie; do not steal; do not covet. But aside from that *you may pursue your legitimate self-regarding interests*.\* You do not need to live for the state; nor for your neighbor; live for yourself BUT do not pursue your liberty at the expense of your neighbor (by coercion, immorality, lies, theft and covetousness against him).\*\*

The contrast between Moses and Plato should be clearly understood. Begin with that which is not arguable, namely, everybody should find the best place in society in which he can satisfactorily perform; on this basis everybody attains his maximum potential and everybody obtains for himself maximum justice.

But how decide what each man can best perform? (1) Are *you* to decide that yourself at the expense of others? If so, you are authorized to become a coercer. (2) Is a *government bureaucrat* (a philosopher-king) to decide for you? Then he becomes a coercer. (3) Is your *neighbor* to decide for you? Then he becomes a coercer. Moses authorized none of these. Plato authorized the second.

Moses arranged for this system: the only acts that should be performed are when you and your neighbors can come to a voluntary agreement, that is, that you have a *contract society*\*\*\* and not a *coercive society*, a *voluntary society* and not a *tyranny*, a *meek society* and not a *violent society*.

Justice cannot be expected to be the result of coercion (1) by *A* for himself against his neighbors; nor (2) by a neighbor against *A*, nor (3) by neighbors collectively (government) against *A*. If coercion is inconsistent with justice, how can noncoercive justice be implemented? The following explains the way Moses's non-coercive justice would work.

Following Socrates, we say that *A* should have his proper work (whatever that is), say, cobbling shoes. Suppose *A*, however,

\*For important phases of this problem, see the March, 1955, and later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

\*\*This looks at life only from the viewpoint of neighbors, not in the relation of man to God. That is a larger and broader problem.

\*\*\*See use of this term in Mises's *Human Action* (Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1949), Chapter VIII.

tries carpentry for which he is unsuited. Nobody will buy *A's* unsatisfactory houses. He is obliged to change because his neighbors are not well served by his houses. *A* does not have his proper work and quits it. But *A* was not coerced in a real sense of the word. It is his choice to have gone into carpentry and to go out of it.

Say that *A* next turns to cobbling shoes, and assume that he does that well — so that his neighbors can profit from buying his shoes. *A* is now genuinely performing a *service*; otherwise they would not buy his shoes. His production is a brotherly deed; it does his neighbors some good.

There may, however, appear to be a possibility that justice (*A's* opportunity to do his own work) may miscarry. Suppose *A* is a foreigner or has a certain religion or belongs to a certain race and therefore *B* and *C* and *D* are prejudiced and will not buy *A's* shoes. But the shoes *are really good*. *B* and *C* and *D* then hurt themselves when they refuse to buy *A's* excellent shoes. Injustice by a man never lasts long when it is at his own expense. In a very short time *B* or *C* or *D* will change his mind and buy. But the "injustice" toward *A* will also be frustrated by "competition." If *B* and *C* and *D* are so hostile to *A* that they are willing to hurt themselves, then *E* and *F* and *G* will begin to buy *A's* shoes. In fact, the more "unjust" *B* and *C* and *D* have been, the lower the price of the shoes and the greater the opportunity of *E* and *F* and *G* to profit from the malignancy and folly of the others. Eventually, the price of shoes will be the full market price. Justice will prevail.

Moses's great noncoercive law has therefore *three* great devices to protect justice: (1) *A's* free choice of his own work; (2) the self-interest of the neighbor; and (3) the freedom (competition) of all buyers (neighbors).

Society then finds its maximum potential on the basis of meekness, noncoercion, agreement, fraternity, or, if you will, *brotherly love*.

Any other kind of brotherly love must be based on coercion by somebody. How indeed can that be brotherly love?

And so Moses is the strangest lawgiver of all time. All other lawgivers legislated to restrict liberty. Moses alone, solitarily and grandly, legislated liberty.

All other lawgivers set some men up as rulers over other men in a positive sense. The rulers could tell those who were ruled what to do as well as what not to do. One man (or men) was authorized to lord it over other men. Some mystical public benefit was supposed to come from the coercion by the alleged wise and the alleged good men over other men — as if there were any who were really wise and really good.

Calvinists say that they believe in total depravity. Nobody, they say, is really good, or really trustworthy; we all fall into sin and unrighteousness (injustice would be the word Socrates would use). But this is purely a fictional principle for Calvinists unless they make the practical application that Moses did, namely, all that you can trust to the men in government is to restrain evil. You cannot trust a government to do what is good in a positive sense — a welfare state.

As a legislator Moses is the most unique in all human history. Nobody else set out to do so little — namely, restrain evil. Nobody actually accomplished so much, namely, *unleashed all the latent abilities of all men* fired by legitimate self-interest but without exploitation of the neighbor.

You can think of Moses as a refugee Egyptian prince, or you can think of him as a desert herdsman loafing away his time while taking care of sheep and goats, or you can think of him as a powerful, sagacious thinker in the Sinai desert, or you can think of him as a mere passive phonograph record for God at Mt. Sinai when he came down with the two stone tablets of the law, or you can think of him as a combination of any of the foregoing four — but of one thing anybody and everybody can be certain, viz., those two stone tablets represented the greatest legislation in all the history of mankind — a marvelous *revelation*.

Compared with that legislation, the legislation of the greatest of the Greeks is a gross error and an evil product.

We are reminded of what the English essayist wrote about Francois Villon, the blackguard French poet who "founded" French literature. Villon was a sorry specimen of mankind, living (as much as possible) off the earnings by prostitution of his girl friend. And he was a wassailler and a thief and the rest. Of course, such a rogue would spend much time in prison, and occasionally at the end of each term would come blinking into the bright sunlight. But Villon was not much for light and beauty and goodness. He ignored all that and spent his time in all kinds of vileness; Stevenson uses the figurative expression of "munching crusts and picking vermin." We assume Stevenson was referring to monkeys in the zoo, munching their crusts and picking vermin off each other and eating.

That is the way we look at the grand effort of Socrates and Plato. To follow them in regard to justice instead of following Moses is like "munching crusts and picking vermin" and like ignoring the great expanse of the firmament, and sunlight, and liberty, and the free winds that blow.

Three thousand two hundred years after the great legislator Moses, modern social thinkers in England and elsewhere came up with a modern version of the identical idea. This modern version took the name of *laissez-faire*.

The curious thing is that many conservative and liberal Calvinists are opposed to *laissez-faire*, a term which consists of two French words that mean the same as that Moses legislated, viz., *freedom except no freedom to do wrong*. In PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we follow Moses and we accept *laissez-faire* because it is consistent with Moses.

Shall we believe Scripture? Or is it an unreliable Book? Is the wonderful soundness of the Mosaic Law proof of anything? In our thinking it is; it is proof that the law of Moses is the Law of God. Any contrary law, whether of Socrates, or Lycurgus, or Solon, or Draco, or Calvinists who believe in interventionism or in any law to do positive good — is for us a law not from God but from an evil source.

What then is justice? Justice is that every man does that for which he is best fitted; further, that that for which he is best fitted is to be determined freely without coercion, according to his own inclination and not according to the command of men in government or the claims of neighbors; and finally, that the rewards for doing that for which each man is best fitted be likewise determined freely without coercion. In short, justice can exist only in a free-market society, in a *laissez-faire* society, in a Mosaic society, in a Law-of-God society.

And when a society becomes that, it becomes prosperous — as Scripture promises. And when a society deviates from that, it becomes nonprosperous — as Scripture threatens.

The teaching of Scripture and the findings of sound economics agree. fn

## Religion And Culture, Again

When it is implied that men lack *culture* unless they tack Platonic moral philosophy onto Biblical moral philosophy, then we conclude that we shall never possess *culture* because we are convinced that the two are irreconcilable.

Apparently, however, in some Calvinist circles a synthesis of Biblical and Platonic moral philosophy has been "accomplished." We consider that to be retrogression and not progress. The extent of the synthesis pretended to be accomplished is worth research and inquiry. fn

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## **"He Has . . . Systematically Examined Every Important . . . Problem"**

The publisher's dust jacket (paper cover) of a book of essays entitled *Planning For Freedom* by the famous economist, Ludwig von Mises, tells a few things about the approach to the study of economics made by this great social scientist. It says among other things about Mises (our italics):

. . . he has in a series of scholarly investigations *systematically analyzed every important economic problem*, critically exploded inveterate errors and substituted sound ideas for discarded fallacies.

We call attention to the clause "systematically analyzed every important economic problem." This expression describes a basically sound approach to every problem in life. Imagine Mises as a young social scientist setting out in life in the field of economics with the intention of "*systematically analyzing every important economic problem.*"

Calvinism, a phase of the Christian religion, needs today what Mises has been doing conspicuously in economics. *Every important problem in religion and ethics, specifically every important problem in Calvinism, needs to be systematically re-examined.*

A young Calvinist who, as the result of his religious education, has an affection for Calvinism can well take as his goal the thorough study and systematic re-examination of Calvinism, and its restatement in *modern* terms. What he needs for that purpose is some ability; a capacity for hard work in religion and in all of the sciences, especially the praxeological sciences (social sciences). What he needs above all is honesty and intellectual integrity. He must be more than a mere repeater of what Calvinists in a previous age have taught. There is not, in fact, anything that Calvin himself taught that should not be re-examined. (Whenever we have *carefully* examined Calvin's ideas, we have been impressed how many ideas he analyzed only cursorily and by no means thoroughly.)

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM also has that general aim, namely, to *analyze systematically every important Calvinist problem.* What

we shall do will at best be only a small fragment of the work that should be done.

An objective, independent research approach is necessary. Whoever sets out with the *predetermined* purpose to prove a predecessor or contemporary Calvinist to be right or to be wrong, whether a Warfield, a Kuyper or a Hodge or Calvin himself, has by his very approach disqualified himself from *objective* work. The word *systematically* in the clause we are quoting excludes a prejudiced approach whether favorable or unfavorable.

The word *every* should not be ignored. It includes *ethical* problems covered by the Second Table of the Law, but also *theological* problems covered by the First Table of the Law. (We use *ethical* as pertaining to the relation of men to men; and *theological* as pertaining to the relation of men to God.) PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has selected the more modest field, namely, ethics, for its primary field of "systematic analysis." Although that is a relatively modest field, it is still an enormous field. At this time we mention two of the subjects in the ethical field concerning which we have said little to date:

- (1) Problems related to the Seventh Commandment,  
*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

This *sex* field as we shall analyze it includes such problems as population growth and birth control, population migration, miscegenation, divorce and remarriage, polygyny. On such problems there are some strange answers which have become popular among Calvinists and there are also strange silences and evasions. Some of these answers appear to be in violation of Scripture, illogical, and in contradiction of the laws of psychological motivation. Some Calvinist denominations have evaded "meeting up" with these problems, except maybe to employ a nonscriptural solution borrowed from the "world."

- (2) Problems related to the Eighth Commandment,  
*Thou shalt not steal.*

This *property* field is related to both private and public conduct. There is, therefore, undoubtedly private *theft* and public *theft*. In a fairly long life this writer has not yet seen any Calvinist church take a stand against *public* theft. This theft amounts to

billions annually. If a poor man steals \$10, and is caught, he must confess before the church; but if the powerful *public* steals \$10 billion, the church is as silent as the Sphinx of Egypt.

In PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we propose to tear the mask of ignorance, sanctimony and unscriptural principles from off these iniquities, knowing that exactly in those quarters where there is declamation about "brotherly love" and "ecumenism" and "Christian culture" and "equality" there will be severe hostility to the solutions we believe should be found, which solutions we shall show are scriptural.

The future of every church depends on it continuing to have members who *systematically analyze every important religious problem*.

\* \* \*

We recommend to every banker, lawyer, minister, doctor, physicist, chemist, biologist, psychologist, economist, farmer, etc. that each of them "*systematically examine every important problem*" in his respective field. It is a sound approach to great achievement.

fn

## What Are The Problems Of Calvinism?

Einstein and Infeld in their book, *The Evolution of Physics*, (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1938) emphatically make a point, namely, that it is more difficult to *state* a problem than to *solve* a problem. What is never stated in a correct manner is not solvable.

Einstein and Infeld speak as mathematicians and physicists. Anyone with experience as a businessman will realize the soundness of the Einstein and Infeld view, because the same situation prevails in business. Lack of awareness of a problem is a far more common cause for failure to solve that problem than knowledge of it but inability to solve it.

Keeping the foregoing in mind we ask our readers this question: *what ARE the problems of present-day Calvinism?* We shall be glad to hear from readers what they consider are the five modern most-important problems of Calvinism.

We believe that it will be an interesting intellectual exercise for thinking Calvinists to state simply and clearly their *modern problems*.

Once we have correctly expressed the *problems*, we can then all set about *systematically* examining and endeavoring to solve them.

How do you state modern Calvinism's problems?      fn

## Faith Alone Versus Faith Propped By Something Else

### I

The *Christian* faith cannot be freed of doubt. There is *ever recurring* doubt, because the ultimate issues of life are "unknown" to the Christian whether wise or foolish or learned or unlearned.

### II

It is a mistake to believe that the holder of any other faith or *any other view of life* can be freed of *his* doubt. The Mohammedan, the Buddhist, the agnostic, the atheist, and the scientific technician all must, inevitably, be affected by *their* doubts. For them the ultimate issues of life are equally unknown. Whence, why and whither man? The answers to those questions are beyond all science.

A man who is doctrinaire and never afflicted by doubt regarding the character of man and his origin and destiny is essentially foolish. He does not know that he does not know. He overestimates the human mind. His epistemology is wrong. (Epistemology pertains to the limits of the human mind.) A man who thinks he *knows* by himself, through his own mental processes, the ultimates of life is arrogant and mistaken.

And so all wise men learn to doubt. Why, they say to themselves, be cocksure of what *cannot* be known?

The church father, Augustine, was acutely aware of the excellent initial dialectical function of *doubt*. (Note that we put in the adjective, *initial*.)

But then the thinkers progress further. First they passed from shallow sureness to doubt. Then from doubt they move to the next step, namely, *doubt about their doubt*. Indeed, all men who think finally come to that curious, inevitable result — doubt about their doubt.

However, the last and final step that many of the wisest of men make is this: they are unwilling to rest in doubt or in doubt about doubt as a *final* view of life. Such agnosticism has an unnerving, deadening effect.

### III

Every addition to a man's knowledge is not a new brick on the top of his intellectual edifice. It becomes, in a sense, a substitute brick. But the substitute brick is by definition different in size and shape. All old bricks must then be readjusted. Every addition to knowledge is therefore "disturbing." To acquire knowledge and to think is synonymous with disturbance of mental quiet. And so people with undisturbed "faith" — Christian or otherwise — are people who have stopped growing intellectually.

### IV

The Christian religion claims for itself the position of the "assurance of faith." It declares that that is not subjective, but that it relies on something external, namely, the promises of God (or better said, the covenant of God.) Those promises are accepted as being recorded in Scripture.

The next question is: What is Scripture? The present Scriptures are obviously man-chosen. Being man-chosen, the question arises why the particular Scriptures were selected rather than others. Confidence in the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures, therefore, becomes a crucial foundation for devout Christian faith.

Curiously — or rather naturally — the two Westminster Catechisms and the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterian churches begin with just that article of faith — the reliability and inspiration of the Scriptures. The Belgic Confession of the Reformed churches in Articles II through VII does the same.

### V

The Scriptures cover the "unknown" and the "known." The "known" as we use this term is that part which constitutes good

*ethics* between man and man, that is, the Second Table of the Law. By "good ethics" we mean the kind of ethics that "work," that men can live by and prosper *because they live by it*. If the Second Table of the Law could be found to be not right, then *our* personal confidence in the First Table of the Law would also be disturbed. It is, therefore, important if not requisite for *our* general religious faith that Moses be a *superlative lawgiver on ordinary everyday ethics*. We believe he is. That reassures us on all else in Scripture. That is why we wrote as we did about Moses in the March issue.

## VI

The position of some Christians on these matters differs from ours. They too get high voltage shocks of doubt as they add to their knowledge. And whither do they seem to turn? They do not recoil on elementary Scripture and on ideas logically related to Scripture; they fall back on "culture" and on secular knowledge which (appears to us) is not easily reconcilable to what Scripture teaches. In other words, the props they need and use for their hard-battered faith (a need which is inescapable because of the finiteness of man's mind) are not props with which we can have mental peace. The supreme soundness of the *ethics* of Scripture are our prime prop for belief in the *religion* of Scripture. In fact, figuratively speaking, the walls of our mental *religious* edifice are braced by the flying buttresses of scriptural *ethics*.

## VII

We address ourselves to *all* men. All men are forced back onto some assumption — some faith — about the nature and destiny of man. In the broadest sense, agnosticism is also an assumption, a faith. We seriously advance the proposition to "believers" and "unbelievers" alike that the supreme soundness of the *ethics* of the Scriptures is the best logical buttress that there is for the Christian *religion*. (We have not said that it is the foundation of faith; we have merely said that it is a prop, a flying buttress, bolstering the walls.)

The foregoing explains our great interest in the *ethics* of the Christian religion, that is, our great interest in the Second Table of the Law: thou shalt not kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet.

All this will not be of interest to anyone who has a completely "frozen" intellectual structure, who is no longer afflicted by any doubts on the ultimate issues of life, simply because he is no longer acquiring new knowledge. fn

## The Decline Of The Ministry

Nine of us were sitting around the luncheon table at the club during the intermission in the meeting. The conversation had turned from business and had become personal. The chairman stated his viewpoint; his voice was mocking: "John," he said, "belongs to a little . . . church. But intelligent people don't believe Christian teaching anymore."

Most men do not express themselves so baldly as that. But in practice they seldom go to church, and when they do it is often merely a concession to the social demands of their wives, or an attendance which involves no assent on their part to what they hear preached from the pulpit.

Among protestants many members are really only nominal members. They have small knowledge of what the church teaches. They do not accept what the church teaches as a real guide for life. Three out of four members in attendance in some churches are women, many of them elderly.

Against real competition part of the church has become somewhat weak. That competition consists of theaters, golf, amusements of all kinds. Sunday church services are steadily losing out to golf courses, travel, picnics, entertainment.

The ministry is not presently in such great repute as it was formerly. A preacher is hardly respected by many professional and business men except as a well-meaning man; the *intellectual* respect is small. The doctrines a minister teaches or professes leave most men cold and arouse their skepticism or even amusement. Not one in a hundred businessmen has enough interest to discuss the *doctrines* of a church, and explore and analyze and accept and defend them.

The protestant churches have no real hold on their members. The ardent members join a sect or some new organization. The



others just drift into indifference. Churchmen are not fighting an uphill fight; they appear to be fighting a losing fight. Considering some of the ramparts they are manning, it can be confidently predicted that they will be ignominiously defeated.

A few isolated denominations still have a considerable hold on their members. But this hold is weakening; twenty-five years from now it may be largely gone. All that needs to happen is a continuation of the trend of the latest twenty-five years.

This decline of protestantism and of the repute of its ministry should not be blamed on the lay members or the nonmembers who have already drifted away. The responsibility lies wholly with the churches, their seminaries, and their ministers.

Unless the protestant churches become up-to-date and withdraw from their mental confusion and faithlessness, nothing will save them from further religious anemia. The count of the spiritual red corpuscles will some day be so low that the churches will be only a ruin. (We are not referring to buildings but to the religious ideas of people.)

We submit for consideration as true the statements: (1) that most of what the churches have been accepting from the "world" has hurt the churches\*; (2) that the churches have largely become mere sounding boards or megaphones for ideas not derived from Scripture; (3) that the churches do not testify to any significant extent against the real evils in the world but against trifling or even spurious evils or evils perpetrated by the weak; the churches testify hardly at all against great and malignant and powerful evils; (4) that the churches do not understand the structure of modern society and that therefore their social ideas are erroneous; and (5) that the churches must have a new reformation, if they wish to become influential again.

The future of the churches is up to the churches. We are disposed to paraphrase Blaise Pascal; he wrote: "The church is in an excellent state if it is sustained by God alone"; we would say: The church is in an excellent state if it is based on Scripture (correctly interpreted) alone. But we also hold that the praxeological sciences (social sciences) can make a contribution to the correct interpretation of Scripture. fn

\*They seem to have a penchant for borrowing what is not the best.

## Doorbraak (The Break-Through)

One half of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM's subscribers are persons of Dutch descent. Only a few of them are recent immigrants, and so knowledge of the religious, social, economic and political situation in the Netherlands is vague or practically nonexistent among such Dutch Americans.

The influence of Dutch Calvinism on the Calvinism of Americans of Dutch descent is declining rapidly and in a few years will probably be practically nil. There are several reasons for this: (1) as long as these Dutch Calvinists in the United States used the Dutch language they were isolated from Americans but in communication with Netherlands; but the language barrier has reversed itself; it now opens Americans of Dutch extraction to American influences and closes the channel of Dutch influences; (2) as native Americans these Calvinists of Dutch extraction are becoming aware that many ideas in the political, social and economic fields held by Netherlands in Europe are incompatible with the American tradition. If Dutch ideas are to be retained, it means that the person will be out of tune with traditional Americanism and vice versa; (3) a generation ago immigrants came from a fairly *solidaire* and united Dutch environment; there were no grave differences within it; today the Calvinist environment from which American Calvinists of Dutch extraction originated is no longer united; there are basic (maybe irreconcilable) differences among them; the broken front of Calvinism in the Netherlands reduces the force of its impact here.

The influence of Dutch Calvinism on American Calvinism is past its peak.

Nevertheless, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM wishes to continue to be in communication with our Dutch brethren. Such communication makes desirable the having of accurate knowledge of actual conditions in the Netherlands. How small that knowledge is has come home to us from our own recent endeavor to read Dutch magazines and newspapers. This is extraordinarily difficult even for someone who knows the Dutch well (by customary language standards). For example, initials in the Dutch dailies and magazines such as

CHU or ARP or PrvdA, and these initials are constantly used, mean nothing to an American unless he knows what the Christelyke Historische Unie party stands for; or the Antirevolutionnaire Partij; or the Partij van de Arbeid (Labor Party); similarly, on nearly all subjects.

In current Dutch papers there is frequent reference to the Doorbraak — the break-through, as a break-through of a dike. We have realized from the contexts in which the term is used that it refers to something both political and confessional. We have asked Mr. M. A. van Wijngaarden, editorial secretary of *Tot Vrijheid Geroepen* (Called Unto Liberty), a new Dutch libertarian publication which we believe thinks "more American" than any Dutch paper we know, to write for us an article on the Doorbraak so that all Americans could understand it. Mr. van Wijngaarden does, we are confident, just that in the following excellent article. We believe all our readers will be interested in this because what is related may be fairly symptomatic of trends in other European countries. In private life Mr. van Wijngaarden does legal and commercial work for a construction firm in Amsterdam. He has been a law student at the Free University of Amsterdam, and a student in economics at the Advanced Institute (School) of Commerce of Rotterdam. Mr. van Wijngaarden's article follows:

The editors of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM have asked me to write an article about the Dutch political parties. They have requested me especially to explain what is meant by the *doorbraak*. *Doorbraak* is a Dutch word meaning break-through. It is a significant Dutch development. The subject is a very complicated one; to make it as clear as possible I have simplified it as much as I can.

### Dutch Political Parties Before The War

The number of the Dutch political parties is large, at least compared with the United States where there are only two of them. In the nineteenth century, we had in the Netherlands, also two parties: the Conservative and the Liberal. Presently there are seven political parties represented in the Dutch parliament. In many municipalities there are still more. What is the reason?

In the middle of the nineteenth century not everybody was qualified to vote, but only people who were financially comfortably situated. The poor men were excluded from the electorate. The majority of the Calvinists and Roman Catholics belonged to the class which was not qualified to vote. They (justly) believed that the government did not take proper account of their interests. The big question in those days was the fight for independent (Christian, private or parochial) schools. Both Calvinists and Roman Catholics wanted financial subsidies for their schools in order to equalize the burden of supporting government and private schools.

The so-called *school fight* (to obtain a fair proportion of tax money for nongovernment schools) was the reason for the origin of the denominational political parties in Holland. The Roman Catholics left the Liberal Party; most Calvinists left the Conservative Party. The Calvinists founded the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Mr. Groen van Prinsterer was the famous leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party in its early days. There was much opposition to it. When Groen van Prinsterer was the only representative for his party in parliament, his adversaries ridiculed him by declaring him to be "a general without an army."

Nevertheless, the denominational parties grew steadily. In 1891 the Anti-Revolutionary Party had 21 seats in parliament, and the Roman Catholics 25, out of a total of 100 seats.

In 1894 a division developed in the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Under the guidance of the well-known Dr. Abraham Kuyper the Anti-Revolutionary Party was continued by one group. Another group followed Dr. de Savornin Lohman, and took the name Christian Historical Party. The reason for this division, according to the judgment of many contemporaries and historians, was more a question of personal controversy between the leaders than real fundamental differences. Notwithstanding various efforts to restore unity, these two separate Calvinist political parties continue to exist as well as a third (mentioned later).

At the turn of the century a new political party came to the front, namely, the Socialist Party.

In those days the voting in parliament was mainly "left against right." The Left was represented by Socialists and Liberals; the

Right by Roman Catholics, Anti-Revolutionaries and Christian Historicals. The Conservatives had in the meantime disappeared from the political arena. Some years later two additional parties were organized: the Communist Party and the Political (Christian) Reformed Party (*Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij*).

The existence of so many parties is favored by the system of *proportional representation* which is used in the Netherlands. All votes, from all over the country, are counted together. A system of *geographical representation* is, of course, a disadvantage for small parties, for if a party has many votes, but no majority in any geographical area, it would not get any representation in parliament.

An important consequence from the existence of many parties is that one party practically never gets an absolute majority in parliament. A parliamentary coalition becomes necessary in order to get a working majority.

### Consequences Of World War II

In World War II, the people of the Netherlands suffered under German occupation for five years. Anyone who has not lived in a German occupied country cannot realize how great the terror was in those years.

It is, therefore, easily to be understood that all Dutch people (except a small number of traitors) joined the resistance against Nazi Germany, and it was also natural that political differences did not at that time play a large part in the common struggle.

Already while the war still continued, various politicians made plans for post-war politics. They thought that the extraordinary unity of the Dutch people which was being demonstrated in the common resistance to Germany during the war could be continued after the war in new political alignments. This turned out to be a great illusion. Although a country may be united while under a general oppression, it does not necessarily follow that there will be equal agreement when it is free and when normal life again takes its course.

The leaders of the Socialist Party looked forward to there being one great "progressive" party in which there would be room

for everybody regardless of what his conception of life was. Nominally for this party the two foundations of Marxism, namely, class-war and historic materialism, were abolished.

*That phenomenon which consists in members of the Calvinist and Roman Catholic parties leaving their old parties and becoming members of a party which has neither Calvinism nor Roman Catholicism as its foundation is called "Doorbraak" (break-through).*

Numerically *Doorbraak* (break-through) has not been a success. Relatively few members have left their confessional parties in order to become members of the Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, or abbreviated P.v.d.A.).

But the *indirect* consequence of the *Doorbraak* has been much more important; that indirect consequence consists of *the influence of the Doorbraak upon the aims and policies of the denominational parties.*

The Labor Party, because it had no absolute majority in parliament, could only obtain a majority by a coalition with one or more parties. The Roman Catholic Party had a key position, namely, it could make a coalition with either the Labor Party or the Calvinist Parties. Because the Roman Catholic Party feared the loss of members to the "radical" labor party, it chose a coalition with the Labor Party. Thereafter, *volens nolens* (willy nilly) it was obligated to support the socialistic policy; it was the "captive" of the Labor Party. This, of course, was of great benefit to the Labor Party.

The Calvinist parties could have done a good job if they had operated as genuine *opposition* parties. But they have not done so in respect to social and economic questions. As was the case with the Roman Catholic Party, the Calvinist parties feared that they would lose many members unless they were willing to stress the "social" aspect enough.

An important factor in this situation has been that the Christian Labor Organization (CLA) has a great influence in the Calvinist parties, especially the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Many members of the Labor association are also members of the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Now the CLA has also had a big competitor in

post-war Holland, namely, the Socialist Labor Organization. In order not to lose members to the Socialist Labor Organization the CLA has felt obliged to become more "radical," that is, it had to go in the Socialist direction.

And so, as the CLA has become more radical, the Anti-Revolutionary Party also practically automatically became more radical.

### **Appraisal Of The Situation**

American readers who are in sympathy with the Anti-Revolutionary Party may become pessimists about this party. In a sense that would be justified. But I wish to point out two facts.

First, the facts mentioned in the foregoing are mainly related to social and economic problems. In two other fields, namely, that of education (the Christian school) and the maintenance of the Sabbath, the Anti-Revolutionary Party holds fast to its old position.

Secondly, there is a steadily growing opposition against the socialistic trend which the Calvinist parties are pursuing. This opposition group is represented by the "libertarians." Their struggle, however, is very difficult. For example, Calvinist papers will not publish "Letters to the Editor" when they contain libertarian concepts. If you call yourself a libertarian, you are abused as being an egoistic man, etc. Furthermore, a libertarian does not make campaign promises to one group which he can only keep at the expense of some other groups; and so he is not "popular" with the mass of voters.

The foregoing article gives American readers only a brief summary of the situation in regard to Dutch political parties and the *Doorbraak*. Maybe I can tell you more about this subject some other time.

mavw

## **The State And The Second Table Of The Law**

The church standards of the Christian Reformed church (that is, its constitutional documents — The Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism and Canons of Dordt) as originally drafted specified that the state or government was obliged to enforce *both*

the First and Second Tables of the Law of Moses (the whole Decalogue or Ten Commandments).

That would put the state in the position of enforcing "religion," namely, the First Table of the Law. If the state is to enforce the *whole* Decalogue, there can be no separation of church and state.

The Christian Reformed church has amended the article in The Belgic Confession, which covers the question of the relation of church and state, in such a manner that the state has no proper activity in the field of *religion*, and vice versa.

That brings a man to the next question: should the state enforce the *Second* Table of the Law? The Second Table of the Law governs *ethics* and not *religion*. It is our position that this *is* the proper field of the state.

Nevertheless, that puts us on the horns of a dilemma—what to do when the laws of the state conflict with rather than enforce the ethical rules of the Second Table of the Law? At the moment we have specifically in mind the laws in the sex field — laws on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

Our answers to these questions are the following:

1. The state definitely should cover by its laws the field of ethics.
2. Those laws of the state pertaining to ethics may not conflict with the Decalogue.
3. If they do conflict, then as individuals or as a religious denomination, the obligation is to disobey the state and obey Scripture. This follows from the principle that it is "more necessary to obey God than to obey man."

If there is in a Calvinist church a slavish demand to obey the state regardless what the state is and legislates and does, then the church members may feel absolved from obeying Scripture. We in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM unequivocally believe in obeying Scrip-



ture rather than men (the state), whenever the regulations of the two conflict.

The difficulties regarding divorce and remarriage, in a church as the Christian Reformed, stem almost entirely from the contra-Biblical action of the state. Remove that institutionalized factor, and the problem is manageable by the church. Fail to neutralize that institutionalized factor and the problem is unmanageable by the church. To follow the state in these matters (unless the state itself follows Scripture) is to establish a conflict. As the state takes the lead, the church can only follow the state or sputter back fecklessly. Neither action solves the problem.

A church which survives a long time must have adopted many sound policies. The Roman Catholic church which has survived for 1900 years has established its own legislation on divorce and remarriage. By doing that it avoided the problem of the legislation of the church on marriage being a mere rag on the tail of the kite of the state.

The fact seems to be that many churchmen *wish* to follow the legislation of the state. They appear not to wish to resist the legislation of the state. Consequently, they praise obedience to the state. They thus make a virtue of disobeying the mandates of Scripture whenever the rules of the state conflict on sex matters with the rules of Scripture.

*Success* has become the criterion of many Calvinist churchmen. They measure *success* in terms of additions to the membership rolls. They are annoyed at the idea of *quality* in the membership. To fail to follow after the (secular) State in regard to divorce and remarriage will reduce, they apparently think, the membership, or *success* of the denomination. However, the Roman Catholic church has done very well despite its strict rules. *Success* in the form of large membership does not, therefore, depend on passively following the state decrees on divorce and remarriage.

In the article that follows we are contrasting the problem of a church in Africa with the problem of a church in the United States.

## Polygyny\* In Nigeria

There is in the Christian Reformed church an unwearied agitation to change the rules of remarriage following un-Biblical divorce. The chief advocate of this is a veteran and powerful churchman. More recently much of the agitation has been carried on by men who at one time were associated with Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. These men and others are active in publishing *The Reformat Journal*, a monthly circulating in the Christian Reformed church. One of the five members of the editorial board is Dr. Harry R. Boer, at one time professor of missions at Calvin Seminary and, prior to that, for a time a missionary in Nigeria, Africa. Considering that Boer has been a missionary "on location" the rules on marriage and church membership accepted in the area of Christian Reformed mission endeavor in Negro Africa are of interest.

### Native Churches In Nigeria

There is an indigenous (native) church in Nigeria, West Africa, in the area where the Christian Reformed church conducts a mission. This church is known as *Ekklesiya A Sudan*, which we suppose means Church of Sudan. That native church is not a part of the Christian Reformed church nor is it a "sister church." However, Christian Reformed missionaries work in this area; the denomination spends money there.

Any foreign native (indigenous) church will almost certainly show radical differences from an American church and that is to be expected in Nigeria in the *Ekklesiya A Sudan*. One of the problems in Nigeria is polygyny, comparable in character to the divorce and remarriage problem in the United States.

Why does polygyny exist in Nigeria?

### Reason For Polygyny In Africa

We have made inquiry *why* polygyny exists in Africa. We believe that there is a very strong reason for it. We are opposed to polygyny in the United States but in Africa this polygyny situ-

\*Sometimes called *polygamy*.

ation is very understandable to an American male, if he is acquainted with the facts.

Unless colored babies in Nigeria are breast fed, the death rate is terrific. Further, not only do babies need to be breast fed; the longer they are breast fed, the better. Of course, breast feeding cannot last long if a new baby is on the way. *Therefore*, concern about the death rate of babies, because they cannot be breast fed during new pregnancies, has resulted in the custom that a man does not associate with his wife except at intervals of more than two years. (Babies are said to be "spaced" about three years apart.)

But that is a long time for the male who has a wife to whom he pays no marital attention. And so the African Negro reasons: I want more than one wife. I will enjoy one at a time while the others are pregnant or nursing small babies. (Further, his wealth and prestige are also measured in the number of wives he has.)

As long, therefore, as infant nutrition other than mother's milk is inadequate in Nigeria, polygyny is likely to continue unless the African black man is satisfied with only one wife and satisfied to approach her only once every two or three years.

### Westermarck On Polygyny

There is an article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* on polygyny by the late famous anthropologist, Professor Edward Alexander Westermarck, a Finn, who became professor of sociology at the University of London. What Westermarck writes on the cause of polygyny in equatorial Africa is (one might say) verbatim what a present-day missionary to interior Nigeria would report. Westermarck ascribes polygyny to the dissatisfaction of the males with having only one wife if, in order to reduce infant mortality, he can associate with his wife only every two or three years. Westermarck writes:

One cause of polygyny is an excess of marriageable women; we may safely say that whenever there is a marked and more or less permanent majority of women in a savage tribe polygyny is allowed. But while the existence of available women makes polygyny possible, the

direct cause of it is generally the man's desire to have more than one wife. There are various reasons for this desire. Among many of the simpler peoples the husband has to abstain from his wife not only for a certain time every month, but during her pregnancy, or at least during the latter stage of it, and after childbirth until the child is weaned, which often means an abstinence of a couple of years or more.

### Moses On Polygyny

Westermarck wrote:

Among the Hebrews a man could in any circumstance have a plurality of wives, and there was no difference in the legal status of different wives, nor was there any limit to the number of wives a man might take.

To our knowledge Moses nowhere prohibited polygyny; *he regulated it*. He wrote some very plain language about taking on more than one wife. In Exodus 21:10 Moses wrote:

If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.

According to this no Jew could diminish his first wife's food allowance nor clothes. Apparently, no second wife could be the cause for reducing the standard of living of the first wife. To what a man had accustomed his first wife, to that she could demand an unreduced quantity and quality. The second wife then would have to be supported out of a man's abundance, his superfluity.

But the interesting phrase is the phrase "duty of marriage." What does it mean? This "duty of marriage" obviously means that the first wife is to receive as much marital attention as she received formerly. The first wife might not be neglected *as wife*. Moses says that the attention — the duty of marriage — shall not be *diminished*.

In Africa they seem to do it differently. Whereas Moses obligated a man to give undiminished attention to his first wife, the

Nigerian polygamists rotate them for the reason that has been explained.

The Apostle Paul, who did not make an enthusiastic appraisal of marriage, being apparently a happy bachelor, makes an unfavorable comment on failure to perform the "duty of marriage." In I Corinthians 7:1-5 he wrote:

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife her [sexual] due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not the power over his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other [maritally], except it be by [mutual] consent for a season that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and [then] may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency.

The plain meaning of this statement is that a husband has a marital claim on his wife; and vice versa, a woman has a marital claim on her husband. If they do not have mutual marital access they "defraud" each other. The nonaccess can only be "by [mutual] consent" and "for a season" — apparently meaning a short time.

Fortunately, a typical man's cycle appears more rapid than a typical woman's cycle and he will usually be the aggressor (as the woman demands). It must be quite another matter to satisfy more than one wife. (In oriental (but not African) polygynous societies such women are guarded in harems by eunuchs. A normal male could not be trusted with the task; no woman could maintain discipline. This explains the great utility of eunuchs in ancient polygynous societies.)

Where polygyny does not prevail but where monogyny is the rule, greater freedom of social and business association of the sexes is possible and practiced. The men and women balance off; the women are not "defrauded." Such a society is more normal and more stable.

## The Nigerian Church On Polygyny

Undoubtedly, polygyny constitutes a very serious problem for the Nigerian church. The solution of the problem in this church is that a man who is a polygamist *may not be admitted as member*. They are happy to permit him to attend but he is denied membership and the sacraments.

Under the Nigerian circumstances we see no reason why polygamists should not be admitted into the church. Abraham and Jacob, Gideon, Elkanah, David, Solomon and many other Old Testament saints were polygamists. We doubt whether they would have considered themselves to be properly treated unless they could keep all of their wives and the children of those wives and bring them along into the church.

We assume polygyny will continue unabated in Nigeria as long as several conditions prevail:

1. That there are more mature females than mature males;
2. That the nutritional situation for babies continues to be bad, and consequently, as Westermarck writes, a man "has to abstain from his wife . . . during her pregnancy, or at least during the latter stage of it, and after childbirth until the child is weaned, which often means an abstinence of a couple of years or more."
3. That the Nigerians reject sanitation and modern dietary practices which are accepted in Western civilization, and which would make unnecessary the periodic marital abstinence presently practiced in Nigeria, which marital abstinence has the meritorious purpose of keeping down the infant mortality rate.

What really astonishes us is the narrow definition apparently given by mission leaders (as Boer) to the mission program. He rejects, we understand, the "comprehensive approach" which means that the mission effort covers all of life — religious, social, economic, political, etc.\* The gospel *only* is to be preached. That is all that missions apparently should do. The contrary view (to which

\*Statement based on information in a book review. We have not read Boer's doctoral thesis.

we subscribe) is that there is a whole complex of benefits which Christianity carries with it. Those benefits should be part of the parcel. This is related to our principle that there are many temporal blessings which accrue from the gospel — if the gospel is not shorn of all its natural by-products. We subscribe to the "comprehensive approach."

What astonishes us more than anything is the apparent gross neglect of any program to improve infant nutrition in Africa. Why does not the Christian Reformed church send baby food to Africa? In all the years of the Nigerian mission we have not once heard of a program to save Nigerian babies. *Only the gospel*, it seems, is to be preached, something pertaining to the next life. But in this life, be not concerned that the span be short because of malnutrition!

The Negroes in Nigeria have found a solution — two or three years of marital abstinence. But then the males say: we want more than one wife to enjoy serially as others in turn are pregnant and breast-feeding young babies.

What does the church say? That the gospel *alone* is adequate in Nigeria, and that there is no need of a "comprehensive approach"?

Of course, eugenists will have their misgivings. A higher birth rate in Africa unaccompanied by a higher death rate will certainly populate the world with the presently less-civilized people, *unless the Nigerians turn to birth control*. What does the church say about that?

These economic and public health problems are problems that churches do not face with candor and courage. These issues we plan to discuss in future issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. But in the meanwhile, we have grave doubts about the humanity and the clarity with which mission leaders are handling foreign mission problems. The questionable solutions abroad do not augur well for adequate solutions suggested by them for domestic problems.

**In America Divorce and Remarriage  
Are Preferred To Polygyny**

Farmers formerly had many children; that was because the children were an asset; they could do farm work *early*. City people

have regularly had less children (and certainly not as Adam Smith surmised because urban and prosperous women were less fertile!); in cities children are financial liabilities; they cost a lot; and so universally city birth rates have been lower.

Ordinary observation in this case is adequate to know the *causes* of different practices regarding birth rate. In the United States the social conditions which are different from those in Nigeria explain *our* different marital problems. Our problems are not polygamy but easy divorce and remarriage. Sober appraisal of the situation results in the conclusion that men in America are more astute than in Nigeria. American men prefer to have wives *serially*, by means of divorce and remarriage, rather than simultaneously in polygyny. Let us consider how calculating American men have been in avoiding polygyny.

No man in a quiet state of mind will want more than one wife at a time except he have some well-paid eunuch to take charge of his harem. A *wife* must be maintained under a man's own roof; this is in contrast with a *mistress*, who is secretly supported elsewhere. Two or more women in a house are very bad for peace. The women are given to quarrelling and conniving to obtain favors for *their* children versus the children of the other women.

It has always appeared reasonable to us that women are willing to resort to polygyny and that men stop it as soon as they can. We would put the problem in this manner: when it was a question for a woman of being a second or later wife *or* not ever having a husband, most women apparently say, I would rather be a second, third, etc. wife *than no wife at all*. Women also do not approve of prostitution; knowing that single women without hope of marriage may drift into prostitution, women favor the surplus women being taken care of by becoming the second, third, etc. wives of polygamists. But when the sexes (in maturity) become approximately equal in number polygyny is generally a doomed institution. The men are wise if they see to that.

If a man wants more than one woman, it is far better for him to have women *serially* rather than simultaneously. Divorce *and* remarriage is then the ideal system for a man. Two or more wives at one time? Look at the cost! Consider the intrigue and controversies!



The law in America permitting easy divorce and remarriage is far more suitable for the American male than polygyny. When then many people are in favor of relaxing the rules on remarriage (which relaxation will remove the principal brake that has existed on divorce) they are excellently adjusting to the "needs" of the American male (and female).

It may be doubted, however, whether the churches will think strictly in Biblical, as distinguished from secular, terms. The western secular world in which we live has abolished polygamy; it is considered somewhat "disgraceful"; the American churches will probably under no circumstances make concessions about letting polygamists become members. On the other hand, the western secular world does tolerate un-Biblical divorce and remarriage; the church will, therefore, be under powerful pressure by adjustable churchmen as well as others to tolerate un-Biblical divorce and remarriage. The pattern of the world in which it lives, largely determines the morals of the church. The church is not the "salt" of the world; the world is the "salt" of the church.

We are not convinced that a genuinely Biblical approach has been made to the polygyny problem in Nigeria. We consider the existing solution in Nigeria to be a defective solution; the thing to do is to alter the circumstances that superinduce polygyny. But that requires a "comprehensive approach" against which Boer has argued in his doctoral thesis.

It may be argued that polygyny is *sin*. Polygyny, however, was freely permitted in Hebrew society. Polygyny is determined by circumstance, and in certain societies may be considered to be a permissible institution. It may be argued that the *sin* of polygyny was committed while a man was in "heathen ignorance" and therefore the *sin* must be tolerated by the church. But it is not the ignorance that is pertinent; it is the infant death rate that is pertinent. Take away the *reason* for polygyny and the institution will die a natural death. Why talk about the sin of polygyny or excuse it as ignorance when there is no real attempt made to reduce *infant mortality*?

Similarly, the solution to the American divorce and remarriage problem lies in changing the condition which aggravates the problem. The condition which aggravates the problem is the action of

the state in permitting easy divorce and remarriage. Refuse to abide by that circumstance and the problem of divorce and remarriage can be solved by the churches in America, as the polygyny problem in Nigeria can be solved by removing its cause.      fn

## The Interesting Quotation By Rev. Leonard Verduin

Occasionally one reads something which is said more forcefully by someone else than one has ever been able to say it himself. This holds true for us in regard to something written by the Reverend Leonard Verduin in the February, 1956, issue of *The Reformed Journal*, page 15. Verduin has an article entitled, "On the IUS Reformandi." Readers will remember that we believe the broadest (but by no means the most simple or graphic) way to interpret the Sixth Commandment (Thou shalt not kill) is to say: *Thou shalt not coerce*. Note with what force Verduin makes that point in the following quotation:

One still finds traces of this objectionable notion that Bucer, and with him the other Reformers, defended so vigorously; it has not yet dawned on some, whose eyes were otherwise inclined to be quite open, that coercion is in itself a violation of the law of Christ — as the Bohemian Brethren put it — and that voluntarism is of the very nature of the Gospel. Some of the deliverances of the great Abraham Kuyper are quite inadequate, according to American taste. He said repeatedly that "if coercion by the secular powers worked then we would not for one moment hesitate to employ it" (*Baatte staatsdwang, we zouden geen oogenblik voor staatsbemoeiing . . . terugdeinzen*). All Dr. Kuyper's eloquent assertion that history had shown coercion to be ineffective fails to satisfy; for at any time a man can stand up and declare that with modern techniques of social controls it *will* work, and then we would have all the terror of the Inquisition back upon us. Kuyper seems to have been sufficiently medieval still

so as not to realize, as did Augusta\* and his people, that coercion is contrary to the law of Christ.

We concur fully with Verduin: Abraham Kuyper was completely off base when he wrote: "If coercion by the secular powers worked then he would not for one moment hesitate to employ it."  
fn

## The Heidelberg Catechism's Explanation Of: Thou Shalt Not Kill

The Heidelberg Catechism (drawn up in 1563 in Heidelberg on the Rhine in the Palatinate, Germany by two Germans, Ursinus and Olevianus) is one of the accepted "standards" (constitutional documents) of the Christian Reformed church. In this famous Catechism the authors explain the commandment, Thou shalt not kill, as follows (Lord's Day XL):

**Question:** What does God require in the Sixth Commandment?

**Answer:** 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 willfully expose myself to any danger. Therefore, also the magistrate is armed with the sword to prevent murder.

**Question:** But this answer seems to speak only of murder?

**Answer:** 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.

\*John Augusta was one of the four men who composed the Council of the Bohemian Brethren, sixteenth century protestants in Bohemia who built largely on the ideas of John Huss and the Waldensians. We agree with Verduin that the Bohemian Brethren held sound ideas on the relation between church and state. See the very interesting letter by Augusta quoted at length in the *Reformed Journal* by Verduin.

**Question:** But is it enough that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?

**Answer:** No; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves: to show patience, peace, meekness, and all kindness towards him, prevent his hurt as much as in us lies, and do good even to our enemies.

The foregoing is a noble explanation of the commandment, Thou shalt not kill. But it is worthy of note that the Catechism makes no mention that *coercion* is generally forbidden. Let us analyze the answers somewhat in detail.

First, there are the *extremes*, namely, simply the *mental attitudes* of envy, hatred, anger and desire of revenge. These are not categories of action but of motivation.

Second, there are the actions of wounding and actually killing. They are certainly the *extremes* of action.

Then, there is the term, *dishonor*, which refers to slander and the manifestation of contempt. These are mostly *words*.

We have then the categories prohibited by the commandment against killing strung out in this fashion:

<u>THOUGHT</u>		<u>ACTION</u>	
	<u>WORDS</u>	?	<u>GESTURES</u>
envy	dishonor	?	wound
hatred			kill
anger			
revenge			

(1) Thought (motivations), (2) words and (3) violent gestures of wounding and killing. But what about the large open space under the general category of *Action*, between *Words* and *Gestures*? The authors of the Catechism put nothing in between! It is that omission which has had a restrictive influence on the interpretation of the Sixth Commandment in Calvinist churches using the Heidelberg Catechism. The general effect of this has been a singular blind spot regarding the Sixth Commandment.

What should be inserted in the blank space? Our opinion is that it should be the term *Coercion*. Certainly, there must be something to fill the area between *words* and the *violent action of wounding and killing*. There is no word which covers this area, neglected in the Catechism, so broadly or so well as the word *coercion*. It is only when coercion is included in the definition that the Decalogue protects freedom of person, speech, religion, etc.

We get then this interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism: the Sixth Commandment forbids (1) motivations hostile to neighbors, (2) words that dishonor, (3) coercion that restrains legitimate liberty, and (4) violence that injures physically and even kills.

If Abraham Kuyper had filled in the missing segment in the explanation of the Sixth Commandment in the Heidelberg Catechism in the manner outlined, he would not have written: "if coercion by the secular powers worked [would be effective] then we would not for one moment hesitate to employ it."

One more thing should be noted. The Heidelberg Catechism does cover an important idea very well. In this case Kuyper's deviation from the Catechism is conspicuous. The Catechism says (note our italics):

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*, . . .

Kuyper as quoted indicates he would be glad to use, if he thought they would be effective, "the secular powers" in order to apply "coercion." But the Catechism specifically forbids that program by the use of the phrase "or by another." Neither Kuyper *nor any agency he could employ* (secular powers) has any authority to apply coercion.

Indeed, the real blind spot of many Calvinists is not that they fail to sense that they may not *personally* coerce someone else; the real blind spot is that they think they may coerce somebody through a *collective agency* such as the state, the government.

The subtle way in which this evil slips in is probably psychologically the most interesting of all aspects of the Sixth Commandment.

What happens is this:

1. The Sixth Commandment is a commandment which pertains only to the *actor* and never to the person acted upon.

2. All interpretations of the Sixth Commandment must apply, therefore, to the action of the actor and not to the effect on the neighbor.

3. The allegation of the actor that his coercion or violence is *good for the neighbor* should never be heeded; what is good for the neighbor is always a question of judgment on which the actor's judgment should not supersede the neighbor's judgment; if that should be permitted then all violence and coercion would be justified by the mere allegation of the aggressor; that is exactly what happens in communist countries; the actor (aggressor, the government) engages in a multitude of coercions for the *welfare* of the people!

4. Because it is not determinable whether the recipient is injured or benefited — and certainly the judgment of the actor on this question is unreliable, men being what they are — therefore, *all coercion either to injure or to benefit the neighbor is forbidden*. The greatest crimes in the world have been perpetrated under the excuse that the coercion involved was for the welfare of the victims or someone else!

5. But Scripture left no loophole for such iniquity to be perpetrated under the mask of a benefit to the recipient. Scripture simply forbids *all* coercion. It restricts the actor in *his* actions; *he* may not coerce; an alleged beneficent purpose is irrelevant. Scripture does not acknowledge such a purpose.

6. There are, as has been reiterated in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, certain specific coercions which may be applied — namely, the coercions against doing wrong, wrong being defined as in the Second Table of the Decalogue.

The all-pervasive requirement for any action in order for it to be nonsinful is that it must manifest *meekness* — be noncoercive.  
fn

## The Testimony Of A Labor Leader In Canada Against Coercion

The Christian Labour Association of Canada puts out a magazine known as *The Guide*. The editor is Mr. F. P. Fuykschot. The February, 1956, issue contains the following information which is interesting (our italics for attention-getting purposes):

### A Scientific Enquiry Into Union Rights

The "Canadian Reformed Magazine" announced that the Canadian Reformed Churches have appointed Mr. Westera L.L.D. to make a study of the Labour Laws.

Especially the following subjects will be considered:

- a. The history and legal status of the labour unions;
- b. Whether the closed shop clause is legal;
- c. Whether the check-off clause is legal.

Mr. Westera has been asked to submit a report of his findings to the churches after he has finished his studies.

...

... The union security clauses [that is, clauses requiring compulsory membership] in the Anglo-Saxon and in the Scandinavian countries have an old history. In the address of Prof. Dr. W. Hug to the Convention of the International Federation of Workmen's Evangelical Associations held in Copenhagen in 1950 this eminent authority in the field of labour laws made a short survey of the freedom of association and the right to unite.

In view of the union security systems (closed shop, union shop clauses) he concluded that these clauses "leave the door wide open to trade union monopoly and, therefore, are the beginning of the end of the workers' freedom of association."

\* \* \*

Organized labour which is not based upon Christian principles consider these union security clauses as a pro-

tection of their union and have their eyes closed for the consequence of these clauses, namely that the freedom to join a union of his own choosing without restraint on the part of unions or not to join is completely killed by laws that allow such clauses in labour contracts.

In Canada such is the case.

While the labour acts proclaim the freedom of the worker (and the employer) to join a union or not to join it, and protect him (as far as possible) against coercion on the part of the employer, *there is no protection at all against violation of this freedom by labour unions in their contracts. Art. 33 of the Labour Relation Act of Ontario and corresponding sections in labour laws of other provinces, clearly state that such violation of the freedom of association is allowed.*

It will be a hard job to have these laws amended. *Actually the only way for freedom-loving people, though they are union-minded is to fight the practices of coercion, used in any way by unions which seek a monopoly.* Such a fight is now engaged by our local in the Vancouver area. . . .

We assume Fuykschot wrote the foregoing. We are pleased to read that he clearly sees that coercion in the form of union monopoly (closed shops and union shops) are an evil. Fuykschot calls on "freedom-loving people" to "fight the practices of coercion." We congratulate Fuykschot on his views which are both economically sound and scriptural. More power to him. fn

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## Academic Freedom At Calvin College

*This little analysis of academic freedom is not intended to be pertinent for only one small denominational college. The problems raised by the demand for academic freedom are of broad importance. A specific case is merely used as an illustration. Non-Christian Reformed readers will, we hope, attach special significance to this article, because it also discusses some fundamental school organization questions.*

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is against academic freedom at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, the denominational college of the Christian Reformed church.

A proposition against academic freedom may dismay some readers of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Here it is, a publication devoted to *liberty* and *noncoercion* and *meekness*, which plainly states that it is *against* academic freedom at a denominational college.

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### Academic Freedom Differs From Freedom Of Speech Or Of Thought

We should, first of all, having plainly stated our position, relieve ourselves of any criticism which is based on the view that *academic freedom* is the same thing as *freedom of thought* and *freedom of speech*. We heartily support *freedom of thought* and *freedom of speech* for every member of the faculty and for every student at Calvin College. Those two freedoms — freedom of thought and freedom of speech — are priceless.

The apparent contradiction consisting in favoring *freedom of speech* for faculty members but opposing *academic freedom* for them can be resolved by explaining what we and others mean by *academic freedom*.

Academic freedom is the freedom of faculty members to teach at a school their own thoughts and promote acceptance of their own speculations and conclusions independent of what supporters of the school may wish.

### The Fallacy In Identification Of Academic Freedom With Freedom Of Speech

In what follows various propositions, and the conclusions derived from them, will be considered. We shall (1) clarify terms which are being used; (2) examine critically the soundness of propositions (premises); and (3) determine whether certain conclusions follow from the premises. Because we are sure it will be helpful to do so, we shall use the customary syllogism which consists of three parts, for example:

(*Major premise*) 1. All men will die.

(*Minor premise*) 2. John is a man.

(*Conclusion*) 3. Therefore, John will die.

The major premise or proposition states the broad rule; the minor premise tells what or who can qualify to come under the broad rule; the conclusion declares that the general proposition is true for the specific case mentioned.

Here is a syllogism of that kind on the subjects of freedom of speech and academic freedom.

1. Freedom of speech is a universal right of men.
2. Academic freedom is nothing else than freedom of speech.
3. Therefore, academic freedom is a universal right of men.

The *minor premise* in this syllogism is not true. *Academic freedom* is not simple freedom of speech. Consider the obvious differences which are mentioned below.

If ten mature men are gathered on a street corner and are exchanging opinions, each is entitled to freedom of speech. (1) The other nine men do not need to listen if they do not wish; they can walk off. (2) Further, they are men who because of their maturity can independently reject or accept what somebody else says. (3) Finally, if what one man says displeases a second, that second person cannot injure the first as, for example, a teacher might do by declaring that a student is "flunking" the course.

The teacher's position is different. (1) Many pupils *must* attend school; they cannot walk away from what they hear. (2) They are, in most cases, immature and at a profound disadvantage against a teacher. (3) They are under the apprehension that if they disagree with what the teacher teaches they may be given a failing mark.

Therefore, the proposition that academic freedom is nothing else than freedom of speech is not correct.

Everyone, independently, will realize that there must be an error because the conclusion in the syllogism will appear incorrect to them. It reads: Therefore, academic freedom is a universal right of men. But a farmer does not claim academic freedom; nor a doctor; nor a truck driver. If something is a *universal* right as the conclusion declares, then everybody has it. However, only academic people claim academic freedom. It must obviously be something different from what is genuinely a universal right of men, namely, freedom of speech.

Let us approach the problem differently:

1. Every person is always entitled to express his opinions.
2. A teacher is a person.
3. Therefore, a teacher is always entitled to express his opinions.

This is the basic syllogism which underlies the idea of academic freedom. If these statements are correct then academic freedom must be allowed in Calvin College and in all schools.

The syllogism contains a serious error. The error is a common one, namely a homonymy (ho mon' y my) — that is, there is a key term in these propositions which has two meanings. The term which has two meanings is the term *person*. That term is used both in the major and in the minor premise.

In the major premise the term, person, means the person *as a human being and citizen*. In the minor premise the term means person *as a teacher*.

The syllogism should be restated and then its defect will be obvious. It should read:

1. Every person in his capacity *as a human being and as a citizen* is entitled to express his own opinion.
2. Jones *as a teacher* is acting in his capacity as a human being and as a citizen.
3. Therefore, Jones as a teacher is entitled to express his own opinion (to the class).

But now it is clear that in the major premise Jones is being looked upon as a person who is a human being and a citizen, whereas in the minor premise he is, in fact, being looked upon as a teacher.

The right of every man to freedom of thought and to freedom of speech is therefore not a right extended to him in his specific function of *teacher*. Jones, a teacher, can shout his ideas on every street corner *as citizen*. It is entirely different if he claims that right in his position *as teacher*.

## Who Has Freedom At Calvin College?

If a member of the Christian Reformed church is to think in the customary groove he will say: control of what is taught in a school rests with one of three:

1. state
2. church
3. parents

(If control of what is taught rests with the state you have a *public* school; if control rests with the church, you have a *church* or *parochial* school; if control rests with the parents, you have a *private* school.)

Then we Christian Reformed Calvinists sit back and proudly say: we believe that the control should rest with the *parents* and *therefore* the school system should really be a *private* school system. And further, when the parents are Christians and insist on Christian instruction in their private school, then they may call their schools *Christian schools* (which is the customary name for the private schools supported by members of the Christian Reformed church; this support is by individuals as such and not as church members).

The trouble is that our list of possible *controllers* of the education of children is incomplete. We listed three:

1. state
2. church
3. parents

There should be a fourth, namely,

4. teachers.

The proposition involved in the idea of genuine academic freedom is that the *teachers* control the education — and not the state, nor the church, nor the parents.

Again, we are not challenging freedom of thought or freedom of speech for Calvin faculty members *as citizens*. Let them walk off the campus and *as citizens* express any idea that they wish; *that is their right as citizens*. When they walk back onto the campus they should not claim to control the teaching *unless the*

*proposition that parents are responsible for the education of their children is wrong.* If the responsibility of the parents is disputed then the whole foundation on which the theory of Christian schools is laid is in error and should be abandoned.

Who has *freedom* at a Christian school — the state, the church, the parents, or the teachers? In our judgment, *only the parents*, unless they *voluntarily* relinquish their right to someone else — state, church or teachers.

### **The Irreconcilable Inconsistency Between Potential Academic Freedom And Assessments To Support Calvin College**

It happens that Calvin College is not a private (parental) school but a parochial (church) school supported by assessments on members of the Christian Reformed church. Everyone admits that as a *church* school it violates the proposition that the *parents* are responsible for the *education* of their children.

There is a historical explanation for this inconsistent situation. At one time a large percentage of the college students intended to become ministers; the college was primarily a preparatory school for the seminary. That justified at that time the parochial character of the college. Now, however, the overwhelming majority of students who attend the College have no intention to enter the ministry or are disqualified by sex from doing so.

Because of the history of the relationship of college and seminary every family in the denomination is assessed \$12 per year in support of the college. The number of families in the denomination is presently 46,355 (1956 *Yearbook*). The assessment is therefore designed to raise \$556,260 per year.

An assessment by the denomination is a claim, a demand. Presumably, if a man refuses to pay it, he can be disciplined and eventually ousted from the church.

If academic freedom were admitted for the faculty members in a denominational college, say Calvin College, and if there are assessments made on members of the denomination, say of the Christian Reformed church, then the conclusion should be that the members are being coerced to pay for something over which they have lost control.

To be consistent, the denomination must plainly deny the right to academic freedom or it should relinquish assessments for the school. If people would *voluntarily* wish to support academic freedom at Calvin College, that is their individual right. But to *assess* people to support academic freedom at Calvin College is another matter.

### Academic Freedom And A Free Market

In its simplest form society can be organized on either of two foundations:

1. The sovereignty of producers; or
2. The sovereignty of consumers.

(There is a third type, namely, the sovereignty of a ruler or ruling class — a tyrant or a tyrannical government. Such a type may operate at the expense of both the producer and the consumer; it may be a leach on the public. But the public itself must organize society either on the basis of freedom (primacy) of producers or of freedom (primacy) of consumers.)

If Smith demands that he is to be sovereign as producer, he cannot (and still be consistent) be sovereign as consumer.

If he wants to have his way as consumer, then as producer he must cater to the wants of consumers. If he wants his way as producer, then consumers must be satisfied with what has been produced. No man can in a sensible manner demand that society be organized on a basis that the individual is sovereign both as producer and consumer. It is an impossibility.

The only society which we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM consider to be a Biblical society is a society organized on the basis that the *consumer is sovereign*. The producers must comply or conform to what consumers want, or they should and will go "broke."

Such a society is a *free market* society or, in economic language, a *laissez-faire* society. In Biblical language it would be called a noncoercive society, or a society based on *meekness*.

Now what is *academic freedom* relative to a free market society?

Academic freedom, *as the term is commonly being used*, is an educational system in which the producer is sovereign and the consumer is not. What the teacher, as producer, claims he has the right to teach, that, he declares, must be tolerated. What a student (or a parent for his child, as consumers of the knowledge being taught) want and demand is not to be heeded. Here in the case of academic freedom there is to be an exception to a society in which the consumer is sovereign. In this case, the producer (the teacher) is to determine what is to be taught and not the consumer.

It is obvious that academic freedom is an attempted exception to the great principle of a free society, namely, the principle that the consumer is sovereign.

Historians say that in the Netherlands the great ideas of economic and political liberalism took a peculiar emphasis, namely, an emphasis on genuinely free *education*. The *consumer* of education in the Netherlands has been protected by laws favoring *parental* or *any kind* of schools that the parents wanted. Liberalism in England and in America took another track and has not really as yet discovered the great soundness of the Dutch idea of *freedom in education*.

### The Teacher And His Freedom

We come now to the *rights* of the teacher.

We propose first to inquire what is meant by a *teacher*; he can function in one or more of three ways: (1) in the customary sense of the term, namely, as a distributor of secondhand ideas; (2) as an original thinker; (3) as a research man.

Some teachers are all of these — distributors of secondhand ideas, original thinkers, research men. The question is: does academic freedom apply to a teacher in all, or in some, or in none of the capacities? The reasonable view appears to be the following:

1. As research men teachers should be completely free. How could research be done without freedom?



2. As original thinkers teachers should be completely free. How can a man be an original thinker if he must abide by the past?

3. As distributors of secondhand ideas teachers may in some instances be free, and in other instances not be free. We shall explain this in what follows.

A teacher as a distributor of secondhand ideas is not free to teach what he wishes if he is employed on the condition that he must teach what the buyers of his services want.

A teacher as a distributor of secondhand ideas is, however, free to teach what he wishes if he is employed on the condition that he may teach whatever he pleases. In this case, the buyers of his services have negotiated away their rights to determine what he is going to teach.

It depends, then, what is meant by a *teacher*. If he is doing research work or original thinking, the very concept of the work prevents restricting his freedom. If he is a distributor of secondhand ideas and no more, he can make a contract with his employers for freedom or be bound by whatever they specify. If, on the other hand, he demands that they employ him or keep him although what he will teach does not please them, then he makes an unreasonable claim. He is endeavoring to coerce them.

In great universities many opportunities are given for research. The teaching staff in such institutions have unrestricted liberty (1) in their research work; (2) in their original thinking; and (3) almost always in their teaching. That is a part of the explicit or implicit terms of their employment.

What is true of intellectual leaders in universities is less true in colleges; there is more teaching and less research there. In high schools and even more so in grade schools the work of a teacher is practically all teaching; there is really no research work.

A *research* man will practically never be teaching in a grade school or wish to teach his *original* findings to immature children. Instead, such a man would almost certainly publish his original ideas to his compeers, his fellow intellectuals, probably in book form or in a brochure of some kind. He will wish to expose him-

self to the correction of other mature minds. Having done so, and if he has not been found wrong in his *original* work, he will then wish to have liberty to spread his ideas.

But in all the preliminary steps he is really not a teacher *per se*. He is instead a thinker, a research man.

We will probably be the last to declare that as an original thinker and research man a man should be unfree. But to us *academic* freedom pertains to freedom in *teaching* and not to freedom in *research*. When, then, we attack academic freedom we are not attacking freedom of research or thinking, but freedom of distributing secondhand ideas which a "consumer" of those ideas may not want.

### The Consumer Of Educational Services

We wish to consider the *consumer* of educational services.

Those consumers are pupils or students. Some of them are practically mature and have independent minds of their own; others are immature and have passive and impressionable minds.

Assume a man with a gifted son, twenty-five years old — intelligent, independent, critical. Assume that this son wishes to explore basically the field in which he will perform his life work. Assume further that the son is paying for his own education by his own labor or by a reduction in his inheritance. In this case, the consumer is the student. As in the middle ages, such a son may travel from university to university seeking the most diverse and provocative educators and ideas. This consumer wants what is new, different, challenging. There is, therefore, a great place for institutions of learning where anything you want may be got. Such institutions should advertise their academic freedom.

Assume on the other hand that a man has a mediocre, fifteen-year-old son, a son who is easily led, and who certainly is not personally responsible now for deciding what is to be taught to him in school. In this case, the *consumers* are the parents; they obviously are entitled to decide what such a son is to be taught. If after the son is five or ten years older and is as mature as he will ever be, and if he insists on having his own way about the

character of his education, then he has advanced into the position of being the real consumer.

### Summary

We summarize on academic freedom as follows:

1. Academic freedom is different from freedom of thought and of speech. To consider academic freedom to be the same as freedom of thought or of speech is a serious error.

2. All persons are entitled to freedom of thought and of speech. Persons who are teachers have freedom of thought and of speech *as persons*, but they do not have freedom *as teachers*, unless the consumer, the buyer of educational services, contracts for and so grants that academic freedom.

3. The idea of academic freedom and the idea of private schools controlled by parents for minors cannot be harmonized unless the parents deliberately contract away to the teachers their (the parents') right to control the character of the education of their children. If they wish, they are entitled to contract away their rights. But if academic freedom is based on the premise that the parents *must* contract away their rights, then academic freedom must be wholly rejected.

4. Academic freedom is a relative term. The legitimacy of academic freedom increases as the student progresses toward maturity and objective judgment. A grade school is not a place for much academic freedom; a great university is a place for it.

5. Any dispute about academic freedom should pertain only to teaching proper, the spreading of secondhand ideas. Research and original thinking, by definition, cannot be restricted by lack of freedom.

6. The buyer of intellectual services, whether ordinary teaching or research or new ideas, can contract for what he wants. The buyer must be free to say what he wants if he *must* pay. Whoever pays is entitled to determine what he is to get, or otherwise he is being coerced. To be a member of a church and to be assessed for a school should give those assessed the right to determine the character of the education for which they are being assessed.

## The Public School And Academic Freedom

Under certain circumstances academic freedom for teachers as teachers (as distinguished from research men and original thinkers) is a practical necessity regardless of what the parents of individual children may want.

The *public* is made up of very diverse people, in religion, culture, values, needs. If there is no uniformity in what the public wants, what is a teacher to do? He can teach on those subjects, few in number, on which there is agreement, the generally accepted view. On all other subjects he has no choices except: (1) follow his own views, or (2) bow to the view of some of his constituents.

Nonsolidarity of a constituency, that is, serious diversity of opinion among parents, practically prevents them from specifying what they want taught to their children. The *public* school system is, therefore, a system which involves, for most practical purposes, the abdication by parents to someone else what is to be taught to their children. It is either an abdication to a majority of parents, or to a dominant minority, or to the academic freedom of the teachers, or to the state bureaucracy.

If parents really wish to control the content of the education of their children, and the character of the environment of their children, there is only one solution, namely, private schools controlled by parents who essentially think alike. In an ideal school system, the *public* schools would be only residual, to take care of the education of the children of parents who are indifferent to the specific character of the education of their children. The children of other parents would be educated in private parental schools specifically as the parents wanted them educated.

Financing such a system should not be difficult. The customary taxes would be collected. The funds would be pro-rated among various parental groups in proportion to the number of children involved. Those parents who joined no group or were indifferent would send their children to a public school, which would act as an omnibus institution, a catch-all to take care of those indifferent of belonging to any group.

Such a school system would be a *free* system rather than a *public* system. We are *libertarians* and therefore we are for free schools (with supplementary public schools).

Control of such a system should present no problems. Examination on factual and formal knowledge, for example, mathematics, the laws of physics, the events of history, could be tested by public examinations. The *values*, the judgments, the view of life which would be taught would all be left to the independent groups.

In summary, when the school system is so unsoundly organized that it does not readily permit the parents to control the education of their children, then that situation is still not a good ground for frustrating education. Education should go on. A public school teacher under the circumstances should go forward according to his own judgment. He has academic freedom *by default of agreement among parents*.

### Opinions At Calvin College On Academic Freedom

In a lecture series in Chicago during the past winter under the auspices of the local alumni association of Calvin College, one evening was given over to the question of academic freedom. The two speakers were Professors E. F. J. Van Halsema and W. Harry Jellema.

Van Halsema presented the traditional idea that academic freedom was fully permitted at Calvin College *within the bounds set by the standards of the church*, but beyond that academic freedom could not roam.

This leaves, however, a wide field of disagreement. The creeds of the church are old and nonmodern and do not *appear* to be pertinent in the case of some current problems. Further, the denomination does not unequivocally take a stand on many important issues. The result is that a church member can easily be assessed to help pay for teaching with which he disagrees, as for example, that Greek "culture" will add much to the Hebrew-Christian religion, or that brotherly love is to be equated with desegregation. (We certainly would not object to *voluntary* desegrega-

tion for whoever wants it, but desegregation *as a requirement of brotherly love* we would certainly consider to be a deviation from the teachings of Scripture.)

The remarks on academic freedom by the other speaker before the Chicago alumni, Jellema, were such that we were unable to understand what his position is. Our uncertainty may be because of our lack of understanding.

### The Problem Of A Calvinist University

In the Netherlands the Calvinists have a university of their own with the proud title, Free University.

If an attempt is made to develop a Calvinist university here, the first requirement should be that it is free, that is, not an institution supported by church assessments. Such an institution should be based on the sound principle of a *private* and not a *church* school.

This will give those who might lack confidence in the institution or the staff selected the liberty of not supporting it.

As a preliminary move, Calvin College should be de-institutionalized and put on a private school basis (as distinguished from its present illogical position as a church school).

Once a university was organized, the problem would remain which has been mentioned previously, namely, a *university* is a research and creative institution as well as an educational institution. On those functions of research and creative thought there should be no restrictions. This would require that teaching would be separated from research, or that a man could function as a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde, distinctly differently as research man compared with teacher. This will require some "organization" arrangements which would be different from orthodox arrangements. It *could* be done, but the problem would not be a trifling one. fn

## **Sex Is Not Sin**

### **BRIEF OF THE ARGUMENT**

#### **I**

The "mission objects" of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are the people whom it is hardest to "convict of sin."

#### **II**

Scripture does not declare or imply that sex is sin. In religious terms: sex activity is based on Creation and not on the Fall of Man.

#### **III**

From a RATIONAL viewpoint sex activity which is RESPONSIBLE is not sinful. The important question is: what makes sex activity RESPONSIBLE?

#### **IV**

The teaching in Scripture regarding marriage is perfectly RATIONAL, that is, it simply makes the parties to a marriage responsible to each other and to society. That teaching is also conspicuously just.

#### **V**

Legislation by the State which does not insist that sex activity must be responsible is injurious to society, and is also contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Under those circumstances, restraint over members by a church should follow Scripture rather than the State because the rule is: We must obey God rather than men.

#### **I**

### **Preface**

This publication, in its own peculiar way, is a *mission* publication. It is interested in promoting the acceptance of Christianity, including Christian ethics.

However, it is not addressed to those who are the most frequent objects of mission activity, namely, bums on skid row,

aborigines of the land, inmates of poor houses, prisons and asylums, or primitive negroes in Africa. Persons in these classes are the objects of an admirable mission interest on the part of many people. We have selected a different field.

We address ourselves to doing mission work for Christianity among typical people, that is, the people who have an average standard of living, who are not special objects of compassion by other people, who are not under the penalties of the law, who have a fair education, who may be *nominal* Christians for social or custom reasons, but people who nevertheless privately despise many of the things which Christianity teaches, to wit, such ideas as man's proneness to evil, need of humility, need of salvation by grace, specific ethical demands outlined in the moral law, etc. (This list, of course, is very incomplete.)

People in the groups we wish to reach with the "message" of Christianity need as much as others a "conviction of sin" before they will ever "get religion." As the trite expression goes, "You cannot get religion without getting on the mourner's bench." Nobody will endeavor to improve himself via the path of religion (or any path) unless he believes he is not so good as he should be.

To convince a "respectable" citizen of "sin" is a difficult task. A businessman looked at the writer one day and made a calm remark which has stayed with him ever since: "There is not enough difference between you and me so that you should end up in everlasting bliss and I in everlasting perdition." The "differences" to which he was referring were in external, observable manner of living — respectability, abiding by law, kindness, goodwill toward others, being a dutiful husband and father, good manners, giving the down-and-out a helping hand.

If it is difficult really to convince of sin a respectable and honorable man who performs some "civic good," it is even more difficult to persuade him that something which is not sin is sin. For example, there are some sex matters which modern people have come to appraise as not being sin regarding which some Christians do give the impression that they consider them to be genuine sin.



Scripture does not teach that sex is sin. It is not sex that is sin *but something else*. In order to promote strongly what Scripture does teach about sex, we begin by clearing away what Scripture does not teach.

## II

### Sex Is Not Sin

The ancient Greeks were more preoccupied with sex than the Hebrews were.

The Greeks, as Reinhold Niebuhr has pointed out, considered sex to be the really disorganizing factor in life. Greek tragedies revolve around that theme.

The Hebrews, in contrast, considered *pride* to be the really disorganizing motivation in life.

One result of these different approaches to life is that the Greeks considered *temperance* a great virtue. The Hebrews *never* mentioned it. They talked, instead, of *humility*.

Modern psychology divides, to some extent, into those same two schools of thought: (1) the sex motivation, the *libido*, is considered the great psychological villain by some psychologists; (2) the egoistic motivation, pride, especially in its inverted form of an *inferiority complex* and a sense of *insecurity* is considered the great psychological villain by other psychologists.

In PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we are in the Hebrew and not in the Greek tradition. We consider pride to be the great villain. But we consider sex under certain conditions to be hard on the heels of pride as a very great villain, too.

In this issue we are, in a way, working over a phase or two of the *great* problem of the Greeks and of the *secondary* problem of the Hebrews. Our solution follows, we believe, exactly what Scripture teaches on the question of sex, but our preliminary analysis (argument) is rational.

In conformity with Scripture (and in accordance also with modern psychology) we submit for consideration the proposition

that *sex is not sin*. In contrast to that, it may appear to some that Scripture declares that sex is sin. Consider three examples:

1. The Tenth Commandment, namely, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, . . ."

2. The statement of David in Psalm 51, composed after his sexual involvement with Bethsheba: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

3. The statement in the Sermon on the Mount: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, that everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Only *careless* readers will conclude from any of the foregoing that Scripture teaches that sex is sin.

In regard to the first quotation, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, the comforting statement of an old churchman comes to mind; it was that the commandment does not say, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's *daughter*. His point was well-taken. There is nothing sinful about a young unmarried man wanting a young unmarried woman *as wife*.

Attention should be given to the word *covet* as distinguished from *wishing to have in a responsible manner*. In this case wishing to have in a responsible manner means to want permanently and with all the responsibilities of marriage. For a young man to wish to have a young woman as wife under those terms is not sin, nor an indifferent matter, but a virtue; Solomon wrote: *Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor from Jehovah.* (What has been italicized ought to make every woman feel good.) To want access to a woman without being responsible to her as husband is something quite different. Coveting can be defined as wishing to have without having responsibility to anyone for the acquisition and the possession. To want (covet) a woman on that basis is to do her and society a grievous wrong.

In regard to the second quotation (from Psalm 51), it is obvious that if the statement means that it is sin to be conceived, then it also means that it is a sin to be born, which latter propo-

sition everybody will consider to be absurd. The idea of sin in this context, therefore, cannot be to the act of conception or the act of birth, which idea unfortunately is the way in which some children reared under Christianity are permitted to interpret the text. The statement by David must be in regard to what he considered he inherited, which is something altogether different from the morality (or immorality) of the actions (1) of his two parents at his conception or (2) of his mother at his birth.

In regard to the third quotation, which is from the Sermon on the Mount, the statement may appear painfully difficult and critical. The text might be interpreted by some that to look at a woman is to sin. Men are indeed given to looking at women, and women certainly know it. Every effort of women in regard to clothes, make-up and cheerfulness is to attract the admiring glances of men. And what if a man looks! Does he sin?

If we read the text rightly, looking at the woman plus admiration by the man is not sin. Further, looking plus admiration plus awareness of the woman's sex is not sin. Finally, looking plus admiration plus wanting possession of the woman in marriage, provided the man is marriageable and the woman is marriageable, is not sin. The man may wish to marry the woman and she may be willing; everybody will rejoice in the prospective marriage. The man may wish to marry the woman and she may be unwilling; there will be no marriage. Did he sin in wanting to have her *as wife*? Not in our view.

The condemnatory expression in the statement is, we are sure, the phrase, "to lust after her." The phrase probably means either (1) *irresponsible possession* or (2) *unlawful possession*. By irresponsible possession we mean that attitude of a marriageable man relative to a marriageable woman which consists in his wanting possession but *without responsibility* for the subsequent care of the woman or children. By *unlawful possession* we mean possession of a woman by a man not eligible for marriage to the specific woman involved. Assume he knows he cannot have her because he is already married, not qualified for marriage, or because she is not qualified for marriage to him because of being married already herself. If he knows those facts, but if he nevertheless wants her contrary to the barriers that exist, and tolerates in his mind the

wish to have her, he comes, obviously, under the condemnation of the statement quoted. The wish to possess a marriageable woman as wife is not sinful; it is only the wish of a man to possess a woman who may not be his wife or to possess her irresponsibly which is sinful.

Sex sin, therefore, is not sexual relationship or the wish to have sexual relationship; it is, instead, only sex relationships and the wish to have sex relationships *under certain forbidden circumstances*, namely, circumstances which can be summarized by saying that they are "outside of marriage" or outside of the "wish of marriage."

To reduce the number of instances which arise from seeing a woman and "lusting after her" society has developed a variety of aids. One is that engaged girls wear engagement rings; another is that married women wear wedding rings. In some societies marriageable women wear different clothes than married women. These are practical devices to reduce instances of men wishing to have a woman not eligible for marriage. Rings should not be considered primarily as ornaments, but as practical aids to morality.

In summary, any conclusion that consists in considering every sex activity or its preliminaries as immorality cannot be based on Scripture.

### III

#### The Rational Requisite Of Marriage Is That The Parties Accept Their Proper Responsibility

Marriage can be defined as a lifelong association between a man and woman, sanctioned by organized society if it exists.

Although the commitments made by the parties to a marriage are usually accepted as being lifelong, in a society in which marriage is not looked upon as permanent and in which divorce is easy, there may be a mental reservation in the promises made and the marriage may be begun as companionate, experimental and tem-

porary. Such mental reservations attack the foundations of marriage and sex morality, *because* they reduce the proper sense of responsibility.

Morality can be looked at as divinely given. It can also be looked at as common sense verified and validated by experience. The first approach is the approach of religious faith. The second approach is the approach of rationalism.

Men are steadily engaged in the effort to relate the "givens" of religious faith with the "findings" of reason.

It is important and reasonable that faith and reason be not unnecessarily contrasted and set over against each other. In what follows an obvious agreement between faith and reason in regard to sex morality is outlined. (This comparison of faith and reason is in conformity with our general approach to ethical "problems.")

*Reason* claims that it is *autonomous*, that is, that it stands objectively independent of all else, including revelation. It aims to be final in itself. In a limited way, as explained in what follows, we agree with that.

The only basic ground on which *reason* can genuinely stand alone is that it is logically *internally consistent*. The *values* and objectives in life, cannot be conclusively evaluated by reason. For that purpose, reason is not wholly adequate. But after a man has adopted certain values, aims and objectives whatever they are, then *reason* can appraise whether the means selected are suitable to attain the desired end. If the means are inconsistent with the end, then the program is irrational. The prime purpose of revelation does not consist in discrediting what reason itself can discredit by showing that it is inconsistent and contrary-to-purpose.

When then we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM appeal to "reason" we are not evaluating ends; we are evaluating means to those ends. If the means are obviously not suitable to attain the ends, then the means are irrational.

Society has only one *practical* procedure for seeing to it that the means selected are genuinely suited to the ends. That procedure consists in making men *responsible*. This is to apply the test

of experience. If men are made responsible, the end results of their actions will be as expected or disappointing, depending on the objectives and on whether the means selected are suitable or unsuitable for attaining the objective.

To make men responsible is to make them live in accordance with the operation of the laws of cause and effect. The laws of cause and effect as a by-product reveal whether means are suitable to ends.

Means which are suitable to attain objectives are not merely "rational." In our thinking, means which are suitable for attaining objectives are also "moral" in the sense defined. (This assumes that the objectives are valid.)

Basically, marriage should be a *stable institution*. We consider that to be a Biblical objective. If we are in error about that objective, it will be only because we have misunderstood Scripture. We shall not in what follows lose sight of the end just stated, namely, stability of marriages.

We consider that real stability can best be obtained by insisting on *responsibility* in regard to sex relations. By making people *responsible* in sex relations they will be cautious in establishing a fixed obligation in sex relations. The best way to make them cautious and responsible is to make the marriage relation permanent, except for notorious violations of the marriage contract which would make it unjust to require an innocent party to continue to be bound by the contract.

The desirability of marriage being stable is not really in dispute among social scientists. We catalogue a few of their reasons:

1. To break up a marriage is not fair to the children. "Broken homes" are a fertile cause of juvenile delinquency.

2. To break a marriage is not fair to the mate (particularly, the woman). A divorce status has not been considered by society to be an especially honorable status. Women usually remain responsible for the child (or children) of a marriage, thereby being handicapped in remarriage. New husbands accept the children from a previous marriage with reluctance (which of course

is usually concealed). The extent to which marriage is for the protection of women is clearly revealed in the well-known callous statement: A woman looks on marriage as establishing responsibility; a man looks on marriage as *limiting* responsibility; let the woman beware!

3. The presence in society of divorced persons constitutes a danger for existing marriages. The detached persons seek a new mate — anywhere. This appears to be especially true of women. Readers are referred to what the Apostle Paul wrote on the subject of young widows in I Timothy 5; see also I Corinthians 7:2, 8 and 9.

4. Nobody is perfectly suited to marriage nor is perfect as an individual. Everyone needs improvement. Marriage is an improvement institution, a mutual aid society. If a man must live *permanently* with a woman, he is under great inducement to improve her if he can; and vice versa for the woman relative to the man. But if the institution of marriage is not considered to be permanent, there is a lack of inducement for patient effort at mutual improvement.

5. Abandoning marriages often throws a burden on society. Any responsibility, which the parties to a marriage refuse to retain, gravitates to relatives, or other individuals, or to society generally.

6. Incompatibility between a man and woman in their relation as husband and wife is only infrequently a *unique* incompatibility; almost always the incompatibility will be a general incompatibility relative to any man or woman. In other words, the same incompatibility is likely to show up in the next marriage. The trouble is not in the marriage but in one (or both) of the mates.

7. When divorce and remarriage become easy and general and honorable, marriages will be undertaken with much less caution and consequently less soundness of judgment. It is universally observable that a person with whom it is difficult to make a deal, is usually difficult to deal with when making it *because he intends to live up to any promise he makes*. The people who make deals "offhand" are the people who go back on their word in an

equally offhand manner. When the last of the direct male descendants of Prince William of Orange (the Silent) came to the British throne (eventually, as William III), the British found him to be very "difficult." But Macaulay explains the reason: the earlier sovereigns in the Stuart family were prepared to promise anything freely, because they did not have the *determination* to keep the promise. But William III was reluctant to promise *because he was determined to do whatever he had promised*. Similarly, in marriages: they are likely to be successful in proportion as they have been entered into with the unqualified intent that the marriage will be permanent.

We can then, on a *rational* basis, state generally that sex relations which are responsible are permissible and not sin, but that sex relations or the intent of sex relations which are not responsible are sin.

There are contrary ideas which are widely held, namely, ideas such as the idea that marriage should only be as permanent as "love," with love defined as sexual appetite; or the idea that life does not consist of "adjusting" to the difficulties of a *permanent* marriage, but rather that life consists of adjusting to marriage problems by slipping out from under them and *escaping* to a new marriage. In these instances, a solution is sought under the cloak of some sort of "love," but this definition of "love" has no relationship with the idea of responsibility. (Neither does it have any similarity to the scriptural definition of love; see February, March and April, 1955, issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

From a *rational* viewpoint, a few additional remarks may be made about the characteristics of marriage.

1. *Temperance* in the Greek sense, will not contribute much to marriage. Temperance is an effect, not a cause. The effect, temperance, is caused by an acute awareness of *responsibility*. Being responsible is what keeps man temperate. A good awareness of responsibility will make a most valuable contribution to the contraction of a marriage and to the maintenance of an existing marriage. When the Greeks clutched somewhat frantically at the idea of *temperance*, they were really reaching for the idea of *responsibility*.



2. The essence of marriage, from the viewpoint of the state, is that it must not create circumstances wherein the irresponsibility of the marriage partners throws the responsibility on the state. Hence the state is interested in permanency of marriage. Where the responsibilities of marriage are rather small, namely, the wife also works and there are no children, neither the state nor the parties to the marriage always have a keen sense of "social responsibility." Break-up of such a marriage is not considered by some to be intrinsically overwhelmingly bad. There is, however, a very grave objection, to wit, these detached mates, wanting new ones, often disturb other marriages and individuals.

3. Naive people look at marriage only as romantic; others look at marriage only as made by God. Those who are also analytical look at marriage as a highly "rational" arrangement governed by the laws of reason. That reason and "revelation" agree on the urgent need of marriage stability and individual responsibility is important evidence toward establishing the reliability of Scripture. (When reason and revelation disagree on mundane (earthly) matters something must be wrong.)

4. There is a strong drift in Calvinist circles toward the idea of *corporate responsibility*. *Corporate responsibility* is often another word for confusion or reduction in individual responsibility, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. The foundation of individualism is *personal* responsibility. The foundation of marriage is also *personal* responsibility.

5. Marriage is an institution that fits well into an *individualist* society. It is not necessary in a *socialist society*. The thoroughgoing theorists for socialist societies (whether Plato and Socrates, Fourier or modern communists, etc.) have all disestablished marriage as an institution. The *earthly* circumstances that make life worth living for a man are the private possession of a wife and of property. Socialism outlines a structure of society which permits the nonexistence of marriage, because "society" undertakes to be responsible for the women and the children; see March, 1956, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Individualism, on the other hand, as a principle for the organization of society, does not permit the nonexistence of marriage; it insists on the partici-

pants in the marriage relation retaining the responsibility and not shaking it off onto the rest of society.

6. Some Calvinists believe that they can be crossbreeds between socialists and individualists, that is, interventionists. (Interventionism consists of a set of ideas which inevitably results in socialism eventually; see June, 1955, issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*, page 172.) As a type of society, Interventionism may be considered to be less destructive to the institution of marriage than Socialism, but not so helpful an environment to marriage as is Individualism.

We come to the difficult question regarding what can destroy a marriage. Opinions will differ on what is sufficient grounds for breaking the marriage contract. The outstanding cause is adultery; other grave situations are willful and permanent desertion; permanent insanity; dangerous physical violence, etc.

Practically, the great issue is adultery. Psychologists have learned that people do not ever really forgive adultery of mates. Pretense or self-deception concerning forgiveness by the forgiver may exist. The psychological wound (trauma) is never healed nor healable. Time may be an excuse for a retaliatory adultery by the mate originally injured, which may be a fairly frequent sequel. Solomon has commented on the undying malice about adultery (Proverbs 6:32-35):

He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of understanding: he doeth it who would destroy his own soul. Wounds and dishonor shall he get; And his reproach shall not be wiped away.

Then Solomon explains the psychology:

For jealousy is the rage of a man; and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

According to this quotation, you cannot buy jealousy off and it is useless to pay blackmail. For a husband to accept "gifts" in settlement of adultery is to look on his wife's adultery as sexual intercourse made good by the subsequent payment of money. This

is a form of prostitution, the payment being somewhat late. The woman will herself never forgive that; she might sell herself for money but will never again respect a husband who settles for money. All these things are universally "felt" more clearly than they can be put into words.

Sex should not, in the estimation of significant people, take up all of life. Too much time spent on sex will take time from other worthwhile things a person should do in his short span of time. Women generally despise a man spending time indiscriminately on women; men generally despise a woman who is constantly devoting time to getting male attention. People say: They are "no good."

The reason why there is a widespread recognition for adultery being considered grounds for divorce is because of a sense of "justice." To be obliged to keep a mate guilty of adultery contrary to the wish of the injured party is injustice. The principles of permanence of marriage and of marriage responsibility are required to bow before the principle of justice.

Secular society, however, has come to acknowledge many grounds for divorce. The result is that there are many divorces.

But once divorced, most divorced people are prepared to trot to the marriage altar as soon again as possible and there are many remarriages following divorce, whether the divorce was on the grounds of adultery or some other grounds.

#### IV

#### **The Teaching Of Scripture Regarding Marriage, Divorce And Remarriage Is Rational And Just**

The legislation in Scripture on marriage, divorce and remarriage is simple, rational and just.

Scripture teaches:

1. Sex is not sin. Scripture gives wide latitude on marriage. It does not outline a eugenics program. It does not consider

sex or the marriage itself to be at fault in marriages that fail, but the parties to the marriages. Marriage is not only an honorable state, but is much to be preferred to the unmarried state. All this we consider to be solid realism, and neither sentimentalism nor idealism.

2. The marriage must, however, be considered permanent, that is, responsible. There were two schools of thought among the ancient Hebrews about marriage. One view was that a marriage could be easily ended. Some Pharisees in New Testament times held to that idea. Christ said:

Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh . . . (Matthew 19:4-5).

On this basis the responsibility to enter the marriage state outranks the responsibility of a son toward his parents; the statement is: "*for this cause*" — that is, in order to have a wife, a man shall leave his parents.

3. The only permissible ground for divorce is adultery, and the innocent party is entitled to obtain a divorce on that ground and be remarriageable. Christ in the same incident referred to in the foregoing said:

They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery (Matthew 19:7-9).

On this basis marriage must be considered permanent, except for a divorce obtained by the innocent party on the ground of adultery.

4. Adultery is discouraged by Christ by his declaration that the *guilty party is not remarriageable*. The disciples of Christ,

their thinking being typical of the prevailing thinking of their time, remonstrated indicating that they thought the terms outlined for marriage were too severe. The remainder of the incident, which is the most significant of any part of it, reads as follows:

The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, that were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, that were made eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (Matthew 19:10-12).

The *eunuchs* to whom reference is made are of three kinds: (1) men who are naturally sterile, who cannot beget children; (2) men who have been castrated (usually when young) and who therefore cannot beget children; and (3) men of a third kind, namely, who voluntarily make eunuchs of themselves *by not remarrying* after they have obtained an un-Biblical divorce or have been Biblically divorced by an innocent mate. This voluntarily being a eunuch (abstaining from a second marriage) is declared by Christ to be rough-going; he says: "Not all men can receive this saying; . . . [and] he that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

In the quotations from Christ one thing is perfectly clear. In order to make people *responsible* in marriage, and therefore to make it permanent, he legislated that: (1) there is only one ground for divorce; (2) the innocent party may insist on his (her) right to divorce, and be remarriageable; but (3) the guilty party was not remarriageable; if he wanted to be in the "kingdom of heaven" he would have to make himself a voluntary eunuch, that is, not marry.

The terrific leverage then that Christ applies to people to keep them faithful to a marriage consists in this: the necessity of their being eunuchs — abstaining thereafter from sex acts — if they have obtained divorce improperly or have been divorced because of their own adultery.

There may be considerable differences of opinion on this "legislation" on remarriage by Christ. Many will prefer the posi-

tion of some of the Pharisees, who were not severely opposed to divorce and remarriage.

The position of Christ (as outlined in the foregoing) will always jolt and sober any person who gives heed to it. The consequence will be that: (1) although men will (and should generally) marry, they will give great care to taking a wife; (2) they will be faithful to their wives; (3) they will not obtain an un-Biblical divorce and they will be afraid of being divorced on the grounds of adultery; (4) the reason will be that although they may want to remarry, they will have to deny themselves that for "the kingdom of heaven's sake." However, because (apparently) some cannot "take that," they will remarry, nevertheless.

This doctrine may be considered to be too severe but it is highly logical (rational). Any other doctrine, as of some of the Pharisees, will unavoidably eventually result in unrestraint on divorce and remarriage. The issue will always have to be to accept either the position (1) of Christ or (2) of the particular Pharisees disputing with him. There is no inbetween position possible; some may deceive themselves that there is, but they have not thought through the problem to its final consequence.

## V

### **The Problem Of Obeying God Or Man In Regard To Remarriage**

Sexual irregularity will occur not infrequently. The instinct to procreate is too powerful always to be kept leashed. Scripture does not pose the sex problem in the form of complete abstinence or of complete license; it permits sex activity which is responsible, that is, within marriage (marriage being essentially an institution to make sex activity responsible).

There are two routes which this not-easily-repressed inclination for improper sex activities can follow, namely, (1) personal license, and (2) laws of the state permitting easy divorce and remarriage; in the second case what was originally personal license acquires the sanction of the state. The first is a personal problem which we are here ignoring. But the second is a problem of social signifi-

cance and it will be analyzed here, albeit briefly. The analysis will be compressed so that it will merely be schematic:

1. *Un-Biblical divorce.* This is the *origin* of the main problem, but it is not the main problem. The main problem is the almost irresistible inclination of divorced people to remarry, if they can find a mate, and their actually doing so. If they have been divorced with the consent of the state, the state considers them re-marriageable, and will authorize a new marriage. The main issue then is: should the churches consider the new marriages valid, or adulterous initially and permanently?

2. *Remarriage following un-Biblical divorce.* If there had been no un-Biblical divorce, there could be no un-Biblical remarriage. If there were no remarriage authorized by the state, the guilty individual would not be considered eligible for new sexual activity. The problem of any church in regard to un-Biblical remarriages, therefore, *is created solely by the action of the state* in permitting the new remarriage. If the church abides by the un-Biblical action of the state in authorizing a new marriage, then the church has really surrendered its moral attitude in regard to divorce and remarriage into the hands of the secular authorities. The Roman Catholic church and the Church of England have avoided this abdication of their moral independence in marriage matters by not recognizing divorces and remarriages which are contrary to their interpretation of Scripture. Other churches have not seen the problem similarly, and have a policy of accepting all secular acts in regard to un-Biblical divorce and remarriage without protest.

3. The general problem involved in the foregoing, namely, whom to obey when they disagree, God or the state, has been discussed before in *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*; see the August, 1955, issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*, page 218; September, 1955 issue, page 251; October, 1955 issue, page 284. When the ethical teachings of Scripture disagree with the laws of governments, we in *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* hold to the proposition that "We must obey God rather than men." A strongly pious note of others that we must obey the government, because "the powers that be are of God" falls on deaf ears. That doctrine we consider a misinterpretation of Scripture and a vicious evil. The basic *universal* rule is:

"We must obey God rather than men." The *special* rule, wholly subordinate to the basic rule, is to "obey the powers that be" *when and only when* their activities and ordinances do not conflict with the ordinances outlined in Scripture.

4. The doctrine that a remarriage following un-Biblical divorce is valid just because the remarriage has been authorized by the state is then an obvious case of participating with men in a program condemned by Christ. In fact, as explained, the question of un-Biblical remarriage is exclusively due to action of the state contrary to Scripture. Some churchmen in effect say that it is the will of God that we disobey Him in order to be submissive to the ordinances of a secular government. Some may think this right, but if it is, then they should admit that there is a broad — and fatal — general principle underlying their position on un-Biblical divorce and remarriage, to wit: *on every moral question the church should follow secular legislation*. If and when that is conceded and allowed, the church will be only a shell.

It is our observation that it is those churchmen who wish the church to follow after the state on divorce and remarriage, *even though the state is acting contrary to Scripture*, who are the men who rather regularly favor the church following the state on other ethical problems. They misinterpret the idea of Paul: "The powers that be are of God." To accept tacitly or openly the general principle which they appear to be accepting will destroy the church as an independent moral institution. fn

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## We Confess Belief In The Doctrine Of Total Depravity

The first of the famous (or in the opinion of many people, *infamous*) five points of Calvinism is Total Depravity. Man, according to Calvinist doctrine, is since his Fall unqualifiedly bad — depraved, indeed *totally* depraved. There is said to be no good in him at all.

The doctrine of Total Depravity needs careful definition, but we shall now let stand the popular imagination of what is meant by Total Depravity. That active imagination defines Total Depravity in a very bad way, almost (some would say) as a caricature.

In contrast with thousands of nominal Calvinists who really do not believe in Total Depravity, we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM *do*. This is not, for us, a dead doctrine but an extremely live and dynamic one. This issue is partially devoted to one limited but important phase of the doctrine of Total Depravity.

We have occasionally thought that the subject we shall discuss in this issue is an excellent test of whether a man is really at heart a Calvinist or only a nominal Calvinist. Our "test" is concerning the Gold Standard, that is, a money system for society based on gold or that is exchangeable for gold. If you are *for* the Gold Standard you are (we acknowledge) a true Calvinist in regard to money; if you are not for the Gold Standard, you are not a true (or at least not an *informed*) Calvinist on this issue.

In the time of the Judges (of Israel, about 1,200 B.C.), there was an intertribal conflict. The story is told in Judges 12. The Ephraimites had picked a fight with the Gileadites on the Gileadite side of the Jordan (the east side). But the Ephraimites were defeated and fled. For the Ephraimites to be safe it was necessary for them to pass back over the fords of the Jordan. The Gileadites, however seized the fords.

The Ephraimites then endeavored to pass over by guile (falsehood). They denied they were Ephraimites. But the

Gileadites had a test. They said: "say, *shibboleth*," but a true Ephraimite could say only *sibboleth*. All who said *sibboleth* were quickly slain.

Our question to every Calvinist is: are you serious in believing in Total Depravity? If you say "yes," then we have our own little test or *shibboleth*; it is: are you in favor of the Gold Standard for money in this country (and for the world)? If you answer "no," then you are a pseudo-Calvinist; if you say "yes," you are a true Calvinist — on the question of money.

We shall not go so far as to slay every pseudo-Calvinist at our ford, but any man who has answered "no" cannot be a true and informed Calvinist.

Let us view the subject from several simple common sense viewpoints. We shall avoid the technical aspects of money questions, which are admittedly not easy to understand or explain.  
fn

## Abraham And Money

One description of Abraham — an excellent one, in fact — is that he was a "livestock baron" or as the expression is in the West, a "cattle baron." But that description is not fully adequate.

Bitter and deadly fights were fought in our Western frontier between *cattle* men and *sheep* men. Sheep when grazing cut the grass shorter than cattle, thereby damaging the range for cattle. Cattle men wished to drive out sheep men.

Abraham was mostly a sheep and goat livestock baron. The reason is obvious. Cattle could not be "carried" on the semi-arid land on which Abraham's livestock grazed. Sheep and goats could.

Abraham was a genuine nomad. Today we would call him a desert sheik. Abraham did not live in the settled communities. He did not live in agricultural territory where land was tilled and owned. The original Amorites and also Hittites already had,

when Abraham came into Palestine, all the land worth tilling. They held title to it. Abraham's herds never grazed on that valuable land.

But interspersed in the good land was bad land and particularly on the fringes there was a lot of desert or semi-desert land. Nobody owned it. Nobody considered it valuable enough to claim it. *That* was the land on which Abraham's herds grazed. The Amorites did not care; that pastoral life (as distinguished from agricultural) was too uncertain and hazardous to interest them. They were perfectly satisfied to let nomads, a wandering tribe, get off the desert what living could be eked out of it.

Abraham then was a nomadic sheep (and goat) baron. (Of course, he also had some cattle and camels, etc. But sheep and goats must have constituted his principle wealth.) Undoubtedly he sold much mutton and wool and mohair. He became rich. The Hittites considered him a "prince." In fact, he developed a very fine reputation. The sons of Heth said: "Thou art a prince of God among us," a reputation any man might admirably desire to have.

Abraham, therefore, had no land. His assets consisted in livestock and their products, pastoral gear, and gold, silver and jewels.

Eventually, his wife, Sarah, died. She needed burial. Now the desert sheik, who had wandered most of his life over thousands of square miles of semi-arid and valueless land wanted a burial site in a settled community. He wanted as burial site land near the city of Hebron belonging to a man named Ephron, a Hittite. This land had a fine cave on it, known as the Cave of Machpelah. As a burial place for his wife and eventually for himself, Abraham went into the city of Hebron to bargain for the land.

We shall by-pass the interesting details of oriental bargaining. The price was set by Ephron at 400 shekels of silver. (The price is considered by scholars to have been outrageously high; but Abraham paid it.)

This is how the deal was closed (Genesis 23:15):

And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current *money* with the merchant.

We wish to consider briefly the "weighing" of this "money" and the description given of it, that it was "current . . . with the merchant."  
fn

## What Is Money?

A truck farmer has tons of cabbages for sale. An automobile dealer has an automobile for sale. A deal can be made by these two by means of bartering the cabbages for one automobile. But the trouble is that the automobile dealer cannot eat all the cabbages himself and must then get rid of a big surplus of cabbages.

Organized societies have all developed smoother and easier methods to trade goods than just barter. Most transactions are consequently "for money." Goods are exchanged for money, and money is exchanged for goods.

Money is then a "medium for exchange." The existence of money makes it much easier to exchange goods.

In an earlier issue we have commented on the benefits to society from "division of labor." (See March 1956 issue, pages 84-87.) The principle of "division of labor" means specialization in producing *one* item (and in our day it means mass production of single items). The result is that every producer has huge surpluses of what he produces (beyond his own needs for personal consumption). He must then barter his surpluses or use money. Bartering being very cumbersome, goods are exchanged for money. Money, therefore, is something very important for society.

Money being so convenient for facilitating buying and selling, it is important to consider carefully what money is and what makes money good and what makes money bad.

If we had to choose two subjects regarding which there has been more continual crookedness — dishonesty — than on any

other subjects, we would select these two: (1) money; (2) estate settlement matters, when a man who has accumulated assets is dead and no longer can protect the possessions he accumulated from wolves. The big time crooks work on money and probate matters.

In our day, dishonesty about *money* is not in exactly the same form as in Abraham's day. The specific money problems that existed in Abraham's day have been fairly well solved by modern monetary techniques. Consequently, people do not manifest anxiety about "money" as Abraham and his contemporaries did. Modern man, particularly modern Americans, have been lulled into a false sense of security on money matters. Modern man is like the boatmen on the Rhine who were said to be bewitched into lack of care by the siren song of the lorelei; the end is shipwreck and great loss.

Everybody, churchmen and nonchurchmen, take "money" for granted. We take it for granted, because money is coined or printed by the *government*. Modern man, bewitched by anti-Calvinist doctrine, *assumes* that a man who becomes a bureaucrat suddenly becomes trustworthy. His public "office" relieves him of that grave ailment known as Total Depravity!

Economic society in Abraham's time was not so well-organized technically on money matters, and Abraham was not so naive about money matters as a modern Calvinist.

Abraham had accumulated great wealth. He had all the earmarks of a modern big businessman — a business tycoon. (We shall not enumerate the many evidences that he was a remarkably astute businessman which are specifically mentioned or which can confidently be inferred from what Scripture relates about him.) In any event Abraham had 400 shekels of silver, described as

"current *money* with the merchant."

The word *money* is in italics, which indicates that the original Aramaic did not contain this word. The exact reading should therefore be:

"current with the merchant."

Scripture here describes a fundamental fact, namely, *money* is money only *when it is accepted as money*. That is what the word "current" in the quotation means. Only that which is accepted as "current" — that which is accepted as being able to be passed on to the next man — is money.

Abraham obviously was no fool. He was able to weigh out 400 shekels of good coins, acceptable in trade, "current with the merchant." What does that conclusively prove? This: this rich and wise old sheik had not let buyers of his wool, beef, hides, skins, mohair, butter, cheese, etc., pass on some bad coins (bad money) to him. He had undoubtedly rejected all bad coins that were offered him.

It is to be noted that Ephron, the seller, also examined the coins that Abraham presented. Otherwise, there would be no point in mentioning that Abraham bought the one-acre grave-lot of Machpelah for silver "current among the merchant."

Probably Abraham was a good assayer, or had a good assayer in his employ. In those days there were two prevalent ways of cheating with money — the base alloy in the coins was excessive or the weight of the coins was deficient. It should be noted that Abraham's coins did not have an excessive alloy, and secondly that the weight was verified for the aggregate number of pieces. Scripture says (our italics):

"and Abraham *weighed* to Ephron the silver . . ."

There are Calvinists who undoubtedly believe that we should accept the money with which the government provides us — small coins, bills, etc., — *because* the government provides it and declares that it is so-and-so. They undoubtedly reason that this acceptance of government money is required because of the instructions in Scripture; they recall what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13:1-2:

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 . . .”\*

Taking that statement in isolation and naively might indeed persuade those who are not too clearheaded that that should prevail about money what a government says about it. But such is not the case. What a government says about money means practically nothing *except it be enforced by coercion and police power* — which can be shown positively to be in violation of the Decalogue.

Abraham knew that it was not what somebody said about his silver coins that made them good money. Some of those coins may have been minted in Damascus; others in Ur; still others in Egypt. What those governments said about those coins was not necessarily reliable. The real question was: what was the quality and weight of those coins *in fact*?

Scripture casually but clearly indicates what is the real touchstone for good money, namely, that it is:

“current with the merchant.”

In our day we would say “current with the people.” It means the same thing.

What the government of the United States says about its “dollar” means nothing outside the borders of the country. International trade — and Abraham was certainly an extensive international trader — is conducted on the basis of gold (or other precious metal) and not on the paper money of a particular nation.

All the guns and all the bombs of any government cannot make its money worth more among free nations than what the international “merchants” or the “people” of the world consider it to be worth. Money is money *only* when it is *accepted*. Money has *value* only for those who accept it. At how much they value it is their decision and not the decision of any government.

The question then arises: what do domestic citizens and businessmen think of that money? And what do foreign citizens and businessmen think of that money? It is they — the people — who determine what is acceptable as money and what its value is.

\*This text is probably subject to more consistently ridiculous and unrealistic misinterpretations than any other single text in Scripture.



What a government says about its money is valid only (1) if true, or (2) if the public *believes* it to be true. The latter situation — “if the public *believes* it to be true — can only be *temporary*, if it is not the real truth. Eventually, everything depends on *truth*. Falsehood cannot permanently prevail.

Abraham lived in a society and a time and did business in a manner which indicated he was always on the alert about *money*, that is, about the honesty of money. Abraham accepted only coins of proper weight and fineness.

It has always been a great comfort to the writer that this man, Abraham, selected by God to be the “founder” of the Hebrew religion, was not a fool but obviously intelligent and practical. His other history in the field of religion (as distinguished from the field of ethics) is therefore also probably reliable. If Abraham had been an impractical man he might also have been an unreliable man in his report of his dealings with God.

Money, then, is a medium of exchange the value of which is determined by what people think of it and not by what the creator of the medium says of it.

We propose to show in what follows that Abraham about 4,000 years ago was more astute about money than present-day members of Calvinist churches.

fn

## The Best Way To Cheat About Money

Society, we have shown, cannot rely on barter for exchanging goods; society needs money. That money should be reliable.

The inference might be that the most reliable men would certainly be appointed to make money reliable. But that is erroneous. The attempt to determine what is to be “money” and what is to be its value was instead taken over by those who were powerful, the strongest and not the most honest; or so it seems.

The characteristics of good money are that it be (1) valuable in itself but not bulky; (2) divisible into various exact sizes; (3) nonperishable; (4) not corruptible without probability of discovery; (5) not-to-be increased in quantity at will except at a cost about equal to its value.

The two common precious metals, gold and silver, gradually came to be accepted as most suitable for money. They came closest to meeting the specifications just listed.

The selection of gold and silver as money was only one step in the solution of the problem; it by no means solved the whole problem. The opportunity for cheating was not ended by the mere use of these precious metals.

The grand seigniors — the kings and princes — took over the coining and minting of gold and silver. But immediately they took their seigniorage — their fee for the service. Their charges usually substantially exceeded the cost of the service. Base metal was introduced. The value of the money was debased.

Further, the almost universal practice developed of "clipping" coins, filing or knicking off part of the metal. That is why Abraham "weighed" the silver to Ephron of the sons of Heth.

Modern coining methods and better assaying procedure finally brought most responsible governments to putting out only reliable coins. At least *metal* coins had become honest. A new era seemed to have arrived. It was no longer a ground for anxiety that money would be dishonest.

This expectation — or hope — proved to be an error. We shall mention a few of the tragic instances in recent monetary history.

1. *The French Revolution.* The leaders of the Revolution seized the properties of the Roman Catholic church. The Revolution needed money and so it was decided to put out some money — *assignats* — "secured" by the property which had been seized. The "state" was considered richer by the value of the

seized church property. Less *assignats* would be printed than the value of the church property; therefore, the *assignats* were alleged to be as good as gold. So they said. But the Revolution soon needed more money. It was then decided to print more *assignats*. Everyone with judgment will know what ultimately happened. The Revolution put out so many *assignats* that they became completely valueless. What the French government said about the *assignats* meant nothing. *Assignats* were no longer "current . . . among the merchants." Nobody would accept *assignats*; therefore, they became worthless. Read the booklet entitled "Fiat Money Inflation in France" by Andrew Dickson White, in his lifetime president of Cornell University and a distinguished diplomat. (A copy of this enlightening book can be obtained for a very modest sum from the Foundation For Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, U. S. A.)

2. *Original Continental Money Of The American States Rebelling Against England.* The thirteen states rebelling in 1776-1783 against England put out paper money. The individual bills were known as Continentals. The more Continentals the states put out, the less valuable they became. Eventually, they became completely valueless. This is the origin of the popular expression, "Not worth a Continental."

3. *Confederate Money.* The Southern states in the rebellion of 1861-1865 issued Confederate money. It deteriorated steadily and became valueless.

4. *Greenbacks.* During the war of 1861-1865 the Northern government printed greenbacks. They steadily went to a serious discount. Only in 1879 was a law passed which brought them back to full value.

5. *The Great German Inflation Following World War I.* The German government, known as the Weimar Republic (a socialist government), printed more and more German marks in larger and larger denominations. In 1923 the German mark became valueless.

6. *The French Franc.* Although the decline has been relatively gradual, the French franc is today worth only 1/80th of its value before World War I. It was then worth twenty cents; it is now worth one-fourth of one cent.

7. *Other Currencies.* They have all declined in value since 1914.

8. *The Present American Dollar.* This dollar is worth about 38% of what it was worth in 1914 before World War I. It is steadily shrinking in value *and will steadily continue to do so.* The basis of that forecast is "Calvinism" — that is, that part of Calvinism which consists of the proposition that man is totally depraved. From that major premise it can be concluded without any chance of error that the American dollar is on its way to steady depreciation of value unless it is restored to a gold basis.

It will be noted that all the examples which we have cited are of *paper* money and not of gold or silver coin.

How did we get away from the precious metals of Abraham's day to mere *paper* money? And is not the paper based on gold? We aim to answer these two questions.

The greatest way to cheat about money is to let the government substitute paper for precious metals. And this great deception is approved by many churchmen. They quote Scripture in defense of their blessing on this iniquity. They quote the Apostle Paul:

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers:  
for there is no power but of God.

Those "powers" are governments. They are notoriously, continuously and deliberately dishonest about money. They are perpetrating the most monumental deception and theft possible. And according to some people this must be tolerated — and approved — because "*every* soul" must be in subjection to the government.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM does not acknowledge the validity of that position. fn

## Adam Smith; Calvinism; The Reasoning Of A Powerful Mind; And A Colossal Error

### Adam Smith

Adam Smith is the most famous economist who has ever lived. We are not saying he was the greatest. Certainly, however, he was one of the greatest.

All "economics" before Adam Smith becomes primitive and puerile compared with what Smith did with economics.

All subsequent economics has been indebted to Smith. The economics of the capitalist and the economics of the socialist are both largely based on Smith.\*

Smith was a Scotsman. He was born in 1723; he died aged 67 in 1790. He was a bachelor. He traveled a little — to France, but most of his life he lived quietly in Edinburgh, Scotland, with his mother during her lifetime.

Smith's great book has the title, *The Wealth Of Nations*. It is one of the classics of the English language.

This book promoted free trade between nations. Smith knew that you could not do yourself much good by trying to hurt the other fellow, just because he did not seem to be your neighbor because he was far away. Smith also realized clearly the great advantage that there is in that manifestation of brotherly love which consists in the "division of labor" and *free* exchange, unhampered by tariffs, customs, quotas, etc. The passages in his book where he covered these subjects are classic.

Smith also realized clearly that increasing the amount of money does not make a community more prosperous. In another famous passage he destroys the idea that there is a money shortage. In contrast to Smith nearly every present-day banker, businessman, professional man, bureaucrat, farmer, labor union leader, etc., believes that an increase in the quantity of money will contribute to prosperity. Smith's argument against this fallacy is conclusive.

\*That such diverse systems can be based on Smith is conclusive proof that Smith was himself confused and ambiguous on some subjects.

But with the hard iron of his thought there is also some crumbly clay. On the basic question of economics — *value* — Smith was so confused that capitalist and communist alike can appeal to him. They do. Karl Marx merely took a phase of Smith's thought on value and labor in order to develop his absurd labor theory of value.

And Smith also was wrong in some of his ideas of money. We shall come to that later.

### **Smith and Calvinism**

Calvinism is traditionally capitalist. Calvinism was especially strong in Scotland in Smith's day. It might then be expected that Smith was a Calvinist.

Not at all. He had a positive aversion to Calvinism. He did not like the pattern of Calvinist ideas. Calvinism may be, as is alleged, sympathetic to capitalism. And Smith may have given capitalism its best expression, so good in fact that it started England and the Netherlands and then other countries on the great road to prosperity, by means of what is known as capitalism. But the relation of Calvinism to capitalism and of Smith to capitalism does not establish a friendly relationship between Smith and Calvinism. Let us simply say that Smith acutely disliked Calvinism.

### **A "Rational" Conclusion Of Smith Which Ignored A Calvinist Principle**

Smith, living quietly in Edinburgh, let his powerful mind roam over ideas on money. He came to the conviction that there was a lot of waste about money. His reasoning was about as follows:

1. Money is necessary to facilitate exchange. You cannot really "get along" without money.
2. Gold (and silver) is good for money, but it is also good for the "arts" (for use in jewelry, etc.).
3. Every ounce of gold is got only at great cost of prospecting and mining.

4. Why not shift over to paper money instead of gold? It costs a lot less to print paper than to mine gold.

As far as it goes there is nothing wrong with this reasoning. Instead of having a lot of adventurers prospecting for gold, and instead of conducting costly mining operations for gold in poorly accessible mountain areas, simply print paper. A small and safe effort is substituted for a large and difficult effort; there is, therefore, an obvious saving.

The apparent "rationalism" of this reasoning is good, but nevertheless there is a colossal error in it. Smith would have done well to have accepted the dour doctrine of the Calvinists that man is *totally* depraved.

### Smith's Colossal Error

We cited several examples of the fate of paper money — the paper Continentals of the original thirteen states of the United States; the paper *assignats* of the French Revolution; the paper dollar of the Southern Confederacy; the paper greenbacks of the northern states; the German paper marks of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s; the French franc today; the present American dollar. These were only examples. All paper money, in all the history of mankind, has *always* failed, or is in the process of failing, and always will fail — Smith and any other thinker, Calvinist or non-Calvinist, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Smith's error consisted in this: he had as much confidence in men as in the immutable laws of nature governing dead metal — gold. If Smith had been a good Calvinist he would on the question of paper money never have perpetrated the colossal error of which he was guilty.

What is the situation regarding *paper* money? It is this: the quantity can be increased at will. There will always be pressure by the public to increase the quantity of money. Politicians seek popularity and votes. They are rewarded for doing what the public wants — they are re-elected. No politician, no statesman, no philosopher, no king, no prince, no preacher, no priest —

no man or woman has ever been able permanently to stem the "demand" for money — if the money could be increased at will — running the printing presses. Therefore, without exception all "paper money" has depreciated. Never in the history of mankind has "paper money" been found to be safe. The reason is that human nature is seldom wise enough to restrict the quantity of money, and never strong enough to resist pressure for more money.

Smith's reasoning conflicted with experience. Reasoning that conflicts with experience should be questioned and rejected. In the ages prior to Smith *only the precious metals* had been found to be reliable for money. Abraham did not rely on printed paper but on silver and gold. But Smith reasoned to the very bad conclusion that society could make a gain by saving gold for the arts and using only paper money.

Smith's reasoning also conflicted with the plain teaching of Scripture, namely, that men are neither wise, nor good, nor noble. Hence, they are unreliable. Any money (of paper) based on the integrity (?) of men will certainly fail. Only money based on some dead inanimate thing as gold, the quantity of which cannot be arbitrarily increased, is safe as money. The laws of nature and dead things are far more reliable than men.

It is true that the quantity of gold is increased by sudden discoveries as in California, in South Africa and in the Yukon. But these are only negligible fluctuations in quantity compared with the fluctuations in the quantity of paper money. *Relatively* gold is the only satisfactory money that exists.

We can now return to our little test whether a man is a Calvinist, namely, our little *shibboleth*, to wit: are you for the gold standard? If you are, you are in one specific instance under the general doctrine of Total Depravity genuinely Calvinistic.

Not only are you Calvinistic, you are also right.

fn



## Does God Make Money Reliable By Means Of Bureaucrats Or Cure Scrofula By French Kings?

It is a theoretical *possibility* that when a man becomes a public officer, a bureaucrat, he suddenly acquires qualities which justify his tinkering with money and the quantity of money. But we doubt the *probability*. Merely becoming one of the "powers that be" does not change the quality of a man's judgment nor add to the strength of his character. Kings, princes, presidents, legislatures, governors, judges are all as totally depraved as the rest of mankind.

We are reminded of the special quality with which the anointment of the kings of France was supposed to endow them. We quote from the essay entitled "Laissez Faire or Dictatorship" in *Planning For Freedom* by Dr. Ludwig von Mises, page 43. Mises writes:

The French royalists contend that the solemn consecration at Rheims conveys to the King of France, anointed with the sacred oil which a dove from Heaven brought down for the consecration of Clovis, divine dispensation. The legitimate king cannot err and cannot do wrong, and his royal touch miraculously cures scrofula. No less consistent was the late German Professor Werner Sombart in declaring that *Führertum* is a permanent revelation and that the *Führer* gets his orders directly from God, the supreme *Führer* of the Universe. Once you admit these premises, you can no longer raise any objections against planning and socialism.

There is as much prospect that a bureaucrat, as one of the "powers that be," will be honest about money just because he is a bureaucrat, as there is probability that the anointment of the kings of France enabled them miraculously by touch to cure scrofula.

Nor is *Führertum* a permanent revelation, nor does a *Führer* get his orders directly from God even though he (Hitler) was one of the "powers that be."

The control of money is no safer in the hands of a bureaucrat than in the hands of an ordinary person. All men are unreliable as regulators of money. Installation into office and the oil of anointment do not change a man. He was, is, and will continue to be totally depraved.

Under the circumstances there is only one thing to do — trust in the laws of nature as they affect the quantity of a dead inanimate thing, gold. It is better to trust in the laws of God in regard to nonhuman things than to depend on the nature of man.

fn

## William Jennings Bryan And Demagoguery About Money

Money can be based on one or more than one standard: (1) gold only; (2) silver only; (3) both gold and silver, a system known as bimetallism; (4) paper.

Toward the end of the Nineteenth Century the quantity of silver became so great that it was no longer a good medium of exchange. At the same time there developed a great controversy in this country regarding bimetallism. The Republicans favored money based on gold only; the Democrats favored a bimetal system — money based on gold and silver together, with one ounce of gold equal to sixteen or so ounces of silver.

The Republicans were right on this issue. The writer admits that, although his allegiance has generally been to the historic Democratic party (not the present Democratic party which has reversed nearly all the historical principles of the party).

William Jennings Bryan led the mistaken campaign for bimetallism. That he was wrong is conclusively indicated by the fact that bimetallism is not working anywhere and no respectable monetary expert advocates it today anywhere in the world.

Bryan, it will be remembered, made a keynote speech at the Democratic convention in 1896, in which he used the notorious

metaphor that this country was being "crucified on a cross of gold." Bryan's religion, in this instance, had a very unfortunate effect on his rhetoric.

The motivations of the bimetallists was to obtain votes from the silver-producing states, and to promote the cheapening of the dollar — silver obviously becoming available in excessive quantities for monetary purposes.

The purpose of cheapening the dollar had the ultimate purpose of defrauding creditors and making a gift to debtors. This is a piece of dishonesty which does not have the desired effect as will be explained in a later issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*. As Scripture says: dig a pit for your enemy and you fall into it yourself.

It is gravely to Bryan's discredit that he was so uninformed and so much of a demagogue that he would favor an unsound monetary program in order to obtain votes. His scheme did not work. Personal devoutness is no excuse for error in public policy or the promotion of a public dishonesty. fn

## **The Present Paper Money Of The United States**

In 1933 a revolutionary event occurred in the United States. The United States went "off" the gold standard. It became a crime to possess gold coin or gold bullion.

Instead of a gold standard, the United States has today a paper-money standard.

The people of this country are not protected by incorruptible gold. They are "protected" only by the "integrity" of politicians who welcome political pressure. That gives them an opportunity to please their constituents. Pleasing their constituents gets them votes. Pleasing their constituents in part consists of steadily increasing the quantity of money.

*All paper-money systems in the long history of mankind have failed. There has always been a persistent depreciation in the value of such paper money.*

If monetary history teaches anything, it teaches that the dollar will go down and down in value, probably at an increasing (although varying) rate of depreciation.

A part of the process has already occurred. The dollar today, using government index numbers (for whatever their value may be) is worth about 40% of the 1933 dollar.\* And the end is certainly not yet.

The present monetary system in the United States is, therefore, not a "Calvinist system." A Calvinist monetary system would not place reliance on sinful and weak men who are evaluated as being "totally depraved" according to Calvinist doctrine. Instead a Calvinist monetary system would be based on inanimate, incorruptible gold or something equivalent thereto. (It does not necessarily need to be *gold* but it must be something like gold; and certainly not corruptible men.)

For a hundred or more years up to 1914 the world was generally for once on a gold standard. Those 100 years have been the years in which there was the greatest increase in prosperity in the history of mankind. Really honest money contributed toward good business. The general statement of Scripture was again corroborated: obey the commandments of God (in this case *honesty*) and you will be rewarded. fn

## The Present Money Of The United States Is Worse Than The Ancient Money Of Abraham

Money conditions today (1956) in the United States are already worse than in Abraham's time and place.

You can have, first, really good money, say gold with modern techniques of coinage, maintenance of quality, and assaying.

You can have, second, a doubtful money, made of a precious metal, but regarding which you must be on your guard concerning questions of fineness and weight. It was this money of "second-

\*This is the year of devaluation. However, using this year introduces (unintentionally) a cyclical factor which lowers the percentage somewhat.

class quality" which Abraham used. The character of that money which made it potentially hazardous for him had the beneficial effect of keeping him constantly on his guard. Under the circumstances carelessness about money might have caused Abraham a partial loss, but it was practically impossible for him to have a total loss.

You can have, third, the very poorest kind of money possible, namely, just *paper* money, not convertible into gold by citizens, and not related to gold in quantity, in fact, a money increasable in quantity according to the wishes or the weaknesses or the foolishness of mere depraved men. It is this kind of money to which we have sunk in the United States.

In 1933 the United States went "off gold." To go "off gold" means to have paper money. To have paper money means that you can increase the quantity at will. To have a paper money means that you have nothing behind your money except the judgment, the integrity and the freedom from political pressure of politicians and bureaucrats. Your trust must be in mere men. Your trust will be disappointed if men are totally depraved. Vital Calvinism (not dead Calvinism) has always said that men are totally depraved.

Here is an issue involving public morality, namely the issue of sound money, on which the general principles of Calvinism could have shown all the ministers in the Calvinist churches the way to an answer which would have made them public leaders in morality.

The reasoning from basic Calvinist principles is very simple and very obvious. Here are the steps:

1. The integrity of money should not be made to depend on men who are totally depraved, if it is possible to depend on natural laws which are not corruptible.
2. Paper money depends solely on depraved men and is not supported by any natural laws which frustrate corruption.
3. Therefore, there should not be a paper money system.

The United States has now had a paper money system for twenty-three years. In all that time the writer has not heard the

whisper of criticism from any Calvinist leader in public or in private conversation against a system which flouts a basic Calvinist principle, and which eventually will lead the United States to economic ruin and possibly to socialism. Not one clear, critical voice!

Such a voice we realize would be a "voice crying in the wilderness." It would probably not be heeded. Or to change our reference, it possibly might have no more effect than the preaching of Noah over a period of 75 years. But that does not reduce or eliminate the requirement of testifying against evil. It is not the men who were judged to be right by their own era, but the men who were proved right before the bar of history, men as Noah and John the Baptist, whom history accords a niche of honor. Calvinism will get no fame from failing to apply its principles or from failing to testify against evil.

"But," says some reader, "granted that a paper money system depends on men who are weak and depraved and grant that that is dangerous, you have not yet proved that it is morally wrong and that any damage has been done or will be done; all you have made clear is that paper money depends on men, that men are prone to be weak, and that Calvinism says that men are that. But what actual damage has been done? What is your evidence?"

All that must be conceded. Let us first consider how paper money *can* violate the moral law. Thereafter let us see if the adoption of paper money in the United States has already violated the moral law. And, finally, let us take a look at the chief victims.

## **How Paper Money Can Violate The Moral Law**

To make a complex money problem easily understandable we shall utilize a simple illustration of a very simple society consisting of ten men or ten families. This group is a "society," that is, they coordinate together, they help each other by division of labor and specialization, and by exchange of their surplus products. They also have money, say dollars to facilitate the exchange without being limited to clumsy barter. Here is our society:

<u>Individual Or Family</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Produces</u>
A	farmer	5,000 bushels of wheat
B	tailor and cobbler	500 suits and shoes
C	preacher-teacher	services
D	builder	5 buildings
E	printer	5,000 magazines
F	doctor-lawyer	services
G	metal worker	1,000 kegs of nails
H	miner	500 tons of coal
I	merchant	warehousing, etc.
J	oil producer.	1,000 gallons of oil

Each of these also has some "money" to facilitate exchange. Say that each person has \$1,000 in cash as his money fund. The total will be \$10,000 in the community.

There was a century ago a famous French economist named Jean Baptiste Say. Say gave his name to Say's Law, which is that goods create demand. The surplus wheat of the farmer constitutes his "demand" for suits, shoes, services, etc. Say's Law states that there may be an excessive (nonprofitable) surplus of some economic goods but that there NEVER is in this finite world a *general* surplus of economic goods. Say's Law is not 85 percent correct nor is it basically incorrect as Keynes\* falsely alleged and misrepresented. Say, in fact, is in simple agreement with what Moses taught in Genesis, namely, that there will ALWAYS be a welfare shortage of some goods, that is, that there cannot be GENERAL overproduction. (This idea of Say is neither understood nor is the teaching of Moses in this regard accepted by many intellectual and moral leaders in Calvinist churches.)

The tool by which anyone, say a farmer, for example, expresses his demand for goods is *money*. He sells his surplus wheat for money, and with the money creates an effective demand for

\*John Maynard Keynes, well-known economist, who died a few years ago. Keynes's ideas are taught in most denominational schools. Every thing that Keynes taught violates the principles of the Christian religion. His economics are, also, merely notorious and long-exploded fallacies dressed up in a new lingo and a mathematical jargon.

oil, nails, services, clothes, coal, etc. In the course of the year all the surpluses of each specialist in our society go to the other nine members. Everything is voluntarily exchanged. "Markets" are established for goods and services which conform to the Biblical law of noncoercion (meekness).

Now let us introduce a new element. One of our society members, say the printer, Mr. *E* lives "beyond his means" or he wishes to live "beyond his means." He says to himself: "I have available to spend what I get for my surplus magazines plus my thousand dollars cash. But I wish to spend more. I'll just print myself an extra \$2,000." He quickly prints the "money."

Mr. *E* now enters the market with \$2,000 extra cash. He is a free and active buyer. He buys more than his share of wheat, clothes, nails, oil, services, etc. Before the others know what is happening *E* has bought so much that the others discover there is a residual scarcity for them. They wish to buy and toward the end of the year prices rise noticeably. What finally becomes clear is that *A*, *B*, *C* and all the rest *except E* did not get their share of goods in proportion to their own production. Somehow or other, so they discover, an extra \$2,000 of "money" came into the situation. No services were performed to get that \$2,000, and consequently in the final exchange of goods (as distinguished from money which is only a medium of exchange) they have been robbed. Somebody injected 20 percent extra money and robbed the others of part of their natural share of the goods in that year.

This is theft. It is a violation of the Eighth Commandment in the great Decalogue of Moses which was the glory of ancient Israel which reads:

"Thou shalt not steal."

In our simplified illustration the man who printed extra money (*paper money*, by the way) was a thief. Anyone who is authorized to print paper money is authorized to steal if that printing *increases* the quantity of money and is used to make good someone's deficit or one's own wish to "live beyond his means."

Putting out an *increase* in paper money is, therefore, plain theft.



A reader may respond to that by saying: "Newly mined gold is a net increase (at least potentially) of money." Indeed it is, but that extra money *will be obtained only at a cost about equal to the value of the gold*. The supply of gold money will therefore never be fantastically increased. But the potential increase of paper money! Consider the *assignats* of the French Revolution; the Continentals of the rebelling American colonies; the paper marks of the German Weimar Republic; the practically valueless present-day French francs; the American dollar of declining value!

What the society we have described needed was a money which was not corruptible by means of arbitrarily increasing its quantity. What this society needed was some Calvinists who were *practical* and *true* Calvinists in that they chose a money system which did not tempt men to theft but fortified the feeble inclination which men have to be consistently honest.                   fn

## How The United States Government Has Violated The Moral Law In Regard To Money

Is there actually any theft going on in the United States since the country went "off gold" in 1933 and went onto a paper money standard?

Let us return to our simple illustration. We made no provision in it for a policeman, or a government or thousands of other occupations. In the complex society of the United States the situation is far more complex than our illustration. But our illustration nevertheless holds good. Who is in fact the "printer" of evil money in the United States? That "printer" is the government itself.

We said the "printer" lived beyond his means or wished to live beyond his means. That is exactly what the government of the

United States has been doing — living beyond its means and printing bogus money — thereby robbing various members of American society.

The extent of this "living beyond means" is roughly indicated by the amount of the increase in the debt of the Federal government. This debt has increased beginning in 1936 as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount of Net Increase In Federal Debt</u>
1936	\$ 3,848,000,000
1937	2,881,000,000
1938	2,153,000,000
1939	2,522,000,000
1940	3,078,000,000
1941	12,981,000,000
1942	50,150,000,000
1943	57,707,000,000
1944	64,753,000,000
1945	47,484,000,000
1946	(18,965,000,000)
1947	( 2,249,000,000)
1948	( 4,100,000,000)
1949	4,330,000,000
1950	( 422,000,000)
1951	2,711,000,000
1952	7,972,000,000
1953	7,777,000,000
1954	3,582,000,000
1955	2,019,000,000
Grand Total in 20 years	<u><u>\$250,212,000,000</u></u>

Source: *Survey of Current Business*. Decreases in debt indicated by parentheses — ( ).

We ask: has anybody of great eminence in the Christian Reformed church ever boldly raised his voice against this monstrous increase of debt with its almost certain implication of theft?

It should be emphatically stated that there is no difference in principle between this \$250,000,000,000 and the \$2,000 by the printer in our illustration. All kinds of alleged differences will be advanced, such as, for example, that some of the bonds which the government issued to cover the debt increase went into "savings" and not into the "monetary structure." Granted; but that does not essentially change the picture. There are other unsound and unscriptural money policies authorized by the government which partially offset that part of the Federal deficit that went into "savings." The fact is, on the basis of other data also published by the United States government, that "money" increased in the 20 years in question by \$109,000,000,000 — from \$32,000,000,000 to \$141,000,000,000. (This figure is (1) Currency in Circulation plus (2) bank deposits subject to checking.)

It will also be alleged that it is desirable to increase money as the physical volume of transactions increases. This brings up all the complex issues about which there was dispute in the famous controversy in the nineteenth century between the Banking school and the Currency school concerning money. But that question can only be resolved largely according to the ideas of the Currency school, to wit, additional money is *not* needed to finance additional physical volume. The alternative to printing paper money is a natural decline in prices. F. A. von Hayek has written somewhere that our age has an irrational fantastic fear of declining prices. But this is an economic neuroticism. *The only way that the law of brotherly love can be effectuated in a complex progressing industrial society is by means of DECLINING prices.* It may take us a long time to find the opportunity to explain this but, D. V., we shall some day. And such declining prices will prove to the beneficent for everybody.

Yes, there is in Washington today one of the greatest powers that has ever existed — one of the Apostle Paul's "powers that be." That "power" is by far the greatest thief and the most insidious and the most destructive thief in the United States. Compared to this thief all other arch criminals whether in business or the labor unions or in corrupting industries are angels of light.      fn

## The Suckers— The Victims Of A Dishonest Money System

We turn to the saddest participants in this colossal theft — the victims.

We have a friend. He is competent, thrifty, industrious, conservative. He is now retired.

His fatal mistake has been that he is *conservative*. Whenever a country is on *paper money* standard conservatism is folly. By "conservatism" we mean the investment of savings in life insurance, mortgages, bonds, cash, receivables. Our friend invested his hard-earned savings in government bonds. Safe, you know.

Safe! The idea is ridiculous. All that an owner of such a bond gets back is the same number of dollars plus meager interest. The purchasing power of the principal is shrinking faster than the interest is accumulating. The interest rate is really a *minus* interest rate.

My friend thought that he had saved enough for his old age. But he is bitterly disappointed. The interest on the bonds is inadequate to pay for rising living costs. And so my friend, almost seventy, has had to go back to work. He has been robbed — insidiously. The thief is a big government in Washington — one of the "powers that be" that simple-minded Calvinists say should be aided and abetted in all that they do because their "power is from God!"

Malthus, of population fame, long ago made clear that the principal victims of inflationism (in this case putting out additional paper money) are those who are retired. Those presently working are hurt, too, but they at least have an income rising somewhat with advancing prices. The retired have no increase in income from any investment which is a mere call on dollars, such investments as were just mentioned.

My friend is no isolated case. Consider the preachers in the Christian Reformed church. In the past twenty years the cost of living has gone up more than two times. But the salaries of preachers have gone up less than two times. The preachers are

steadily losing economic position. The day will come when the pay is so poor and the profession so unfavorably regarded that competent young men (who are willing to be active and to work) will not be willing to enter the ministry. The ministers will have no one to blame more than themselves. When did they protest against the obvious and vicious evil which perpetrated an injustice against themselves and against many others? They need not plead their personal case; let them merely promote *general* public honesty about money; that will also protect them.

What is true of preachers is even more true of Christian school teachers and teachers generally. They have fared even more poorly. Looked at from a money viewpoint teaching is a wretched profession to enter. Yes, there is an eventual modest pension. This pension is almost certainly invested largely in bonds — which are steadily shrinking in purchasing power. Shot by an assassin's bullet, dying Prince William of Orange (the Silent) prayed: "*Mon Dieu, ayez pitié de ce pauvre peuple*" (My God, have pity on these poor people.) The Prince can well be paraphrased: "My God, have pity on these poor teachers."

The Christian Reformed church has, of course, an intellectual staff in the form of its college faculty. This staff should undoubtedly know the score. The staff consists of philosophers, sociologists, economists, political scientists, historians, *litterati* and the intellectual elite of the denomination. But we have not heard any remark from this intellectual bodyguard of the denomination regarding the moral perversion involved in the paper-money standard of the United States. But they are being served with their own coin. The basic teaching of the school is that the policies of the recent and present governments of the United States are meritorious, and are to be obeyed as the will of one of God's "powers that be." Again we paraphrase William the Silent: "*Mon Dieu, ayez pitié de ce pauvre clercs*" (My God, have pity on the poor intellectuals).

Who are the victims of the unsound, un-Calvinistic money policy of the United States? The real Calvinists and the wise? Not at all. They are well enough informed to know what is going on and they are astute enough to escape a wicked policy in a way so that they are not injured. They see the pit that has been dug

for them to fall into. And they see the diggers of the pit — the intellectuals who fall into the pit themselves. Indeed, Scripture is highly reliable: God is not mocked; not even by the United States government nor by those who neglect Biblical teaching.

It is the common man, the man who does not understand and cannot be expected to understand complex money questions who is injured by this public iniquity. It is also the widows and the orphans and the small saver who is practically restricted in his or her investments to savings accounts, building and loan association deposits and to bonds who is being robbed. Scripture says that "your sins will find you out." If that is true, this money iniquity will eventually come to light. Then the common man and all the victims will turn on the moral leaders — preachers, teachers, intellectuals — and ask an accounting. "Why," they will ask, "did you not protest against this iniquity and warn us? Why did you prattle about obeying the powers that be, when those powers that be were violating the commandment of God?" What answer will the sanctimonious churches give in that day? They will in fact be discredited. People will turn their back on an allegedly moral institution which history reveals as having been stupid.

#### **Supplementary Note On Money**

The foregoing is not in any way exhaustive in regard to problems about money. It is, in fact, only a most elementary discussion of one ethical phase of money. We shall, we hope, be able in future issues to write much more about money. But this will have to suffice for the time being. fn

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We invite readers to whom we send sample copies to subscribe to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, or better still to join the Progressive Calvinism League.

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PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM may not please you in all respects. Why expect it? A man often learns more from men who disagree with him than from men who agree with him.

We do not allege that we publish an excellent publication. We merely do the best we can in the time available to us to prepare it. But good or bad, it is, we are sure, a "different" kind of a publication from most others.

Our "difference" from others is that we are "progressive." We adhere as closely, or more closely to traditional Calvinism than any publication we know. But we also believe Calvinism must be adjusted to modern times and modern knowledge.

If you have no interest in adjusting traditional Calvinism to modern times, or if you are not really enthusiastic about Calvinist doctrine itself, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will not have much to offer you.

We are especially interested in reaching Calvinist intellectuals — preachers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, physicists, chemists, businessmen, farmers, union leaders, research men — men who are *intellectuals*, that is, men who acquaint themselves with ideas and influence the acceptance of those ideas by others.

*We invite you to subscribe.*

Readers in various locations have asked us who are neighboring fellow subscribers. They wish to organize a reading club or a discussion group. We have not yet decided to provide names of subscribers to others as we are very uncertain that it is proper to give others that information. We shall not provide names except with individual consent. Subscribe with confidence.

"Ideas" have a very penetrating effect. We know that our ideas penetrate people's minds. They are never uninfluenced by PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Our readers fall into two general classes: they enthusiastically agree or they "get mad."

We occasionally get insulting or threatening letters. Why there should be so much hatred is a mystery to us, except that others hold violently contrary ideas. We admit that ideas which some Calvinists hold appear unscriptural and unscientific to us. We see no point in pretending that we agree with that with which

we do not agree, or in spending our money for anything except the spreading of our own ideas, not the ideas of others.

During the past week we have received a letter from one of the intellectuals in the Christian Reformed church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He had received a copy of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*, a sample mailing. He wishes that *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* be kept out of his mailbox; he recommends that we stop "squandering" our money and put it to a "constructive use," and he writes us that he is in favor of the denomination taking disciplinary action against us for slanderous statements.

When we read this letter carefully we learn that this man certainly does not love us; he wishes to have us disciplined; he accuses us of slander.

In the same mail we get this letter.

Enclosed please find a \$4 money-order being the subscription rate for the current year, and all issues of the first volume (1955).

I borrowed the May, 1956 issue and am quite enthused about it — your league and publication fill a need in the Calvinistic "Camp," which commands appreciation.

With best wishes for carrying out this important work, I remain . . .

Readers will note that the reaction is varied. We want all the readers that we can get. fn

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## Lack of Intellectual Respectability

On July 2 we had lunch with a representative of a Catholic University. A week later on July 9 we had lunch with a representative of a distinguished Protestant school. Both men were interested in money.

The second man asked us for the names of business men who might be happy to have their corporations contribute to an orthodox Protestant school. Slowly and carefully we went over the long list of business men who control the policies of their corporations. We were not able to come up with the name of a single man whom we would consider a good prospect from whom to get contributions.

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In the case of the Catholic, the situation was different. In this case we were not hesitant for a minute. We provided the names at once. We included *all* the Catholics we know.

Why the difference in these two situations? Are Protestants less loyal to their churches than Catholics to theirs? That certainly is part of the answer. In these parts many Protestant business men no longer consider it an *honor* to belong to a church. They do not talk about their church connections with any note of pride. You can work with them for years and not hear one reference to their church connections or their religious ideas. The situation may be different in other parts of the country.

(Another reason for difficulty in supplying names of potential Protestant contributors is because Protestants are divided into several denominations. Their contributions are available usually only to their own small group. The Catholics constitute a larger community.)

We have pondered why successful Protestant professional and business men have drifted away from their churches. We believe it is because there is a lack of intellectual respectability in what the churches teach. The churches unfortunately teach many things collateral to the Christian religion which happen to be not true or sensible or even plausible. The way most men adjust to such a situation is not to expose the errors or the absurdities but simply to lose interest; not to be active; to ignore the church; send a nice check but play golf on Sunday. The contribution often masks a basic intellectual contempt.

This "decline and fall of the churches" has been going on for a long time and will take considerable additional time.

In a denomination as the one to which the founders of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM belong there is a similar lack of intellectual respectability. There is evidence that the courses in philosophy, ethics, political science, history, economics, sociology contain confused ideas. Generally, the educational influences bearing on the youth of the denomination are (1) naive in regard to what the

church has taught in the past, and (2) confused in its synthesis (splicing together) of modern knowledge with Biblical teaching. The various influences affecting the ideas of young people have come to be controlled substantially by those intellectuals whose ideas will in the future be discovered by youth, when they mature and do some thinking for themselves, to be disreputable from an intellectual viewpoint. The current enthusiasms of students are not significant; it is unwise to be optimistic about the future on the basis of sophomoric enthusiasms for syntheses of naive interpretations of Scripture with pseudo-social science. The enthusiasm will wear off and there will be the mental depression resulting from disillusionment.

Examination of what is published in college papers presages that the ultimate dissolution of religious enthusiasms must be widely expected. Eventually when mature, many students will abandon what they will realize was never intellectually respectable.

The intellectual respectability of what is taught in religious colleges could wisely be broadly investigated and appraised. fn

## **One Phase Of Economics — The Relationship Of Men To Things**

### **An Easy Definition Of Economics**

The dictionary says that economics is the science that deals with (1) the production of wealth, and (2) the distribution and consumption of wealth.

Economics can also be defined as the science dealing with prices, production, labor, capital, land, money, costs, profits, and the shares which people get out of jointly working together to produce wealth.

But we wish to set economics off against a larger background, and in that sense define it differently. Our purpose is to address ourselves to a special group of people, a group among Christians known as Calvinists.

## Economics In Its Proper Setting

In PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we have in a somewhat discretionary manner divided the field of Calvinism (or Christianity) into two parts:

- (1) the relation of men to God, and
- (2) the relation of men to men.

We have, also in a discretionary manner, designated the first as the field of *religion*, and the second as the field of *ethics*. Further, we have said that we shall not extensively enter the first field, and we have indicated that it is our intention to consider primarily ethics — the relation of men to men.

These divisions are not only in a sense discretionary; they are also inadequate. Our readers will readily be able to understand that from what follows.

There is, in fact, a very important relationship that is practically lost sight of by our two-fold division. This important relationship is the relationship of men to things, the relationship of men to the natural world around us.

This relationship of men (not to God or to men but) to things is in a certain sense the primary field of economics.

The most famous economist in the preceding generation, Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk (1851-1914), wrote an article in the January 1891 *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* entitled, "The Austrian Economists." He declared (our italics):

To be sure, the *classical* economists well knew to what point all their explanations [in economics] must be traced, namely, to the care of mankind for its own well-being, which, . . . is the ultimate motive-force of all economic action. But owing to a certain circumstance the . . . explanation, [which they gave] . . . was always wrong. That circumstance was the following: A Crusoe has to do *only with goods*; in modern economic life we have to do (1) with goods and (2) with human beings from

whom we obtain the goods we use — by means of exchange, cooperation and the like. The economy of a Crusoe is explained when we succeed in showing what relation existed between [his] well-being and material commodities, and what attitude the care for [his] well-being required [him] to take toward such material commodities. [But] to explain the modern economic order there is, apparently, need of two processes: 1st, just as in Crusoe's economy, we must understand the relation of our interests *to external goods*; 2nd, we must seek to understand the laws, according to which we pursue our interests when they are *entangled with the interests of others*.

No one has ever been deluded into thinking that this second process [the relation of men to men] is not difficult and involved — not even the classical economists. But, on the other hand, the classical economists fatally under-rated the difficulties of the first process [namely, the relation of men to things]. They believed that as regards the relation of men to external goods, there was nothing at all to be explained, . . . Men need goods to supply their wants; men desire them and assign to them in respect of their utility a value in use. That is all the classical economists knew or taught in regard to the relation of men to goods. . . .

It is a fact, however, that the relation of men to goods is by no means . . . simple and uniform. The modern theory of final [marginal] utility in its application to cost of production, complementary goods, etc., shows that the relation between our well-being and goods is capable of countless degrees, and all these degrees exert a force in our efforts to obtain goods by exchange with others. Here yawns the great and fatal chasm in the classical theory; it attempts to show how we pursue our interest in goods in relationship to other men *without* [first] *thoroughly understanding the interest* [which we have in those goods themselves] . . .

Böhm-Bawerk's proposition is: the relationship of men to things is very complex and important, and was never correctly explained by famous earlier economists, known as classical economists (Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, Mills, etc.).

### Men And Their Environment

Men have, then, three potential fields of action:

1. Their relation to God (religion).
2. Their relation to fellow men (ethics and some phases of economics).
3. Their relation to things (another phase of economics).

Böhm-Bawerk says: economics is interested in both numbers (2) and (3). And the special point he makes is this: *you cannot solve number (2), the relation of men to fellow men, unless you first properly understand the relation of men to things, number (3).*

We wholeheartedly agree with that; the relationship of men to things is far more complex than people realize. We ourselves do not think highly of what Calvinist intellectuals generally teach on the relation of men to things.

That unfavorable opinion is not because of what Scripture teaches, but because of what men have naively interpreted the teaching of Scripture to be. It is not that we object to what Scripture teaches, but we object to what men have *interpreted* Scripture to say.

### Economics As An Aid In Interpreting Scripture

Economists make the claim for economics that it is a science. Presumably, as a science it has some knowledge to present, some insight into reality to outline. It ought, then, to have some contribution to make to the correct interpretation of Scripture, as distinguished from the interpretations of Scripture based on the naive observations of minds untrained in regard to the relation of men to things.

Economics is a relatively young science; say that it is 200 years at the most. It could not then, before the year 1750 have made a significant contribution to the correct interpretation of Scripture. It is our observation that even though economics could influence the interpretation of Scripture significantly only for the last 200 years, that even in those 200 years it has not much influenced the interpretation by theologians and moral philosophers. The more is the pity, because economics (except pseudo-economics in violation of logic, experience and revelation) can make a large contribution to an enlightening — a progressive — interpretation of Scripture.

### **Economics And Scripture**

Scripture does not shun economic problems. (In fact, it *could* not do so.) The teaching begins in the second chapter of Genesis and is continued to the end of the Scripture; the last book in the Bible declares itself to be a book describing the relationship in the next world not only of men to God but also of men to the *then* world, the new environment. It talks extensively about that new environment.

In this and succeeding issues we propose to analyze briefly what Scripture teaches about three questions which are not primarily religion (relationship of men to God) nor primarily ethics (relationship of men to men) but are initially problems of economics — the relation of men to their environment; or they are strictly individual rather than social. The three subjects are: (1) Work, (2) Pain, (3) Death.

### **The Fall Of Man**

The first great event after creation is the Fall of Man, an expression used to designate the first sin of Adam and Eve. This event is described as follows:

*Genesis 3:2-21.* And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden,

God hath said, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.

And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the



tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The Fall of Man involved a relationship of Adam and Eve to *things*, the trees in the garden of Eden. (This was not the only relationship.)

Orthodox Christians accept this account of the Fall as being *literal* history; the nonorthodox accept the account as being *symbolic*. For example, a famous theologian as the late J. Gresham Machen accepted the account literally; and similarly, another famous contemporary theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, accepts the account only symbolically; he does not consider this to be a historical event.

We propose in what follows to pursue the orthodox interpretation and to consider three questions:

- (1) Work *before* and *after* the Fall of Man;
- (2) Pain *before* and *after* the Fall of Man; and
- (3) Death *before* and *after* the Fall of Man.

Of course, in the compass of brief popular articles in a monthly publication, it is not possible to treat these subjects exhaustively, but only in the barest outline. fn

## Work And Sin

### Work Not Primarily Caused By Sin

We begin by asking the question: is work the consequence of sin or is it in a primary sense caused by sin?

Our answer is a plain *no*. Work was not *caused* primarily by sin but is only aggravated by sin.

## God And Work And Sin

If work were caused by sin, then God must be (we speak respectfully and are merely outlining the logic) a sinner because he works. Christ declares:

*John 5:17.* My father worketh even until now,  
and I work.

However, the term *work* should be defined. As mere *activity*? As *purposeful* activity? As purposeful activity *pursued to the point of unpleasantness* (or disutility, as the economists would say) or even exhaustion?

That God pursued a purposeful activity (that is *worked*) to the point of disutility could be inferred from two Biblical statements (our italics):

*Genesis 1:31.* And God saw everything that he made,  
and, behold, it was very good.

*Genesis 2:2.* And on the seventh day God finished  
his work which he had made; and he *rested* on the  
seventh day from all his work which he had made.

This idea is repeated in the Decalogue in the Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:11) where it says that Jehovah *rested* the seventh day (our italics).

We reiterate, therefore, the broad and significant proposition that as far as God is concerned his *work*, his activity of a purposeful character which he pursued in creation in a sustained manner and followed by *rest*, was not *caused* by sin.

It should be admitted, at once and of course, that the character, activity and circumstances of God are not really subject to human description or genuine human understanding. This general fact places an enormous restriction on our comprehension of God and of his purposes and activity.

## Man And Work And Sin

It is, therefore, more significant to ask: is the work of *man* caused by sin?

Returning to Moses's account in Genesis, we learn that work was not caused by sin (our italics):

*Genesis 1:28.* And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue* it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The use of the verb *subdue* indicates that man was to put forth a purposeful effort to make the natural things of the world serve him. This is obviously *work*.

The same idea is later more clearly told (our italics):

*Genesis 2:15.* And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to *dress* it and *keep* it.

This instruction to go to work — to *dress* and to *keep* the garden — is before the Fall of Man. Man had to go to work from the very beginning.

He was placed in a "garden," generally *assumed* to have been better than any present day park in the world. But that is purely an *assumption*. We consider the garden to have been a lush but uncultured wilderness; there is nothing in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation which requires an interpretation that the garden was a park. There was not, in our opinion, ten square feet of good bluegrass lawn neatly cut and trimmed in the whole place; and what garden looks good if its borders are not trimmed! Common sense makes it clear that a very primitive creature without tools or practical knowledge found himself in a lush jungle in the swampy delta of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

We are not neglecting Moses's declaration at the end of the first chapter in Scripture:

*Genesis 1:31a.* And God saw all that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good . . .

If this means that everything was "perfect" in the sense that Adam did not need to go to work, why did God "command" Adam to go to work? Because work was good for man in a moral sense but not useful in an economic sense? That idea is, we believe, unreasonable: man had to go to work because the garden of Eden needed work on it if man was eventually to get enough to eat. Consider the various kinds of societies and the specific society in which Adam lived; here is a list of the societies and their ranks:

1. An *industrial-commercial* society which is "higher" than an *agricultural* society.
2. An *agricultural* society which is "higher" than a *pastoral* society.
3. A *pastoral* society which is "higher" than a *hunting and fishing* society.
4. A *hunting and fishing* society which is higher than a *berry-gathering or fruit picking* society.
5. A *berry-gathering and a fruit-picking* society, which is the very lowest economic society that there is.

Adam and Eve began at the very bottom. And Moses "makes no bones" about it; he is a robust realist and historian, not a romancer and embellisher.

The popular imagination is, however, a long way away from Moses and his simple narrative. The unrealistic Bible story books for children have traditionally shown Adam taking his ease under beautiful trees on a velvet well-trimmed lawn with Eve engaged in the trifling activity of standing, reaching up, and picking off fruit with one hand, and simultaneously handing some to Adam.

Instead of showing a false picture of life in the garden of Eden, children's story books would do well to show a realistic picture. Here were two very primitive people, who did not have

clothes or know how to make them, who had no tools, who did not know how to start a fire or to cook and who subsisted on raw fruits, who had everything to learn about "subduing" the earth. Obviously they began at the most primitive stage, under wilderness conditions, gathering fruit off trees and shrubs.

Such fruit did not drop into their mouth. They had to *work* from the very beginning by picking the fruit. If they had not yet sinned, they nevertheless did have to work.

### Why Adam Had To Work Even If He Had Not Sinned

Not only did Moses clearly state that *from the very first* Adam and Eve were obliged to work, it could be inferred according to plain logic that sooner or later even though there had been no sin, work would have become inescapable. Work was *inevitable* and much surer than death. Let us take a look at the *facts* and at popular assumptions regarding them and see where we shall come out:

1. God commanded the human race to breed and "replenish" the earth.
2. There were *presumably* to be no deaths among men (see, however, comments on this question in a future issue).
3. Consequently, population could only increase more and more. The increase obviously would be *unlimited*.
4. But the world was and is *finite*, with a circumference of 25,000 miles. Most of the surface of the earth has been and is covered with water. The garden of Eden, although a wilderness, was one of the few places where aboriginal primitive humans could survive, climate and food supply being taken as controlling factors.
5. The infinite number of nondying men and women and steady births would sooner or later have forced the population to fight for sustenance by *hard labor*.

The logic of the situation is inescapable and conclusive. Work was necessary for an expanding human race. *The necessity for work antedated sin.*

We come then to the firm conclusion that sin is not the cause of the necessity of work. Work was and always would be *necessary* in a sinless world (except one in which population did not increase and where food literally fell into the mouths of humans, the climate was always balmy and never cold or violent, where there was potable water also dropping into their mouths, and other impossible requirements without end or sense).

What then can be the only relationship between sin and work? This and only this: sin has merely increased (1) the amount of the inescapable work; (2) the inefficiency and ineptness of the work; and (3) the consequent painfulness (disutility) of the work. The basic *cause* for the necessity of work is the general character of men and the character, including its finiteness, of the world.

### Nota Bene

When we strictly follow Moses in regard to early human conditions and look at Adam as a primitive man in a primitive environment, some readers may jump to a wholly erroneous conclusion against which we wish to go on record.

The inference might be that we consider Adam to have been semi-human, a Neanderthal man, for example. Not at all.

Some years ago a theological professor visited at the house. In our discussions he insisted very strongly on an idea, to wit: Adam had all the innate mental abilities of his descendants; he was fully a human being, a *Homo sapiens*. His primitiveness was not in his abilities, but in the stage of his culture.

We assured our friend that we were in full, unqualified agreement. We were affirming things altogether different, namely:

1. Moses says that the original man was primitive in culture — not in ability.
2. The pre-Fall world required work in order to support even Adam and Eve.
3. Work in itself is a good thing and not a bane and not cursed anywhere in Scripture.

4. Sin increased the need for work because folly causes work, and man because of sin became less effective, and consequently the painfulness and disutility of work were greatly increased.

Adam in short was a potentially cultured man who had not yet become cultured. He was in the garden of Eden not even a stone-age man but a fruit and berry gatherer. *At least that is what Moses declares.*

We conclude, therefore, that work *intrinsically* is a consequence of the relation of men to things, and not a consequence of a good or bad relationship of men to God or of men to men. A bad relationship of men to God and of men to men merely increases work and increases the painfulness of work. If such maladjustment of men to God and of men to men becomes very serious and stubborn, then the "mere" increase in work to which we have just referred can become calamitous, catastrophic, suicidal. If, for example, a society hardens its heart to promote theft by inflation (see June 1956 issue), the result will be calamitous eventually. God, Scripture declares, is not mocked. A society's sin "will find it out."

It is not work that is bad. It is that part of work which is directly the result of sin that is bad. Fail to make this distinction and all thinking on the relation of men to things becomes twisted and false. The result is that men (and churches) hold nonsensical ideas on practical matters, allegedly based on Scripture but in reality out of harmony with Scripture.

Work is inescapable. To work means that there is a purpose. That there is a purpose means that something wished to be attained is not yet attained. That something is not yet attained is not proof of sin; it is merely proof of finiteness. Mere finiteness is not sin. And God "works," too, not because he is finite, but because when he concerned himself with a finite creation some activity — work — on his part was (shall we say) "requisite" toward helping his finite creation attain its finite ends.

To teach that the necessity of all work is the result of sin is to teach a doctrine which is nonscriptural and which reduces Christianity's claim to intellectual respectability. fn

## Work Is, Or Should Be, Pleasure

The great men we have learned to know during our life have all been or are terrific workers. They are slave drivers — of themselves.

Nor are they easy taskmasters of others. These men have high standards of achievement — great work needs to be done, it needs to be done with thoroughness; with the minimum of time and effort; labor and materials need to be husbanded — that is, economized; there must be no waste. It is as if these men say: "Work for the night [of death] cometh in which no man can work." These great men, we have observed, never "drive" others so hard as they drive themselves. They are all really kindhearted and reasonable; but they certainly believe in work and compared to ordinary men, they are hard "drivers."

None of these great men believes in work for work's sake. They believe only in work as a means to an end. They are consequently careful regarding what work they do. They do not wish to be industrious about trifles; they are not "hemstitchers"; instead they are industrious about *important* matters. Consequently, they achieve much.

One of the greatest of the great men the writer has known, in casual conversation recently, declared that *work is a pleasure*, and that it is only work that makes life worth living. (This was, of course, an interpretation of mundane affairs in this life and was not intended as a comprehensive philosophy of life.)

There is a certain type of engineers known as *industrial engineers*. These are engineers whose direct and avowed purpose is to reduce the amount of work necessary to attain a given result. They use time and motion studies, improved machine locations, etc., to accomplish their ends. But the ultimate aim is not to eliminate work but to eliminate *unnecessary* work, so that the freed effort can be used to accomplish a new purpose never previously attainable because the old work consumed all the available time.

Men should like to work. Great men enjoy their work. Scripture repeatedly recommends work, and industriousness, and thrift and it condemns sloth and idleness and irresponsibility. fn



## The Universal "Welfareshortage"

The term *welfareshortage* is self-descriptive, that is, there is a shortage of welfare. We wish to use the term always in a special and emphatic sense. We shall therefore throughout this article write the two words as one and use italics.

The term is an exact translation of a word we originally read in the Dutch language, namely, *welvaartstekort*. In all ages, in all climes, among all people, under all conditions, there is even among the richest of nations and the richest of men a permanent, inescapable *welfareshortage*.

Moses taught that there would be a permanent and universal *welfareshortage*. This idea is, however, not accepted by many religious leaders. By denying this Biblical doctrine of a permanent *welfareshortage* (as taught by Moses) those leaders establish a (false) "ground" or reason for interventionism into economic affairs by governments.

The unscriptural interventionisms taught by religious leaders cannot be adequately refuted merely by denying their final *conclusions*. It is necessary to examine their basic *premises*. Those basic *premises* are seldom stated; they are tacitly assumed.

The uncritical do not realize that those unwarranted premises are involved, and that they are contrary to Scripture or to the science of economics; people generally are therefore misled into accepting the conclusions of the interventionists.

In this article we shall consider what three men hold regarding the idea of a universal *welfareshortage*. Those three men are:

Dr. C. A. Verryn Stuart

Moses

Richard Postma

### C. A. Verryn Stuart

C. A. Verryn Stuart was a Netherlander who died a few years ago. He was in his lifetime professor of economics at the State University in Utrecht (Netherlands). In 1920 he wrote a basic textbook in economics which during his lifetime went through six printings. The title for the sixth revised edition is: *De Wetenschap der Economie en de Grondslagen van het Sociaal-Economisch Leven* (De Erven F. Bohn N.V., Haarlem, 1947). In English this title would read: *The Science of Economics and the Foundations of Social-Economic Life*.

This textbook in economics we consider to be an excellent one.

We regret that Verryn Stuart was an agnostic, considering it to be impossible to have any knowledge of God, and declaring that men created God by their imaginations rather than that God had created men. He explained men's belief in God as a "tragic compulsion to come to an explanation of life itself." He considered it impossible to come to such an explanation.

There is one "reason" for unbelief, as Verryn Stuart's, which continually disturbs us badly. When the Christian religion pretends that those of its interpretations which happen to conflict with both Scripture and common sense are nevertheless Christianity, and when someone who is not a Christian sees the conflict with common sense, it is understandable that he then also rejects not only the nonsensical idea but Christianity with it. It may be expected that false Calvinism and false Christianity will continue to tend to make religious sceptics of many sound economists. In that sense, the "blood" of these economists is on the head of Christians.

But regardless of Verryn Stuart's scepticism, induced by the follies of unscriptural interpretations of Scripture or by some other cause, he is on absolutely solid ground in his teaching regarding the relation of men to things. Verryn Stuart teaches that there is a universal *welfare shortage*, universal in time and place. This is a very fundamental idea. We shall, in what follows, quote briefly from the first chapter of Verryn Stuart's book, and explain his ideas. Readers can proceed in the assumption that in this matter of *welfare shortage* we are in unqualified agreement with this famous Dutch economist. (Quotations are our translation.)

## Verryn Stuart On Insatiable Human Wants

Verryn Stuart writes:

The science of economics concerns itself with that specific fact of experience that men, everywhere and always, originally unconsciously but upon further development more and more consciously, *observe wants* (needs) in themselves.

This statement pertains to the relation of men to things (physical and otherwise). We begin then with the basic idea that men "everywhere and always" have wants which they wish to have satisfied. This is a fundamental psychological and physical fact.

Verryn Stuart later proceeds as follows:

Mankind realizes, if it is to avoid extermination, the requirements of supplies of food, shelter and clothing. In proportion as increasing culture brings a civilized man to deeper self-knowledge, he becomes conscious of numerous new needs in addition to the better satisfaction of old needs which may be considered as already supplied.

We remember reading years ago in a Calvinist magazine the conclusions of a philosopher arrived at during his leisure while cruising on a boat. The idea was that by means of modern conveniences which save time we should have more leisure and time to be philosophers and to devote to church activity. Every labor-saving device — airplanes, refrigerators, carpet sweepers, etc., — all these should result in more time for the contemplative life and men's societies and missionary activity. But this idea is naive because it does not realize the growth of *new* wants. Every time one want is satisfied a new want crops up. The *wants* of men are not a fixed quantity as this philosopher assumed, but an infinite quantity. For most men, if they have a radio but television is available, a television set becomes a "necessity." As Verryn Stuart says, "numerous new wants" stand at the threshold of every man's mind all the time.

Verryn Stuart then goes on to declare that there is infinite variety in the wants of men. He says that it is not possible to classify those wants into a "system" which fits everybody. He

writes that men "value" things differently, both material goods and immaterial goods, and he adds that the same man himself continually changes so that "values" are in a constant state of flux even for the same man. (This is one reason why interventionism (*dirigisme*) and socialism cannot be satisfactory to men.)

### The Idea Of Welfare

Next, Verryn Stuart defines welfare. He says:

*Welfare* (prosperity, *welvaart*) then is: the capacity of a man to satisfy the desires of which he has become conscious. The idea expresses a condition of balance between wants and the means of satisfying them.

However, because of the character of conscious life which is a continuous wanting, the attainment of balance is not accomplished; there is only a pursuit of balance. Every satisfied want makes way for an active new want.

Verryn Stuart goes on to say that, in a broadening prosperity, wants continue to increase unabated, or even faster than prosperity itself. Further, that satisfaction of one want begets new wants, as for example, a new house creates a psychological want for new furniture; or improvement in transportation creates a demand for week-end travel.

Every time that there is progress in the satisfying of wants there are new successor wants in their places.

That the wants of men are, in a practical sense, insatiable is true for Christians and non-Christians, young and old, wise and foolish. Wants are irrepressible; satisfaction of one want merely results in new wants bobbing up. There can, therefore, *never* be a lack of psychological demand, which would stall the economic mechanism and cause a depression. NEVER.

### Inadequate Means To Satisfy Wants

Whereas wants are infinite and *in total* are not satiable, the situation is altogether different in regard to the specific means of satisfying those wants. These means are limited. They are never able to cover the wants. It is impossible to think in terms of a

permanent gratification of all wants. It is this crucial imbalance between wants and means to satisfy wants which causes the universal *welfareshortage*. Verryn Stuart writes:

And so the existence of a persistent *welfareshortage* is one of the basic characteristics of the life of men.

Asceticism (a policy of suppressing the wish of satisfying wants) is, of course, one way of endeavoring to solve the problem. But asceticism has very few devotees. Asceticism as a solution to the problem of wants and their satisfaction is foreign to the character of the Christian religion. American *Christians* have as many gadgets to satisfy their wants as do American *non-Christians*. Great civilizations are not based on asceticism; to the contrary, great civilizations are based on the arousal of many demands and the effort to satisfy those demands by intense labor. Verryn Stuart quotes Cicero and Clive Day. Cicero declared that culture is the highest not where wants are the least and most-easily satisfied, but where wants have been enlarged and can be satisfied only by great effort. Day is quoted as follows:

Civilized people owe their advancement to the fact that they have wanted so many things and have been willing to work to get them . . .

Verryn Stuart goes on to say:

Life is change, and that change develops largely out of the lack of satisfaction with what exists, out of the struggle to adjust better and more completely, with the conditions which life presents. In this lack of satisfaction with what exists lies the incentive for all progress, because we know that in large part our desires can be satisfied by effort. Desire for what can be attained arouses devoted effort. Only the desire for what is known to be unattainable embitters and enfeebles.

### The Ratio Of Wants And Of Means To Satisfy Wants

It may be possible to measure the means used to gratify wants. But it is not possible to measure the wants themselves. They are subjective, changing, irrepressible; if satisfied or frustrated in one way, they break out at another point. Whereas means are

finite, wants are infinite. There is, therefore, a permanent imbalance between *wants* and *means* (goods). It is that permanent imbalance which constitutes the indestructible *welfareshortage*. It is this *welfareshortage* which is the incentive to labor and effort.

### Moses First Taught There Is A Welfareshortage

Moses (c. 1520-1400 B.C.) was no modern man as was Verryn Stuart. Nor was he a technical economist. But on the economic question of the relation of men to material and immaterial things Moses and Verryn Stuart are in perfect agreement. Both men are plain-spoken on the permanent existence of a universal *welfareshortage*. Moses wrote:

*Genesis 3:17-19.* . . . in toil shalt thou eat of it [the ground] all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

This statement through Moses gets down to one simple proposition: mankind will be subject to an absolutely insurmountable *welfareshortage*. (1) Man's wants will always exceed his means; (2) he will acquire the *means* to gratify his *wants* only by hard labor; and (3) the circumstances will be partially unfavorable (because of "thorns and thistles").

This language is that of a simple, primitive economy. But it is universally true. Granted that in an air conditioned building there is no "sweat of the face," work is still necessary. Granted that chemicals will easily kill thorns and thistles, work is not to be escaped. Even though capital (labor-saving devices) is multiplied and remultiplied, there is still the fact that "in toil" man acquires the means required for existence.

Moses was right for several reasons:

1. The *means* to gratify wants are limited and always will be in this life.

2. The *wants* are unlimited in the sense that human nature grows a new want or wants to replace every satisfied want.

3. The folly of men greatly impairs the best way to satisfy wants, which best way is by division of labor (that is, co-operation), by noncoercion, by free exchange, by truthfulness and by respect for property in persons and goods. In other words, sin greatly aggravates the amount of work required to satisfy wants.

And so Moses, declaring that the statement is a direct quotation from God, warningly proclaims that there is only one sound view of the relation of men to things, namely, that there will be an inescapable, perpetual *welfareshortage*.

Some Christians may believe that if there were no sin there would be no *welfareshortage* in this life and in this world. It is impossible for us to accept that proposition. All logic is against it. It is contrary to knowledge of the physical world about us. It is contrary to our self-knowledge of our own psychology. It is contrary to Scripture because Scripture indicates that Adam had to work before he "fell." It is also contrary to Scripture, by inference, to believe that God, who is recorded by Christ to work regularly, would create some paltry human beings who would not have to work. The Creator works and his creatures are to be idle! No!

We come then to the conclusion that Verryn Stuart and all modern economists are merely at this late date repeating what Scripture taught long ago. In this life in this world there is no escape from a *welfareshortage*.

We plan at some other time to devote attention to the *extent* to which sin has aggravated the need for work. That subject is beyond the scope of this article.

#### Richard Postma And Overproduction

Mr. Richard Postma is a contemporary, occupying an influential place in the Christian Reformed church, namely, that of Editor-in-Chief of *The Young Calvinist*, monthly organ of the Young Calvinist Federation. He is also known as the Youth Leader in the denomination.

Mr. Postma's ideas are generally interventionist and in our opinion exactly to that extent in violation of Scripture. In PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we, being strict constructionists of Scripture, consider all forms of intervention (*coercion*) to be a plain violation of the Sixth Commandment, (Thou shalt not kill [*coerce*])). We follow not only Moses in this, but also Christ, who declared, Blessed are the meek [who do not coerce] for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5); that is, those who are meek shall be prosperous. That is exactly what all the great economists of the past and the present teach.

Some years ago (1953) we had a conference on another matter with Postma, but in the casual conversation at the end he expressed an opinion about the business situation. He was apprehensive about the business outlook. There was, he believed, overproduction of automobiles and of household appliances and of other products. He expressed the opinion that the cause of depressions—and it was a depression which he feared—is *overproduction*. And because overproduction is the cause of depressions the government should engage in more regulation (that is, should intervene more, be more *dirigistic*, be more coercive and restrictive in regard to business.

Postma's first proposition is: overproduction causes depressions. His second proposition is: therefore, the government should intervene (violate the Sixth Commandment!) in order to prevent overproduction and by so doing keep business prosperous. It appears to the unwary that *regulation* is to make and keep business prosperous, but actually the interventionist program turns out to be *restrictionism*, that is, measures to reduce production.

But what now is left of God's statement, according to Moses, of a permanent, universal, inescapable *welfareshortage*? Postma begins his reasoning with an assumption of overproduction, which is flatly contradictory to that statement of God.

Not only is the Postma theory of overproduction contrary to Scripture; it is also contrary to common sense and common observation. Overproduction? What Christian Reformed family is not waiting until tomorrow to obtain something that it wants?



How many Christian Reformed families have all kinds of needs which are urgent, but who do not have what they urgently need because it is not being produced and because they cannot buy it?

And if that is true in this great and rich United States, what about the hundreds of millions in abject poverty all over the world? Everywhere there is a request for aid, for assistance, for charity. The world wide *welfare shortage* is staggering. We dissent therefore from the idea that we need "intervention" to prevent overproduction, because overproduction causes depressions.

Not only is the popular phobia about *overproduction* contrary to Scripture and contrary to common sense, it was in this instance also a proposition contradicted by the course of events. Production of automobiles, of household appliances and production in general have *increased* since 1953. In 1955 the production of automobiles was 29% higher than in 1953. In regard to overproduction Postma was wrong, as interventionists usually are; interventionists have the hallucination that they are qualified to regulate, to "intervene," because of some special intelligence which permits them to analyze the present soundly and forecast the future correctly. This is the self-delusion or the pretense of visionaries. The governments of the United States and of the Netherlands and of England and of practically all countries are well-staffed with such visionaries.

This error of Postma that the trouble with prosperity is not a *welfare shortage* but overproduction is at the very opposite end from Moses of the possible interpretations. Moses said: there is not and will not be enough. Postma's idea is: there is and there will be too much. Moses said: work and produce. Postma's idea is: we need government intervention to *restrict* overproduction. If Moses was right, Postma is wrong.

There is a most self-deceptive error made by those who favor *interventionism* as a system for the economic ordering of society. (In regard to how *interventionism* differs from capitalism and socialism see June 1955 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 172-173.) *Interventionism* is supposed to be farsighted *planning* and wonderfully wise *regulation* for attaining prosperity. Actually, universal experience with this type of *planning* and *regulation* has been that it finally turns out to be directed toward *restricting*

production. That is what it *always* ends up being. And along with this there is a sure consequence, namely, prices are raised to the consumer — the widows, orphans, preachers, teachers, those who are retired, etc.

One of the simplest and soundest of propositions is that: Interventionism is restrictionism—a program to reduce production. See the book by A. S. J. Baster, entitled *The Little Less* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., 36 Essex Street, Strand W. C. 2, London, England).

We shall reserve for another time the discussion of various theories of booms and depressions, of the ups and downs of business known as the Business Cycle. The explanation of the business cycle is not overproduction, nor underconsumption, nor lack of purchasing power, etc. The explanation will be found to be very simple—a plain, deliberate and damnable violation of the Law of God, namely theft and falsehood—two sins which God through Moses forbade.

But one word more about the Postma theory of overproduction. What is the logical error he perpetrated? It is this: he was confusing overproduction of *some* items with *general* overproduction. Certainly, it is possible to have overproduction for a short time of a specific commodity, say of shoes. But if there is overproduction of shoes, then there *must be underproduction of something else*. Any depression then could have been prevented by producing more of what was underproduced. The overproduction theory, so popular with all interventionists and would-be planners and little Mussolinis, can logically never be anything else than *wrong* production rather than *overproduction*. If that is not true, then Moses declared an untruth in Genesis 3:17-19. The fact, however, is that Moses did teach a sound principle. And the further fact is that there is overproduction of only specific things. But ignoring some specific overproduction, the *general* situation is underproduction, and a consequent *welfare-shortage*.

When, then, Postma and other religious leaders say that overproduction is our trouble and that the government should

intervene to prevent overproduction, they are advocating a program contrary to Scripture. Their diagnosis is wrong and their solution is wrong. They are like a surgeon who would cure a man by cutting off his toe when his appendix was about to rupture.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, contrary to prevailing Calvinist doctrine, believes with Moses and the great economists that the trouble with the world is a *welfareshortage*.

To teach that the problem of the maladjustment of men to things consists in a relationship of overproduction rather than a *welfareshortage* is to teach a doctrine which is unscriptural and which reduces Christianity's claim to intellectual respectability.  
fn

## A Revival Of An Old Inquiry

In September, 1955 we published in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 241-243, an article entitled, "We are in Favor of Justice For The Laboring Man."

This article follows:

### 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 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 judgment 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 reward to labor and the return on 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?

We then wrote the late Dr. Cecil De Boer as follows:

I take pleasure in enclosing a copy of the September issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. You will see that in the lead article there is an inquiry addressed to *The Calvin Forum*.

We received the following letter in reply:

Thank you for your letter of September 28, and for the enclosed issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Professor John Vanden Berg, an assistant professor of economics and one of the editors of *The Calvin Forum*, has consented to write an article for the *Forum* in which he will undertake to answer the questions you post in your lead article. I should have liked to contribute to the discussion; but for the time being I find myself about as busy as I care to be with a series of articles on the general topic of science and religion. . . .

Since then De Boer has died and *The Calvin Forum* has discontinued publication. On June 13, 1956 we wrote Professor Vanden Berg as follows:

See the attached copies of two letters, one by me to the late Dr. Cecil De Boer and the other his reply to me. I wish to pursue the matter further, and would appreciate hearing from you if you have any information to give me.

We have not received any reply from Professor Vanden Berg.

We now address our inquiry to every significant group professing Calvinism — to the Christian Labor Association; the Free University of Amsterdam, Calvin College, etc. We repeat our questions. They are:

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?

These questions are all related to the relation of men to things as well as men to men. And the answers given need intellectual respectability. fn

## Questions About Our Fifth Declaration

Our Declaration No. 5 continues to be questioned. Recently we received a very interesting letter from Rev. Francis E. Mahaffy, a missionary. We are printing an extract from his letter:

... after I read the initial issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, I had grave doubts as to how effective your paper would be. To me the paragraph on page 13 is a blot on the record. I refer to your statement, "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?" Later statements you have made I believe modify that extreme statement but I fear that that statement has harmed the good cause you are advancing. . . .

My opinion is that here you make the serious mistake of presenting only half the truth and in such a manner as to leave quite a false impression. In your attempt to point out in a striking manner the fact that obedience to God's laws and material prosperity have a cause-effect relationship, you gave inadequate consideration to conditions that interfere with that cause-effect relation. The world we live in is a sinful one. And so as a matter of fact you can not address an individual in this world and assure him that prosperity will follow faith. Only in certain very limited circumstances will that hold — where the individual is living in a land ordered by God's laws. In the context of the sin of this world you often have to say, as we must, to become a Christian will bring loss of material goods and perhaps even more. We have to urge people first to count the cost of becoming a Christian.

You ask the question, "Why should one adopt the Christian religion if it does not pay to do so?" This is something irrelevant to the law of cause and effect in relation to obedience to God's law. You are entering into the sphere of motives of people becoming Christians. It seems as though you would place it almost on the same level as a business deal. If I gain enough financially by the deal, I'll enter it, if not, I won't. Obviously that was not the approach of Christ or the disciples. The disciples did not follow Christ because it paid financially to do so. They and others who followed Christ often paid for their discipleship with poverty and death.

Mission work can not be placed on this basis. People should be called to accept Christ and the Christian religion because it is the only true religion. All other reli-

gions are false and evil. Only in Christianity is there salvation. Should people accept it from such motives as to whether it will bring prosperity or not, they are hardly the kind of converts we as missionaries or the church wants.

Certainly disobedience to God's law brings poverty as has been amply illustrated. It is correct that obedience to God normally and generally will bring prosperity. But we are living in a world turned upside-down by sin and so very often the reverse is true. Your placing the motives for accepting Christianity on the basis you do here seems to be quite foreign to the general tone of our Lord's emphasis on the nature of faith and discipleship.

If I have misunderstood you, let me know for I am sure many others object strongly to this paragraph of yours also and perhaps the record needs straightening. I think you would do a service to your readers to elaborate more on that point and correct erroneous impressions. . . .

We accept Mahaffy's comments as having merit. Some of the statements quoted by Mahaffy are, we admit, subject to serious misinterpretation. Mahaffy's letter clinches for us a conclusion that we were steadily being forced to, namely, that our Declaration No. 5 needs a further careful explanation. In some future issue we shall attempt that. We ask our readers to be patient. It may take us a little time to do this.

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# Progressive Calvinism

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## Christianity And Communism And Progressive Calvinism

This issue and the next have a definite relation to each other as they are primarily on two phases of the same subject—brotherly or neighborly love.

### How Can Christianity And Communism Have An Identical Law Of Neighborly Love?

In this issue, we relate some of the matters discussed at a meeting of a Reading Club to which we were invited. The experience was rewarding. Telling about this meeting gives us a natural opportunity to do what we should have done earlier, namely, repeat our interpretation of a major principle, to love our neighbor as ourselves, *which principle must be defined as we have defined it* if the definition of love by Christianity and by communism is not to be identical. For Christianity and communism to define "neighborly love" identically will require the acceptance of identical ethics. "...what communion hath light with darkness (II Corinthians 6:14b)?"

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## PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM Is In The True Calvinist Tradition On Neighborly Love

We have defined neighborly love in various issues in 1955 definitely, specifically and clearly, *and strictly according to Scripture*. Calvinists presently do not generally define neighborly love definitely, specifically and clearly. Some actually have already adopted the communist love definition! But the suspicion may arise falsely against us that we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM have a new and untraditional definition of neighborly love, and that it is we who are deviating.

To forestall false notions before they can develop, we plan in the September issue to show that PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM on the subject of neighborly love is perfectly in the tradition of Calvinism. To substantiate that we shall work over the ideas of an internationally famous sociologist, probably the most famous of the preceding generation. That September issue will be especially directed to "intellectuals." We shall show that PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM's definition of brotherly and neighborly love is nothing new but is *exactly the definition which has made Calvinism famous and successful*.  
fn

## Questions Which Readers Ask

### Learning From Men Who Think Independently

Sometime ago an old friend came in to find out whether I would meet with a small Reading Club of which he was a member. I agreed that sometime at mutual convenience I would meet with the Club. It was carefully decided that the meeting would be for "discussion" and not for speech-making. This article gives information on some subjects that were discussed. The list is not complete; omissions are because of lack of space.

A man learns practically nothing from people who agree with him. He can learn better from people who disagree, or

who are not convinced, and who have questions, than from those who already agree.

Solomon wrote (Proverbs 27:17):

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man

sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

The men in this Reading Club and others who attended impressed problems and ideas on my mind which were enlightening and helpful. These men put forth an excellent effort to "sharpen our countenance." It is of inestimable value to deal with men who *think independently*.

### Arrogance Versus Good Fortune Plus Confidence

This reminds us of something which should have been mentioned long ago. It pertains to whether we believe ourselves to be wise and others not to be. Have we special mental arrogance?

We are admittedly arrogant. Everybody is. We know the reason for our arrogance; it is given by Hobbes, towit:

All mental pleasure consists in being able to compare oneself with others to one's own advantage.

Merely putting this unpleasant truth into words is sufficient.

We would not be happy if readers confused whatever unfortunate arrogance we have with the confidence we have in the worth of ideas we present. We are sure of those ideas not because of self-appreciation but because of conviction regarding their worth. Schopenhauer wrote:

...all other sufferings of the mind may not only be healed, but may be immediately relieved, by the secure consciousness of worth. The man who is assured of it can sit down quietly under sufferings that would otherwise bring him to despair...

We have a very "secure consciousness" of the worth of ideas which we present, which is something altogether different from arrogance.

Acknowledging that we have such a "secure consciousness" of the soundness of ideas which we present, what factor is there that *should* and does keep us from extreme arrogance? The answer is: what we have learned and now hold with conviction has become our knowledge through favorable circumstances. It was not our wisdom that provided us with that knowledge. Anyone who would know all the circumstances would say that we were "lucky," and in a proper sense of the term we certainly have been. If what is presented in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is right—and we have a "secure consciousness" that it is—there is nevertheless no special merit in us just because we happen to present it. Our ideas are not original. If we can give an acceptable answer to questions, that is because of our favorable opportunities and experience. Other men, with the same opportunities we have had, would have done better than we have done.

### Conduct Of The Meeting

We return to the meeting of the Reading Club which we attended.

Twenty-five or thirty men were present. The organizer of the meeting made a brief and excellent introduction. He turned the meeting over to the chairman, an educator. He made brief and excellent introductory remarks. Then he turned to the business to be transacted: discussion, questions and answers, arguments and explanations—the exchanging of ideas and the endeavor to understand each other and bring minds closer together.

To open the general discussion the chairman took the initiative and asked the first question. Preparatory to that he devoted several minutes to present a summary of a very important principle which is vital to the issues which are discussed in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. We realized at once from his summary of the issue that he is an extraordinarily "good reader."

The chairman declared that a very fundamental proposition in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM pertained to the problem regarding the meaning of *brotherly love*. (We use the terms, brotherly love and neighborly love, interchangeably.) He said: PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM repeats the well-known formulation of the law of brotherly love as being, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, with the emphasis on the last two words, *as thyself*. Then he asked: what does it mean to love the neighbor *as thyself*?

No better subject could have been selected with which to begin the meeting, because the answer to this question is the basic proposition (*leitmotif*) of all the ethical principles of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

### A Question On Neighborly Love

#### 1. What does it mean to love the neighbor *as thyself*?

This is approximately what we answered. (We are adding a few ideas which we thought of afterwards; one always thinks of a lot of things *afterwards*!)

To emphasize loving the neighbor *as thyself* obviously makes yourself the standard. What do *you* want most—more than anything else—for *yourself* as a human being in relation to other human beings? The answer to this question is the key to how you love yourself. This is the answer regarding what *loving yourself* consists of: *to have the maximum freedom and be able to do what you want to do*; to wish freedom for yourself is to love yourself, because by freedom you can generally live the life you wish to live. Without that freedom you cannot make loving yourself mean much. The exercise of freedom is the foundation for you to be able to love yourself.

But there is an exception to that freedom. It is a very crucial exception, small in one sense and overwhelming in another, namely, you may not harm, be vengeful, fail to show charity or fail to proclaim the gospel. But these prohibitions *when looked at rightly*, do not really rob you of much freedom. There is a glorious liberty left outside the field of harming or failing to help the neighbor as defined. This great and wide liberty is the

priceless possession which a man has or should have as a human being.

The law of loving the neighbor does not require that we *like* him but only that we *love* him. To *love* him means (1) not to harm him (by violence, adultery, theft, falsehood, covetousness) and (2) to be forbearing and forgiving, and disposed to do him good even though he may have harmed us. Further, that (3) we show him *charity*, that is, give him help when he really needs it. Finally, (although not mentioned in the meeting because it was assumed) we (4) owe it to the neighbor to proclaim the gospel to him. In short, to love the neighbor is (1) to do him no harm; (2) to be forbearing and forgiving and do him good; (3) show him charity if necessary in our own judgment, and (4) inform him of the gospel. So much, BUT NO MORE. If we wish to do more, that is each person's private affair. Let him do as much more as *he* wishes.

The liberty which you want for yourself must be allowed to the neighbor also. He must be permitted by you to live his life his own way, according to his inclinations, except he also may not harm you or others, etc. This forbids all coercion of neighbors by you or by him. You must leave neighbors *free*. That is the greatest way to show your love to him. We then get this definition of brotherly love as love equal to the love for thyself:

You want for yourself:

- a. Liberty in all matters,
- b. Except
  - (1) do no harm to neighbor
  - (2) show forbearance toward him
  - (3) show charity toward him
  - (4) declare gospel to him

and so, if you love your neighbor *as yourself* you wish him to have exactly the same. *Then* you love your neighbor *as yourself*.

We have then added the positive idea of *liberty* to the negatives in the commandments. This positive idea of liberty may appear to be only a small residual left after the prohibitions of the commandments slice off a large part of life. But that is not

the correct view of the commandments. Exactly the reverse is true. The Decalogue leaves a man's life *free* and grand and wide, except that it slices off only an evil segment of life, and the loss of that evil segment, looked at in perspective, does not cramp life at all.

But then we add another corollary. If the foregoing is *love* to the neighbor as *to oneself*, and if no more is required for loving the neighbor, then you have no further obligation. He is on his own and you are on your own. You cannot or should not try to live his life and he cannot or should not try to live your life. To do that is evil and intrinsically compulsion and coercion and sin. Stop trying to be a do-gooder beyond what we have outlined.

That you undertake more obligations than Scripture requires (as we have just outlined) is to extend the law of love. That *extension*—that hyper-piousness—has the effect of making Christian ethics ridiculous and *evil*. It is evil and sinful that we try to live each other's lives, and meddle around in each other's affairs. *The unwarranted extension of the law of love beyond what Scripture teaches makes that law of love exactly the same as the law of love that communism teaches.* Communism teaches a law of love which goes beyond what has just been defined as neighborly love, and which is harder to fulfill than what the Christian law of love teaches. Communism basically requires that you must love your neighbor *more* than yourself. You must live *for* him. That communist extension, against which we warn because it is not taught in Scripture, is the exact extension that communists hope Christians will accept.

If modern Calvinism insists on adopting the identical definition of love which communism teaches, it places itself in a most vulnerable position. How can modern Calvinism teach different practical ethics if its most basic premise—on how to love the neighbor—is identical with communism? If the premises are identical, the conclusion must be identical.

There are really only two definitions of brotherly love: (1) that everybody properly minds his own business, or (2) that everybody meddles with everybody's business.

Confused Christians may favor number (2), namely, that we all meddle into each other's affairs, but they always naively limit the idea that we shall only meddle into each other's affairs *for their good*. But this is about as unrealistic as anything can be. Is there no *total depravity*? It is precisely that meddling into our neighbor's affairs *for ill* that we do all the time by coercion, adultery, theft, falsehood, covetousness.

If you want the right to meddle into your neighbor's life and regulate it, but do not want him to meddle into your life and regulate it, then you do not love your neighbor as yourself.

The nonprecise reasoners among us may be dissatisfied with this precise definition of *neighborly* love, especially as distinguished from *parental* love, or *conjugal* (matrimonial) love, or so-called *love among the "brethren."* They may define all these "loves" as being identical. But in these other "loves" some additional element is naturally and properly added. Defining all kinds of love as being identical with neighborly love is invalid.

Furthermore, there are the sentimentalists. They want such love to mean that everybody should be "holding hands" with everybody else. For them brotherly love is an emotional phenomena, almost completely disassociated from just conduct, freedom and forbearance. It is beyond the scope of this report of a meeting to rebut this misrepresentation of what Scripture teaches.

There are sentimentalists in Calvinist circles who talk of "community" and organic unity. Their idea is that to love is to like. Further that to fail to like is sin—a violation of the law of love. But this idea of the *obligation to like* as being the definition of brotherly love finds no real basis in Scripture. Instead of binding men's choices in a requirement that they must like (and even must like equally), Scripture gives only those four specific objective requirements which we have previously listed. In regard to *love* Scripture does not play with words or prattle about immeasurable subjective attitudes; it deals instead with obvious, external, measurable, definite realities.

There is outside the churches a similar sentimentalism and mysticism. Men who practically deify the state as Hegel did and



as the various socialist-communists (and also the welfare-staters) do, also have a vague, elusive and vicious presupposition of some brotherly or neighborly obligation towards neighbors individually and collectively.

All these "love" ideals are unrelated to the practical, limited, hard-headed, beneficent definition of brotherly and neighborly love in Scripture. All those definitions are hyper-pious, collectivist, hypocritical, unattainable, frustrating and depressing.

There is one class of moralists about love to whom we wish to make special mention, namely, those *A's* who love the *B's* so much that they coerce all the *C's* to help the *B's*. This is a doctrine of love which has a particularly odious hypocrisy about it. The world is full of such "lovers"—people who would love another never at their own expense but at the expense of third parties.

Readers cannot understand all this fully without first reading earlier issues of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* which are almost entirely on the subject of neighborly love: February, March, April and May, 1955.

### A Question On The Relationship Of Christianity To Prosperity

2. From the floor the question was asked to the effect: Is it sound to say that prosperity definitely results from obeying God's commandments? Does not experience indicate that obeying God's commandments does not uniformly make men prosperous, but even sometimes the reverse? This question challenges Declaration No. 5 of the Progressive Calvinism League. The declaration 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 presented in our first issue, January 1955, a brief explanation of this declaration. See that issue.

Some of our explanatory statements in the January 1955 issue need more careful formulation than we gave them.

In the first place, we do not mean by *prosperity* merely *material riches*. We mean by it a pleasant earthly life, a life you can live to suit your own inclinations (except to sin). This kind of comfortable or good life might mean a modest life on a college campus, in pleasant physical surroundings, with delightful intellectual stimulation, long summer vacations, sabbatical years for study and travel. Of course, you will not get rich in material goods doing that, but you will still be "rich" because you are living your life *your way*, as you wish to spend it on earth on mundane matters. A man cannot expect wealth if he does not work for it. Nor can he enjoy the intellectual life, if he fails to do what that requires. And so prosperity means (in our thought) the *good life*, the one you specifically want to live, and that is certainly not limited to Cadillacs and town and country houses and great luxury. It means other kinds of lives than the mere acquisition of wealth.

But, we regretfully admit, the *good life* does not always follow from adherence to Christianity as certainly as a physical effect follows a physical cause, for several reasons:

- (a) *Private* evil interferes with that natural cause and effect;
  - (b) *Public* evil also interferes;
- and then we should have added a third qualification, namely,
- (c) God in his inscrutable wisdom (but probably for the benefit of our souls) afflicts us. Consider the case of Job.

These are sweeping qualifications. We mentioned (a) and (b) inadequately in our January 1955 issue, but we wholly neglected (c).

In regard to the question: Is there a *normal* cause and effect relationship between obedience to the commands of God, as cause, and a resulting good life (prosperity, living as we wish) as effect—to that question our answer was and is *Yes*. All Scripture teaches it. We can fill a book of solid references to support this. Scripture teaches that God rewards the good and

punishes the evil. If it does not teach that, then the world and morality are upside down.

We hold, therefore, tenaciously to the conviction that the *general* rule in this world in the past was, today is, and in the future will be that temporal rewards result from conduct in obedience to God's laws, and that temporal penalties follow conduct in disobedience to God's laws. As a qualification we admit that coercion (power), exercised by individuals and by men collectively (governments), interferes with these laws. Further, we admit that the inscrutable providence of God *seems* occasionally to interfere with the general rule.

This last factor touches on a moot question among Christian Reformed Calvinists—the question of *common grace*. God makes "his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). This sounds like a statement against Declaration No. 5, that is, that there are neither punishments nor rewards for different kinds of conduct.

In this connection we told the meeting that there are obvious logical contradictions in various ideas about *common grace* and *total depravity*. If a man has sufficiently naive ideas about cosmogony (how the world is put together and functions), he can also have—he must of necessity have—correspondingly naive ideas about "grace." Sometime we hope to cover these ideas possibly under the title, "Playing Tiddley-Winks With Words." Much of what passes for doctrinal profundity on "grace" is plainly unrealistic.

We told the meeting: *of course* the rain falls on the just and the unjust. Imagine a square of ten miles on each side, with quarter-section farms owned by "believers" and "unbelievers"; the holdings of each type of owner are distributed throughout the whole area; and then God because of some "grace" idea should keep the rain and sun off the plots of the "unbelievers" and should bountifully dispense them on the adjacent plots of the "believers"! Such *discrimination* in natural affairs by the *providence* of God would be so absurd and unworkable, that Christ simply called attention to an idea of such elementary common sense that there is no proof of "common grace" to be derived from such a text.

FOR PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM therefore, common grace (whatever some may define that to be) does not reduce the *general* validity of our Declaration No. 5.

This question of the relationship of morality to prosperity (as we have defined it) has a peculiar relationship to Calvinism. One of the major socio-religious-economic theories advanced in the last half century is that there has been a peculiarly close relationship between Calvinism and capitalism; Calvinism is supposed to have nurtured capitalism. The most famous German sociologist of the preceding generation, Max Weber, wrote a book on that subject, *The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit Of Capitalism* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1952). (He quoted statistics that if you are a Calvinist you are likely to be more prosperous than other religious groups (except Jews).) Here, then, is Weber, who is considered a great authority, proclaiming that *prosperity* follows in a special sense from being a Calvinist (as distinguished from having some other religion). We are not subscribing to all that Weber wrote, but this we admit: the brand of Calvinism which we accept has exactly that "ethic" in it which Weber declared promotes capitalism and prosperity. We mention this merely because Weber confirms our Declaration No. 5 in his own way. We plan to devote the next issue to Weber's idea.

### Are We Our Brothers' Keepers?

3. Are we our brothers' keepers, or not? This was not a direct question from the floor but was assumed or suggested by one of the men present.

The chairman immediately called attention to the fact that Cain merely asked a "rhetorical question," and that it could not be properly inferred from Cain's question that we are our brothers' keepers.

Here again the determining consideration is: what does loving our neighbor require—are we our neighbor's *keeper*? Yes, but only in so far as the law of neighborly love extends. Beyond that we are not our brother's keeper.

We are not obligated to support our neighbor; we do not need to "keep" him. If he needs help *in our opinion* (not his

opinion or anybody else's opinion) we must exercise *charity* towards him. That charity is dispensed at the giver's discretion and not on the recipient's demand, or the declaration of some pious third person. The man who "has" may be of the opinion that the man who "has not" will be injured by charity. A beggar reeking of liquor may ask for a quarter for a sandwich and whine about his hunger, but a man may be well-advised to refuse it, because the quarter may go for more liquor.

Professional social workers think very poorly of unorganized charity and payments to uninvestigated recipients of charity. Those social workers always substitute *their own* judgment for that of the recipient. It is a practical necessity to do that. This is true not only of secular charities, but also is (or should be) of religious charities or private Christian benefactions. The *giver's* judgment must prevail over the recipient's judgment. This is an essential ingredient in charity, or else what is done is no longer charity but something else.

Charity, it should be noted, is really inconspicuous in Scripture. Moses allowed the poor the *gleanings* of the field. The tax for charity according to Moses was a tithe, a mere 10%. Scripture, looked at in perspective, is not large-hearted regarding charity; a man can keep 90% of his income! It is not the largeness of the scriptural demands, but the smallness that should cause surprise. No tyrant or people in all history is so modest as God is in taxing and making demands on men.

But what has been written does not leave any man free of the obligation of charity, of giving mutual aid. We have not written what we have written about not being our brother's keeper and about charity in order to reduce any man's inclination toward helping a neighbor *who is in need and when the "help" will do the neighbor some genuine good*. Charity is as necessary in society as oil in a motor. Let the oil run dry in a motor and the motor will be ruined. Let charity run dry in society and society will be ruined. We are enthusiastic about charity.

We are not disputing about helping a brother or about charity. We are disputing the *extent of the claim* for "keeping" a brother and for charity.

Cain indicated that his idea of being his brother's keeper was so limited that he could injure the brother, slay him. Of course, *in that sense* of not slaying a brother we are his keeper. And so it all depends, as we said before, on what is meant by "brother's keeper." Here is the gamut of ideas involved in being our "brother's keeper":

Injuring him.	Not injuring him, leaving him free, scriptural charity, forbearance, and gospel.	Supporting him, and regulating his life for him. Extensive sharing.
Cain said brotherly love did not cover this segment.	PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM's idea of being brother's keeper. No more than this; no less.	Communist and interventionist and welfare state ideas of being the "brother's keeper."

We reject both extremes of being a brother's keeper. We accept only the intermediate definition and requirement.

We talked in the meeting about a very modern idea, namely, *progressive* income taxation, that is, as the income goes up, the tax rate "progresses" upward still faster and may even amount to about 90% of very large incomes.

This popular "modern" idea (in violation of the Eighth and Tenth Commandments) was apparently unknown to Moses. Strange, we have often thought, that if *progression* in tax or charity was a sound and obligatory idea—strange that God never thought of it or at least neglected to instruct Moses to specify a progressive obligation in regard to charity and taxes. But He did not. If Karl Marx, socialists-communists and interventionists are right about the progressive tax, then all the writers in Scripture have surely been uninformed.

Here again the interesting phenomenon is that ancient Scripture teaches a sound and not a destructive policy. *Sound* modern economics can do only one thing, namely, condemn the progressive income tax. True social science and Scripture agree.

## The Danger Of Materialism

4. Reference was made to the danger of materialism.

This involves a profound problem. Every reference to materialism disturbs us, because we are sensitive that the charge of *materialism* might be made against PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM albeit incorrectly and unjustly. We do not consider ourselves to be materialistic, but merely candid and honest about materialism.

All Christians are in some sense materialistic. But everything depends on what is meant by *materialism*. Does it mean:

1. Desire for *consumable* things (luxuries)
2. Desire for ownership of *productive things* (capital)
3. Unwillingness to participate in charity
4. Consumption of natural resources
5. Self-interest versus group interest
6. Indifference to the service of God

Materialism can mean any of these. We do not consider PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM to be materialistic on any of these counts except number (2).

It would be natural to change the foregoing questions into a form that "begs the question," e.g.,

1. Excessive desire for luxuries
2. Excessive desire for wealth
3. Miserliness
4. Waste
5. Exploitation of others
6. Irrational denial of a Creator

We are against all of these. In that sense we are not, and never will be, materialistic.

What is an *excessive* desire for luxuries? And what are *luxuries*? Mises, in a very short article in the August 1956 issue of *The Freeman*, declares that what were luxuries for our ancestors are *necessaries* for us. Also, what are necessities for us today are luxuries for Hindus and Chinese today. What preacher, for example, in the United States has given up the "luxury" of an automobile in order to provide extra funds for missions in Africa?

The answer will be that in the United States automobiles are practically necessities. But is this materialism?

The problem of *materialism* was too big for us to handle in the meeting, and we did not discuss it. Some other time maybe.

### Two Ways To Look At The State

5. It was inevitable that the relation of men to the state would come into the discussion.

We pointed out that Scripture sounds two entirely distinct notes on the character of the state:

- (a) The Apostle Paul talked about "the powers that be" and that the state is from God. (The context shows that Paul *assumes* a beneficent government.)
- (b) The Apostle John, languishing in banishment on the island of Patmos, saw the eventual state as a monstrous thing—the Great Beast, and the agent of the anti-Christ. (The context shows that John *assumes* a malignant government.)
- (c) The Apostle Peter took two separate positions about the state: (1) in one instance, a position identical with Paul's, based on Paul's assumption; see the statement in I Peter 2:13-17; and (2) in the other instance, a non-partisan position with the only really universal perspective, namely, that the state should be appraised *depending on what it in fact is*, and that conduct should be accordingly, namely, to obey or to disobey, *because* "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). This is the *general* rule to which we in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM hold.



We make no assumptions that the state is generally good or generally bad. We obey a good state, and we recommend resistance against a bad state.

We reserve to ourselves the right to decide whether the men in the government are obeying God or not, and to obey or not to obey accordingly. There is a very effective way to make the law of God of no effect whatever, and that way consists in accepting whatever government exists and obeying that government when it is bad. In PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we are not so fatuous as to believe that *all* governments enjoy the blessing of God and should be obeyed just because they exist, maybe even by violence or fraud, nor are we teaching any doctrine that we must obey men rather than God.\*

#### Our Quotations From Rousseau And Machiavelli

6. The chairman questioned the reliance in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM on statements of Rousseau and of Machiavelli, two men whose reputations are not the best among Christians. Why, he asked, quote and use in arguments, statements of men of such disrepute? (Or a question to that effect.)

Firstly, we quoted these men because we estimated that the mere quotation from them would shock readers to attention. We are sure that our estimate of the rhetorical advantage of the use of these quotations is correct.

Secondly, we answered that there was a great difference between Rousseau and Machiavelli. We despise the ideas of Rousseau, but for many of the ideas of Machiavelli we have profound respect.

In regard to Rousseau, son of a Swiss preacher, we quoted him favorably only once, because we would almost say that that

\*The Christian Reformed church has a decision in its Synodical Minutes which is based *solely* on the premise that the laws of a government may be permitted to supersede the law of God. This premise is basic in some of the thinking of the Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema, a most influential leader in the denomination. This same premise influences the thinking of the editors of *The Reformed Journal*, a publication deviating radically from traditional premises. We believe that even in the Christian Reformed church God should be obeyed rather than men.

was the only time he was right. Rousseau attacked the idea of the "divine right of kings." We believe Rousseau's argument on that is drum-tight and conclusive. It cannot, logically, be improved upon. We are against the divine right of kings. The proposition on which that is based is that God specially selected all the rulers of the earth, and that they have God's approval, and a sort-of pipe line of power from God to those rulers, whether good or bad.

The claim of the "*divine* right of kings" is a counterfeit claim. What astonishes and alarms us is that members of Calvinist churches, for example, the Christian Reformed, today hold to an identical doctrine, namely, the *divine* right of any existing government. All they do is substitute "any existing government" for "kings." (See footnote on page 241.)

Rousseau had no more finished his sound argument against the *divine* right of kings before he set up a whole series of ideas regarding society and government which were as wrong as the idea of the divine right of kings. Rousseau made an attack on the divine right of kings; he did not really attack the *divine right* phase of the idea which usually means unrestricted right.

It is not possible for Rousseau or anyone to get along without a state. And so he theorized about a new and better state set up on the basis of the "general or common will." To this new state, representing the popular majority, he immediately granted so much authority and liberty to exercise any authority it wished that it was practically based upon "*divine rights*" of its own. See June 1955 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 154-158.

Some members of the Christian Reformed church have with Rousseau abandoned the idea of divine right of kings. But to the government which exists in place of a monarchic government, they grant as much "divine" rights as any king claimed; they attack the location (*locus*) of divine right in a king and accept it in a people and their representatives; we attack the *divine* right idea itself, as never possibly resting in a person or a people

but only in the law of God. Rousseau's ideas all constitute foundation stones for eventual socialism-communism. He prepared the seed-bed for the French Revolution. We summarize, then, in regard to Rousseau—away with the man's ideas!

In regard to Machiavelli, we know his notorious reputation, but for us Machiavelli falls in a different class. Generally, we admire the man. We know that he gave advice on how to assassinate somebody. It is good advice regarding *method*. If we ever take to assassination we shall follow it; it is this: give no warning sound, threat, movement,—nothing; just *stab*. Otherwise, Machiavelli says, you may get killed yourself.

Machiavelli picked out some of the most sensational of his ideas and sent them to one of the Medici in order to get back into favor and return to Florence. (He was in banishment.) These are the essays in his little book, *The Prince*. But read all of Machiavelli's essays (*The Discourses*, Modern Library) and the impression is different. Here is a man with magnificently wise and penetrating judgment (as well as apparent cynicism). We look on Machiavelli as an unregenerate Calvinist. He had exactly the same estimate of mankind as Calvinism has, to wit, *totally* depraved. Most people object to Machiavelli's realism; they object to old-fashioned Calvinism for an identical reason.

We are not, be it noted, agreeing to everything Machiavelli wrote. Read the man's main work, *The Discourses*; you will then appreciate him.

### Acridity

7. The chairman "took me to task." He quoted various parts of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, and declared that he considered them sarcastic and even "*acid*."

If you look up the word *acid* in a dictionary you will read the following: "of a cutting or burning taste; bitter; acrimonious." The charge caught me completely "off guard." A public meeting is hardly the place to justify an attitude.

I acknowledged and continue to recognize that an "*acid*" approach to differences of views is not the ideal or effective approach. It is not a suitable means to an end.

I accepted the firm protest of the chairman, and said I would change my methods. That was and is my intention.

### **Denominational Criticism**

8. In the foregoing connection (or some other, I forget) the chairman also questioned criticism of the denomination to which we both belong.

Everyone who knows what is going on realizes that there are wide differences of views in the Christian Reformed church. There is no reason why they should not be vigorously explored.

We have not begun a publication to criticize Mohammedanism, nor Confucianism, nor Catholicism, nor Christian Science. We are not adherents of any of those systems of thought. There is something inappropriate about by-passing oneself and criticizing what is far away.

Nor do we think there is a small speck in the eye of Calvinism. We are not spending our money because we believe the troubles of modern Calvinism are trifling foibles. We consider the modern church to be apostate to scriptural teaching on various points. It is not always the formal doctrine that is wrong but the unwillingness to apply it.

We do not have money to put out some "meditations" or to flatter our brethren with fine words. Nor have we funds to criticize those not associated with us. This publication is by deliberate policy self-analytical of the specific, small group to which we belong.

We are not a reform movement for the world, or the United States, or all Christian churches, but for a specific small denomination. But we consider the significance of this to be beyond denominational lines.

### **Equality As A Goal In Life; Is It Scriptural?**

9. A member of the Reading Club called attention to the teaching of Scripture in regard to *equality*. The idea sounded new and surprising to us. However, he had a text which was

the basis for his question. The text is in II Corinthians 8:14. It reads:

But by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality.

There can be no question that this text has in it something intended to promote "equality." But the context was unfamiliar to us.

We were, therefore, obliged to plead ignorance of the idea specifically involved in this statement.

We then shifted and made our answer general. This is what we said:

1. Single texts can hardly be used as the basis for a major doctrine. Every theologian takes the position that it is the *current* (prevailing and general) teaching of Scripture which should prevail, not isolated statements.

2. Scripture does not teach a *general* doctrine of equality. It teaches charity, but charity is not designed to establish general equality but to relieve distress.

3. It is unfortunate to think in terms of equality, or to make many comparisons between people. Somebody must come out poorly in the comparison. Comparisons are invidious—damaging to somebody. A man should be compared with his own past and not with his neighbor.

4. Inequality, or better said, *differences* between men are something for which to thank God. It is the *differences* in men that hold society together, not their likenesses. If we were all equal in everything, *no cooperation between men would be necessary nor would it exist*. Cooperation—voluntary and therefore brotherly and neighborly—can exist only between A and B when A does something and B does something *else*, and they then exchange *voluntarily and willingly*, that is, in a brotherly manner. But if there are no advantages in that, then society lacks cement. *Differences* in men are a God-given blessing.

5. Equality can hardly be a goal of Scripture because it would be out of harmony with creation. Inequality, or rather difference (variety), is a basic element in creation. God made the world infinitely *varied*. We do not think that it should be the duty of man to make everything "*equal*," and by so doing undo what God created to be different.

Since the meeting we have examined the specific text in II Corinthians 8:14 more carefully. The text when originally quoted was obscure (to us).

We happen to have a Dutch Bible which is an excellent edition with helpful chapter summaries at the beginning of each chapter. With the help of those chapter summaries we come to the conclusion that Chapters 8 and 9 in II Corinthians are on the same subject, to wit, *charity collections for the poor in Jerusalem*. Readers may remember that we questioned the early enthusiasm of the church in Jerusalem by which it dissipated the assets of the members in a spree of mismanagement which could have only one result—future poverty exactly in proportion to the current spending of capital. (See pages 33-35 in the February 1955 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.) This prostrated the Jerusalem congregation for years. Struggling new and foreign churches were asked to collect for the original church in Jerusalem. Chapters 8 and 9 are a case in point; Paul is trying to raise money in Corinth, Greece to ameliorate poverty in Jerusalem. The Macedonian churches are mentioned by Paul as examples of good contributors. The Corinthian church had had some intentions to collect, but Paul makes it clear that they had failed to perform. There had been only the "will." He writes about sending Titus and one or two others to drum up the money. (Readers are requested to read the two chapters; if they do not they will have difficulty following the explanation.)

The introductory summary in the Dutch Bible for Chapter 8 reads as follows (translated):

Paul tells the Corinthians of the generous charity of the Macedonian churches to the poor in Jerusalem, and declares he had instructed Titus to work on the Corinthi-

ans to get a similar collection. Paul points to the example of Christ who became poor to make us rich, and admonishes them to accomplish their original intention but not so that they themselves would be deprived but to contribute out of their abundance. He makes an analogy of the manna in the desert (Exodus 16:13). Titus is being sent by Paul to collect the money; another appointed by the congregation [at Jerusalem or Macedonia?—FN] is accompanying Titus; and also a third man of good repute in the estimation of Paul and the congregations.

This was quite a delegation, *three* men travelling internationally, to use their influence to get from the Corinthian congregation funds for the poor in Jerusalem. The collection expense was certainly high.

The summary of Chapter 9 reads as follows (translated):

The apostle testifies that he has adequate assurance of the good intentions of the Corinthians to promote this collection. He gives reasons why he has sent the three men to them, namely, so that everything would be ready by the time he arrived himself. He admonishes them to contribute well, giving various arguments for generosity drawn from God's blessing, love and mercy. He refers to the gratitude to God which will result from their contribution by those who receive it, and to the prayers which the recipients will make to God for the Corinthians.

Obviously, this is a high-powered collection campaign induced by the urgent need at Jerusalem and by Paul's wish to have funds in order to make good his promise at the great dispute mentioned in Galatians 2 where the settlement included a divi-

sion of territory between Paul and the original apostles and where Paul committed himself to collect money (verse 9):

And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision [Jews]; only they would that we should remember the poor [at Jerusalem]; which very thing I was also zealous to do.

If readers will themselves have read these two chapters (with the assistance of the foregoing summaries), they will reach the following conclusions, I believe:

1. The references are to *charity* only, and not to the social order. The *equality* to which reference is made is therefore limited to charity and not to general equality.

2. The *equality* to which Paul refers is really reciprocity—you help them now, and they will help you at another time; “your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want.” This “breadth of view” about charity, namely, that what it costs now may be offset by what you get back later is a valid idea to which we called attention on page 102, paragraph 5, in the April 1955 issue. This is not an argument addressed to pure charity but just the contrary, long-term self-interest.

3. These charities are not a *claim*, and Paul is very careful to say that he is *not assessing* them. In Chapter 8 verse 3 he says that the Macedonians “gave of their own accord,” and not in response to an assessment. Then he writes in verses 7 and 8a (our italics):

But as ye abound in everything, in faith and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. *I speak not by way of commandment...*



Paul here is keeping charity on the basis it must be kept if it is to remain charity. All compulsory "charity" is no longer charity. He does not speak "by way of *commandment*."

We continue therefore to believe that there is nothing in Scripture which teaches "equality" in any socio-economic sense. We think the *current* or *prevailing* or *general* teaching of Scripture is against it.

We are indebted to the Reading Club member for bringing up his very interesting point.

### Exploitation Of The Poor By The Rich

10. Unfortunately, this report is being written several weeks after the event and we cannot remember everything clearly. But somehow or other the question came up of the exploitation of the poor by the rich, and particularly exploitation of the poor *in the past*. Someone, I believe, implied that employers in earlier generations exploited their employees, and that unions are to be thanked for ending the exploitation and for raising the standard of living.

That idea—that unions *really help* the employee—is, we believe, wholly erroneous. There is no more to it, than there is water in a mirage in the desert. However, that statement is so contrary to the almost universal opinion of mankind that to state the two contrary views—that unions have helped employees, versus that unions have not helped employees—is to stir up a real argument.

Let us look at the question historically first.

Originally the union movement was a "craft" movement. Union members were *only* the skilled workers. Those unions "helped" their members. *But at whose expense?* Somebody must have lost what the skilled worker gained. And who lost? *The unskilled worker*. The public program of the craft unions was on that basis: "we are skilled; we will not let you in unless you are skilled; you cannot have our wage rates."

Craft unionization did not result in greater production. Therefore, there could be only a different "distribution" of what the employees got; if the skilled got more, the unskilled got less. All economists have recognized that.

More recently the union movement was extended to the unskilled as well as the skilled. John L. Lewis was a proponent of *universal* unionization. The Christian Labor Association holds to the same idea. But if everybody is in the union, then the skilled can no longer get more *at the expense of* the unskilled. Who pays the piper now?

In the first place, there are many people who are not yet in unions, particularly white collar workers. They are partly footing the bill.

But the theory of the Christian Labor Association and all other unions is that the employer is footing the bill. That natural exploiter! It is their idea that if it were not for the unions, employers would be making excessive profits.

That may occasionally be true, but basically it is incorrect. It can be shown by rigorous reasoning that *the employer cannot be stripped of his basic return*. It was beyond the scope of the meeting to explain that there, and it is beyond the scope of this report to explain that here.

There is no more chance that "capitalism" will not get its return than there is that labor will not get its return. (Adopt complete socialism and communism and the statement just made will still be true. We shall, D.V., show that some day.) A reader may laugh and say, who can resist power or coercion by a state; will not the laws and the police and the army enforce a law to see to it that capitalism does not get its "share"? No, the laws, the police, the army, the torture chamber will not change it. A great economist wrote an essay entitled, *Macht oder Oekonomisches Gesetz*, which in English reads "Might versus Economic Law." He explores the proposition that man-made laws can nullify "economic law." His reasoning to his conclusion is conclusive; men by laws, by *might*, cannot annul economic law. As Christians we would amend the statement:

men cannot mock God successfully; man-made laws do not annul (ever) laws of nature established by God.

But, someone will say, capitalists can be expropriated; society can seize capital. Then the capitalist has footed the bill.

Morality is not tested by short-term events. A bank robber can get himself a million dollars quickly on a fortunate robbery. The short-term effect is good for him—until he is caught. Eventually, he himself suffers a penalty.

Similarly, all legislative or administrative action to destroy the benefits of private property will be futile and destructive. Not only will the attempted result fail. There will also be a penalty, as well.

What will happen from universal unionization, with unions operating as do today the CIO, the AFL and the CLA?

First, the nonunion people will be injured some, *temporarily*; next, the employers will be injured some, *temporarily*; but the union members themselves will be injured as surely as the law of God exists. The sequence will be as follows:

1. Chronic unemployment will develop: the less efficient will not be hired because they cannot earn their pay. The higher the rates are above the natural price for labor, the more *chronic* unemployment there will be.

2. But there is a temporary escape from the penalty of chronic unemployment, namely, increases in product prices. These price increases will be above the natural market in order to pay for the labor rates above the natural market. Money will have to be expanded as a corollary step. This is inflationism. What does anyone gain if prices go up as much as labor rates do? This inflationism is the present official policy in the United States. If it eventually should work out successfully, Scripture is unreliable and the law of God can successfully be "mocked." (That has not yet ever happened and will not ever happen.) All that is needed is ample time to prove that might (*macht*) does not annul the commandments of God (in this case, either the Sixth Commandment or economic law (*oekonomisches Gesetz*)).

We expressed in the meeting our profound disagreement with the idea that employers one hundred years ago exploited their employees more than employees are exploited now. We ridiculed the idea that unions have raised the general standard of living. We did this by making a simple suggestion.

The Hindus and Chinese and East Indians are in really a poor way. But unions can make them prosperous! Why not; unions are supposed to have made Americans prosperous. Those poor Hindus and Chinese are being exploited by the rich, whether natives of those countries or of England or of the Netherlands. Now we recommend that George Meany, and Walter Reuther, and John L. Lewis, and Joe Gitter go over there and organize unions. Then (so the argument must go) presto! suddenly and wonderfully the Hindus and Chinese and East Indians will be as well off as American people! Does anyone believe it? Of course not; and by the same token they admit that labor agitation by labor leaders does not make John Public prosperous. The right way to look at most labor leaders is not as welfare-producers nor as benefactors of the employees nor as statesmen but as agitators trying to justify a psychology which is a flagrant violation of the Tenth Commandment. Generally, labor union leadership is a disreputable profession—morally.

We ask: if the agitation of a labor leader will not do any good for an East Indian, a Hindu, a Chinaman or an African employee, then what will do those people some good? The answer is, a policy, which is the exact opposite of that of any labor leader we know, and which is based on Scripture and also singularly Calvinistic, namely, active work, thrift, investment, and *safety of a free market return on capital*. We do not know a single labor union leader who basically admits this last requirement—*safety of a free market (noncoercive) return on capital*.

The way to improve the status of *all* men is to obey Scripture, and the result will surely be that *there will be more capital PER CAPITA*. It is the greater amount of *capital PER CAPITA* that raises the standard of living.

It is because there is far more *capital* PER CAPITA in the United States than anywhere else that we have a higher standard of living than anywhere else. Toss labor union leaders in Darius' lions' den and the lions will surely "have mastery over them" at once; the employees will not be worse off; eventually, better.

There is a very specific reason why our ancestors had a smaller income than we have. It is not because they were exploited. It is because there was then less *capital* PER CAPITA. All comparisons of standards of living today with those of a century ago are invalid—meaningless. The only correct reasoning which could result in properly crediting unions with developing a higher standard of living would be that all other conditions between now and a century earlier were unchanged—except unions. Therefore, then, the better standard of living now could *only* be ascribed to the unions because that is the only cause that is different. But the facts of economic life are denied by such fallacious reasoning. *Many* conditions have changed in that period, including the real cause of prosperity, namely, an increase in *capital* PER CAPITA.

Of course, the economic order for society cannot be explained in a few pages or in one meeting. We recommend to all readers as a policy:

1. Read and obey Scripture. You will be happy and wise and probably prosperous. In addition:

2. Read the writings of the *great* economists. Their secular teachings agree perfectly with Scripture. (There are many pseudo-economists whose ideas, taught extensively in colleges, violate Scripture.)

We might add, if you wish to read something which pays special attention to the subjects where Scripture and economics join, you will find PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM interesting reading.

\* \* \*

There were other subjects discussed at the meeting, but enough for this time. Later we were asked: what room is there in true Calvinist thinking for social legislation, such as, im-

provement of working conditions, minimum wage laws, etc.? We would like to answer such questions, but these (as were all the other questions) are too big for us to answer at one time.  
fn

## Some Observations On Reading Clubs

Some years ago we occasionally attended a Reading Club in another city.

Originally several of the members had helped to organize a club to read novels. Novels are easy reading and the club had grown to be a big thing. Some then wanted to read more serious books; that would inevitably reduce the number who would be interested.

This second Reading Club, reading only serious books on public and social problems, turned out to be an equally great success. The members were loyal to it and active.

The membership was not large but unusual: a wealthy widow of a well-known manufacturer; the chief editorial writer of a great daily newspaper; the biggest investment banker in the state and his wife; a Unitarian minister; a well-known pediatrician and his wife; a lady president of a girls' college; the financial vice-president of a large corporation and his wife; the executive vice-president of one of the city's largest banks and his wife. There were occasional visitors by invitation.

The *place* of meeting was the apartment of the widow.

The *time* was once every two weeks on Monday night at eight o'clock sharp until ten o'clock equally sharp. At two or three minutes to eight the automatic elevator might be packed going up to the apartment.

Extensive care was given to the selection of books to read. The men took turns at reading aloud; some were extraordinarily expert, as the Unitarian minister. The women usually

brought along some knitting or sewing. They did not read but participated in the discussion.

The book was not read in advance by any members. They came to each meeting without knowing what would come up. The reading, in fact, was only a starting point. It would be frequently interrupted by discussion. This was the "give and take" of ideas. Everybody joined in. The discussion was courteous, deferential, mild, honest and sincere, but views differed widely and the arguments were animated. As these were not ordinary people, the dialectic (disputation, reasoning, argument) was excellent.

On disputed questions of fact or on the history of ideas there was frequent reference to an Encyclopedia Britannica which was available.

Refreshments were never served; the time was too valuable. As the clock struck ten the guests got up, thanked the hostess, greeted each other farewell and left.

This Reading Club was a wonderful institution. It enriched the life of the lonely widow. It was a pleasant "evening out" for the other participants, none of whom had time to waste at cards or theatricals (as Thomas Jefferson wrote to his daughter: "no card playing there among genteel people—that is abandoned to blackguards"). In a way, "social obligations" were fulfilled *en masse* saving a great deal of time which would otherwise be lost in individual visits.

But the great thing that the good books did for the group was that it "elevated" the whole tone of the meeting. Those present did not talk "small talk," or deal in trifles or gossip. Instead they enriched each other's lives with new ideas and convictions, corrections and supplements.

Readers of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM should consider establishing such reading clubs. People of a quality to read this publication can profitably have a reading club to read controversial literature of all kinds. But no gossip; no small talk; read good material and bring and keep the discussion at that level. Have wives sit in. fn

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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.

### Subscribe Now

The September issue will give a brief statement how the Calvinists in the Netherlands and in England, in the Golden Age of Calvinism, defined *brotherly love* and *loving God above all*. That definition will not be the definition taught by some members of the faculty at Calvin College or Seminary nor the Free University of Amsterdam. But that definition will essentially agree with what PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has published on those subjects.

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# Progressive Calvinism

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## The Idea Or Theme Of This Issue:

### Progressive Calvinism Is A "Throwback" To Traditional Calvinism

We have previously written that although we are *progressive* Calvinists we are not "modern" Calvinists.

We are *progressive* in the sense of utilizing findings of the praxeological sciences (that is, the social sciences, viewing them individualistically\* without the intellectual narrowness of viewing them *only* from a *social* aspect). These praxeological sciences are history, political science, economics, sociology, etc., and partial aspects of other sciences as psychology, physiology, etc. We relate the finding of those sciences with primitive Christianity.

Many modern Calvinists are different; they are not, as we see it, progressive. They are not traditional Calvinists either; the adjustment of their "Calvinism" to the modern environment has consisted in conforming more and more to the "world" and the supplementing of their religion with ideas not from rigorously logical "science" but from *ideologies*.

Ideologies, by Marxian definition, are not really true, but are biassed systems of thought. Karl Marx, founder of modern socialism-communism, denied objective truth. All systems of thought, he declared, have a selfish, subjective bias, as the bias of an aristocrat, or a bourgeois, or a capitalist, etc. All such ideologies are basically dishonest (Marx said), except *one* ideology — his own, of course; that really honest and universal ideology of his own was the ideology of the proletariat (a proletarian is a man who has no capital); and so it is or should be the ideology of *all* men. Lenin, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini\*\* were all professed Marxists and were adherents of Marx's proletarian and honest (?) ideology; fine exemplars they of the only universal and true system of ethics!

\*See December, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 341-347.

\*\*Mussolini did not abandon Marxist principles when he became a guild socialist (syndicalist, the corporative state) along the lines favored by, among others, the so-called Christian labor organizations.

The ideas which are presently promoted in denominational schools as being the new zenith and the true essence of Christianity, (or of one of its branches, Calvinism) — ideas for example regarding compulsory desegregation and the *moral* obligation to desegregate — such ideas are the *new* religion in departments as in the sociology departments of Christian colleges. The essence of the principles of social service and welfare work taught are basically unhinged from *traditional* Christian ethics. (Naturally, what is taught is alleged or implied to be Christian ethics, but it is basically the ethics of Marxism, a superpiusness which requires that you love your neighbor *more than* yourself. Further, it is exceedingly reactionary, going back to medieval idealisms of various kinds.)

As we wrote in the October 1955 issue, page 283, under the title, "We Line Up With Sixteenth Century Dutch Calvinists Rather Than Modern Dutch Calvinists," we are "ideologically" far closer to sixteenth and seventeenth century Calvinists than to some twentieth century Calvinists. We are, as geneticists and live-stock breeders would say, "throwbacks" to the great Reformation in the Netherlands and the great Puritan movement in England and the United States. That is, we are basically throwbacks, *except* for our progressivism which we have just mentioned.

This idea, that we are *traditional* Calvinists, has struck us with renewed force while reading recently for the first time two works of Max Weber, entitled *The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit of Capitalism* and *General Economic History*. We have sat back after reading these books and marvelled how PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is in the Calvinist tradition, and how far some in Christian Reformed church have departed from that tradition. fn

## Max Weber, Sociologist

Sociology is the youngest of the praxeological sciences (social sciences). It also comes closest to being a pseudo-science of any of the praxeological sciences.

Two of the reasons why sociology is such a dubious science is because (1) its foundation is so inadequate and (2) its pretense is so great.

1. Firstly, the reason why its foundation is inadequate is because it concerns itself with one thing only, towit:

a. The relation of men to men.

It completely ignores two other relationships, which in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we carefully keep in mind, namely:

b. The relation of men to God, and

c. The relation of men to things\*

Some of our nonreligious readers will shrug off our attention to the "relation of men to God." Some of our hyper-pious readers will shrug off our attention to the "relation of men to things." Despite the dissent from both of these groups we consider all three of the subjects we have mentioned to be part of a unified and coherent system of thought. That system of thought makes, we believe, more "sense" than any other system, whether it be the system of an agnostic who rejects attention to the relationship of men to a supreme Being, or of a sociologist who fails to understand or take into account the relationship of men to things.

If neither Adam nor his descendents had ever sinned there would not be pressure (coercion) of men on men, but there would still have been pressure of things on men (the welfareshortage). That is why economics is an essential ingredient of sound praxeology, and a necessary antecedent of sound sociology.

But the sociologists have historically in a notorious manner been ignorant of economics. In this they have followed Comte, the founder of sociology. Not only are they generally ignorant of economics, they are hostile to economics; their ideas of the relation of men to men are warped by their neglect of the relation of men to things. They consequently often confuse the pressure (coercion) of circumstances (things) with something else, namely, the coercion of men by men.

Not understanding either *nature* or the *law* they talk of *common grace* and *brotherly love* respectively in unrealistic and ab-

\*See July 1956 issue, page 195 and following.

stracted senses. Ideas in regard to grace and love should be fitted to reality. Whoever gets his ideas of the nature of reality from a typical sociologist, will have a distorted view of life.

The poorest way to approach praxeology is from the viewpoint of sociologists. In recent years in Christian Reformed circles (as elsewhere) sociology has become popular as the approach to an "advance" in Christian ethics. Our view is that a typical sociological approach is certain to end in deterioration, if not subversion, of Biblical ethics.

The new popularity of sociology is universal; the crown princess of the Netherlands is this Fall entering college and is reported in newspapers to be intending to specialize in sociology. The sense of values in the royal house of the Netherlands is, we concede, popular.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM's ideas in the field of nature and law are different from the ideas of common grace and love as taught in denominational colleges, or as in Union Theological Seminary in New York City, or in the pronouncements of the World Council of Churches. This subject is too comprehensive to be discussed further here.

2. Secondly, there is that other feature about sociology which readers should note; sociology pretends it is not "normative" but merely descriptive. We in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM have a norm, a standard. We make no apology for that. We do not deny that we have a "viewpoint," and that acceptance of a viewpoint automatically has an effect on everything. Our norm, our standard is the Law of God. We are not "pure scientists" who only describe and who only talk "facts." We lack that pretended qualification of sociologists. We cannot in good conscience, for example, tell our readers what Professor Donald H. Bouma, head of the sociology department at Calvin College has been reported to have told to new students from the grass roots of Michigan, Wisconsin, California, etc., in his first lecture in a course, to the effect that in that course in sociology pure science is to be taught, just *facts*. (These facts are statistics of some sort!) Instead, we

openly accept certain *values*. For us there are no such things as "brute facts." We are plodding propagandists for a set of *values* known through the Decalogue.

There are then (besides others) two fundamental and irreconcilable differences between sociology and PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, namely, we have a triple base (the relation of men to God, other men and things) rather than a single base (the relation of men to men only), and we openly admit we are not "scientists" in the sense of the positivism of Comte, the founder of sociology, who declared that "Science is measurement," that is, it is only description and excludes values.

Max Weber, whose ideas we shall consider in this issue, was born at Erfurt, Germany (where Luther went to college) in 1864. He died fifty-six years later in 1920. Weber is, therefore, to be considered as a man who belongs to the present age.

Weber's father was a prosperous politician. The son first studied law. But his real interest, especially toward the end of his life, was sociology and social philosophy. In encyclopedias Weber is alternately described as a social economist or as a sociologist.

Weber served as professor at Berlin (1893), Freiburg (1894) and at Munich (1918). He also had a connection or lectured at Heidelberg. He visited the United States and made a speech in Saint Louis, Missouri. During a considerable part of his life Weber was afflicted with ill health. After World War I he participated in some of the peace conferences. His ideas had a large influence on the National Socialist party of his day.

The *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* says:

As defined by Weber sociology is concerned with the social activities of human beings, that is, with activities oriented to those of others.

As we said earlier, sociology pertains to the relation of men to men, or as it is stated here: "activities oriented to those of others."

The same article on Weber declares about him (our italics):

[Weber] ascribed to science the task of intensifying the awareness of *conflict* and thereby im-

parting to the active individual a stronger sense of responsibility based upon that consciousness that in the pursuit of his own values he must *inevitably infringe upon the values of others.*

Instead of considering life a natural *conflict* and social life as causing inevitable mutual injury as Weber is here said to have done, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM looks on social life as naturally peaceful and cooperative (and not warfare) but marred by sin — that is, marred by disobeying the Decalogue. There is a great difference in those two viewpoints, and readers may be sure that the premises of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are genuinely to be preferred as being in accordance with reality.

Weber's famous publications give evidence that he was a hard worker and had great abilities. How he could have done as much as he did in the 56 years of his life, despite his illnesses, is a marvel.

The praxeological sciences can be approached from four viewpoints:

1. *authoritarian* (as Scripture);
2. *a priori*, from general principles which insist on the internal consistency of the ideas;
3. description and measurement, that is, putting "facts" in the form of statistics; or
4. *psychological or historical interpretation*, that is, that you "interpret" events in history.

Weber is a sociologist utilizing especially method number (4). He is a great theorist about events. For him the question was: What was the psychology and the proper interpretation of historical events?

A man adopts a method or a program in life which fits his make-up and at which he can do well. Weber was a brilliant interpreter of many historical events. It gave him an opportunity to show the imaginativeness and penetration of his mind. It was his *métier*.

What was Max Weber's explanation — interpretation — of the rise of Capitalism in the Western World? In the remainder of this issue we shall be tracing Weber's thought on that question.

The *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* has this to say about Weber's ideas:

[Weber] reached the conclusion that Calvinism, on the basis of the idea of *calling* as developed by Luther, had elevated this worldly asceticism\* to an idea of conduct and that the obligation of the godly man to pursue this ideal constituted one of the main springs of Capitalism. More specifically this worldly asceticism tended to identify spiritual salvation with business success and so created the Capitalist spirit.

In plain words, the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* says that Weber says that Calvinism "created the capitalist spirit."

From this, however, nobody should infer that Weber was otherwise an admirer of Calvinism. Weber (in the frequent pose of sociologists, of being pure scientists) declared he was approaching his analysis of the relation of religions to capitalism without "value judgments" regarding the merits of Catholicism, Lutheranism or Calvinism. In a way it must be admitted that Weber is not obviously partisan in his viewpoint; he did not choose between the various branches of Christianity. But his basic viewpoint is an unscriptural set of ethics — that one should love the neighbor *more than* himself. Because under true Calvinism and genuine capitalism that principle is rejected, and the rule is, Thou shalt love the neighbor *as thyself* (not more than thyself), Weber is essentially hostile to both. He holds to the socialist principle, Thou shalt love the neighbor more than thyself.

The *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* says of Weber:

The search on the part of the German youth movement for a substitute for religion drew from him the observation that the doors of the church were still open to those who could not live without faith and were willing to sacrifice their intellectual integrity.

For Weber, acceptance of scriptural standards as norms entailed the "sacrifice of intellectual integrity." He was then *at heart* no admirer of Calvinism nor any other brand of Christianity.

\*The term, this-worldly asceticism, will be defined later.



In what follows we shall summarize ideas in two books by Weber:

1. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 284 pages, translated from the German by Talcott Parsons in 1930, and published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. The original German text first published in 1904-5 had the title *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*. This English translation has an interesting foreword by the well-known Englishman, R. H. Tawney.

2. *General Economic History*, 382 pages, translated by Professor Frank H. Knight of the University of Chicago, published in 1927 by Greenberg, Publisher, Inc., and reprinted by The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois in 1950. This is a posthumous work of Weber. In fact, this history is really compiled from student notes taken during Weber's lectures. These lectures were given shortly before his death.

Weber, considering his nonacceptance of Christianity in any form, nevertheless (it must be conceded) does not speak discourteously of Calvinism, Lutheranism or Catholicism. He does attribute the *spirit of capitalism* to certain ideas which he declares are peculiar to Calvinism. We shall, in summarizing and appraising Weber's ideas, conform to his unobjectionable way of describing the various manifestations of Christianity. Nothing that is written in what follows is intended even remotely as a criticism of the great Catholic and Lutheran churches, of which in the large we are great admirers.

fn

### Tawney's Foreword To Weber's Book

Richard Henry Tawney was born in Calcutta, India, in 1880 and as far as we know is still living. He is described in encyclopedias as an English educator and economist.

Early in his teaching career he became interested in the problem of education of the working class, and he eventually became president of the Workers' Educational Association. He long held the chair of economic history at the University of London. He has served on many government boards and commissions.

Tawney has written various books. The one for which he is famous is entitled, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. Readers will note that this title is similar to Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Tawney may be considered the English counterpart of the German, Weber. The books of both men are devoted to the relation of Calvinism to the rise of Capitalism. Tawney is especially interested in the relationship in *English* history between religion and capitalism. This naturally would make him interested in the Puritans, because the great rise of English capitalism occurred under the Puritans.

Although similar, there is an important difference between Weber's and Tawney's books. Tawney's book has an additional idea. It is that the Puritan conscience was constantly uneasy about this capitalism business. The purpose of Tawney's book is to discredit the relationship between Calvinism and capitalism. Yes, the relationship (he admits) was there. But not only is capitalism an evil and a mistake, but the consciences of those very Calvinist builders of capitalism writhed in an agony of uncertainty about the moral soundness of those very ideas which were the driving force behind the growth of capitalism. Tawney appears to endeavor to stir up the same anxieties in the minds of the remnants of true Calvinists who are left. That is his only plausible purpose.

Tawney has a fine literary style, great learning and subtle suppression of strong statements. The effect of his book is the greater, understatement always being more forceful than overstatement. But despite the rhetorical effectiveness of Tawney's work, it should be looked on as a completely biased piece of propaganda. Tawney is an avowed socialist, hostile to capitalism.

History is never unbiassed. A historian always must select from the immense mass of data that is available. He selects what he thinks significant or what proves his thesis. Tawney's thesis is that the Puritans had an uneasy conscience about business and capitalism. He selects his data accordingly.

One would expect that modern Calvinists would be skeptical and unsympathetic to the thesis of Tawney, an avowed and aggressive socialist. But that is an error. At Calvin College

Tawney's work is considered unbiassed, objective history, even though Tawney is a propagandizing socialist. One reason for this is that at Calvin College the "Protestant ethic" which is professed is no longer the protestant ethic of the great days of Calvinism in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. A second reason is that at Calvin College they do not understand that Tawney is endeavoring to discredit the idea that Calvinism led (properly) to capitalism, because if Calvinism does properly lead to capitalism, Calvinism cannot lead to socialism. It is socialism that Tawney wants. To get religion (in this case, Calvinism) behind the program for socialism, it is necessary to establish that Calvinism should never have led to capitalism. The most Tawney could try to establish is that the *conscience* of Puritans rebelled. He selects (biasses) his quotations to that end.

In Tawney's *Foreword* to Weber's book he summarizes Weber's main thesis as follows. It could not be simpler and better expressed.

The pioneers [the Calvinists] of the modern economic order were, he [Weber] argues, *parvenus*, [upstarts] who elbowed their way to success in the teeth of the established aristocracy of land and commerce. The tonic that braced them for the conflict was a new conception of religion, which taught them to regard the pursuit of wealth as, not merely an advantage, but a duty. This conception welded into a disciplined force the still feeble *bourgeoisie*, heightened its energies, and cast a halo of sanctification round its convenient vices. What is significant, in short, is not the strength of the motive of economic self-interest, which is the commonplace of all ages and demands no explanation. It is the change of moral standards which converted a natural frailty into an ornament of the spirit, and cannonized as the economic virtues habits which in earlier ages had been denounced as vices. The force which produced it was the creed associated with the name of Calvin. Capitalism was the social counterpart of Calvinist theology.

That is Weber's thesis admirably summarized by Tawney:

1. The Calvinists (the Reformed and the Puritans) were newcomers, *parvenus*, people from below who forged their way to the top. They did this against odds — the established aristocracy and the financial and commercial hangers-on of the government.

2. The pursuit of wealth in the estimate of the Calvinists was not only an advantage, but a *duty*.

3. It was not economic motivation merely that explains the rise of capitalism because all people have economic motivation, but it was the new idea of morality, namely, that *economic motivation* was "an ornament of the spirit" and not a human frailty.

4. What other ages had considered vices about collecting wealth the Calvinists "canonized as the economic virtues."

5. In short, capitalism is nothing more than the "social counterpart of Calvinist theology."

What somewhat amuses us is that some things here said apply largely to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Consider our Declaration 5 which is widely attacked. This Declaration, although written before we had read Weber, is exactly in the spirit of the Calvinism which Weber describes.

(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.

Consider what Tawney quotes from Scripture in the following quotation from his foreword to the English translation of Weber's book:

The Calvinism, both of England and Holland, in the seventeenth century, had found its way to a different position. [Tawney had just mentioned the early attempted socialism by the Puritans in Massachusetts, which collapsed; see PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, February 1955, pages 35-37.] It [Calvinism in England and Holland] had discovered a compromise in which a juster balance

was struck between prosperity and salvation, and while retaining the theology of the master [Calvin himself] it repudiated his scheme of social ethics. Persuaded that "godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as the life to come," it resisted with sober intransigence [stubborn determination], the interference in matters of business both of the state and of the divines. It is this second, individualistic phase of Calvinism, rather than the remorseless rigours of Calvin himself, which may plausibly be held to have affinities with the temper called by Weber "the spirit of Capitalism."

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM should long ago have quoted in support of our Declaration 5 the text quoted by Tawney "godliness hath the promise of *this* life, as well as the life to come" (I Timothy 4:8b).

Readers will now understand the famous thesis of Weber about Calvinism and capitalism. There are all kinds of refinements to the idea but the main idea has now been plainly stated.

It is because PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is in this great Calvinist tradition that its ideas are disliked in some quarters in the Christian Reformed church. This is proof how greatly the temper of the age has already transformed that brand of Calvinism. What is true in this regard in this country, is doubly true in the Netherlands. fn

## Are Calvinists Prosperous?

Weber in footnote 5 to Chapter I of his book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, in alleged proof that there is a relationship between Calvinism and prosperity, presents the following statistics:

For instance, in 1895 in Baden there was taxable capital available for the tax on returns from capital:

Per 1,000 Protestants 954,000 marks  
Per 1,000 Catholics 589,000 marks

It is true that the Jews, with over four millions per 1,000, were far ahead of the rest. (Page 188.)

Weber also attempts to show that Protestants are more determined to obtain an education. The figures in total are as follows; they apply again to Baden in 1895.

	Percent of Population	Percent Getting Voluntary Advanced Education
Protestants	37	48
Catholics	61	42
Jews	2	10
	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100

In his Chapter I Weber makes the following allegations regarding the Germany of his time.

1. Business leaders, owners of capital, higher grades of skilled labor, higher technically and commercially trained help are "overwhelmingly Protestant."

2. Many Catholic students taking advanced education do so in order to enter religious vocations. Protestant students generally seek a higher education for business, technical and professional purposes.

Weber makes remarks as follows about the effect of Calvinism on social stratification in previous ages:

Even the Spaniards knew that heresy (i.e., the Calvinism of the Dutch) promoted trade, and this coincides with the opinions which Sir William Petty [English representative in the Netherlands during the rise of Calvinism in Holland] expressed in his discussion of the reasons for the capitalistic development of the Netherlands. (Page 43.)

\* \* \*

Montesquieu says (*Esprit des Lois*, Book XX, Chapter 7) of the English [especially, the Puritans] that they "had progressed the farthest of all peoples of the world in three important things: in piety, in commerce, and in freedom." Is it not possible that their commercial superiority and their adaption to free political institutions are connected in some way with that record of piety which Montesquieu ascribes to them? (Page 45.)

The last sentence quoted is a rhetorical question by Weber. Weber's point is that prosperity and freedom were products of *piety* (not *piosity*). We agree with him. fn

## What Is Capitalism?

We shall consider, in what follows, the key terms in the title of Weber's book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. These terms are (1) *capitalism*, (2) the *spirit* of capitalism, and (3) the *Protestant ethic* by which Weber means particularly the Calvinist brand.

What is *capitalism*?

Weber denies that capitalism is the impulse to acquisition or the pursuit of gain. He says everybody has that impulse — physicians, prostitutes, nobles, artists, etc. He declares that it is naive to call the mere "love of gain" capitalism. He writes:

We will define a capitalistic economic action as one which rests on the expectation of profit by the utilization of opportunities for exchange, that is on (formally) peaceful chances of profit. Acquisition by force (formally and actually) follows its own particular laws, and it is not expedient, however little one can forbid this, to place it in the same category with action which is, in the last analysis, oriented to profits from exchange. (Pages 17-18.)

In this definition Weber mentions two basic ideas — *exchange* and *peaceful chances*. The idea of exchange or trade is clear enough. The controlling term is *peaceful chances*. This unusual term justifies the following explanation:

1. Capitalism excludes coercion, because if there is coercion the transaction cannot really be peaceful. This requires then obedience to the Sixth Commandment, Thou shalt not kill (coerce).

2. Number (1) is a negative, but the inevitable positive which must go with it is *freedom*. If you are not coerced, you are free. If trade is not coerced, it is free. If it is free to all parties, it is peaceful.

3. Then there are *chances*. A transaction may return a profit or no profit. But capitalism requires that the players in the game take their chances. They cannot be guaranteed a profit. They cannot be insured against their mistakes. The public cannot protect the participants in economic activity from responsibility for individual acts, their own chances. This is based on the Eighth Commandment, Thou shalt not steal. This, too, is negative, but the positive is that the neighbor must have a *right* to his property, if it is *wrong* to take it away from him by force, theft or fraud. But if he loses his property by folly or slackness, that is another matter. He took his *chances*. When he lost under those conditions there was no breach of *peaceful chances*.

Note that Weber rejects entirely the idea that capitalism is based on force. He says that "acquisition by force follows its own particular [and different] laws."

Weber's definition of capitalism naturally excludes communism, socialism and interventionism. Communism openly employs force and denies right of private ownership. Socialism employs less force but denies the right of private ownership. The difference between the two is merely a difference in the openness of the force employed.

Interventionism is not basically different from communism and socialism. The force it uses is disguised under the cloak of *legality*, and the range it covers does not deny the validity of private property, but it provides for the regulation of the *use of property*. It is exactly the *use of property* in which its value to an individual resides. By restricting the use, the ownership is proportionately nullified. Interventionism is a disguised attack on private property. (Interventionism is the prevailing doctrine of members in the Christian Reformed church and Calvinistic churches in the Netherlands.) Interventionism is not capitalism nor *basically* a degree of capitalism. Interventionism is basically a degree of socialism, and a stepping stone to full socialism. *Interventionism is coercion disguised under the form of legality but coercion nevertheless.*

For space reasons we shall not give more complete and satisfactory definitions of capitalism by famous economists as Ludwig



von Mises and others. We are here working on the basis of Weber's terms. For our limited purposes the definition is adequate. Weber sets up a *free market* by his use of the term *peaceful chances*. fn.

## What Is The Protestant Ethic?

### A. What Is The Protestant Ethic In Regard To The Antithesis?

By the term *Protestant Ethic* Weber primarily refers to *Calvinist* ethics. He does not extensively include Lutheran ethics under the term. Lutheran ethics are, in Weber's view, a cross-breed between Catholic ethics and Calvinist ethics. Weber writes that the Catholics and Lutherans have a "common repugnance" to the "ethical peculiarities of Calvinism" (page 87). For a Calvinist the "relationship of religious life and earthly activity" are different from that of the Lutheran or Catholic.

Both Catholicism and Lutheranism preceded Calvinism, and Calvinism is not understandable except in relation to Catholicism and Lutheranism.

Weber has a whole series of terms which have special meanings and these terms need to be understood, terms such as *asceticism*, *this-worldly asceticism*, *other-worldly asceticism*, *calling*, *magic*, *prophecy*, *brotherly love*, *glory of God*, *rational*.

We shall explain the terms, *asceticism*, *other-worldly asceticism* and *this-worldly asceticism*, against a Catholic background. We shall explain the term *calling* against a Lutheran background.

### Catholic And Calvinist Ideas On Asceticism

One of the big issues in the Christian Reformed church is the *antithesis* — the difference between "unbelievers" and "believers" and the opposition the believer is expected to show against the "world," and the requirement that he be separate from it.

This antithesis idea has many facets, for example, the demand that there be separate labor organizations for "believers" from "unbelievers." If the idea is not entirely or not even predominantly withdrawal from the "world," it does involve opposition to the

"world" or, as a minimum, testimony against the "world." Involved also is the whole concept of "corporate responsibility," a very vague idea, but it must have some meaning.

Devout people believe that they have the calling to be a "holy and a separate people" unspotted from the world.

If the "church" is to be different from the "world," and if the "church" is to be a "salting salt" and a "leaven" in this world, something must be done and certain actions must be taken by the Christian which make him different from the non-Christian. This involves testimony, difference, and maybe withdrawal from the world.

*Asceticism* is a specific manifestation of the idea of the antithesis. It is a restraint, a withdrawal or something which represents a religious ideal for the glory of God and the soul's welfare.

Weber makes a basic distinction between *this-worldly asceticism* and *other-worldly asceticism*. He designates the asceticism of Catholicism to be basically *other-worldly*, but the asceticism of Calvinism to be *this-worldly*, or for short *worldly asceticism*.

The idea of "*worldly*" asceticism by Calvinists sounds self-contradictory. How can a man be ascetic and have that he an asceticism which puts one into the "world," right into the maelstrom of life?

The Catholic *other-worldly asceticism* was manifested by withdrawal into monasteries and the separation of the clergy from the laity. The ideal was a withdrawal and separation from the world. There was virtue and merit in *that*.

Weber declares that that is also in part the idea of Lutheranism.

But the spirit of Calvinism, he declared, was wholly different. In this case the ideal was to be different while *in* the world; instead of withdrawing, to be in the vortex of practical, everyday activity. Do not *withdraw from* the world, be *different in* the world. Summarizing, to withdraw (into monasteries, for example) is an *other-worldly asceticism*; to participate in the world but to be different from the world is a *this-worldly asceticism*.

Weber considers the *this-worldly asceticism* of Calvinism to be an intense asceticism — active, distinct, aggressive, leavening, practical, noncontemplative, *this-worldly*.

On this basis of *this-worldly asceticism* the Calvinist would strive for the glory of God and the extension of the church by *activity in the affairs of this world*. On that premise there is nothing wrong with being heavily engrossed in practical affairs, say in manufacturing and commerce or in the arts or what have you.

There is only one way fully to impress the importance of this idea. A Calvinist was not to be a monk in a monastery, but a monk everywhere, all the time, in every activity of life. This is probably as good a figure of speech as could be devised; imagine a man very active in matters pertaining to everyday existence, working, buying, selling, meeting people, participating in every proper activity in this world and not trying to withdraw from it, but nevertheless separate, distinct, different from the "world" around him, as a monk in a monastery is different from an ordinary man. Calvinists then are peripatetic (walking) monks.

A little reflection will make clear to members of the Christian Reformed church that on the antithesis question they are vacillating between the *this-worldly asceticism* of traditional Calvinism and the *other-worldly asceticism* of separating from the world. The antithesis for many has become mostly *separate organization* from the world, rather than bold activity in the world. The emphasis is on the husk of *organization*, rather than on the kernel of activity (*principles*).

We are well aware that lax Calvinists do not even like the idea of the antithesis because *their own principles are the principles of the "world."* They really belong *with* the world. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM does not feel that it belongs with the "world" nor is it keen about separate organizations such as special unions or monasteries. We believe in testimony *in* the world. But this means for us something very different from a typical modern Calvinist. Practically no Calvinist in the Christian Reformed church testifies today against *public* evils. Calvinists generally do not even recognize public evils *as evils*. They cannot be Calvinist "monks" striding through the world, because they are not really different

themselves from the "world." As a classic case take the Christian Labor Association whose program (except for open violence) is identical with that of all other unions. The difference — the "antithesis" — is manifested in *organization* rather than in *policy* (principles). The difference in *organization* is the less-important difference. It is differences in principles that are most significant; such differences hardly exist.

### B. What Is The Protestant Ethic In Regard To Calling In Life?

Luther, according to Weber, was the first to develop broadly the idea of *calling*. The Calvinists took the idea over and made it even more prominent in their lives. On this *calling* idea they grabbed the ball and ran the whole field with it.

What is this *calling*?

It is not in any way a mystical sense of a divine calling to be a missionary or a preacher. It is, instead, merely an attitude toward *any* job or work you have. Your *calling* is how you view and do your life work whether you deliberately selected it and like it, or whether you just fell into it and you have it by force of circumstances. It is not the job itself but the principles according to which you do the job.

Weber defines *calling* as follows:

1. *Calling* generally is a "religious conception; that [is], a task set by God" (page 79). Luther added something to this very old idea of *calling*, according to Weber:

But at least one thing was unquestionably new: the valuation of the fulfillment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume. . . . The only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfillment of the obligations imposed on the individual by his position in the world. That was his calling. (Page 80.)

Note the strong language Weber uses, to wit: "duty in *worldly* affairs was (for the Protestant) the *highest* form of moral activity." Both Luther and the Calvinists are said by Weber to hold this idea.

2. "... every legitimate calling has exactly the same worth in the sight of God" (page 81). If this idea which Weber includes as a basic ingredient of the idea of *calling* is correct, then all worldly activities (except the immoral) are pleasing in the sight of God. This is a natural consequence of devaluation of life in a monastery. If there is no special merit in living there, merit must be manifested in the world itself. Weber wrote about Luther's idea:

The monastic life is not only quite devoid of value as a means of justification before God, but he [Luther] also looks upon its renunciation of the duties of this world as the product of selfishness, withdrawing from temporal obligations. In contrast, labour in a calling appears to him as an outward expression of brotherly love. This he proves by the observation that the division of labour forces every individual to work for others, but his viewpoint is highly naive, forming almost a grotesque contrast to Adam Smith's well-known statements on the same subject." (Page 81.)

Regular readers will immediately realize that PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM follows Luther (by the later Adam Smith route) in regard to the idea that the division of labor *accompanied by real freedom of exchange* is the outstanding this-worldly manifestation of brotherly love. (But if the *freedom* of exchange is hindered by state interventionism this program of brotherly love is partly frustrated.)

\* \* \*

So much for the background in the rich history of Catholicism and the new vigour of Lutheranism. From this point onward the Calvinists walk the further path more or less alone. And it is this extreme of Calvinism to which both Catholics and Lutherans were declared by Weber to have a "common repugnance."

It should be remembered that Weber is talking about "ideal" types, that is, the really typical types. Some Catholics have held or now hold these ideas commonly held by old Calvinists. Some Calvinists (then and now) essentially are sympathetic to Catholic views (as the separatists today among the Calvinists). Lutherans, too, are of all types, some with a Calvinist and others with a Catholic tinge to their ideas. We come now to the *typical* Calvinist of the Golden Age of Calvinism, as described by Weber.

### C. What Is The Protestant Ethic In Regard To The Glory Of God?

It is one thing to reject *other-worldly asceticism*; it is another thing to value all the activities of life as a *calling*; but it is still another idea to consider that you are glorifying God just by the exercise of your ordinary, everyday calling.

In Christian Reformed churches some ministers preach that you must so work in your daily work that you *also* glorify God; you supplement your actual daily work by a mental attitude and it is by what you supplement that you glorify God. This is not the real, traditional Calvinist idea; that idea was that *by doing the work itself* you were glorifying God.

Let us follow Weber's analysis:

#### 1. You must WORK. Weber writes about Calvinism:

Not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God, according to the definite manifestations of His will.

Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election. Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health, six to at most eight hours, is worthy of absolute moral condemnation. (Pages 157-158.)

Weber says that the Calvinists about whom he was writing considered *work* to be to "the glory of God, according to the manifestations of His will."

2. There is a second facet to living for the glory of God. That facet consists in the *avoidance of waste* and in *frugal and simple living*. These two things are also, according to Weber, part of the living to the glory of God. The *avoidance of waste* honors God by not wasting what He has provided in nature; this is an obvious relationship of men to things, but by the character of that relationship, by conservation of scarce things, God is glorified.

3. Weber writes: "The elected Christian is in the world only to increase this glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability" (page 108). The glory of God does not consist, in other words, in loud "Amens," nor in the sacrifice of goats or bullocks, but in obedience to the commandments. As Samuel said to Saul 3,000 years ago:\*

And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (I Samuel 15:22-23.)

\*Important note: Readers are requested to suspend judgment regarding what we *fully* mean by the *glory of God*. What some people mean by the *glory of God* we consider inadequate.

In this connection we place the problem in the perspective which it must have in this context. This is done as follows:

1. *To live to the glory of God* can be viewed subjectively or objectively; *subjectively*, when considering the attitude of the mind and will toward God; *objectively*, when considering human *action*—that which is actually done. (Human *action* is the field of *praxeology*; *praxeology* includes the social sciences but is broader than a mere *social* approach to action. Our *praxeological* approach is not *social* only, but takes into account the relation of men to (1) God and (2) things, as well as (3) to men.) We are operating in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in the field of *praxeology*, and not in the field of *psychology* or *subjective motivations*. We are considering only the glory of God in the field of human *action*.

2. In the field of *human action*, we believe that two categories will cover everything pertaining to the glory of God. These two categories are (a) talk; and (b) conduct, or in different language, (a) testimony and (b) obedience. Although *testimony* is human action, and so is part of *praxeology*, it is the part which we have, according to previous statements, left mostly to the field of religion proper, and to gospel testimony, and individual and group manifestations of praise to God. (We shall cover this field intermittently and with a proselyting purpose.) Our real field in PROGRESSIVE CAL-

Electricity is measured both in amperes and volts. The amperes are, say, the quantity of electricity and the volts are the driving force behind the amperes. The ideas just outlined, namely, *work* and *conservation* and *thrift* (the amperes), describe characteristics of fundamental value to business. What made Calvinists work so hard in exercising these virtues? What gave them the voltage to do it?

Weber says that the source of the tremendous voltage which Calvinists had in regard to *work*, *conservation* and *thrift* was the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Jumping the intermediate links, what he is declaring is that belief in predestination makes you do things that are to the glory of God, and *which*, incidentally of course, *will make you prosperous*. Who would think of linking predestination and prosperity? PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM *has* received protests against the idea that obeying the law of God will make you prosperous. But Weber goes further; he says there is an inseparable relationship between predestination and capitalism. Weber's reasoning is really interesting. It goes as follows:

1. Calvinists believe in election to salvation, and reprobation to damnation. This activity of God is unconditional, according to His sovereign good pleasure.

2. But the idea has its grim as well as its happy phases. You cannot "elect" yourself. You cannot earn your own salvation. *What if you are not "elected"?*

VINISM is the field of conduct, that is, the field of *obedience* or *disobedience* to God.

On the question which of the two, *testimony* or *obedience*, is the more important relative to the glory of God, we follow Scripture. Scripture requires *both* talk and conduct appropriate to the glory of God, but when it chooses between the two, it definitely rates *conduct* higher than *talk*, and *obedience* more than *testimony*. That is what Samuel told Saul, as we are quoting in the text.

Max Weber, too, is not writing about *talk*, but about *conduct*. We agree with Weber in what he says Old Calvinists considered to be the glory of God in respect to their own *actions*. The program of the Old Calvinists consisted in living in *obedience* to God, because (we assume) they too considered that to be the higher way to glorify God.

We petition readers to avoid saying that we consider the glory of God to be only obedience and not testimony also, or that we are denying the significance of the *attitude* of the person, his motivation, etc.

With Scripture generally, with Samuel in particular, with Old Calvinists, and with Weber as he interprets Old Calvinists, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM agrees completely and unqualifiedly.



3. That question poses an intense psychological problem for a Calvinist. How have confidence that you are "elected"? Men, according to Weber's approach to the problem, cannot be confident in "election" just because they "believe" it. The belief will wither and die unless it is cultivated and nourished in some way. How nourish confidence that you are elected, and get away from stoical fatalism and unbelief?

4. To that question Weber said the answer for the Calvinist consisted in *actively, aggressively working in this world*. That would not earn salvation. That is not possible. Salvation is by grace. But it would show thankfulness for grace. By showing thankfulness for grace God would be glorified. And what provided the supplementary or primary motivation or voltage for this? The answer, according to Weber, is that the Calvinist *psychologically needed* that activity (work, thrift, conservation, obedience to the law of God in *this* life) to assure himself of his salvation. And *that* is why he was so industrious, thrifty, and modest in living. God was glorified by *acts* in this life, in the ordinary workaday world, but Calvinists subjectively needed that activity in order to keep up their morale in regard to election.

Weber expresses his views about this psychological problem as follows:

In the place of the humble sinners to whom Luther promises grace if they trust themselves to God in penitent faith are bred those self-confident saints whom we can rediscover in the hard Puritan merchants of the heroic age of capitalism and in isolated instances down to the present. On the other hand, in order to attain that self-confidence intense worldly activity is recommended as the most suitable means. It and it alone disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of grace. (Pages 111-112.)

And, so Weber concludes, dogmatic and austere belief in predestination was really the psychological foundation of the greatest economic development the world has ever seen — capitalism. And capitalism is a by-product of trying to live to the glory of God!

But a danger arises. Wealth and prosperity result in worldliness. Riches make for independence, and independence weakens the religious instinct. What may the answer be to that? On that subject Weber quotes John Wesley, founder of Methodism; (Weber considers Methodism, Pietism and the Baptist groups to be in the Calvinist tradition). This is what Wesley wrote (*italics as in original*):

"I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion at heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this — this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; *we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich.*"

After quoting Wesley, Weber goes on to say:

There follows the advice that those who gain all they can and save all they can should also give all they can, so that they will grow in grace and lay up a treasure in heaven. It is clear that Wesley here expresses, even in detail, just what we have been trying to point out. (Pages 175-176.)

Space limitations prevent us from developing further Weber's idea that the Calvinist's need to glorify God, by obeying the commandments in *this* life, was induced by the need to convince himself that he was really "elected."

#### D. What Is The Protestant Ethic In Regard To Loving The Neighbor As Thyself?

Not only does Weber outline the ideas of sixteenth-seventeenth century Calvinists in regard to the *glory of God* as being of a kind with which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in some respects agrees, but he also describes the old Calvinist idea of *brotherly love* as being of a kind with which we also agree. Not only do we agree, but we somewhat enviously admit that Weber employs a phrase which is in some respects more descriptive of our idea of brotherly love than that which we have used. We shall now outline what Weber considered to be the real substance of the old Calvinist idea of *brotherly love*. It should be kept in mind that by manifesting this kind of brotherly love the older Calvinists considered that they were glorifying God.

Weber wrote as follows:

It seems at first a mystery how the undoubted superiority of Calvinism in social organization can be connected with this tendency to tear the individual away from the close ties with which he is bound to this world. But, however strange it may seem, it follows from the peculiar form which the Christian brotherly love was forced to take under the pressure of the inner isolation of the individual through the Calvinistic faith. In the first place it follows dogmatically. The world exists to serve the glorification of God and for that purpose alone. The elected Christian is in the world only to increase this glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability. But God requires social achievement of the Christian because He wills that social life shall be organized according to His commandments, in accordance with that purpose. The social activity of the Christian in the world is solely activity in *majorem gloriam Dei*. This character is hence shared by labour in a calling which serves the mundane life of the community. Even in Luther we found specialized labour in callings justified in terms of brotherly love. But what for him remained an uncertain, purely intellectual suggestion became for the Calvinists a characteristic element in their ethical system. Brotherly

love, since it may only be practised for the glory of God and not in the service of the flesh, is expressed in the first place in the fulfillment of the daily tasks given by the *lex naturae*; and in the process this fulfillment assumes a peculiarly objective and impersonal character, that of service in the interest of the rational organization of our social environment. For the wonderfully purposeful organization and arrangement of this cosmos is, according both to the revelation of the Bible and to natural intuition, evidently designed by God to serve the utility of the human race. This makes labour in the service of impersonal social usefulness appear to promote the glory of God and hence to be willed by Him. (Pages 108-109.)

Readers are requested to note the following in regard to the question Weber is discussing:

1. Calvinism resulted in "undoubted superiority in social organization."\* This influence of the Calvinist was despite his interest in the future life and despite his intense individualism and his resistance and even disrespect for civil authority. That Calvinism promoted a "superior social organization" is a very fine tribute to Calvinism.

2. The really important idea in the long quotation is that, *in the Calvinist tradition, brotherly love has a "peculiarly objective and impersonal character."* This is the highly descriptive phrase describing *brotherly love* which we wish we had coined or even sensed. Readers are informed regarding our intense suspicion and dislike of *sentimental* brotherly love which creates a "community" in the sense that various educational leaders think of "community."

Now it must be admitted that it sounds contradictory to describe brotherly love as *impersonal* and *objective*. But that apparent incongruity (contradiction) exists only because love has first been defined sentimentally as an *obligation to like*. As we have defined brotherly and neighborly love in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, such love is "peculiarly objective and impersonal."

\*A free market.

3. And what fruit does this "peculiarly objective and impersonal" brotherly love yield? Weber answers that it yields a unique "service in the interest of the rational organization of our social environment." In Weber's dictionary of words, *rational* means *suited to the end, logical, effective*. When, then, Weber talks about a "rational organization of our social environment" he means a social organization that contributes to human happiness and prosperity. In other words, the *correct* idea of brotherly love, although impersonal and objective and no more, promotes happiness and prosperity in this life.

4. Weber goes further. This *impersonal and objective brotherly love* makes business — buying, selling, producing, trading — "appear to promote the glory of God and hence be willed by Him." Of course, this buying, selling, producing and trading must be in accordance with the Second Table to the Law, that is *completely free*, except that there may be no wronging of the neighbor by violence (Sixth Commandment), adultery (Seventh Commandment), theft (Eighth Commandment), fraud (Ninth Commandment), nor coveting (Tenth Commandment).

Weber ascribes the greatest importance to this idea that *brotherly love* should be impersonal and objective. In the famous last chapter of his *General Economic History*, previously cited, he writes:

The typical antipathy of Catholic ethics, and following that the Lutheran, to every capitalistic tendency, rests essentially on the repugnance of the impersonality of relations within a capitalist economy. It is this fact of impersonal relations which places certain human affairs outside the church and its influence, and prevents the latter from penetrating them and transforming them along ethical lines. The relations between master and slave could be subjected to immediate ethical regulation; but the relations between the mortgage creditor and the property which was pledged for the debt, or between an endorser and the bill of exchange, would at least be exceedingly difficult if not impossible to moralize. The final consequence of the resulting position assumed by the church was that medieval economic ethics excluded higg-

ling, overpricing and free competition, and were based on the principle of just price and the assurance to everyone of a chance to live. (Pages 357-358.)

In this quotation mention is made of the hostility of great branches of Christianity to the specifically Calvinist idea of the impersonality of brotherly love. This explains in part the bitter attacks made on ideas on brotherly love presented in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Further, the logical result of that kind of law of brotherly love is that higgling\* about a price is perfectly justified and so also is free competition. In the Christian Labor Association, at Calvin College, in the Free University of Amsterdam, in the writings of Abraham Kuyper, in *The Banner*, on the pulpits in the Christian Reformed church, the free action of competition in the market place is often decried and criticized as unbrotherly, un-Christian, as a violation of the ideal of brotherly love. In its place, as Weber declares, there is substituted the idea of a "just price" and the "assurance to everyone of a chance to live."

What is a "just price"? Nobody knows. The ideas of a "just price" and a "fair price" *independent of free market activity* are utterly meaningless.\*\* We would declare that God himself does not know and cannot know what a "just price" is, were it not that we feared offense would be taken at such a statement.

This is another instance in which we are astonishingly in agreement with the great Calvinism of the sixteenth-seventeenth century, as outlined by Weber.

In short, what Weber declares to be traditional Calvinism in regard to neighborly relations in the affairs of this world, we have laboriously defined in the February, March, April and May 1955 issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, as the scriptural idea of *brotherly love*. The definition we gave is a definition which defines an "objective and impersonal" brotherly love. fn

\*Americans customarily use the word, *haggling*.

\*\*This requires extended explanation, for which space is lacking here.

## Evaluation Of Weber's Thesis On Calvinism And Capitalism

When we read Weber's books we thought that Weber was writing about the psychology of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. If Weber failed to understand Calvinism in its Golden Age, he certainly had a prophetic insight into the Calvinism of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. We believe, however, that he perfectly understood the real psychology of Calvinism in its great career. The man's work in examining basic contemporary writings and his detailed research was monumental in scope. See the references in his book, and consider the preliminary reading required before he could possibly write the book.

It is not, however, Weber's laborious research which gets our greatest admiration; it is, instead, his interpretation of what Calvinism was in its heyday. That interpretation we consider correct and brilliant, almost the insight of genius.

Space is lacking to describe Weber's ideas further. There is a whole tapestry of brilliant insights and interpretations which we may in later issues describe piecemeal. Readers who really wish to understand Weber's ideas should certainly read his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. We strongly recommend it; also the other book, his *General Economic History*, especially the last chapter.

When we strongly recommend this we have several thoughts in mind:

1. Readers will discover by comparing principles that modern Calvinism at the Free University of Amsterdam and at Calvin College is a radically different Calvinism from the Calvinism of the Reformation when it was in full career. "The apple has fallen today very far from the parent tree."

2. We believe that Weber did correctly interpret the "Protestant ethic." Without subscribing to all his ideas, his basic interpretation of what Calvinism really consisted is, in our opinion, descriptive and factual.

3. Weber, accepting personally the premises of socialism, could not, of course, be basically sympathetic to this Calvinism, this Protestant Ethic. Modern Calvinists who repudiate the Calvinism of the Golden Age of Calvinism have unconsciously

shifted to the socialist viewpoint when viewing old Calvinism critically. They agree with Weber in his viewpoint. We do not agree with Weber's viewpoint. We view Old Calvinism favorably because we are one with Old Calvinism. Weber and some Calvinists view Old Calvinism favorably because it produced a very effective, *rational*, prosperous social organization. But they would change that if they could by socialism in the case of Weber, and interventionism in the case of modern Calvinists.

4. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM considers much of modern Calvinism not to be Calvinism at all, but a completely deviationist, heretical doctrine; (1) that comment can be substantiated by logic; (2) it is confirmed by history; (3) the bitter fruits will be harvested in the years to come. Modern Calvinism is already degenerative. Its protagonists are intellectual *epigoni*. They have never really understood Calvinism. They are merely prattlers of the prevailing ideas in the air, the present climate of thought. They adopt those ideas and piously baptize them as Calvinist. Their position is essentially that of the socialist, Tawney, whom they admire. There is in much modern Calvinism no "salting salt" whatever.

#### Concluding Remark

In 1904-1905 a German sociologist, by describing carefully of what sixteenth and seventeenth century Calvinism consisted, unwittingly anticipated what would be written in 1955-1956 in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. The connection consists in the fact that Old Calvinism and PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are basically the same Calvinism.

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# Progressive Calvinism

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## The Charisma From God

The word *charisma* (pronounced ka ris' ma) will be important in this and later issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Unless readers learn what we mean by the word, they will not understand the significance of what is written. The full meaning of the word will be developed in several successive issues. *Charisma* is sometimes written *charism* (kar' ism); the meaning is the same.

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The dictionary defines *charisma* as "a gift or power bestowed by the Holy Spirit for use in the propagation of the truth, or the edification of the church."

When the question is asked who have in history been recipients of such charisma, certain obvious instances come to mind, namely, Moses, the Old Testament prophets, the apostles in the New Testament, those present at Pentecost, and finally especially the Apostle John in the Apocalypse (last book in the New Testament).

Our interest, however, will lie in modern instances in which Christian Reformed and other churchmen apparently believe that a charisma of some sort operates even in the twentieth century.

Some may doubt that there is actually extensive belief today in a charisma, a gift or power by God. However, we believe we shall be able to make clear that in reality a pervasive belief in modern charisma exists.

This belief in modern charisma is not on the surface of praxeological (social, political and economic) events, nor is it explicitly stated, nor is it an avowed modern doctrine. It is instead something that is assumed and taken for granted.

A comparison may help. Socialists declare all economic *value* to be the product of labor; many capitalists have a similar idea. A lot of labor on a house or a machine, means that there will be a high value on the house or machine; and vice versa. However, the idea that labor produces value is wholly erroneous. Behind the scenes there are two factors which are the real explanation of economic value — *demand* and *scarcity*. Without these two characteristics nothing has economic value. Value does not derive, as it appears to do, from labor, but from demand and scarcity.

Similarly, churchmen call attention to some factors in society which *appear* to be an explanation of their principles for society, but behind their apparent explanation there is basically a belief on their part in a modern charisma—something coming from God.

That belief, we believe, should be challenged, because that charisma which they assume always involves violation of the revealed will of God. When PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM sees such a

conflict and consequently is on the horns of the dilemma of choosing for confidence in charisma versus confidence in the Law of God, then it relies on the Law of God.

Obedience to the Law of God, in our estimation, is more than any alleged or assumed charisma. fn

## The Christian Reformed Church In Perspective

It is difficult to appraise objectively an institution of which one is a part, for example, the Christian Reformed church. But the accomplishment of that is undoubtedly profitable, particularly if the purpose is to promote the denomination's future effectiveness. What, indeed, is the Christian Reformed church when it is looked at *objectively*?

It is a denomination 99 years old. It was organized by foreigners, Netherlands. It is still somewhat foreign; many of its leaders and people continue to look to the Netherlands for religious leadership, as a devout Mohammedan prays facing toward Mecca. In order to advance to high position in the church, attendance at the Free University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands is even today considered helpful.

For the first three-fourths of its existence the Christian Reformed church may be considered to have been fairly *solidaire* (unified). In the last fourth of its existence there has developed within it a steadily widening division of opinion. The adjective, *Christian Reformed*, cannot today be applied to its 175,000 souls and be indicated to mean a prevailing genuine unity within the denomination. Furthermore, the denomination is becoming too big to be cozy. As all things that grow big, its affairs must progressively become more impersonal. (See September 1956 issue of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM*, pages 283-286.)

In recent years some members have become more and more sensitive to ideas in the world around them. Ideas from the outside have begun to penetrate their minds deeply. Those members have in many cases developed a really different set of ideas for Christian Reformed Calvinists. Those new (borrowed) ideas are in the field of doctrine, church organization, and ethics. We hap-

pen to be especially interested in these new ethics. They consist essentially in the *ethics* of the social gospel, as developed by Walter Rauschenbush, and as promoted today by Reinhold Niebuhr and G. Bromley Oxnam and others, and by the World Council of Churches. These members whose ethics are similar to the ethics of the social gospel may be called the "radicals" in the denomination. (We do not here use the term "radicals" in an either favorable or unfavorable sense.)

The other segment of the denomination has remained, shall we say, inert. In the formative years of the people who today constitute the mature people in this denomination, Abraham Kuyper of the Netherlands, theologian and politician, played a great rôle and determined the general cast of their ideas. Kuyper's views had a significant characteristic, namely, they were orthodox and devout in expression, but at the same time they basically shifted ground to several new and dubious positions. The sedate and restrained followers of Abraham Kuyper may be designated as the "inert conservatives" in the denomination. They do not know that Abraham Kuyper taught a social doctrine different from the traditional Calvinist one.

Division will, we believe, continue to develop between the "radicals" and the "conservatives." In one sense it is a real division. The conservatives distrust the radicals, and the radicals are disgusted with the naiveté of the conservatives.

But in another sense, it is a sham division, a no more real struggle than the exercises on a parade ground. The reason for this is that Kuyper's *principles* in regard to ethics were basically similar to the ethics of the social gospel as developed in this country. Kuyper merely did not go so far in his *conclusions* on ethics as the social gospel proposes; his *premises*, however, went all the way. The conservatives have not fully realized that their premises (in so far as they pertain to Kuyperian ethics) betray their supposedly conservative position. They cannot dispute successfully, because the *logic* of the radicals is consistent with their premises, but the logic of the conservatives is not. There will never be a logical conservative ethical position in the denomination until the ethical premises of Kuyper are re-examined, reappraised and, as we are sure they should be, rejected.

Kuyper's position on *ethics* is out of harmony with traditional Calvinism, if Max Weber's description of Calvinism, as given in last month's PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is correct, as we believe it is correct. The nontraditionalism in Kuyper's ethical ideas is not really debatable. We all lack insight to realize easily what the *unstated* premises of certain doctrines may be, but anybody can see the eventual *consequences* of ideas. What are the consequences of Kuyper's ideas? The answer to this may be found in the present-day disintegration of the political, social and economic ideas in the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands, and the spiritual disorder that the party manifests. This disintegration can be ascribed to the character of Kuyper's ethical principles, which have fermented through the Anti-Revolutionary Party as yeast in dough.

It is important to note that what this party is today is not appraised, by those who speak for the party, as deviating from Kuyper. Consider Smeenk's book, *In Kuyper's Lijn*, (in the Kuyper tradition or line) which develops the idea that the present program of the Anti-Revolutionary Party is indeed in harmony with the teaching of the master.

In number of members the Christian Reformed church is growing, as the expression goes, "like a weed." This is a biological growth, the birth rate. Very few new members are obtained by the denomination from the outside. Externally, the denomination has in fact always been nonfertile. Internally, the growth should not be measured by birth rate but by spiritual characteristics and ideological vigor. This is hard to measure. In regard to ideological vigor, one might go into a congregation and select five men and women at random, between the ages of 25 and 30 years, and give them a written examination, avoiding, however, the customary denominational "passwords" which would give a clue to the correct answers. The majority of the answers might disappoint those who believe that the denomination will continue to have a traditional or virile Calvinist hold on the generation coming into maturity and influence. Certainly, that hold will not be on the basic ideas of Calvinism in its heyday in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Members in the denomination disclaim that they are Fundamentalists. That unwanted description is endeavored to be fended

off in part by a special device, namely, by the acceptance of the social gospel in the fields of ethics and group action. (We shall submit evidence in the next issue.) One phase of an objective description of the denomination is that some of its members profess *theological* doctrines historically known as Calvinist, and that they actually are drifting steadily toward the *ethical* doctrines known as the social gospel. They do not, however, advance those ethical ideas as being practically the whole content of religion as the social gospel advocates do.

Returning to the idea of denominational nonfertility in getting new outside members, the radio program of the Christian Reformed church has, naturally, satisfied some non-Christian Reformed listeners who would be satisfied with any orthodox religious program, but it has turned out to be somewhat as a program of a company which engages in a big national advertising program, but fails to get the increased sales needed to justify the expense of the advertising. To any experienced merchandising executive the tactical deficiencies of this promotion program are obvious.

The significant question in the circumstances is: *Why* has the Christian Reformed church always been nonfertile externally in regard to getting new members, and why is it possible that it may be becoming spiritually sterile internally?

Our answer will in general be that the cause is intellectual confusion among members in regard to certain Biblical doctrines. Intellectually, the members of the denomination emit an uncertain sound. Not only are some of the members confused in regard to various subjects, but the ideas they hold lack intellectual respectability and consequently can never be convincing. The confusion arises (1) from there being an unsatisfactory content to the idea of living to the "glory of God"; the term is frequently only a cliché; and (2) from there being a new definition substituted for "brotherly love" in place of the traditional Calvinist definition.

In short, the First Table of the Law lacks modern meaning (relevance), and the Second Table of the Law is in reality subverted by some members in the Christian Reformed church.

Let us examine available strands of evidence.

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## Do They Know The Score?

Several years ago a visiting friend looked at us quizzically, and asked, "Why do you challenge those people?" To that question we answered, "Because they are wrong and their influence is harmful."

"But," he said, "I think you misunderstand. Those people are not deliberately wrong; they do not know any better. They have never heard the arguments against their position. Why not then approach them educationally rather than argumentatively?"

That friend's idea has frequently recurred to us; we believed at that time that he was mistaken, but we have gradually come to wonder whether he might be right after all.

Not long thereafter we were talking with an able man influential in the supervision of Calvin College. We did not reveal what our line-of-argument would be, which resulted in his acting cautiously toward us and defensively. We asked exploratory questions in regard to educational matters in the denomination. But it was impossible to make progress. He would not answer queries. We "got the brush off"; we were told: "There is not anyone there who really knows what the score is." The subject was changed on us, and that is that.

Recently we set about examining a book published in 1951, entitled *God-Centered Living, or Calvinism In Action* (The Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan).<sup>\*</sup> This book is a symposium; there are fourteen authors, each contributing a chapter.

We have read the articles by the following authors:

1. Dr. Clarence Bouma, "The Relevance of Calvinism For Today"

<sup>\*</sup>We thank the Baker Book House for permission to quote. They have informed us to our disappointment that this book is out-of-print. Although we are in substantial disagreement with some ideas in some of the essays in this book, we recommend to readers that they endeavor to obtain secondhand copies. It is an unsound self-education policy to read only one interpretation of moot present-day problems. We review books which are significant either because of their merits or their demerits. The authors of the various essays have concentrated many ideas in the brief compass of their respective essays. Quotations in this review are too limited to reveal the full scope of those essays.

2. Rev. Peter Van Tuinen, "The Task of the Church for the Solution of Modern Problems"
3. Dr. William Harry Jellema, "Calvinism and Higher Education"
4. Dr. William Spoelhof, "Calvinism and Political Action"
5. Dr. Henry J. Ryskamp, "Calvinist Action and Modern Economic Patterns."
6. J. Herman Fles, "Calvinism and Contemporary Business Endeavor."
7. Dr. Garrett Heyns, "Calvinism and Social Problems"
8. Dr. Amry Vanden Bosch, "Calvinism and International Relations"
9. Dr. H. Henry Meeter, "Books on Calvinism and Calvinist Action"

After reading these articles our doubt has decreased whether the two friends with whom we talked, as we just mentioned, might be right.

The contributors to *God-Centered Living* whose names we have listed\* are former students of Calvin College. Presumably the "Calvinism" that they profess is the Calvinism taught at the school. They do not declare that what they write is different from what they may have heard while at Calvin College; they present their ideas as the quintessence of Calvinism and the optimum of orthodoxy. Several of the men mentioned were or are connected with the school: Bouma was in the theological school; Spoelhof is president of the college; Jellema heads the philosophy department; Ryskamp, the economics-sociology department; Meeter has just retired from the Bible department.

In what follows in this issue we shall briefly examine the contributions of Bouma, Meeter and Ryskamp. The ideas of the others we shall summarize later, if the opportunity presents itself.

\*Nothing here written pertains to any of the articles in *God-Centered Living* which are not here listed. We have not read (as of this time) the other articles.



Eventually, readers should be able to understand clearly what our answer is to the question: Why is the Christian Reformed church ideologically a nonfertile church externally, despite its biological virility and muliebrity internally?

We re-submit the idea, in this instance in connection with the 100th anniversary (in 1957) of the Christian Reformed church, that it should give serious attention to Machiavelli's great advice, namely (our italics):

There is nothing more true than that all 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 in the manner ordained, or if they change, so do it that it shall be for their advantage, and not to their injury.

. . . And those are the best constituted bodies, and have the longest existence, which possess the intrinsic means of *frequently renewing themselves*; . . . and the means of renewing them is to *bring them back to their original principles*. . . All religious republics. . . 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.

In regard to prevailing ideas of some Christian Reformed members, it may be argued: (1) that their goodness is becoming corrupted; (2) that the church will of necessity eventually be destroyed, unless (3) it renews itself, by (4) returning to its original principles.

The title of the book we are looking at sounds devout—*God-Centered Living or Calvinism in Action*. The further description is, "A Symposium by the Calvinistic Action Committee." We would not be welcome on the Committee, nor would we be willing to join. We find ourselves unable to become enthusiastic about this Calvinistic Action Committee. Its program reminds us of the programs of the Social Action groups in other denominations, which groups are obviously working on the propagation of the Social Gospel.

## Purpose Of The Book: God-Centered Living

The *Foreword* to this book signed by the Calvinistic Action Committee begins as follows:

This book seeks to be of help to those who desire to know what the will of God is for the practical guidance of their lives in the complex relations and situations of our modern day.

In regard to several of the contributions in the book we are unable to accept the proposition that it consistently outlines the "will of God" or what is written is useful for "practical guidance." Our views are to the contrary. We do not advise reading *God-Centered Living* in order to find out what the "will of God" is.

The Committee cannot take offense at our independent and unfortunately unfavorable view, because of its own disavowal:

Naturally the reader will appraise each chapter in the light of his own convictions and his own peculiar interests. He must realize that the Calvinistic Action Committee does not express any opinions of its own, but that the Committee has felt that each chapter is a challenge, and a beginning to a progressive and dynamic Calvinism in a chartless age.

Our view is that part of what is written in *God-Centered Living* is reactionary and degenerative rather than "progressive or dynamic" Calvinism, and is itself "chartless" or worse.

We are simply stating the issue between two radically different views, Old and Progressive Calvinism on the one hand and modern "Calvinism" as outlined in *God-Centered Living* on the other hand.

There are various devotional and religious *sentiments* expressed in the essays in *God-Centered Living*, which are all very fine; but we are challenging the underlying *principles*.      fn

## Clarence Bouma On "The Relevance Of Calvinism For Today"

Dr. Bouma's contribution to *God-Centered Living* is introductory to the others and serves that purpose excellently. As is also true of the other contributions the literary style is admirable. The contributors generally polished their contributions with the consequence that the articles make smooth reading.

Bouma (1) defines Calvinism, (2) outlines the potential of Calvinism for practical ethics, and (3) discusses how this task is to be achieved. The third is, obviously, the important subject for this book.

In a broad way we do not take exception to what Bouma wrote, but we shall comment on Bouma's article under the following headings:

1. Abraham Kuyper and Bouma
2. The social *struggle*
3. Bouma and the "Glory of God"
4. Bouma in the Kuyperian ruts
5. The *Doleantie* versus the *Secession*

### Abraham Kuyper And Bouma

Imagine a thief who in daylight has robbed an isolated house on a highway with a garden in the rear sloping down to a deep river. Imagine, too, that on the night before the robbery there has been a heavy rain.

In the afternoon the owner returns and finds his house robbed. Being calculating he disturbs nothing; he acts to preserve all clues. He finds the rear door open and then he sees the thief's footsteps in the mud in the garden. He follows them to the river's edge, where they end. Obviously, the thief had walked in the river for some distance to throw off pursuers.

The householder goes up and down the river bank. He repeats the process, going farther each time. But nowhere do the

footsteps of the thief emerge from the river. Finally, in despair the householder gives up.

The fact is, however, that the thief never entered the river. He walked backward carefully step by step and left by the front driveway. The clues left by the thief hindered rather than helped pursuit.

Similarly, ethical questions are problems. Abraham Kuyper had a solution for those problems. His solutions, too, led to the water's edge. And then the trail disappears. Many, including Bouma, have been following Kuyper to the water's edge. The solution they think is along Kuyperian lines of guild socialism\* or interventionism,\*\* and common grace, and sphere sovereignty. But what if all those clues are in the wrong direction? It is our belief that whoever follows them will continually be running distractedly up and down the river's edge. Finally, completely frustrated, he will give up.

The unfortunate effect of Kuyper's big footsteps is that they have handicapped further development of Reformed ethical theory. His path has a dead-end—the deep river. Kuyper has had, we regret to believe, a stultifying effect on a whole half-century of the Calvinism which followed in his steps. Anyone, who as Bouma has a penetrating and ambitious mind, wishes to progress beyond or build further than Kuyper. But that is an impossibility; Kuyper's intellectual structure was built on too weak a foundation.

No worthy ideas have been built by anyone on the Kuyperian intellectual concepts. Kuyper's ideas have been repeated. But nothing new has been added. It is a great misfortune that Calvinists have had their attention so fixed on Kuyperian concepts that they cannot escape their toils.

The ethico-socio-economic ideas of Kuyper long frustrated all our thinking. Fortunately, we escaped from them.

### The Social Struggle

Bouma, as does nearly everybody, views life as a *struggle between men* rather than a *struggle to keep the Law of God*. This

\*See June 1955 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 170-172.

\*\*See June 1955 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 172-173.

is a grave error based on a metaphor, namely that life is a battle. Bouma writes (our italics):

Life in all its modern ramifications presents a *genuine battle*, a *struggle*, a *warfare*. The unusual intensification of the *social struggle* is caused by a number of factors, all of them characteristic of the modern *structure* of society.

The metaphor that life is a natural *warfare*, is misleading and the explanation that the *structure* and *complexity* of society *cause* that warfare is an error.

The "interdependence" of men is here considered by Bouma to be a cause for social strife. The reverse is correct. The interdependence of men is the cause of social cohesion. That natural interdependence and cohesion is disturbed by disobedience to the Law of God. *There* is where the warfare is, and not in the interdependence.

Bouma extends this to international matters, but again it is not international interdependence that causes "warfare," but violation of the commandments of God.

Bouma does correctly appraise the really important ethico-politico-socio-economic issue of the day, namely, the issue between the principles of socialism and the principles of Scripture. On this subject we completely agree with him.

### **Bouma On The Glory Of God**

Bouma wrote: "Let us be on our guard lest we speak glibly of the 'glory of God.' Let us be on our guard, lest it deteriorate into an empty phrase." The warning he gives is, we believe, in order.

### **Bouma In The Kuyperian Ruts**

The high mark of Bouma's program is outlined in the section on how to achieve the task of making Calvinism relevant to modern life. Here he follows Kuyper as accurately as Ben Hur in the great chariot race followed the rival Roman charioteer, Messala;

—when they had both passed there was only one set of wheel tracks. The track that Bouma follows consists of Kuyper's ideas on

1. common grace;
2. antithesis;
3. sphere sovereignty.\*

### Common Grace

1. What we have in "common" with all men is *common grace* according to Bouma. Of course, we have sun and rain, food and shelter, conversation, and what have you, all in common with all men. What of it? What does such an idea reveal? Common grace is in reality only another term for natural and social laws or the providence of God. Why not leave it with that. Why call it a great and new profound idea—common grace? Why imagine that *common grace* is one of the three great tools or principles to promote Calvinism in the United States? Why not simply analyze natural, social and economic laws? Giving those a new name is no contribution to the welfare of society. What is there in a name?\*

### The Antithesis

2. But over against what we have in *common* with all men is the *antithesis*, the difference and lack of agreement between believers and unbelievers, that is, what we do not have in common. This term, *antithesis*, is another word that is a substitute for thought, except that in this case antithesis has come to mean primarily separate *organization* of "believers" from "nonbelievers." For us the *antithesis* is no mystery, and no new idea. Instead of trying to sell the antithesis idea throughout the United States, why not set out to promote the real thing, namely, *observance by self and others of the law of God in the world*. That is all the real meaning that the *antithesis* has in regard to practical action, which is what Bouma is talking about

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM cannot afford to promote this inferior antithesis idea. We are instead promoters of the Law of God.

\*For meaning of term, sphere sovereignty, see February 1956 issue, pages 51-55.

\*\**Common grace* has many meanings. We are using the meaning as determined by Bouma's context in this article.

### Sphere Sovereignty

3. Finally, Bouma picks up Kuyper's idea of *sphere sovereignty*. This is a most unfortunate term. It should be *sphere freedom*. We are wholly in favor of sphere freedom. But that freedom does not rest for us on *sphere sovereignty*; if there is sovereignty in the sphere, there must be an antecedent *personal* sovereignty. There must be more sovereignty in men than in spheres. The sphere is nothing more than an area of joint but still personal action. The mental abstraction, a sphere, is not a reality in the sense that it can have, in its own mystic and conceptual self, any sovereignty.

The spheres were not "created" by God but by men. The presumed sovereignty of the sphere does not come directly from God but is always exercised *through men*. If the men do not establish the sphere, there is no sphere. If a sphere is created by men, it derives its sovereignty at the most *through men*. The only sense in which there is sphere sovereignty directly *from God* is that everything occurs under the providence of God. This, of course, is not a practical idea, but a theoretical generality, perfectly true, but no practical conclusion can be deduced from it.

The tragedy consists in this; that the idea of sphere sovereignty results in a failure to see the antecedent *individual* sovereignty, which is the sovereignty that counts. Surely, the wonderful independence of voluntary human associations, the spheres, from governmental domination is of cardinal importance. But all the sovereignties so prominent in Kuyper's mind—governmental or sphere—derive *through* one source only, namely, men. Any government, sphere or man operating contrary to the law of God has *no sovereignty derived from God* for perpetrating that wrong act.

What we have just written has merit, we are sure, when compared with Kuyper's sphere sovereignty; we have here contrasted *sphere* sovereignty with *individual* sovereignty. That comparison is practically forced upon us by Kuyper's unfortunate thought structure. But actually we do not believe in *personal* sovereignty. A human being is not important enough to be *sovereign*. He is, unhappily, too depraved to be *sovereign*. Then it might be concluded that we believe only in the sovereignty of God. That is correct.

But that idea is in a sense abstract. How get it down to earth? Very simply: *sovereignty* on this little earthly ball, floating as a dust speck in immeasurable space, derives from the LAW of God. Whatever is done *according to that Law* is sovereign—valid and imprescriptible. Whatever is contrary to that Law of God is not sovereign, is invalid, and has no right of existence though approved by a man, by men, by spheres, by government, by judges, princes, kings, emperors, potentates, dictators. In the sense just defined all *sovereignty* resides in God and thence in the LAW he has made.

The whole thought scaffolding of Abraham Kuyper disfigures his structure of ideas for Calvinism.

It has for long seemed unwise to us for Americans of Dutch ancestry to promote to sophisticated Americans the somewhat vague Kuyperian ideas of common grace, the antithesis, and sphere sovereignty. Why not, if the ideas are to be promoted, stay with what Americans will readily understand, to wit:

<i>These Ideas</i>	<i>And Not These Ideas</i>
1. Natural laws and the providence of God.	Common grace
2. Obedience to law of God.	Antithesis
3. Freedom and responsibility of individual in group action.	Sphere sovereignty

Kuyper's peculiar ideas have no new relevance for America today. But they are, unfortunately, the very ideas which Bouma proposes as the contribution that Calvinism of Dutch origin can make to America.

It is to be hoped fervently that the Centennial Anniversary of the Christian Reformed church in 1957 will not be marred by new drum-beating for Kuyperian ideas, even though those ideas appear repeatedly in this book put out by the Calvinistic Action Committee. These ideas of common grace, antithesis and sphere



sovereignty all involve inferior understanding of the real ideas and utilize terms which hinder rather than help understanding.

### The Doleantie Versus The Secession

From the foregoing some readers may erroneously reach the conclusion that we are thinking in terms of unhinging Christian Reformed Calvinism from its Dutch background. That inference is incorrect.

Calvinists in America of Dutch origin are mostly descendents either of those who participated with Kuyper in the *Doleantie* in 1886, or of those who participated in the Secession (*Afscheiding*) of 1834. If the Christian Reformed church wishes to return to an earlier Dutch thought movement, let it consider the Secession. Although Groen van Prinsterer, a contemporary of the Secession, was not formally a Secessionist, he was, in our opinion, a far sounder guide for modern Calvinists than the leader of the *Doleantie*. If we must have a Dutch *fürher* or an *il duce* let it be Groen rather than Kuyper.

That the Secession was a linsey-woolsey movement must be admitted. That it had strong pietistic elements must also be admitted. But it should be recognized that in its simplicity there was strength. The attempted effort to introduce "culture" into the *Doleantie* (an attempt of which the Secession was free) did not, in our opinion, add something which can ever be sold to Americans. Certainly, in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we cannot accept "Kuyperian culture." Anyone advancing today with Kuyperian ideas is like Victor Hugo's Napoleon after the battle of Waterloo. In the darkening evening of the third day after the battle was hopelessly lost, a man, according to Hugo, was found advancing again. It was Napoleon, "mighty somnambulist\* of a vanished dream." The Calvinistic Action Committee are somnambulists, too.

That Kuyper made great contributions to the Reformed churches is not disputed. His contribution, however, consisted in something other than what is emphasized in Bouma's article. fn

\*Sleep walker.

## H. H. Meeter On "Books On Calvinism And Calvinistic Action"

Dr. Meeter has compiled an extensive bibliography of books on Calvin, Calvinism, Calvinistic conferences, etc., which appears as an appendix to *God-Centered Living*. Meeter has not undertaken to evaluate these books. If that had been done, the *Appendix* would be more valuable.

However, any appraisal of books in this list would, if the appraisal were to have value, necessarily be highly critical.

In the list, for example, is R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. This book is, it is true, about Calvinism, but the question is, what kind of book—favorable or unfavorable, reasonably objective or propagandistic. At Calvin College this book is considered history with worthy objectivity. We view the book differently. Tawney is a socialist who wished to throw doubt on the idea that Calvinism could properly nurture capitalism. Tawney wants religion to nurture socialism. As historically Calvinism has nurtured capitalism, it became necessary for Tawney to select quotations showing that Puritans and other Calvinists had conscience problems about capitalism. All this is very subtly done by Tawney. In fact, it is not realized at Calvin what Tawney is doing. (See September 1956 issue, pages 265-269.) We object to this biased propagandistic book being on Meeter's list without any warning as to its character.

In our estimation one of the greatest dangers to the Christian Reformed church is the prospective success of the program of Tawney, of the social gospel advocates, and of the World Council of Churches, etc., to sell to members of the Christian Reformed church the idea that morality and Christianity require the acceptance of the principles of socialism, specifically, its principle in regard to *brotherly love*. In various quarters in the Christian Reformed church that idea seems to have been accepted. Meeter's book list can unintentionally contribute to this trend.

On the list, of course, is Kuyper's Stone Lectures on *Calvinism* given at Princeton University. No comment is made on these either, which is understandable. We have had an experience in connection with these Lectures which disturbed us at the time.

We were talking to a young American several years ago. For some reason he had occasion to refer to these Stone Lectures. He said: "I have read them. They are valueless. They really do not tell you anything." He made additional stronger criticism which we shall forbear to repeat. The remarks struck us as a blow in the face.

We then re-examined those Stone Lectures and concluded that the young man was right. Lectures as the Stone Lectures at Princeton presumably will add something new to the body of knowledge of the subjects discussed. These Lectures fail to do that. They are old ideas with variations in terminology.

In the years immediately ahead there may be a resurgence of promotion of Dutch books on Calvinism and of current ideas of Calvinists in the Netherlands. Meeter himself has written a book on Calvinism which reports modern Calvinistic thought in the Netherlands. He accepts that modern thought as being in the Calvinist tradition. That estimate of his differs from ours. Some modern Calvinism in the Netherlands is not reconcilable with the spirit of Calvinism in its great days, but is modern Interventionism borrowed from the "world" and contrary to the teachings of Scripture. fn

### Henry J. Ryskamp On "Calvinistic Action And Modern Economic Patterns"

Professor Ryskamp follows Abraham Kuyper along lines different from Bouma, but he follows Kuyper nevertheless.

When Bouma followed Kuyper on *common grace*, *antithesis* and *sphere sovereignty*, he was following Kuyper on ideas which would affect the promotional merits of the ethical phases of the gospel message. For example, if the antithesis is to be an important idea in the approach to nonbelievers, then there is a note of hostility and arrogance in the message; we are in and you are out. The whole tone changes when the emphasis is not on the contrast, the antithesis, but on obeying the Law of God. To our mind the *ethical* phase of the Christian message is covered far better by

stressing the Law of God rather than the antithesis. The "psychology" of the idea of the antithesis is bad and not promotional.

Bouma is a theologian and his emphasis on three ideas affecting the spread of the gospel is natural for him. Ryskamp is a social scientist, a praxeologist, a man who deals with questions of human action rather than the gospel message. In this field of human action, or praxeology, he follows Kuyper on the subjects of interventionism and the existence of a charisma. These are, as we view them, two dangerous subjects. It is not to be denied that Ryskamp has the backing of Kuyperian ideas on these subjects. But he is also essentially in harmony with Tawney, and Keynes, and the social gospelers, and the World Council of Churches. He is, in fact, perfectly in harmony with the spirit of the world around us today. It is that spirit cloaked with certain ethical and religious externals which he offers. We consider the substance to be far more important than the externals.

What we outline in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in regard to the Law of God puts us diametrically opposed to the prevailing worldly climate of thought. There is an antithesis, but it is a *result* and not a manner of approach or an attitude.

The ideas which will be examined in what follows are the ideas of Abraham Kuyper, Ryskamp, Tawney, Keynes, the social gospelers, the social actionists of the churches, and the World Council of Churches. On praxeological subjects all these people are fairly well agreed. No one believing that the World Council of Churches has a good praxeological program will disagree with Ryskamp either. We agree with neither Ryskamp nor the World Council.

Ryskamp in praxeology is in the same rut that Bouma landed in in theology. Ryskamp has been conditioned to accept Kuyperian ideas to such an extent that he has not been fortunate enough to get onto an entirely different track of ideas. One of the unfortunate features of education in the Christian Reformed church is that some person becomes an *authority* so that his ideas substitute for scriptural and scientific ideas. Some devout and maybe uninformed man is considered so great an *authority* that everyone follows him.

When Ryskamp is following *authorities* there is nothing unusual about that. Practically everybody is doing the same thing.

### Ryskamp Essentially Agrees With Max Weber

In the preceding issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we summarized Max Weber's view of the relationship between Calvinism and capitalism. We acted merely as reporters of Weber's views. Ryskamp goes further and essentially agrees with Weber. He writes as follows on page 182; italics by Ryskamp:

Whereas Calvin exhorted his readers and followers to serve God *through* their vocations, Luther was content with the idea that men should not neglect to serve God *in* their vocations, which, it seems, he regarded as burdens to be borne in this world. Calvin dignified the occupations of all workers as "callings," divine callings. It was this idea, that each individual had a God-given vocation, that contributed to the burst of energy that characterized the period identified with the development of capitalism. This new activity and increased productivity may be attributed to the fact also that Calvin exhorted the Christian to own Jesus Christ as his Lord not only in his religious or ecclesiastical life, but especially in his everyday relationships, particularly in his daily work. The idea that one's work is God-given and that one must seek to serve God actively in and through his work, undoubtedly contributed to the new dynamic that stirred the western world.

Although Ryskamp is willing that much of the credit for the good in the Industrial Revolution and capitalism go to Calvinism, he declares that the defects in capitalism are from other sources. He writes on page 183 (our italics):

. . . some writers have claimed that Protestantism, particularly Calvinism, was the major influence in the concurrence of events that led to the development of capitalism *and its attendant evils*. This conclusion has, however, been challenged by others, both Calvinist and non-Calvinist writers. These writers point to the fact that changes

had been occurring which gradually brought on the new order of economic relationships. They emphasize what is now generally recognized to be true, that the *radical individualism*, the *rationalism*, and the *deism* which were developing in the period preceding the industrial revolution were largely responsible for the thinking upon which the economic philosophy, used to support *laissez-faire* individualism, was based.

We are unsympathetic to relieving Calvinism of responsibility for any of the alleged evils of capitalism. We consider Calvinism to be far more responsible for those evils than so-called *radical individualism*, or *rationalism*, or *deism*. We wish to comment very briefly on these three subjects.

1. Firstly, in regard to individualism: PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is itself what Ryskamp calls "radically individualist." We do not consider the evils of the world to be the result of radical individualism, but of something quite different, namely, disobedience to the commands of God. (See June 1955, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 162-166.)

2. Secondly, we are not "rationalists" in the meaning of the eighteenth century term, but we believe that what is good logic is also good morality. We are opposed to contrasting reason and morality, or reason and Christianity. Earlier Ryskamp had written (our italics):

For the economic liberal the active agent in economic life was the individual guided by *enlightened self-interest*, the individual guided by *reason*, *not necessarily by moral or religious standards*.

Ryskamp obviously believes in a conflict in practical matters between reason and morality. This idea we consider to be at variance with what Scripture teaches. Nor do we believe that the Christian religion should have a millstone around its neck which consists in the idea that in practical affairs religious standards are not "rational" in a proper sense of the term. We concur with Macaulay when he wrote the great words:

*The principles of morality and far-sighted judgment are identical.*

When reason and Christian ethics are contrasted as Ryskamp contrasts them, the acceptability of Christianity is unnecessarily lessened.

3. Thirdly, a relationship is alleged between deism and the evils "attendant on capitalism." We are not deists, but the evils of capitalism in our opinion do not stem primarily from deism, but from disobedience to the commands of God. In old-fashioned language the evils of capitalism are plain sins against the Ten Commandments. Those sins ought to be mentioned without mincing words. We shall see later whether Ryskamp mentions those sins, or whether anyone else contributing to this symposium specifically mentions them.

### **Ryskamp's Principles; Are They Moral, Biblical And Economic?**

So much in a preliminary way. Our criticism regarding Ryskamp's ideas becomes progressively more grave. Ryskamp professes doctrines which we are unable to appraise as moral, or Biblical or economic.

We believe that we are correct when we make that appraisal. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that his article contains inconsistencies which make it confusing to know what his real position is. He reasons circularly. This is his circular path.

1. Capitalism developed, in part, out of Calvinism.
2. The bad in capitalism stems from other causes than Calvinism.
3. The bad in capitalism needs to be corrected.
4. The agency to correct these evils is the state.
5. The state may take both positive action to promote the good and negative action to restrain the evil.
6. Nevertheless the state may not destroy individual initiative or personality, and the individual must correct the evils that exist.
7. And so the state is not finally the agency to correct evils after all.

In short, Ryskamp contradicts himself.

First Ryskamp gives some praise to capitalism. Next, he admits that the purposes of socialism and communism are to correct evils in capitalism. But socialism and communism must not be employed. The correct agency is an *interventionist government*. Ryskamp ascribes this great insight of favoring interventionism to "Abraham Kuyper and others." Ryskamp is, therefore, definitely an interventionist, but . . . but . . . interventionism can be bad . . . and . . . and needs to be carefully administered; otherwise . . .

Obviously, we are here dealing with the thought of a man with a wide perspective on capitalism, on socialism and communism, and on interventionism. When he must eventually choose, he is a cautious and qualified interventionist, but an interventionist nevertheless. However, he is an uneasy interventionist. It is as a self-contradictory interventionist that he teaches unacceptable ideas. Tawney's objective to make the consciences of Calvinists uneasy has been affective on Ryskamp.

There are in what Ryskamp writes, naturally, the customary references to the glory of God, the welfare of neighbors, brotherly relations, the "cultural mandate" (about which something later), etc. These we consider the nice facade to dubious principles.

Ryskamp, if he had never come under the influence of Abraham Kuyper, might have come to sounder conclusions. We quote in his own words how he became an adherent of interventionism (our italics):

At the end of the last century and during the first years of this century, Calvinistic writers in the Netherlands began pointing out the rationalistic and deistic influences in the rise of capitalism. They pointed with no lack of certainty to the impersonality of modern economic life and to the evils that had developed as a consequence. *Dr. Abraham Kuyper and others* called for increasing concern for the lot of the poorer classes and they proposed *measures* almost a half century ago *which some men still regard as socialistic today*. They were, however, following the leadership of John Calvin in their awareness of the needs of the laboring classes. And they openly proclaimed the fact that where and when the operation



of our free, impersonal economy caused situations to develop that permitted too great inequality among men and that made it impossible for many to find work or homes, *interference was not only necessary but proper*. This was advocated by men who believed in the sovereignty of the several institutions, church, family, state and economic order, in their own sphere, but who believed that, in a world in which life is after all one whole, if the economic institutions set up and maintained by sinful men failed to function properly, the situation might require that *the institution ordained by God to govern and to maintain proper relationships (the state or its agencies) should interfere*. (Page 187.)

Note what he says: "If the *economic* institutions set up and maintained by sinful men failed to function properly, the situation might require that *the institution ordained by God to govern and to maintain proper relationships (the state or its agencies) should interfere*. (The italics are ours.)

Ryskamp slips in the word *economic*. The state he says may and should interfere in *economic* institutions. He has just said that the spheres are sovereign, but before he ends the sentence he develops one exception, the *economic*. If plain logic is to govern, it is necessary to show (1) why the field of economics is not really sovereign but can be interfered with by the state, and (2) why contrarily the church, for example, is really sovereign and the state may not interfere. Slipping in the adjective *economic* really puts practical affairs outside of the group of sovereign spheres. In order to justify the exception for economic matters, it is necessary to provide a good reason for the exception. No proof is advanced; the exception is justified because there is a *welfare-shortage*, which presumably a state, which has a charisma from God, can alleviate.

It is necessary to call attention to constant use of question-begging words and terms by Ryskamp in this article. Ryskamp uses expressions as follows: "*failed to function properly*." When do they *fail* to function *properly*? Also, "*the institution ordained by God to govern and to maintain proper relationships (the state or its agencies) should interfere*." What is *proper*? Such use of

adjectives, adverbs and question-begging terms proves nothing. Doctrines should be considered unacceptable on the basis of the number of adjectives, adverbs and question-begging terms in the formulation of the doctrine.

Ryskamp's great hope is not in the proclamation of the law to sinful mankind. That, by the way, is PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM's great hope. His hope, instead, is stayed on the bureaucrats in the government—the "institution ordained by God." His trust is in the charisma of politicians, who want to be re-elected and consequently are looking for votes. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has no confidence whatever in this charisma. We do not believe it exists. There is no pipe line of inspiration or power directly from God to any bureaucrat. That is not what Paul's proposition means when he says, "The powers that be are of God." But that is exactly the proposition that Christian interventionists, including Ryskamp, basically accept.

We are in this matter far closer to Thomas Jefferson. He wrote\* (our italics):

... Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.

Jefferson had lived temporarily in France at the time of the French Revolution and some may attempt to accuse him of holding ideas based on the principles of the French Revolution. However, in his own *Autobiography* he wrote (page 176):

... After I retired from that office [Secretary of State], great and malignant pains were taken by our federal monarchists, and not entirely without effect, to make him [that is, George Washington] view me as a theorist, holding French principles of government, which would lead infallibly to licentiousness and anarchy.

Jefferson rejected that charge.

\**Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, edited by Adrienne Koch and William Peden, Modern Library, p. 323.

In our view, Kuyper and Ryskamp are closer in theory to the principles of the French Revolution than Jefferson. The interventionism they favor is a step towards a *revolutionary government*.\*

### The Practical Denial Of Total Depravity

Ryskamp writes (our italics):

. . . a state that does not call a halt to crying evils and does not give direction—*when it is the only agency that can*—is itself a cause of decay.

The premise underlying this is that bureaucrats and politicians are not depraved; they and they only *can* intervene into social relationships. This *can* must mean that they have the insight, judgment, honesty, fairness, courage and devotion to do what is right to "give direction" to society. This is simply the *führer* principle of Hitler. When any government is appraised as Ryskamp appraises government in this connection, the old "divine right of kings" and also the principles of the French Revolution are back in the saddle. We have here again the idea of some charisma from God to a government.

Naturally, Ryskamp immediately hedges. He says, "We certainly do not want an unlimited state because we know from Germany and Russia's experience . . ."

But what does he want? He is, in fact, a nonrealist. His view is that the government must do it, and his assumption is that the government will be good. The government, he clearly assumes, will be good because it has the charisma; but he also mistrusts that charisma.

### Ryskamp's Double Standard Of Morality

On page 196 Ryskamp writes:

Government exists to protect rights, the rights of all individuals and of all classes. This does not mean

\*For meaning of term *revolutionary government*, see Guglielmo Ferrero's *The Reconstruction of Europe*, especially Chapters III, IV and XIX.

that the government may never curb personal action in the use of private property and business. It must interfere when it is necessary to make it possible for others to exercise similar rights. Although this practically compels the government to take positive action in the interest of some people while it takes negative measures to control others, there is no other way out today. Moreover, it is for this purpose of regulating human conduct (curbing injustice), and of using authority to enforce regulation, that the institution of the state has been given to us.

Although cautiously and ambiguously phrased, this paragraph sets up a double standard of morality for government. In regard to *A* the government may pass laws to restrain evil, but in regard to *B* the government may pass laws to *compel him to do good*. In other words, a government may *compel B* to contribute something, that is, it may take something away from *B* which he has lawfully acquired and lawfully holds. This is the *positive* action of government which Ryskamp favors.

That there is not a logical justification for a government to "do good" rather than restricting itself to "restraining evil" is apparent from the obvious conclusion that if the government has restrained evil—that is, has performed that proper function faithfully—there should be no need of anything further. If there is "injustice" in the world because of violation of the commandments of God, then *enforce the Law of God against such evil-doers*. Do what Scripture does teach. For it to be necessary for a government to go beyond that and "do good," only two justifications can be given:

- (1) Evil in fact has not been and is not being restrained; or
- (2) Freedom is not part of God's plan for the world; charity is compulsory; there is no real right to private property; everything should be communal; a bureaucrat guided by charisma can wisely guide such "do-gooding."

The legislation in Scripture is limited (a) to the restraint of evil and (b) to voluntary "do-gooding." Item (2) in the foregoing is not taught in Scripture. Ryskamp, together with the Social Gospellers, the World Council of Churches, the interventionists, the socialists and the communists, teaches item (2). It is a revolutionary teaching. The language is guarded; the idea is unmistakable.

Scripture curses the use of double weights or of double standards of morality, or different laws for different people, and those who bend justice. Ryskamp would openly have two sets of laws. His statement implies deliberate class legislation.

We do not believe Ryskamp happily and willingly came to this un-Biblical doctrine. The character of his article indicates that he has a sharp mind and technical knowledge of economics. Any sharp mind realizes that interventionism, as always defined, requires that a government may *do more than restrain evil*. The whole purpose of interventionism, as Kuyper clearly indicated, is to go beyond the restraint of evil, or in Ryskamp's words, "... practically compels the government to take positive action in the interest of *some* people."

This is not only an evil principle, it is also tyranny; it has an added attribute, the pretense of doing good and of acting for God.

Incidentally, this "positive action" is always something that requires a definite violation of the Ten Commandments. The mask that covers reality in this case is the mask of *legality*. The government which is one of the "powers that be" has the right to pass a law contrary to the Decalogue, because (so it is alleged) it has its "power from God," a charisma.

Any government that is authorized to go beyond the restraint of evil as defined in the Second Table of the Law is a tyranny. Any government that goes beyond the restraint of evil sets a higher goal for itself than God set for Himself.

### **Erroneous Formulation Of The Law Of Neighborly Love**

Ryskamp consistently formulates the Law of Neighborly Love erroneously.

On page 180 he writes:

. . . the will of God . . . enjoins the individual to serve God and his neighbor as himself.

This is unacceptable. We are to *serve* our neighbor as ourself. This is a radically different idea than loving the neighbor as oneself. The natural facts of life absolutely prevent us from serving our neighbor as much as we serve ourselves. Nobody ever even tries except in the circle of his immediate family. To call this a principle of the Christian religion is to make a fantastic exaggeration of it. Here again we have that popular sanctimoniousness of modern Christianity to *extend* the requirement of brotherly love in such a manner as to make it a hypocritical doctrine and one which is justly contemptible in the judgment of non-Christians.

On page 195 Rsykamp writes that we are "called upon to serve God with [our] wealth . . ." Then he adds:

This means, according to the second table of the Law, that he [a man] must serve his neighbor as he would be served himself.

Here, too, there is the shift from *love* to *serve*, with the overtone that you must work as hard for your neighbor as you do for yourself—we are all to be *serving* each other!

But then inconsistencies and contradictions are immediately added:

- (1) Each man is a *steward*, but his *stewardship* is not openly recognized as in effect nullifying *private property*;
- (2) He is to be free;
- (3) He is entitled to "profit" (which as we read it is incorrectly defined).

When *stewardship* of property is not identified as a nullifying qualification on the *ownership* of property there is undoubtedly a serious mental confusion somewhere. A baronical lord had a steward. The *steward* owned nothing; he was only a custodian. One of the curious cases of double-talk in religious circles is the

identification of stewardship with ownership in such a manner that the ownership is really nullified by vague and grandiose obligations of stewardship. It would be well to reject all ideas of "stewardship" and stick to the idea that "charity" is the only requirement of Christians. The stewardship idea is that there is a *further* requirement beyond charity. If that is true, how far does it go? Essentially, the idea is that stewardship goes so far beyond charity that it nullifies the validity of ownership.

Ryskamp writes about the men of the Old Testament (our italics):

Nevertheless, they acted as if the wealth which they had accumulated was *altogether their own*, and in the use of it they acknowledged little of their obligation to their God or to their fellows. (Page 180.)

If a man has honestly and honorably accumulated wealth as presumably Abraham did, is it or is it not "*altogether his own*"? Abraham had no hesitancy to kill men in order to restore Lot's property and person.

It is not to be disputed that God requires charity of all men, particularly of the rich. But if *stewardship* is defined to mean more than *charity*, we reject the idea of stewardship as being un-Biblical.

Ryskamp has three ideas—charity, stewardship, ownership. Scripture has only two—charity and ownership. It does not slip into the ambiguity of stewardship.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM teaches that every man must "love his neighbor as himself." Ryskamp teaches that every man must "serve his neighbor as himself." We deny that there is any scriptural foundation to the proposition that you must "serve the neighbor as you serve yourself." To "serve your neighbor as yourself" means complete voluntary communism in the name of Calvinism.

(to be continued)

### Correction

In the August 1956 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 245-249, we ascribed the poverty of the Jerusalem church to the failure to have distinguished between capital and income, and consequently to have been imprudent in consuming capital. The later extreme poverty of this congregation we have ascribed to that error.

We consider the explanation correct as far as it goes. It is not a complete explanation. This congregation was dispersed, persecuted and impoverished by the man later known as the Apostle Paul. See Acts 8:1-3.

Paul, therefore, had an additional reason for trying to raise money internationally to support the congregation at Jerusalem. The other apostles may at the time of the dispute mentioned in Galations 2:1-10 have called Paul's attention to his special responsibility for the Jerusalem situation. fn

"The state is not, as most political scientists would make it, an inanimate thing; it consists of people, human beings, each of whom operates under an inner compulsion to get the most out of life with the least expenditure of labor. They differ from other human beings only in the fact that they have chosen (because they believe it to be easier) the political or predatory means of satisfying their desires, rather than the economic or productive means.

The fiction that the state is an impersonal institution, something society constructs for its own benefit, serves to hide, even from its members, the nature of its composition."

—Frank Chodorov, in *Faith and Freedom*, September, 1956

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# Progressive Calvinism

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## Ryskamp On "Calvinistic Action And Modern Economic Patterns"

### Note To Readers

What follows is a continuation of a review of Dr. Henry J. Ryskamp's essay in *God-Centered Living or Calvinism in Action*, a book containing fourteen contributions by Reformed scholars. (The publisher of the book is the Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; unfortunately the book is out of print, and readers will be able to get only second-hand copies.) Ryskamp is the head of the economics-sociology department of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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As readers know, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is interested especially in *human action*, the whole field of human conduct, a field covered by a relatively unknown term, *praxeology*.

A church elder is expected to be blameless in doctrine and in *life*. *Life* here means *action*. It should be noted that the Calvinistic Action Committee which sponsored this book is a committee operating specifically in the field of praxeology, the same field selected by PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM for an examination of ethical principles.

All the essays in the book *God-Centered Living* are about some field of *action*.

It is customary to consider political economy to be the field of action only in regard to material (or economic) interests — buying, selling, producing, consuming, etc. But we are not in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM relating only economics to ethics and to religion; we are, instead, relating the *whole field of human action* to ethics and religion. A comprehensive approach to all human action is the same as making a praxeological approach. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM's interests are praxeological and not merely economic.

A great economist, Dr. Ludwig von Mises, visiting professor at New York University, has written an extraordinary book about praxeology with the title *Human Action* (Yale University Press, 1949, \$10). This monumental book covers not only praxeology but concerns itself as well with the epistemological problems of the praxeological sciences. Readers who are equipped to read serious works in the field of epistemology and praxeology should examine this great text.

Naturally, if the Calvinistic Action Committee undertakes to put out a volume by fourteen distinguished contributors in exactly the field in which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM operates, we have a profound interest in what appears in that volume. That explains our reason for giving attention to essays in *God-Centered Living*. We regret that we see matters pertaining to human actions differently from what some contributors do. In fact, we view their ideas on human action with alarm, and unhappily, with strong opposition. Our convictions do not permit us to let stand unchallenged

many of the ideas which are prominent in *God-Centered Living*. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM thinks so differently from the Calvinistic Action Committee that we are certain to be impatient with each other and possibly will not really understand each other.

Fifteen years ago we would have read *God-Centered Living* with substantial approval. We held similar ideas. Although temperamentally disinclined even to amend our ideas, fifteen years of painful intellectual adjustment have gone into abandonment of what we formerly held and into acceptance of completely different ideas. Our mental change was slow, stubborn and distressing. We know of no reason for others to change their ideas more quickly or easily. We are prepared for violent attacks on our comments on these essays. If fifteen years from now some have come to see praxeological matters as we see them today, we shall be amply rewarded.

We ascribe the erroneous ideas in *God-Centered Living* to unfortunate worldly and unscientific influences which during all their lives have been "registering" on the minds of the authors in this volume whose essays we are reviewing. Without wishing to be unkind or censorious, our view is that what is advanced in *God-Centered Living* in several of the essays is basically neither Biblical nor scientific nor good morality.

The situation is complicated by a substantial dualism in ideas in these essays. By certain quotations a case might be made that there is agreement between ideas in *God-Centered Living* and in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Other selected quotations could indicate no real agreement at all. The fact is that the program outlined in some essays in *God-Centered Living* partly works "both sides of the street." This is especially true of Ryskamp's essay.

What follows completes our review of this essay. Much more could be written outlining further disagreements besides those we are here briefly stating.

### **Erroneous Description Of The Industrial Revolution**

Ryskamp erroneously describes what happened in the Industrial Revolution. He writes, pages 184-185 (our italics):

Although the elements of the new order [the Industrial Revolution] were in themselves in the main defensible and desirable, the way in which they were used contributed to the setting up of a pattern of relationships which the enterprisers and leaders could not consciously have desired to achieve. Extremes of poverty and of riches remained, although general productivity increased. New and *more sordid* living conditions than we today can imagine resulted from the *application of the forces* which caused so rapid an increase in industrial production and exchange.

What "forces" caused the industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism? Max Weber wrote:\* *Calvinism*. Ryskamp agrees that Calvinism was one of the important factors in the Industrial Revolution. And so we are inescapably brought to the conclusion that Calvinism helped to cause "new and more sordid living conditions."

In the same breath Ryskamp writes contradictorily that there was a "rapid . . . increase in industrial production . . ." In other words the production of goods increased but living conditions became worse—"more sordid."

If these two ideas (more sordid living conditions and more production simultaneously) are to be considered to be true despite their rather obvious contradiction, then there is a plausible explanation, namely, the new capitalists lived *very* extravagantly and consumed *more* than the increased production. But *that* is something of which no one has ever accused the Puritans and others active in creating Capitalism. They were notoriously thrifty and modest in their living. What Ryskamp writes must be a self-contradiction, because if more was produced and if the employer did not consume that, then the employes must have had more for themselves.

But the case for the benefits to employes during the Industrial Revolution should not rest there. Recently a book has been published entitled *Capitalism and the Historians*, (edited by F. A. von Hayek, The University of Chicago Press, 1954; \$3.00). Readers are advised to read this book in order to have evidence that the customary description of the worsening of living conditions for the people in the Industrial Revolution is a misrepresentation.

\*See PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, September 1956.

But it is not necessary to read an excellent book to learn that what Ryskamp writes is erroneous. Here is a well-known fact: the Industrial Revolution resulted in an enormous increase in population.

Why?

Could population have been expected to increase if conditions had worsened? The answer must be no. Conditions must have improved. What happened was that the babies who died off as flies because of bad circumstances *before* the Industrial Revolution were able to survive just because of the Industrial Revolution.

That conditions were bad in fast-growing industrial towns need not be disputed. The question is: were the new living conditions under the Industrial Revolution better than previously? The standard to go by is not today's standard of living, but the then immediately preceding standard. On that basis the Industrial Revolution was a God-send to the poor.

Despite all the foregoing someone may argue that the capitalists should not have made large profits and that those profits should have gone immediately and largely if not entirely for better living of the poorer classes. Some day we shall, we hope, be able to devote an issue to that unsound and mischievous idea. It sounds attractive, but will impoverish the poor and so be contrary to their real interests.

Abraham Kuyper talked two ways about the Industrial Revolution. First he described it as a terrible manifestation of individualism, and (so he thought) consequently of unbrotherliness. But in other connections he described it differently and contradictorily, namely, the Industrial Revolution had so expanded production and prosperity that it was necessary to change the rules in order to abandon individualism, and to adopt instead interventionism — that is, government controls directed by people who have a charisma from God. This idea of turning to interventionism because individualism had become too big a success, appeared to us, at that time and always since then, to be the most perfect case of intellectual inconsistency that could be imagined. Abandon individualism *because of its productivity!*

### Unacceptable Statement On The Relation Of Godliness And Prosperity

Ryskamp writes (pages 185-186):

Without disputing the elements of truth in the statement that prosperity is a mark of the favor of the Lord, and poverty, of His visitation . . .

We are surprised at this statement. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM affirms that there is a normal (not an invariable) relationship between obedience to the commandments of God and prosperity. But we have never declared — or at least we should not have done so — that “prosperity is a mark of the *favor of the Lord*.” There are people who are prosperous (temporarily) by disobeying the commandments of God. But Ryskamp here indicates that “prosperity is a mark of the *favor of the Lord*.”

Nor can we accept the even more-extreme statement that “poverty [is a mark] of His visitation.” Suppose someone is poor because of illness, or family burdens, or accidents, or because he selects a poorly-remunerative vocation, or because he has few talents, or merely because he is young and must yet make his way in the world. And this “poverty” is to be described as a “visitation” from God! We disagree.

Our proposition has consistently been more limited. Obedience to the law of God, regardless of what the purpose may be and regardless if it is mere rationalism and common sense and without religious motive — such obedience, in accordance with the praxeological laws which God has established, normally results in personal and community prosperity; there are manifold exceptions. Whoever declares more than that is declaring too much.

### Ryskamp As A Relinquisher Of A Voluntary Economy

The teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is that coercion is contrary to the Law of God; a large part of the Sermon on the Mount pertains to the Sixth Commandment, Thou shalt not kill (coerce).

The essence of a capitalist or a free market society is non-coercion. The essence of interventionism is a government's right to coerce. Ryskamp, we are distressed to say, finally concedes the right of coercion. He writes, page 186 (our italics):

It is true that business men, charged with unfairness in the treatment of their employes, often parry the charge with the contention that *they cannot afford to pay more than the prevailing price of labor*. If the argument is sound — and there undoubtedly is some truth in it — it merely goes to prove that *prevailing price, acting alone, does not serve as a just regulator of economic relations*. As time passed and our modern individualistic economic system revealed its great productiveness, it also revealed the development of economic evils that cried to high heaven for some arrangement more just than price alone.

Ryskamp here repudiates the "free market." He says labor prices may be unsatisfactory and in the final case are not "just."

What he is really saying is that God is not "just." Ryskamp is talking of labor prices freely determined; men in a free price market have *freely* arrived at a labor price. Still, Ryskamp says, it may not be *just*. Obviously then, this is not something that reflects wrong relationships *between men*; this is not a violation of brotherly love because the brotherly love was manifested by the freedom allowed in determining the price.

We are forced then to the conclusion that Ryskamp is really protesting *against conditions*; this is a protest against the welfare-shortage which God created\* and to which attention is called by Moses in one of the earliest chapters in Genesis. The inference that the over-all labor price in a free market is unjust is a disguised complaint by Ryskamp against the realities of life.

Let us consider an example. A boy in his early teens very much wants a bicycle. He has only \$20 to pay for the bicycle. A

\*On *welfareshortage* see PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, July 1956, pages 209-219. In our opinion, the *welfareshortage* was implicit in creation, and is not an effect of the Fall, although the most painful effects of the *welfareshortage* stem from sin.

neighbor boy of the same age has a bicycle for sale. He paid \$35 for it, and is willing to sell it for \$30. Nobody else wants a bicycle; nobody else has a bicycle for sale. The boy with the bicycle is, shall we say, a member of a family no poorer and no richer than the family of the boy without the bicycle. One boy wishes to sell; one boy wishes to buy. Of course, no deal can be made unless the seller reduces his price to \$20. But look at this seller's "loss"! The price was not "just" to him.

But what are the facts? The realities of the situation are the inescapable realities of life. The buyer in a sense had a welfare-shortage — he lacked the full \$30. For the seller to sell below \$30 meant that he would feel the pinch of welfare shortage. Too bad that we all cannot have everything we want. Too bad that we are finite and need things. Too bad no "just" price could be arrived at in the case we cited.

And what is the explanation? All complaints about a price being unjust although arrived at in a genuinely free market — are disguised complaints against God; He has not given us everything that we want.

And so modern interventionist Calvinism is prepared to step in to "relieve" the situation by government intervention. Government interventionism presumably can, in a Godlike manner, reduce the welfare shortage. It has that charisma from God!

That charisma presently consists in inflationism. Inflationism does not multiply goods, which is what people really want and need; it merely multiplies the quantity of money. (See June 1956 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.) Inflationism is insidious and damnable theft. It is for that reason that we favor simply obeying the Law of God rather than relying on a charisma.

And so Ryskamp concludes in the text that follows the foregoing quotation that because of "injustice" the unions are authorized to be *coercive*, because the *free* market does not produce a "just price." And then he adds to that that "social control" is necessary; he, of course, means the state, which has the benefit of a charisma from God.



The difference between the principle here stated by Ryskamp — that free prices fail to be the most just system for organizing markets — and the principle in which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM believes is unbridgeable. If what Ryskamp here implies is actually Calvinism, then we wish to withdraw from Calvinism. Our reason is that we would then consider the ethics of Calvinism no longer to be a branch of the ethics of Christianity.

### Ryskamp's Intellectual Sources

Ryskamp quotes as authorities Reinhold Niebuhr, R. H. Tawney, Kenneth E. Boulding, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. None of these men is an *authority* for us.

Niebuhr is a socialist and the most distinguished propagandist of the Social Gospel in the United States.

Tawney is a socialist who has devoted his most important work to the idea that the consciences of Calvinists have not been and should not be comfortable about capitalism; instead, their consciences (he believes) should lead them toward favoring socialism.

Kenneth E. Boulding is professor of economics at the University of Michigan. He is one of the eight contributors to a book edited by David McCord Wright, entitled *The Impact of the Union* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1951). Boulding's contribution is entitled "Wages as a Share of the National Income." The cast of Boulding's thought is determined by Keynesianism. Keynes (1883-1946) is the notorious economist who taught old fallacies in new terms, and flattered interventionist and socialist politicians by giving an alleged economic justification for their sinful policies of inflation and interventionism. Keynes's basic ideas included the thought that the spendthrift is the benefactor of society and the thrifty person the bad person in society; also that prosperity can be accomplished by printing money. He favored a program of permitting labor unions to force wages, by means of coercion, higher than they should be, but then slyly nullifying the benefit of the increase, by raising prices by increasing the quantity of money. The two policies that Keynes favored were (1) coercion plus (2) theft (that is, violations of the sixth and eighth com-

mandments). He considered that these two sins would offset each other. His idea was the silly one that the common man would be deceived by high *money* wages and would not know that his *real* wages had not increased! Boulding himself is described in a book which we plan to review next month as "an economist who is close to the National Council"; any economist "close" to the socialistic National Council of Churches is suspect, in our judgment.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., is a well-known leftist professor at Harvard University. He is also a columnist for the radical daily paper, the *New York Post*. He is a vice president of the socialistic organization known as the Americans for Democratic Action, usually designated by the initials ADA. The notorious ADA is sympathetic with the socialist Labor Party of Great Britain.

### Omission Of Mention Of The Real Sins Of Capitalism

What is capitalism? The sins of capitalism cannot be described unless capitalism is defined. Maybe one of the simplest definitions is that capitalism is the economic system which acknowledges the right of the private ownership of property. But many ideas go along with that, such as, freedom and noncoercion, honesty, and truthfulness. These features add up to a "free market." Call that capitalism, if you wish.

If we have been having capitalism in this country, has it no "sins" as it actually operates?

We believe that capitalism as it operates in the United States has some very great sins. These sins are contrary to the Law of God. Ryskamp does not refer to those sins.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM intends in some future issue to consider the sins of capitalism. We fear that we shall discover at that time that many Calvinists wish to see those sins of capitalism to be continued.

\* \* \*

It is not feasible to devote more space at this time to the ethics and economics outlined in "Calvinistic Action and Modern Economic Patterns." We consider those ethics and economics to be neither moral, nor Biblical nor economic. fn

## Five Ideas That Will Stultify Calvinism

We submit a blacklist of five terms, of varying meaning, which are not, in our opinion, valuable or effective ideas for promoting that brand of Christianity historically known as Calvinism:

1. Common grace
2. The antithesis
3. Sphere sovereignty
4. "The powers that be" (as meaning the "right" of interventionism—which is *more* than the restraint of evil by the government)
5. Charisma

The first four of these are highly-promoted Kuyperian ideas,\* adopted by nearly all in the Christian Reformed church and taught in a church-owned school. Item (5) is not openly taught but underlies the idea in item (4).

Except in a few instances none of these five ideas has been "sold" to the American public. The first three are awkward and vague and even erroneous ideas. It is our opinion that they never can be "sold." A business man may spend \$5,000,000 for a new advertising program. But the advertising will not succeed eventually unless his merchandise is good. None of the first three ideas is good enough merchandise to obtain a permanent market.

The last two ideas are peculiarly nonsalable in the United States. They go against the whole tradition of the citizens of this republic.

The lamentable fact is that Americans of Dutch extraction are endeavoring to "sell" these five inferior ideas to Americans under the name of religion and Christianity and Calvinism. If this is to be a "contribution" of the Calvinistic Action Committee, it is to be devoutly hoped that the contribution will be disdained.

\*Ideas of Abraham Kuyper, early in this century Prime Minister of The Netherlands, and a leading Calvinist theologian, educator and writer. See PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, October 1956 issue, pages 299-305.

In place of these five somewhat confused, mischievous and complexified ideas we recommend these five simple understandable ideas:

1. Providence, including the natural and praxeological laws of God;
2. The Law of God (Decalogue);
3. Individual and group freedom;
4. Limited government, with authority only to resist internal and external evil;
5. The revealed Will of God — no acceptance of the idea of a modern charisma to bureaucrats and politicians.

Maybe the Christian Reformed church in its centennial celebration in 1957 will endeavor another futile advance with its pet ideas. If the attempt is made, the denomination will "fall on its face." The indifference with which these ideas will be heard, even by fellow Christians let alone nonbelievers, will be a complete answer that these terms are ineffective catchwords and cannot be used as magic to win converts.

If the Christian Reformed church wishes to obtain members from outside their present numbers, it is recommended that it keep its message simple and Biblical and avoid complexifying its appeal by the five notions originally listed. fn

## The Prophet Iddo

Western civilization is in considerable danger of "cracking up." It has some conscienceless and remorseless enemies on its borders. Large sections of the world are being agitated by propaganda designed to arouse covetousness and envy and hatred.

But the real danger to Western civilization is *within its own* borders and stems largely from false ethics promoted by religious people. The danger to Europe and America is that the great

principles of morality inseparably and uniquely associated with the ethics of the Christian religion will be abandoned. Those principles are very simple:

1. No violence, except to restrain evil as defined in the Decalogue (Sixth Commandment);
2. The stability of the family (Seventh Commandment);
3. No theft (Eighth Commandment);
4. No falsehood (Ninth Commandment); and
5. No poisoned motivations — no covetousness (Tenth Commandment).

Beyond these simple, elementary rules the matchless Christian ethics teach FREEDOM. All the rest of life is free from coercion. (See PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, 1955, pages 28-146.)

Whatever is done or arrived at or determined by that primary and genuine scriptural freedom must obviously be noncoercive in character and merely be an adjustment to reality (the welfare-shortage). It may appear to be coerced but the coercion is not by men but by circumstances.

The moment that one endeavors to change a situation which has been developed under freedom, by means of legalized coercion, then the ethics of the Christian religion have in principle been abandoned, despite any lip service given to scriptural ethics. A new ethic, a new religion, has been substituted for the old.

Covetousness, which is a sin against the practically abandoned Tenth Commandment, cannot be tolerated, let alone encouraged, without bringing on a complete nullification eventually of Commandments Six to Nine.

The popular modern Calvinist doctrine of brotherly love essentially justifies and promotes covetousness. Read some articles in a book as *God Centered Living* with the thought of the sin of covetousness in mind and see whether there is significant reference to covetousness. Or are some articles in the book in fact substantially a defense of covetousness?

It is a mistake in some circles to talk of *ten* commandments. The number has been reduced to *nine*.

There is, of course, no chance for either (1) the poison of covetousness or (2) the evil of coercion affecting the outcome of a situation if transactions are kept *free*. Both covetousness and coercion break to pieces on the real freedom of the other party, as waves on rocks.

To be genuinely effectual, covetousness needs to be able to use the strong arm of coercion. In a *nominally* moral society, coercion beyond the restraint of evil, namely, to the much more extended and dangerous idea of positively "doing good" is not granted to individuals but only to the government. However, according to the Law of Moses the legitimate right of coercion is restricted to resisting evil; there is no right given to anyone nor to any organization to coerce the doing of good. That act of coercion itself is evil.

When young we had a friend, a student at Princeton Theological Seminary. He sent us a program of the commencement exercises. The baccalaureate sermon or commencement address was scheduled to be given by a minister named Dr. David James Burrell (1844-1926) of the Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue in New York.

Shortly thereafter we were in New York for the first time, and we decided to attend services in the Marble Collegiate Church. Dr. Burrell preached on the "Prophet Iddo," a character then unknown to us by that name.

Iddo is the man told about in I Kings 13. The story is well known. A prophet (Iddo) came out of Judah to testify against Jeroboam's evil altar at Bethel. Iddo declared it would be destroyed and desecrated. He had a command to return at once to Judah by a different route than he had come. His return evidently was to have something of the character of a hard-to-trace flight.

In Samaria there was an old prophet. He had a son. The son heard the denunciatory prophecy of Iddo and went home and told his father.

The father immediately set out after Iddo. Iddo apparently was not making haste on his return to Judah, and the old man found him sitting under an oak and invited him to return. Iddo refused saying he was under instructions from God to return promptly and by a different road.

"But," — and here is the fatal allegation — declared the old prophet from Samaria, "I am also a prophet as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of Jehovah saying, Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water." (To this Scripture adds the comment: "*But he lied unto him.*")

Iddo was seduced. He went back. He dines with his host. But before Iddo leaves the false old prophet reverses his story and foretells Iddo's doom. The prophecy proves to be correct.

Iddo is killed on the way home by a lion. The old prophet goes after the body and has it buried with the specific instruction to his sons that he is to be buried in Iddo's grave. Why? So that his own bones will not be disinterred and burned on the altar at Bethel when the doom forecast by Iddo is fulfilled.

Having told the interesting story with great skill, Dr. Burrell made his simple application with great force, to wit: the danger for the church today is not from the outside but from false prophets on the inside, as the old prophet of Samaria.

It might be added that many who declare they speak for the Lord no more do so than the old scamp who said that "an angel spake unto me by the word of Jehovah . . ."

If the Western world listens to old prophets in Samaria it will surely be destroyed.

The old prophet at Samaria declared he had a charisma from God. There are many people, as Iddo, who will listen to a statement alleged to be a charisma from God, but which obviously violates the commandments of God. On the basis of the outcome for Iddo, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM intends to follow no charisma which violates the revealed Law of God. We do not want it to be written about us (I Kings 13: 24-32):

And when he [Iddo] was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his body was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it; the lion also stood by the body. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the body cast in the way, and the lion standing by the body; and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the mouth of Jehovah: therefore Jehovah hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake unto him. And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled it. And he went and found his body cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the body: the lion had not eaten the body, nor torn the ass. And the prophet took up the body of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back; and he came to the city of the old prophet, to mourn, and to bury him. And he laid his body in his own grave; and they mourned over him, *saying*, Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones besides his bones. For the saying which he cried by the word of Jehovah against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

Pretty crafty. To keep his own bones from being disinterred and burned according to the prophecy, he seduced Iddo and caused his death. To know what happened long afterward read II Kings 23:15-18.

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he [King Josiah of Judah] brake down; and he burned the high place and beat it to dust, and burned the Asherah. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount; and he sent, and took the bones



out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of Jehovah which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things. Then he said, What monument is that which I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, who came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said, Let him be; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

The old prophet of Samaria is symbolic: the greatest political dangers besetting the western world are domestic and not foreign, and stem from sanctimonious religion prating about charisma. fn

## Religion And Two Classes Of Sciences — The Natural Sciences And The Praxeological Sciences

The *natural* sciences include physics, geology, paleontology, chemistry, zoology, biology, astronomy, etc. The natural sciences primarily pertain to sub-human matters.

The *praxeological* sciences include history, political science, sociology, economics, etc. These all pertain to human action. In that sense they are "higher" than the natural sciences.

In Christian groups there is an erroneous evaluation of the relative importance of the impact of the natural sciences and of the praxeological sciences on the tenets of the Christian religion. Developments in the natural sciences are often considered to be antireligious. Religion is, therefore, not infrequently partly anti-science; that is, more or less hostile to the *natural* sciences.

But strangely enough that antiscience attitude of "Christians" seldom extends to the praxeological sciences. The "findings" of these "sciences" are not questioned and disputed as are some of the findings of the natural sciences.

For example, a slight deviation by "science" from Scripture regarding the character of creation becomes a major question of heresy; but an important deviation in "science" in regard to human

action becomes accepted among Christians. What various sociologists teach, for example, is widely accepted as Christianity. The same thing holds true of the teachings of various economists. But the fact may be that the teaching of these sociologists and economists may deviate much more significantly from Scripture than the teaching of the natural sciences.

Christians appear to be blind to the fact that the praxeological sciences are potentially and actually far more dangerous to the tenets of Christianity than are the natural sciences. There are two reasons why the praxeological sciences are more significant to religion than are the natural sciences:

1. Human action, the field of the praxeological sciences, involves inevitably questions of ethics. Ethics is an essential part of religion.

2. If the epistemology and methodology of the praxeological sciences is considered properly to be the same as in the natural sciences, then one has basically become a Comtian positivist. Somebody once wrote to the effect that: it is tragic that anyone should think that positivism and Christianity can logically be taught on the same campus. Popular sociology and economics today are largely positivist in character.

And so if someone is to go heresy-hunting he can, if he wishes, go after the natural sciences. He will come home, maybe, with a dead jack rabbit. But if he goes heresy-hunting in the praxeological sciences, he may come home with a dead lion or elephant. We are not recommending to anyone that he go heresy-hunting. We are only indicating what the size of the game is that is to be got in the respective fields.

If one asks a member of the Christian Reformed church for "heretical" ideas propagated by the natural sciences, he will probably give a quick answer. But ask him for a heretical idea in the field of economics or sociology and he will give you a blank stare. He will not be able to give you an answer.

This is a curious case of ignorance regarding just where "science" is chipping away at the foundation of religion.      fn

## **Ethical Ideas Potentially Imbided By Pre-Seminary Students**

A completed theological training presumably will have required:

1. 8 years in a grade school
2. 4 years in a high school
3. 4 years in a college
4. 3 years in a theological seminary

By the time a man goes into theology he is likely to be 22 years old (6, plus 8, plus 4, plus 4). In those 22 years he may easily have acquired unsound notions on the history of mankind and how to interpret that history according to principles of political science, economics, sociology, etc.

Maybe after 16 years of such earlier schooling a theological school can, in three years, correct any unsound ideas already acquired, by teaching doctrine and ethics without referring specifically to antecedent erroneous praxeological ideas; but that is to be doubted. However, to relate Biblical doctrine and Biblical ethics carefully to the praxeological sciences assumes that the professors in the theological school are genuinely informed in regard to the praxeological sciences, that is, that they really understand modern political science, economics and sociology, that they know just where errors may be, and that they carefully eradicate those ideas from the minds of theological students.

However, when a man sits in the pews in Christian Reformed churches he may well begin to wonder about a series of interesting questions:

1. What praxeological ideas are the unsuspected premises to what is taught in so-called Christian grade schools and high schools?
2. What praxeological ideas are openly taught in the denominational college?
3. Does the theological school merely teach certain undisturbing doctrinal ideas, not realized as possibly being in conflict with what was taught during the earlier educational career?

4. Do students entering the theological school realize that there is any inconsistency between what they learned in praxeological courses in the college from what they now hear in the seminary? If there is an inconsistency, how do they resolve it — do they abandon their praxeological ideas, or do they give only semi-sceptical lip service to theological ideas, or do they leave conflicting ideas unmolested side by side, and illogically accept both — or what?

5. Or does the theological school accept unreservedly the findings, and the epistemology, and the methodology of the modern praxeology of the undergraduate schools?

If a man listens — *listens* — while sitting in a pew in a church service he will without great difficulty find some kind of an answer to these questions .

Some day the time may be auspicious to examine the written, indisputable record on questions such as these:

1. Are any of the praxeological sciences taught in violation of scriptural standards?
2. Is philosophy and the history of ideas taught confusingly?
3. Is the standard for appraising literature specious and corrupting?

These — praxeology, philosophy and literature — are important subjects in a school. It is in order to get ideas in these fields taught in a certain manner that people are reconciled to being assessed or to making voluntary contributions to support a school.

What is taught in colleges regarding the relation of men to things (ordinary economics) is such that there is reason to believe that no one whose education as a preacher began in a typical undergraduate school has a sound understanding of how the relationship of men to things affects the proper view of men to men. We regret that we doubt that anyone trained in some denominational colleges, in the immense and controversial field of praxeology,

can possibly be qualified as a preacher on practical everyday questions, unless he has escaped from some ideas taught in the undergraduate schools. fn

## The Source Of Authority

We take the following from a writing by Wilford I. King, economist for the Committee for Constitutional Government.

### The Eighth Commandment

Suppose that, in an isolated valley, there are three men, each working for himself on his own farm. One is very diligent, and, when winter arrives, has accumulated a large store of foodstuffs, and has on hand ample feed for his horses, cows and poultry. The others, having taken life easy during the summer, find that long before spring, they are short of provisions. If, then, they combine forces, set upon their neighbor, and seize his possessions, both capitalists and collectivists will agree that the two lazy farmers have violated the Eighth Commandment — in other words, have stolen the diligent farmer's goods.

But, suppose, instead, that the two insist upon establishing a democratic government for the valley. They hold a "town meeting," and, by a vote of two to one, adopt a statute requiring that all share equally in the summer's produce. Is this a perfectly legitimate action, falling outside the scope of the Eighth Commandment? If not, just how many persons does it take to establish a government and make the procedure ethical?

—Quoted from *Freedom First*, Spring, 1956

It is exactly this question: *who or what grants authority* (that is, proper power) *for certain actions*, which constitutes the basic question regarding the "powers that be."

1. The ancient doctrine was that mere power granted authority.
2. The modern doctrine is that a mere majority grants authority.

3. The confused church doctrine is that "the powers that be" possess authority. This simply approves power that exists whether seized and operated by a minority or a majority, that is, the church doctrine facilely approves either (1) or (2).

4. Guglielmo Ferrero said\* that a government has authority provided it permits opposition to its policies by peaceful processes; this granting of freedom peacefully to change power gives authority, or legitimacy, to a government. There is no question that this is a far better answer than any of the preceding three.

5. But the complete answer is this: *that* government legitimately has authority which completely obeys the Law of God. It is that obedience that gives *authority* — not the raw power of a dictator; not the half plus one of the majority; not some mysterious charisma from God under the slogan, the "powers that be"; not a majority which permits freedom of thought and speech, and its concomitant, free elections, good in itself as this freedom may be. Instead, authority rests in one thing only — righteous acts according to a known, written, superb law — the Law of God. No "power" that exists has any *authority* in itself, from the people, nor directly from God, nor by granting great and wonderful freedom. Authority cannot exist unless it has merit in itself, intrinsic in itself because it conforms to the Law of God.

What has just been declared is, it must be admitted, completely at variance with the teaching of some modern Calvinists. We consider their teaching as listed under (3) to be an evil thing, condemned by the Law of God, and sure to carry bitter fruits with it.

The Christian Reformed church has recently officially taken a position that is based on the proposition that it is not the Law of God which governs the state, but the law of the state which prevails above the Law of God. This, we believe, happens to be a reversal of a natural and proper order.

\*See his *Reconstruction of Europe*, especially Chapter IV, entitled, "The Principle of Legitimacy."

*Authority* is not intrinsic in man because he has the elevated position of a human being. We are not founding authority on the dignity of man or on any natural law. These are humanist and vague ideas. But the Law of God is simple and clear enough. It and it alone conveys authority. fn

## Vanden Bosch On "Calvinism And International Relations"

This contribution by Dr. Amry Vanden Bosch to *God-Centered Living* puts forward as its basic idea that in international relations a man, if he is to be true to the tradition and principles of Calvinism, will be a proponent of a world government (a regulatory institution), and in a specific sense be an enthusiast for the United Nations and its agencies. Unfortunately, it is impossible to persuade us that this idea has merit. We do not believe that supporting the United Nations represents good Calvinism; just the contrary.

### Distinguishing Between A World Society And World Community

Vanden Bosch distinguishes between a world society and a world community. He says that a world society presently exists, but not a world community. He defines the terms as follows: the world is a society when there is "material interdependence"; the world is a community when there is "material interdependence *plus some degree of moral unity*" (our italics).

Vanden Bosch hopes for the establishment of a world community. He writes: "A world society is not enough. Unless there is a world community the world regulatory institutions which are necessary [in our atomic age] for our survival cannot be established, . . ." He then outlines two agencies to establish a world community:

1. Mission activity, that is, spreading the "Good News";

## 2. Development and maintenance of international cooperation.

We shall comment briefly on these ideas and appraise them.

### **The Gospel As An Agency To Accomplish "Community"**

Adherence to the Christian religion does, it must be acknowledged, establish a community but only a community of a sort, that is, a community with definite limitations.

The term which Vanden Bosch uses for mission work is the "Good News." Assume that several people accept the Good News, how much *community* does that establish? The Old Testament considered the Israelitish people to be a community and that they knew the Good News. However, the northern and southern kingdoms fought lustily together. Common possession of the Good News did not in itself establish good international relations. It is only late, namely, in the New Testament, that Christ designates himself as the "vine" and his followers as the "branches," and declares that there is a certain unity among them. There undoubtedly is, although at various times the several branches of Christianity have earnestly continued to engage in attempts to exterminate each other. Whereas Christ clearly never wanted a coerced unity accomplished by force, His followers have often thought differently. They frequently think that they are doing a good work when they endeavor to destroy each other.

Imagine a typical member of a moderate-sized church, say one of 150 families or 600 persons. You profess one faith; you live in the same community. There is intermarriage. You help bury the dead. You celebrate the same "communion." You are all "branches" of the same "vine." This is one phase of the situation. But it is a restricted view. The unity or the community is not nearly so extensive as a sensible interpretation of the idea suggests.

There are old and young in that community. The "community" between them is very limited. The old are crotchety toward the young and the young are disrespectful of the old.

There are rich and poor in that community. The "community" between some of them is also very limited. A man who has the



opportunity to accumulate assets and does so *by thrift* differs greatly from a man who also has the same opportunity to accumulate assets but does not because of *disinclination to thrift*. Such men at 60 have no temporal "community" of broad significance. They have steadily drifted apart. They think very differently. They are not really sympathetic to each other. They look at each other *critically*. These remarks do not refer to differences in assets resulting from other causes than inclination or disinclination toward thrift. There will be plenty of community between an old rich man who believes in thrift and a young poor man who practices thrift. There will also be plenty of community between a young spendthrift going through his inheritance and a poor old spendthrift. In short, there are many basic differences between men who possess the same Good News, but are temperamentally and temporally altogether different. On those differences there is no "community."

There are also wise and foolish in that church community. The "community" between them is also very limited. There is less chance of sympathy between a wise man and a foolish man, than between a young and an old man, a rich and a poor man. Solomon even advised to stay away from a fool. A typical church has as many fools as any other group of the same size.

In a typical congregation differences of views may therefore be such that there is only "limited" community. The idea of a close community in a denomination is really only a hope and an ideal. When then the Good News is defined as referring to a certain mystical unity in this life it refers to a specific "community" and not a general "community."

The unity of the church may be considered to be best manifested in the possession of a common eschatological hope — a common hope regarding the *hereafter*. That, of course, does not contribute much to community in *this* life. This hope in something in the hereafter is really divisive between believers and nonbelievers. Christians do not all believe in universalism, that is, they do not believe that everybody will be in the same good place in the hereafter. An eschatological hope which only some people have does not, then, constitute a universal agency for developing a "com-

munity" in this life. There is no general unity or community to be obtained from ideas in the field of eschatology.

We doubt that a world community can be developed on the basis of the Good News, if that is understood to refer primarily to salvation by grace and to eternal life.

The Good News can be understood more broadly, namely, as referring to the keeping of the Law of God. Then indeed there might be earthly, present-day, world-wide community. The minimal agreement that would be necessary would be acceptance of the commandments which pertain especially to practical matters in this life, to wit: (1) No violence (Sixth Commandment); (2) Preservation of the family (Seventh); (3) No theft (Eighth); (4) No fraud (Ninth); (5) No covetousness (Tenth). In so far as Vanden Bosch refers to a unity based on common acceptance of the Law of God — and he does refer to agreement on moral standards — we concur with him. He has something there.

Will present-day mission activity establish a world *community*? If that is the hope, we believe it is a vain hope. Many of the Christian missions throughout the world are modernist in two senses: (1) their Good News is not evangelical or eschatological, and (2) their Good News is not the traditional definition of the Second Table of the Law; instead they teach a *social gospel* which is in disharmony with the real meaning of the Law of God; the definition of brotherly love which is given in this social gospel is divisive to mankind and ruinous to prosperity; one definition of the social gospel is that it establishes claims of extensive *stewardship* which justifies removing the Tenth Commandment from the Decalogue. Poison people's minds by the idea that they have claims beyond Biblical charity and there is no *community* possible any more. The idea of stewardship is not so much directed at enlarging the generosity of the man who is the "steward" as it is to whet the appetite and covetousness of the man who is to be the recipient. That is the "appeal" in the idea of stewardship. The social gospel produces just the opposite of what Vanden Bosch hopes from the Good News; it disturbs community; it does not create community.

It is unrealistic to declare that the mission activities of all orthodox missions are uncontaminated by the divisive ethics of the

social gospel; the ideas of the social gospel have already, for example, deeply penetrated the Christian Reformed church.

Christian missions are not only likely to be ineffective in establishing community for the reasons given but also for other reasons. They are too small to affect the huge non-Christian mass of people. Further, those people do not wish to accept the whole Christian religion. They want the *results* of the Christian religion but not the *religion itself*. Nehru, for example, sets conditions according to which missionaries are permitted to operate, which conditions nullify the teaching of "the whole counsel of God." The doors to full mission work are closed in many countries of the world.

### Development And Maintenance Of International Cooperation

After devoting one page to missions as one hope for world community, Vanden Bosch devotes three pages to a more practical agency for community, namely, the "development and maintenance of international cooperation." In his thinking this means the acceptance and support of the United Nations. Vanden Bosch writes: "The Calvinist, then, is a supporter of the United Nations" (page 251). We were saddened when we read that. Right then we concluded that we were not and never would be a "Calvinist."

Vanden Bosch's program can be summarized as follows:

1. Accept a super-government above the United States (something world regulatory, and that can adjudicate what we consider domestic affairs). For example, Vanden Bosch writes: "We must henceforth demand that our government submit all disputes with other states over legal questions to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and it must be left to the Court to decide whether the question falls within its competence" (page 251). Unless we submit to such an international tribunal, we are, he writes, guilty as a nation of "lawlessness." Men, apparently in his thinking, will finally create a super-government and that government will finally be the sole repository of that wonderful charisma from God, by which that government is authorized to demand obedience because it is "power" about which the Apostle

Paul speaks. Men will create this super-government but then it must be obeyed because God ordained it.

2. Neutrality on world problems is suggested as being a doubtful morality. This is an interesting idea which we believe has some merit and which we may analyze at another time. However, it may be that Vanden Bosch questions the moral right to neutrality only for a special reason, namely, in order to justify the United Nations whenever it meddles into *every kind* of controversy: local, internal, religious, sectional, or what have you.

3. Differences in standards of living in rich countries and poor countries must be reduced; otherwise communism will spread. This idea gets down to this: support the backward nations extensively, or otherwise the prospective violation of the Tenth Commandment (covetousness) by the poor nations will overwhelm the rich nations. The argument really is that it is good to submit to this type of blackmail. We do not believe that such "bribes" will ever satiate covetousness and we do not believe that international aid, as popularly understood, will establish a world community. We believe it will work toward the reverse result.

4. If it is valid to restrict immigration (Vanden Bosch is not sure of this) nevertheless free trade should prevail. We completely agree on this, except we go further. There is a vital difference between free movement of people (free immigration) and free movement of goods (free trade). These two must be distinguished. Control of immigration is, in our opinion, perfectly permissible; otherwise there is no protection against irresponsible increases in population. An existing civilization cannot be preserved with a genuinely irresponsible birthrate; deny the right to restrict immigration and a self-defense against an overwhelming danger is thereby denied. In regard to free trade, which does help every man (but does not leave him irresponsible) PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is unqualifiedly for free trade. There are, however, some specific aspects to be taken into account so that we be not abused by other countries despite our free trade policy. Vanden Bosch indicates that we severely restrict free trade by our tariffs. He neglects that practically universally throughout the world three conditions exist which makes the direction of his criticism toward the United States not wholly valid:

- (a) Their tariffs against us are higher than ours against them.
- (b) They have *import quotas* and *exchange controls* which have restricted international trade many times more than all our tariffs have ever done.
- (c) They have a specific type of monopoly known as cartels, the essential characteristic of which is that they sell at a high price at home and dump at lower prices in other countries. (Consider rayon yarn as of today; one European country sells us such yarn at about 30c per pound. Their domestic price is 41c. This is a dumping operation, which justifies the United States having a protective tariff against such dumping. However, the real correction consists in the reduction of the tariff abroad, so that that country cannot hold its domestic price at 41c, thereby creating a cartel, that is, monopoly situation.)

5. Vanden Bosch repeatedly refers favorably to the various sub-departments of the United Nations, to wit: the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (which has drafted a document entitled, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," which he calls "remarkable" but which we consider subversive and menacing); the Food and Agriculture Organization; the World Health Organization; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (the notorious Unesco).

With the general approach of Vanden Bosch to world problems, namely, that they are to be solved largely through the United Nations and its agencies, we are in unqualified, condign disagreement. We consider this solution to be contrary to the teaching of Scripture for reasons which can be easily understood.

Granted that Scripture teaches brotherly love; granted that it teaches that all men must be treated kindly; *it also teaches not to cooperate with any government which operates on other principles than the Decalogue.*

The cases of the ancient Israelitish kingdoms are classic. They were warned to avoid foreign alliances with any power with different religion and ethics. Trust was instead expected to be

placed in God, which obviously means, in a practical sense, trust in obeying the Law of God. See II Chronicles 14:8-13; II Chronicles 20:1-24; II Chronicles 25:5-11; II Kings 19:9-20; II Kings 20:12-18. The right rule by which to guide conduct, namely, that rule which consists in *obeying the Law of God, is consistently considered in Scripture to be a more powerful shield and buckler than all the alliances of the world.*

Here are two incidents in the life of King Asa of Judah, in one of which he put his trust in God and what was right, and in the other in which he put his trust in an alliance.

And Asa had an army that bare bucklers and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: . . .

And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an army of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; . . . Then Asa went out to meet him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathat at Mareshah. And Asa cried unto Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude. O Jehovah, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. So Jehovah smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. (II Chronicles 14:8-12.)

Thus far King Asa was doing all right. Then he sought an alliance with King Benhadad of Syria; it turned out badly. He created, as the text indicates, a more-powerful enemy in place of an old one. In this, history is repeating itself. We have assisted Russia only to have developed her as an enemy, as Asa developed Syria as an enemy. There is "nothing new under the sun."

In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of Jehovah and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad

king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me. And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmain, and all the store-cities of Naphtali. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building Ramah, and let his work cease. (II Chronicles 16:1-5.)

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and hast not relied on Jehovah thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge host, with chariots and horsemen exceeding many? yet, because thou didst rely on Jehovah, he delivered them into thy hand. For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; for from henceforth thou shalt have wars. (II Chronicles 16:7-9.)

An alliance with an evil power has never yet done anyone any permanent good.

In the United Nations the United States cooperates with Russia, India, Indonesia, Yugoslavia and other malignant and evil governments. If scripture is a guide in such matters, disaster will come to the United States because of its membership in the United Nations. The United Nations, however, is Vanden Bosch's white hope.

In the broadest sense, then, we are in grave disagreement with the author of "Calvinism and International Relations." We see no special merit in (1) internationalism, or (2) in a super-government, or (3) in centralization of power, or (4) in cooperation with the greatest butchers and tyrants in the history of mankind. We

believe in decentralization; international prosperity by free trade; international responsibility regarding birth rate, by prohibiting immigration according to a nation's good pleasure and its domestic purpose of protecting itself; and above all we believe in domestic and international affairs being made conformable to the Law of God. *That* will make a nation powerful; will promote peace; will promote international prosperity. And, of course, any person and any nation does wisely to be strong militarily as well as obedient to the Law of God. The purpose of military strength is to resist external evil.

If the Law of God were always followed with superb and astute wisdom, then righteousness and prosperity and happiness and safety would universally prevail. The ancient Israelites did not follow that great Law of God with complete faithfulness and wisdom. If they had, they never would have gone under. Nevertheless it should be remembered that the Davidic dynasty ruled for more than 500 years, one of the longest in the history of mankind. One may well wonder whether the United States will last that long when it cooperates with evil nations in the activities of the United Nations.

In summary we may say that we have no confidence whatever (1) that missions, if they teach the social gospel or ideas related to it, or (2) that the United Nations — either one or both together — will be effective agencies in creating a world *community*. It is a chimera to expect it. These agencies will do just the reverse — *as they operate* they will be divisive and will contribute to dis-

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## Progressive Calvinism Is Rationalistic

1. One of several interesting conclusions to which we have come after considerable observation and reflection is this: modern Calvinism, and specifically the Calvinism prevailing in the Christian Reformed church, is essentially Fundamentalism in supernatural and eschatological matters, *plus the social gospel*.

2. A second conclusion in a sequence of related ideas is: The trouble with the world is not the "world." To the contrary, the trouble with the world is the "Christian" church. The trouble with the world is not Buddhism, nor Mohammedanism, nor communism, nor atheism, but "Christianity" whenever Christianity is defined as being the social gospel. In other words, one of the great evils in the world is the *social gospel*.

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3. A third conclusion in this sequence of related ideas is: We are opposed to a certain irrationalism in Calvinist churches, an irrationalism which consists in contrasting faith with either reason or experience. In a sense then, *we* are "rationalists." By that we mean that we consider faith as operating properly only in the concerns of men which are beyond what is verifiable. What can be "known" does not require faith. Matters of ethics, the relation of men to men, are not matters of faith, in the sense that faith will (can?) give an answer contrary to experience and *consequently* of reason, reason being nothing more than a knowledge of experience, actually observed or deducible from experience. Ethics, then, for us, is a *science*, and not merely an authoritarian system of morality. It is, for us, *both*.

4. A fourth conclusion in this sequence of related ideas is: If the social gospel is Christianity, then Christianity is false. The social gospel is contrary to the *science* of ethics.

5. A fifth conclusion in this sequence of related ideas is: If a religion, which declares itself to be revelation, is in error and is untrustworthy in the field of the science of ethics, there is then no rational ground for faith in its declarations pertaining to the supernatural and the eschatological. Why believe a religion in matters where it is unverifiable, when you already know that it is not to be believed where it is verifiable?

6. A sixth conclusion in this sequence of related ideas is this: That the Hebrew-Christian religion in its ethics is *reliable*, and that *consequently for us* its teachings on matters beyond knowledge is also reliable.

This issue and later issues are devoted to these ideas.

There are, it seems to us, at least two obvious requirements which must be met if ethics is to qualify as a science. These requirements, for our nontechnical thinking, are (1) the *eventual long-term* results must be beneficial, because all human action involves purpose and the purpose must be to attain some supposed benefit; (2) the means must be effective to attain the end sought; in that sense the means must be rational and logical. But the effect of item (2) on item (1) is that *the operation of cause and effect eliminates eventually undesirable objectives*. The use of effective

means to attain those objectives which are thought to be desirable but which are in fact undesirable results in a revision (correction) of the objectives.

We end up then with three things which are, in our thinking, identical in the field of ethics and morality, towit: (1) experience; (2) reason; and (3) revelation. That is what makes us rationalistic, and hostile to irrationalism.

The two men who have had the most influence on our thinking in these matters are a lawgiver, Moses (c. 1480-1360 B.C.) and an economist, Mises (1881- ). Most of our readers know about Moses. In this issue we are introducing Mises, the economist.

Our eventual purpose is to show that the social gospel *cannot* be reconciled either with the *science* of ethics or with the revelation through Moses. This is a large task. We may never complete it. But we are making a beginning.

In making this approach to the principles of ethics which Calvinism should promote because they are "scientific," we are not going off on a tangent away from Scripture. Instead we are jarred back on our heels and induced to accept, even more than formerly, the ethical teachings of Scripture. We are confident that our readers who will carefully follow the presentation will derive the same benefit.

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## **Suggestions To Women Who Have Ambitions For Their Men**

If you have a son or a young husband whom you hope will be a "success" in life, and if you wish to help him at the beginning of his career in a practical manner, what do you recommend to him, and endeavor to arrange for him?

We suggest two specific programs; (there are others, of course):

1. Advocate that he get employment directly under a very superior man; and

2. Urge that he find, and restrict his reading to, very superior books — the best books of all time.

Such an "environment" — his working for a distinctly superior employer and his reading only the best books — will spectacularly help your son or husband in his career.

Fortune plays a part in both of these factors which are so influential toward success, but especially in regard to the first.

Not everybody can obtain work under very superior men. There are not enough of such men. A young man setting out in life is usually ignorant regarding *who* would be a superior employer (valuable to the young man for training and discipline). *Who* a young man's employer will be is largely a matter of chance.

The opportunity is in a sense better in regard to selecting superior books. Several lists of Great Books have been compiled. They are valuable. But in our estimation no Great Books reading list, that we know, is satisfactory in the field of praxeology (the social sciences).

We are presenting a series of reviews of certain essays in a book entitled *God-Centered Living or Calvinism in Action* (see October and November 1956 issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM). The ideas in those selected essays are at times erroneous and defective but not because of personal deficiencies of the writers. These men write about Christian action without revealing that they have ever read the really great, modern books in praxeology. They quote other authors (and are obviously influenced by them) who are, there is good reason to believe, certainly not *great* authors but *popular* secondary authors proclaiming the intellectual fads, follies and iniquities of the age — the Niebuhrs, the Tawneys, the Bouldings, the Schlesingers, etc. The authors of some of the essays in *God-Centered Living* never have had the good fortune to "pick up the scent" of the really great books, and consequently they could not follow that trail as bloodhounds.

The well-known lists of Great Books always list Adam Smith and David Ricardo and they usually list John Stuart Mill and Malthus, four of the most famous of the so-called English classical economists. But these men were *early* pioneers in economics. They

did great work (especially Smith and Ricardo) but their work has been largely superseded by later writers.

There is an "error" in slavish acceptance of the books in a "Great Books" list. In rapidly developing sciences, reading the *early* great books in those sciences gives valuable knowledge of the *history* of that science. But life is too short to cover the history of thought in many sciences. Because of the limited time available, a man should concentrate on the *later* modern great books in such sciences. This is especially true in economics.

We are not declaring that the later great thinkers in a science, because they worked better, *necessarily* therefore had minds superior to their predecessors. Those who came after should do better work because they could build on their great predecessors. Modern great economists have certainly done so.

Who are, in economics, some of the really great, modern successors to Adam Smith and David Ricardo? Who are the men whose writings it is preferable to read instead of Smith or Ricardo, even though none of them is presently so well known as these two? We submit the names of four men and the individual books by which they are best known:

Carl Menger: *Principles of Economics*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1950, 328 pages, \$5.00.

Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk: *Capital and Interest* (in three volumes). A new English translation will soon be available.

Ludwig von Mises: *Human Action*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1949, 889 pages, \$10.00.

Friedrich von Hayek: *The Road to Serfdom*, The University of Chicago Press, 1944, 240 pages, \$3.00.

As an undergraduate at a university in our youth we took an advanced English course during the summer quarter. The class was small. One of the fellow students with whom we associated, declared he intended to be a literary critic. We asked him why. He answered: "Because I know that my judgment is excellent in regard to literature; and the professors here confirm me in that

opinion." In regard to books in the field of economics, our opinion of our own judgment is identical with the opinion of our friend in regard to his judgment of books in the field of literature.

We plan over a period of time to introduce the works of these great economists to the attention of our readers. We cannot cover the field of economics fast enough nor well enough ourselves to justify letting readers wait in regard to becoming acquainted with sound economics. It is our thought that if we do no more than put readers on the trail of these great economists we shall have done our readers a substantial service. This alone will adequately reward them for subscribing to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

The basic arguments of the four great authors we have mentioned have never been refuted. Not only have these men rebuilt the work of the earlier economists and obtained imperishable fame for themselves, they are also advocates of a social system which is highly *rational*. Further, not only do they favor a *rational* social system, but also a system which provides maximum *freedom*. Further, their system for society is the only one, we are surely convinced, which can be reconciled with the *teachings of Scripture*, correctly understood. Finally, their system for society is not only just but promotes *prosperity*.

The authors mentioned are writers of serious and solid texts. The average reader will have difficulty mastering some of the ideas in their books because they are so different from popular ideas. We plan over a period of time to help such readers.

Just now we recommend that readers abandon the natural order and read at once a new book, by Mises, entitled *The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality*, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, 1956, 114 pages, \$3.75.

If we cannot provide ambitious young men the great opportunity that naturally arises from working directly for especially great men, we can provide them with specific knowledge regarding what are the greatest books in economics — those worth reading above all others.

The intellectual quality of men is pretty well measured by the reading that they *continue* to do — during their *whole* maturity.

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## Ludwig Von Mises: The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality

### The Question With Which The Book Begins

The Introduction of *The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality* begins as follows (pages v and vi):

The substitution of laissez-faire capitalism for the precapitalistic methods of economic management has multiplied population figures and raised in an unprecedented way the average standard of living. A nation is the more prosperous today the less it has tried to put obstacles in the way of the spirit of free enterprise and private initiative. The people of the United States are more prosperous than the inhabitants of all other countries because their government embarked later than the governments in other parts of the world upon the policy of obstructing business. Nonetheless many people, and especially intellectuals, passionately loathe capitalism. As they see it, this ghastly mode of society's economic organization has brought about nothing but mischief and misery. Men were once happy and prosperous in the good old days preceding the "Industrial Revolution." Now under capitalism the immense majority are starving paupers ruthlessly exploited by rugged individualists. . . .

The bias and bigotry of public opinion manifests itself most clearly in the fact that it attaches the epithet "capitalistic" exclusively to things abominable, never to those of which everybody approves. . . .

It is the task of this essay to analyze this anti-capitalistic bias and to disclose its roots and its consequences.

Some readers will immediately sense that what Mises says regarding "many people" namely, regarding their hostility toward capitalism, is specifically true about many members in modern Calvinist churches. They dislike and criticize capitalism. They repudiate the name of capitalist for themselves. They declare that they are not socialists either. They say that they occupy a position

which (so they think) is an inbetween position, something neither capitalist nor socialist, but interventionist. This interventionism, they think, is capitalism not modified so much that it becomes socialist, but modified enough to restrain capitalism from its alleged wickedness. The restraint or modification of capitalism consists of the government *intervening* extensively into economic affairs. This interventionism is assumed to be just, righteous, helpful, God-given. The reason for this favorable opinion of interventionism is that it is assumed that governments act for God, that they are one of the "powers that be" which *must* be obeyed. Governments are all supposed to have a charisma from God, a direct pipe line of authority from Him; that is the theory or the assumption.

We once heard a Christian Reformed preacher who quoted Mussolini to show that he was a man who taught hatred. The preacher contrasted that to the teaching of Scripture about love. But we have often thought that the undertone of the teaching in the churches against capitalism is surcharged with the idea that hatred and envy are proper toward whoever else has more possessions than the person himself has.

Basically, the hatred against *capitalism in the abstract* is also a hatred against other *people*. Interventionism is generally a form of hatred. However, the interventionist type of hatred, toward A, B and C, effectively disguises itself under the pretense of being great and wonderful love toward X, Y and Z.

It should be clearly realized that Mises is exploring a question which applies to many Calvinists as well as to other people. We would phrase the question he poses in his book in this simple, specific language:

Why does Rev. X, who is a preacher in a Calvinist church, why does Professor Y of a denominational college, and why does Mr. Z, elder in a church — loathe (genuinely hate) capitalism?

This is not an unrealistic question. Over the past twenty years we have circularized with pro-capitalist literature various Calvinist educators and ministers. We have had letters of approval, but we have also received specific responses evidencing extensive



hostility both to our ideas *and our person*, the latter solely because we are unashamedly and unqualifiedly in favor of capitalism. This hostility is in some cases venomous. We shall presently forebear to publish these data. Other information has been transmitted to us verbally by friends who have been shocked by the rancor against us reflected by the remarks of others. For a man to favor capitalism boldly in a Calvinist denomination is to expose himself to hatred.

Some people may immediately wish to hedge by declaring, "We are capitalists all right, but we are not *laissez-faire* capitalists." This is a quibbling about words. Modified capitalism is merely interventionism in some degree or other. *Laissez-faire* capitalism is simply capitalism with no more or less restraint on social and economic life than is prescribed by the Ten Commandments. What others allege is capitalism of a non*laissez-faire* variety is really interventionism of some degree, which interventionism is an alleged right of a government to intervene in business beyond the Ten Commandments, on the assumption (which is baseless) that that government has a charisma from God.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is unqualifiedly for *laissez-faire* capitalism. We do not hesitate about that. We believe in a government to restrain evil; not a government to do good. We believe a government legitimately puts into effect the Second Table of the Law, correctly defined (see May 1955 and following issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM).

Mises is boldly for *laissez-faire* capitalism. In this matter he has our *unqualified* support.

After reading about the problem, as formulated by Mises — why do people hate an economic system which has done more for their well-being than any other system — it is, of course, interesting to learn what his version is of the reason for that widespread and lusty hate against capitalism (and against the person of anyone who boldly believes in the capitalistic organization of society). Why do many Calvinists hate capitalism, and anyone who openly defends capitalism, such as the editor of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

Mises answers the question about this hatred against capitalism by a psychological analysis rather than a moral one.

## The Reason Why Men Hate Capitalism

Mises begins his answer by calling attention to the fact that under capitalism the consumer is "sovereign." The consumer buys what *he* (or she) wants. In that act each person pursues his own self-regarding interests or acts according to his own sense of values. To please people, then, you must serve them, in the sense of voluntarily complying with their free preferences. A man in a capitalistic society gets along well *in proportion as he supplies others*, those others patronizing or avoiding him, depending on his good or poor performance. Under capitalism a man's *merit* controls his success because consumers "look out" for themselves (which is not only perfectly proper but necessary in a sound society).

A society in which the consumer is sovereign is the only kind of society which has the foundation that Scripture requires. That foundation is noncoercion, or freedom, based on the Sixth Commandment, Thou shalt not kill (coerce). (There is, of course, one exception, the right to coerce for the limited purpose of resisting evils banned by the Ten Commandments.)

We are then talking of a society wherein consumers reward those who supply their wants and avoid those who do not do that equally well. This is not only a moral structure for society; it is also a rational and utilitarian structure.

Mises writes (pages 11 and 12):

In a society based on caste and status, the individual can ascribe adverse fate to conditions beyond his own control. He is a slave because the superhuman powers that determine all becoming had assigned him this rank. It is not his doing, and there is no reason for him to be ashamed of his humbleness. His wife cannot find fault with his station. If she were to tell him: "Why are you not a duke? If you were a duke, I would be a duchess," he would reply: "If I had been born the son of a duke, I would not have married you, a slave girl, but the daughter of another duke; that you are not a duchess is exclusively your own fault; why were you not more clever in the choice of your parents?"

It is quite another thing under capitalism. Here everybody's station in life depends on his own doing. Everybody whose ambitions have not been fully gratified knows very well that he has missed chances, that he has been tried and found wanting by his fellow man. If his wife upbraids him: "Why do you make only eighty dollars a week? If you were as smart as your former pal, Paul, you would be a foreman and I would enjoy a better life," he becomes conscious of his own inferiority and feels humiliated.

A society which Mises describes as a capitalistic society is not founded on (1) coercion, nor (2) caste or status, nor (3) egalitarianism, but (4) on freedom and on merit in the judgment of one's fellows. In a *free* market those psychological defenses which a man could advance for failure under the first three types of society (one with a tyrannical structure, or a caste structure, or an egalitarian [equalizing or leveling] structure) are all removed. Under genuine capitalism men automatically lose the excuses for their failures, or in other language, for not supplying their neighbors so well that the neighbors by their own actions make them prosperous.

Now what does every man who fails have a tendency to do next? This is Mises's answer (pages 14 and 15):

In order to console himself and to restore his self-assertion, such a man is in search of a scapegoat. He tries to persuade himself that he failed through no fault of his own. He is at least as brilliant, efficient and industrious as those who outshine him. Unfortunately this nefarious social order of ours does not accord the prizes to the most meritorious men; it crowns the dishonest unscrupulous scoundrel, the swindler, the exploiter, the "rugged individualist." What made himself fail was his honesty. He was too decent to resort to the base tricks to which his successful rivals owe their ascendancy. As conditions are under capitalism, a man is forced to choose between virtue and poverty on the one hand, and vice and riches on the other. He, himself, thank God, chose the former alternative and rejected the latter.

This search for a scapegoat is an attitude of people living under the social order which treats everybody according to his contribution to the well-being of his fellow men and where thus everybody is the founder of his own fortune. In such a society each member whose ambitions have not been fully satisfied resents the fortune of all those who succeeded better. The fool releases these feelings in slander and defamation. The more sophisticated do not indulge in personal calumny. They sublimate their hatred into a philosophy, the philosophy of anti-capitalism, in order to render inaudible the inner voice that tells them that their failure is entirely their own fault.

Mises next proceeds to give examples of the hatred of various types of people toward a *merit* society (or a *free* society, or a *capitalist* society — all of which are the same kind of society). He analyzes the pattern of psychological motivations in the direction of hatred and covetousness on the part of the following:

1. Intellectuals
  - (a) A doctor
  - (b) The *American* intellectual, as distinguished from the European
2. The white collar worker
3. The idle rich (the "cousins")
4. Actors and actresses

The pages devoted by Mises to analyses of prevalent inferiority complexes, self-pity, self-excuse, envy and hatred are uncomfortable descriptions of human nature.

#### **The Clergy And The Economic Order**

There is an interesting omission in Mises's analysis, to wit, he does not analyze the psychology of anti-capitalistic clergymen, which would lay bare why *they* may unconsciously be motivated to be hostile to capitalism. We have some thoughts on that ourselves.

There was a time when a clergyman was a member of the ruling classes in his own right. He was in status and especially in education above the masses. He associated freely with the upper classes, and even exercised over them the prerogatives of spiritual authority. If he had been fortunate in advancing in the ecclesiastical hierarchy he was on a secular equality with the aristocracy. It was also possible for him to be a member of a powerful and rich religious order. (The various religious orders in the middle ages were in many instances very wealthy, their lands having been obtained by gifts or bequests in the course of many generations.) As has been often noted, churchmen in those days were steady supporters of the existing order, an order based on status and caste. They had allied themselves with "power." This was stage one.

Then came the rise of the middle classes. The middle classes were opposed to the aristocracy with its rights of caste and status and they were eminently religious. Religion then became middle class, and the clergy became the rather uncritical spiritual body-guard of capitalism. This was stage two.

Later, as a result of the universal franchise and other modern developments, power shifted to the "proletariat," and men of the cloth again adjusted smoothly and chameleon-like to the changed conditions; religion, and men active in religion, namely, ministers and priests, became labor minded, proletarian in orientation. This is stage three, the present stage.

It should then be noted that throughout the centuries the clergy have been "realistic" and have allied themselves with whoever had *power* — first the aristocrats, then the middle class, and now the mass of the population. This is, of course, by no means true of all clergymen.

If someone is today to describe the main tenets and the main activities, say of the great Protestant denominations, he can make the answer brief as well as accurate, namely, the Christian religion today stands for the *social gospel*. Protestant clergymen accepting the social gospel far outnumber the clergymen who do not.

The *social gospel* is that manifestation of "Christianity" which consists of emphasizing the application of an allegedly "Christian" program to *this* life. Religion should not, according to this view,

lose itself in concern about life in the next world, but should concern itself about life in this world. The Kingdom of God is, for those holding to the Social Gospel, an earthly kingdom (not a heavenly one). That earthly kingdom must be accomplished here and now. In practice, the modern effort to realize an *earthly* Kingdom of God has consisted in allying the church to programs which are expected to get the support of the majority of the population.

In fact, today the most powerful voice raised for defending the *coercive* and consequently mischievous power of labor or the proletariat, or the "masses" is the demagogic voice of the clergy who teach the social gospel.

The social gospel has not developed out of the moral law; it has developed out of the adjustment of theologians and preachers to a shift in political power in the modern world; they have devised a "gospel" which would tend to make Christianity (so-called) the spiritual vanguard of whatever program the majority of the people urged on by covetousness want. The social gospel is a psychological groping for power by the clergy.

In this endeavor of the social gospel to get itself selected and accepted as the champion of those who have the most votes, it has used two specific but altogether different methods; one of these is "practical" and coercive; the other of these is allegedly "moral" and relies on persuasion (or rather, propaganda). The first of these is the encroachment of religion into practical politics; the second is the development of a new "morality" which has changed the traditional meaning of the commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

### **The Alliance Of The Social Gospel With Practical Politics**

The method by which the social gospel encroaches into the field of practical politics is evidenced by the conduct of the National Council of Churches (and its predecessors). The various decisions and actions of this Council are carefully planned and nurtured by the leading social gospel Protestant clergymen in America. The mass of members of those denominations are

quite uninformed on what their "spiritual" leaders are doing. The social gospel clergy effectively control the ecclesiastical machinery of the denominations of which they are a part.

The method of social gospel clergymen for aggrandizing themselves in the arena of practical politics is interesting. The pattern is as follows:

1. They endeavor to unite *all* Protestant denominations into one organization, presently the National Council of Churches. On this basis 35,000,000 people are *alleged* to be represented by the National Council of Churches.

2. The social gospel *leaders* then develop their specific programs. These are not restricted to moral principles but extend to practical statecraft and politics. For example, some social gospel leaders may be opposed to the proposed Bricker Amendment to the Constitution. This is obviously a problem in government organization and is not a specific moral question. A committee of the National Council has reached a decision and made a declaration against the proposed Bricker Amendment.

3. The next two steps are parallel in time but not in character. (a) First, the Council publishes its Committee's decision and declares that it is the attitude that the faithful should take toward this Bricker Amendment or whatever the subject may be. (b) Second, representatives of the Council testify in Washington before committees and they lobby in Congress, alleging that the decision which was reached by its committee is the conscience and voice of 35,000,000 people. The implication is that the Council speaks directly for more than 20 percent of the population of the country.

To be able to allege that he speaks with so many people behind him, and with the weight of such great numbers, would flatter any man's vanity. A social gospel clergyman also feels that way about it. It "compensates" him for many inferiority complexes under which he labors. Who would not be happy, yea, even thankful, for his lot in life if he has the conviction that he is the leader of 35,000,000 people in matters pertaining to practical political policy.

The National Council of Churches puts itself forward as a great *ecumenical* movement. A more accurate description would be that it is an agency to satisfy the morale of social gospel leaders, who are happy to think that the people are behind them so that they may be reassured that they are significant in life.

### The New Morality Of The Social Gospel

As an agency to support subjective morale the acquisition of political power is a trifle compared with self-satisfaction which can come from establishing for self the reputation of being a *moral* leader and legislator. To teach morality is about as flattering to vanity as anything can be. There are always the moral heights from which to look at the rest of mankind. The National Council of Churches has undertaken to be the legislator of new "moral" laws. It no longer is satisfied with *justice*; it wants something different from justice, and it designates what it wants by a modern name, *social justice*. Obviously, if *social justice* were the same thing as *justice*, it would not be necessary to apply a new name, which is why the term *social justice* has succeeded the different term, *justice*.

Under the term, *social justice*, the social gospel has developed a new, fantastic, sanctimonious and destructive set of ethics. We hope to analyze these in detail some day.

Suffice to say, at this point, that it is our opinion that the claim of social gospel clergymen to be moral legislators and judges is a psychological compensation for them in their rapidly deteriorating position in the world. As their religious influence becomes less, their voice becomes louder, and their moral requirements which they say men must follow the more unreasonable. They have actually made Christianity sanctimonious, and eventually socially destructive.

Anyone genuinely trained in the social sciences realizes that the prevailing religion of the social gospel represents tragic ignorance of the realities of life. In exact proportion as any church accepts the social gospel its hold (influence, control) over the rational intellect and sober judgment of its members declines. The intellectuals drift out of the church. Church attendance



finally largely consists of a few young women who think it desirable that their children have a church background, and a considerable number of old women who need religion to comfort their declining years. This is in a degree true of all churches. The Christian Reformed church, too, is in danger of losing influence over its intellectuals at a steadily increasing rate; the trend will continue unless the denomination returns to intellectual respectability.

\* \* \*

By both methods, (1) the *political* program of the National Council of Churches, and (2) by developing for themselves the leadership of the proletariat by teaching the social gospel and approving or at least not disapproving the coercive activities of the labor organizations, and other minorities and majorities the clergy today relieves itself of its inferiority complex, gratifies its own ego, and manifests its own hatred of a *merit* society, a *free* society, a *noncoercive* society, a *scriptural* society.

#### **Present Economic Unfairness To The Clergy**

There is, it should be admitted, a peculiar—and understandable—explanation for the popular hostility among the clergy against the existing order. That justification is the low monetary remuneration which clergymen generally receive. There are exceptions, but for the vast majority of the clergy, the salary is unduly low.

A clergyman has spent long years in getting his education. Considering his talents and education he could, in some of the other professions and in business, earn far more than he earns as a clergyman.

There are, it is true, important nonmonetary rewards that go with being a clergyman. But when everything is considered, clergymen today, because of the importance for society of the proper performance of their profession, are probably less well paid, in combined monetary and nonmonetary rewards, than at any time in the history of Christianity.

Our opinion is that the salaries of ministers (for example, in the Christian Reformed church) should in general be very sub-

stantially increased in order to be in proper relation to their services.

The ironic thing about the situation is that few clergymen understand the "economics" of what is going on. They seem not to realize that their ethics and their political and labor alliances act boomerang-like and recoil on them to impoverish themselves. This brings us to an idea which we have heard Mises suggest, namely *a chair in economics* (held by a *sound* economist) *should be established in every theological school.*

Of course, if ministers wish to "protect" themselves by the same policy that they approve in the case of "labor," then they will form a union, go on strike, have a picket line at church services, and especially at funerals and weddings, and so drive up their salaries. They will find it useful to employ a business agent and to require compulsory membership in their union. Anyone who will not join the preachers' union will have to be prohibited from functioning as a preacher.

However, if ministers wish to form a noncoercive, say a scriptural labor union, we shall be glad to discuss the economics of that with them. We shall not, however, be ready to agree to many of the prevalent union practices that ministers now generally approve for unions. We are prepared, however, to be a business agent for a legitimate union for those who are obviously being exploited. If unions are a good thing for "labor" why should they not be equally good for clergymen?

#### Mises's Explanation Basically Refers To The Sin Of Covetousness

But returning to Mises's thesis: what explains the disinterest and even natural hatred of all men to capitalism? The answer is a psychological phenomenon based on pride and egoism, fortified by envy, jealousy and covetousness.

We are all unhappy that the other man is more successful, in something or other, than we ourselves are. Few of us have learned that there is no happiness to be built on another's unhappiness. Our "happiness" has a constant tendency to deteriorate into gloating over another man's failure or mediocrity or lower

position. This is one of the practical manifestations of the lack of brotherly love.

Practically every organization today is endeavoring by coercion to keep the other fellow down. If he rises by merit he must have been "unbrotherly" somehow. It is all right to envy his success, and to frustrate him in his efforts. The commandment of Moses, Thou shalt not covet, is neglected so that it has become the "deadest" commandment in the Decalogue. The social gospel's principal function is to neutralize the Tenth Commandment.

So much for a brief summary of the ideas in the first chapter of Mises's book.

The remaining chapters do not deal with the popular *motivation* to covetousness and with the hatred against capitalism and capitalists, but with the content of the "social philosophy" of the average man. Mises not only describes that social philosophy but also supplies the arguments which discredit it. This material is extraordinarily valuable. It shows the roots of popular and naive ideas and clearly indicates why those ideas are erroneous and pernicious.

Consider what Mises writes about the "progressive" writers, the *literati* as he calls them. He writes (pages 61 and 62):

As the progressive dogmatist sees things, there are two groups of men quarreling about how much of the "national income" each of them should take for themselves. The propertied class, the entrepreneurs and the capitalists, to whom they often refer as "management," is not prepared to leave to "labor"—i.e., the wage earners and employees—more than a trifle, just a little bit more than bare sustenance. Labor, as may easily be understood, annoyed by management's greed, is inclined to lend an ear to the radicals, to the communists, who want to expropriate management entirely. However, the majority of the working class is moderate enough not to indulge in excessive radicalism. They reject communism and are ready to content themselves with less than the total confiscation of "unearned" income. They aim at a

middle-of-the-road solution, at planning, the welfare state, socialism. In this controversy the intellectuals who allegedly do not belong to either of the two opposite camps are called to act as arbiters. They—the professors, the representatives of science, and the writers, the representatives of literature—must shun the extremists of each group, those who recommend capitalism as well as those who endorse communism. They must side with the moderates. They must stand for planning, the welfare state, socialism, and they must support all measures designed to curb the greed of management and to prevent it from abusing its economic power.

This description of the ideas of the *literati* equally well fits the prevailing ideas in Reformed (Calvinist) circles in the Netherlands and in the United States. There is the same rejection of both communism and capitalism, and the same pretense of a lofty middle-of-the-road position, untainted with either the evils of capitalism or the evils of communism. The criticism by members of the Christian Reformed church of what appears in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is along this line, namely, neither communism *nor capitalism* are tolerable.

Mises also considers the charges against capitalism of (1) not providing happiness; (2) of materialism; (3) of injustice; etc.

What Mises writes about "injustice" is especially interesting. In the course of his argument he writes (pages 80-82):

The worst of all these delusions is the idea that "nature" has bestowed upon every man certain rights. According to this doctrine nature is openhanded toward every child born. There is plenty of everything for everybody. Consequently, everyone has a fair inalienable claim against all his fellow men and against society that he should get the full portion which nature has allotted to him. The eternal laws of natural and divine justice require that nobody should appropriate to himself what by rights belongs to other people. The poor are needy only because unjust people have deprived them of their birthright. It is the task of the church and the secular

authorities to prevent such spoliation and to make all people prosperous.

Every word of this doctrine is false. Nature is not bountiful but stingy. It has restricted the supply of all things indispensable for the preservation of human life. It has populated the world with animals and plants to whom the impulse to destroy human life and welfare is inwrought. It displays powers and elements whose operation is damaging to human life and to human endeavors to preserve it. Man's survival and well-being are an achievement of the skill with which he has utilized the main instrument with which nature has equipped him—reason. Men, cooperating under the system of the division of labor, have created all the wealth which the daydreamers consider as a free gift of nature. With regard to the "distribution" of this wealth, it is nonsensical to refer to an allegedly divine or natural principle of justice. What matters is not the allocation of portions out of a fund presented to man by nature. The problem is rather to further those social institutions which enable people to continue and to enlarge the production of all those things which they need.

What Mises is here doing is declaring that it is necessary to have a sound perspective of reality, a sound cosmogony. The interesting thing is that in this matter he independently concurs perfectly with Moses. Moses declared that there would be a *welfareshortage*.\* Mises declares the same thing. Unless one acknowledges and keeps in mind that fundamental fact, the existence of a permanent welfareshortage, all subsequent reasoning will be fallacious. But that is exactly the fact which most men, including theologians, assume is not the fact.

One more reference. What is the eventual outcome of believing in interventionism as most Calvinist leaders do? Will interventionism save us? Mises says, No. He calls attention to the fact that Marx and Engels recommended interventionist measures by governments *in order to destroy capitalism and usher*

\*See July 1956 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, page 209.

in communism. Marx and Engels described the interventionist measures they recommended (which Abraham Kuyper also recommended, which the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands also recommends, which Professor H. J. Ryskamp also accepts) as: "economically insufficient and untenable" and they stated that those interventionist measures "in the course of the movement outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production."

Here we have an astonishing situation: the interventionism recommended by Abraham Kuyper and his followers in order to save capitalism is the same interventionism recommended by Marx in order to destroy capitalism. Marx's idea is the more realistic of the two.

Mises some years back wrote an article entitled "Middle-of-the-Road Policy Leads to Socialism." We sent a copy to ministers in the Christian Reformed church (and to others), because we knew that the majority favored interventionism which, as we have just quoted, Marx and Engels declared in their *Communist Manifesto* would lead to communism. But we have received little thanks for spreading an article which revealed that popular and pious interventionism is the high road to communism—eventually.

There is proof, which every Netherlander or anyone informed about the Netherlands can understand, in regard to Mises's proposition, to wit: that the "middle-of-the-road policy leads to socialism," on the ground that it leads to more and more government controls, that is, *dirigisme*. That proof is the trend in the platform of the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper, it wanted *some* modest controls. But every control begets the need of more controls, and the Anti-Revolutionary Party in its platform today is committed to so many controls that it can be written off as a party promoting righteousness or real freedom. Instead it has a platform which compromises with coercion in every phase of life, outside of the churches and the schools. Unless it returns to first principles the Anti-Revolutionary Party will end up as socialism, and maybe communism.

How natural it is for controls (1) to expand; and (2) to be contrary-to-purpose can be made clear by a brief quotation from Mises's essay entitled "Middle-of-the-Road Policy Leads to Socialism," pages 11-12:

The government believes that the price of a definite commodity, e.g., milk, is too high. It wants to make it possible for the poor to give their children more milk. Thus it resorts to a price ceiling and fixes the price of milk at a lower rate than that prevailing on the free market. The result is that the marginal producers of milk, those producing at the highest cost, now incur losses. As no individual farmer or businessman can go on producing at a loss, these marginal producers stop producing and selling milk on the market. They will use their cows and their skill for other more profitable purposes. They will, for example, produce butter, cheese or meat. There will be less milk available for the consumers, not more. This, of course, is contrary to the intentions of the government. It wanted to make it easier for some people to buy more milk. But, as an outcome of its interference, the supply available drops. The measure proves abortive from the very point of view of the government and the groups it was eager to favor. It brings about a state of affairs, which—again from the point of view of the government—is even less desirable than the previous state of affairs which it was designed to improve.

Now, the government is faced with an alternative. It can abrogate its decree and refrain from any further endeavors to control the price of milk. But if it insists upon its intention to keep the price of milk below the rate the unhampered market would have determined and wants nonetheless to avoid a drop in the supply of milk, it must try to eliminate the causes that render the marginal producers' business unremunerative. It must add to the first decree concerning only the price of milk a second decree fixing the prices of the factors of production\*

\*"Factors of production": such items as prices of hay and grain.  
(P. C. Editor)

necessary for the production of milk at such a low rate that the marginal producers of milk will no longer suffer losses and will therefore abstain from restricting output. But then the same story repeats itself on a remoter plane. . . .

The foregoing is simple logic. Read *carefully* what it says and you will know why the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands is on the way to dissolution—unless it reforms itself. The ideas (1) that controls can be easily limited to a restricted field, (2) that they are not contrary to purpose, and (3) that they consequently do not lead toward socialism—all these are bad fallacies, interventionists in any country or church to the contrary notwithstanding.

We strongly recommend that readers read this new book by Mises: *The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality*.

### Mises's Other Books

We list Mises's other books in the order in which we recommend readers to read them (on the basis of ease of reading):

*Planning For Freedom*, Libertarian Press, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, 1952, 175 pages, \$1.50 paperbound, \$3.00 clothbound.

*Bureaucracy*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1944, 125 pages, \$2.00.

*Omnipotent Government*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1944, 291 pages, \$4.00. This book explains how the Germans, a great and respectable people, became immoral because of the way they thought on *economic matters*. America thinks the same way today—fifty years behind the Germans—and we are likely to end up with the same infamous conduct. As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is.

*Socialism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1951, 591 pages, \$5.00. This book is a final and conclusive argument that Socialism *cannot* be a valid principle for the economic organization of society, because it destroys the basis for all economic calculation.



*The Theory Of Money And Credit*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1953, 493 pages, \$5.00. This the most valuable of any publication in the field of money and credit. In it Mises not only explains the basic ideas in regard to money and credit, but he shows that unsound credit policies are the cause of the business cycle—the great bane of our present economic system.

*Human Action*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1949, 889 pages, \$10.00. This is the most comprehensive of all economic texts ever published. This book is for capitalism what Marx's *Das Kapital* is for socialism.

The last three especially establish firmly Mises's reputation as being one of the greatest economists of all time.                      fn

## **Economists And Authors Writing About The Economic Structure Of Society**

We have prepared a chart of the names of economists and of other writers about the economic structure of society in such a form that readers can tell at a glance when they lived and how we classify them.

In this chart time is shown on the horizontal scale. When a man lived can be determined from the chart or (more exactly) from the accompanying table of statistics.

The chart contains the names of many famous economists, but not all of them. It contains also names of some not-so-famous economists; these names are included for special reasons which readers will understand in the future.

There is an admittedly arbitrary classification of these names into three groups:

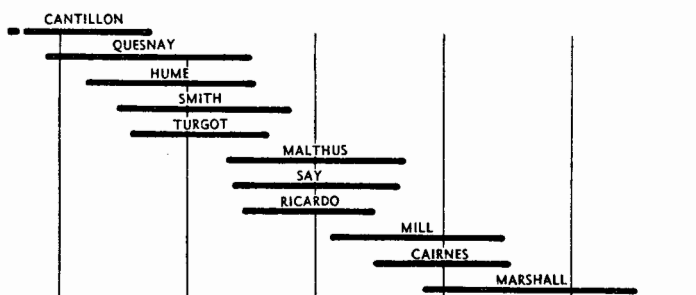
1. The Classical economists and others in that tradition.
2. Socialist, Interventionist or radical economists and writers with whom PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM is in disagreement.

## Economists And Authors Writing About The Economic Structure Of Society

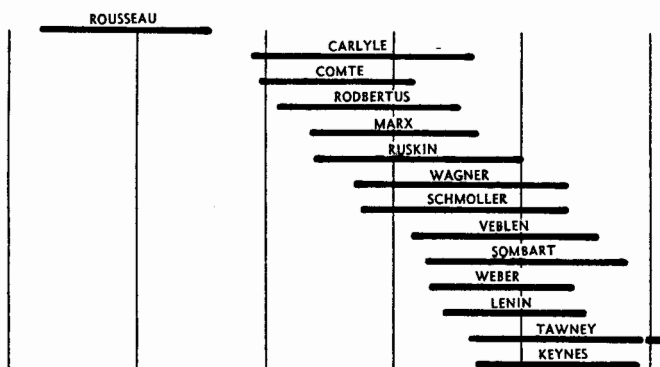
The Classical Economists And Others In That Tradition	Socialist, Interventionist And Radical Economists And Writers	Free Enterprise Economists With Whom Progressive Calvinism Generally Agrees
c.1680-1734 Richard Cantillon	1712- 1778 J. J. Rousseau	1760- 1815 Henry Thornton
1694-1774 Francois Quesnay	1795- 1881 Thomas Carlyle	1801- 1850 Frederic Bastiat
1711-1776 David Hume	1798- 1857 Auguste Comte	1834- 1910 Léon Walras
1723-1790 Adam Smith	1805- 1875 Johann Rodbertus	1835- 1882 William Jevons
1727-1781 Anne R. J. Turgot	1818- 1883 Karl Marx	1840- 1921 Carl Menger
1766-1834 Thomas Malthus	1819- 1900 John Ruskin	1851- 1914 Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk
1767-1832 J. B. Say	1835- 1917 Adolph Wagner	1851- 1926 Knut Wicksell
1772-1823 David Ricardo	1838- 1917 Gustav von Schmoller	1851- 1926 Friedrich von Wieser
1806-1873 John Stuart Mill	1857- 1929 Thorstein Veblen	1861- 1935 Edwin Cannan
1823-1875 John Cairnes	1863- 1941 Werner Sombart	1865- 1948 C. A. Verryn Stuart
1842-1924 Alfred Marshall	1864- 1920 Max Weber	1881- Ludwig von Mises
	1870- 1924 Nikolai Lenin	1885- Frank H. Knight
	1880- Richard Tawney	1886- 1949 Benjamin M. Anderson
	1883- 1946 John M. Keynes	1899- Friedrich von Hayek

# Economists And Authors Writing About The Economic Structure Of Society

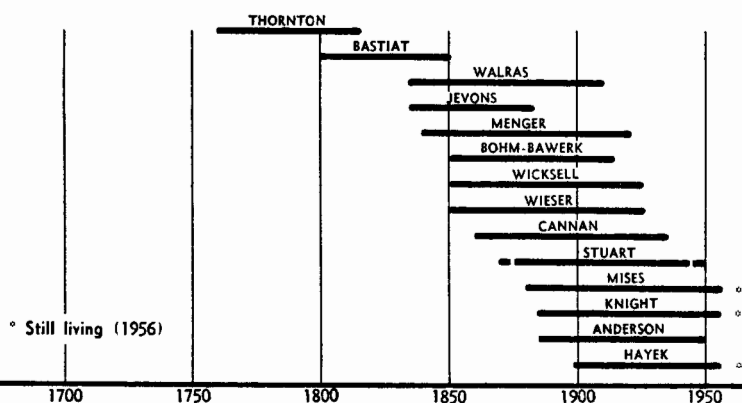
## The Classical Economists And Followers



## Socialist, Interventionist And Radical Economists



## Free Enterprise Economists



° Still living (1956)

3. Free Enterprise economists with whose economics we in general agree.

We make a few descriptive remarks.

### **The Classicists**

Cantillon, a Frenchman, is the earliest great thinker in economics.

Adam Smith is in a class by himself.

Ricardo retired early, as a well-to-do financial broker and has a great place as an economic theorist.

Malthus is famous for his treatise on population. We plan eventually to discuss Malthus's population theory and its economic and other consequences.

Mill is not one of the great economists, but he wrote a very popular text on economics. He is more famous as an essayist; see his essay, for example, "On Liberty." We are *for liberty* as Mill was.

Turgot and Quesnay are Frenchmen of the well-known Physiocrat school of thought. We have taken some liberty in including them with the classicists.

Cairnes, Say and Marshall are in the list designated "Classical economists and others in that tradition" because they were not classifiable (for us) among the socialistic writers nor were they different enough from the earlier classicists to put us at ease about classifying them with the Free Enterprise economists. There may be question especially about Alfred Marshall being in this first group. Some readers may wish to put him in the third (Free Enterprise) group, but Marshall has always seemed to us to occupy an equivocal and unfruitful position.

The greatest of the classical economists, Adam Smith, has been claimed as godfather as much by socialist economists as by free enterprise economists. This may sound unbelievable, but nevertheless it is true. The explanation is that Smith did not probe to the depths the basic issues involved, and he wrote inconsistently on some very vital subjects. In that sense, Smith (and the other famous classical economists) are inadequate for solving

today's problems. How can Adam Smith have been consistent in his writings if Marx and Mises can both refer to him as a forerunner and as an authority? Anyone, therefore, intending to begin and to end his economic education with reading Smith's famous book *The Wealth of Nations* has a defective economic education. If in economics a man has the time to read one book only we do not recommend this great classic; too much of it is defective and has been superseded.

### The Socialists And Radicals

In this list are the writers with whose principles we do not agree.

Rousseau is one of the fountain-heads of the French Revolution.

Comte is the father of Positivism which involved the improper extension of the methodology of the physical sciences to the social sciences.

Rodbertus and Marx are the two most-famous writers on the doctrine of socialism and communism. They are the fathers of so-called scientific socialism.

Schmoller, Wagner, Sombart and Weber belong to the socialistic German Historical school, who were short on economic theory and long on economic history (statistical and historical description).

Thorstein Veblen is mentioned as an American Institutionalism. Institutionalism economics is the American counterpart of the German Historical school. The Institutionalists have had a baneful effect on American economic thought.

Ruskin and Carlyle were not economists but they taught destructive social and economic doctrines. As *literati* they did more to pervert ideas on a sound fabric for society than equally mistaken but trained *technical* economists whose influence was less than theirs.

Keynes is the modern economist who has had the greatest influence for evil. The devastating effect of his ideas is worldwide.

Tawney is one of the socialist *literati* highly regarded by many Calvinist intellectuals but not by PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

We might have added to the list names such as Niebuhr, Schlesinger and Boulding who are also highly regarded by some Calvinists.

### **Free Enterprise Economists**

In this classification are the men to whom readers should turn for a more-satisfactory economic education.

Henry Thornton is in this list because we plan to refer especially to him. He was an important member of the famous evangelical group known as the Clapham Sect, which founded the English Bible Society.

In PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM we are in the Jevons-Walras-Menger-Bohm-Bawerk-Wieser-Mises-Hayek tradition. They build on the great classical economists, but basically correct the errors in the theories of the classicists. Jevons was an Englishman; Walras was a Swiss; the others are known as the Austrian school. If we must name *only* three men whom we follow most closely it will be the three Austrians — Menger, Bohm-Bawerk, and Mises, especially Mises. Hayek is a famous essayist as well as economist.

Bastiat was a devout Catholic; his writings are of a more popular character than those of the others.

Wicksell, a Scandinavian; Cannan, an Englishman; Verrijn-Stuart, a Netherlander; and Frank H. Knight and Benjamin M. Anderson, Americans, are modern outstanding economists in the "school of economic thought" to which we in general belong.

On the basis of the foregoing, readers who are acquainted with the literature of economics will be able to bracket the position of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in the field of economic theory. In a general sense we are aligned with economists (1) who hold to the "subjective theory of value"; (2) who think in terms of marginal utility; and (3) who are for individual freedom and opposed to socialist and interventionist coercion.

The economists we follow are some of the greatest economic theoreticians thus far in the history of economic science. These men are not in our list because they are "Christians"; they are in our list

because the "economic order" which they favor is in harmony with the "moral order" prescribed by Scripture.

There are, of course, many great names which we have omitted from our list of free enterprise authors. Nothing unfavorable is implied by the omission. The names we have included are in some respects simply representative. Other representative names might have been selected.

The Christian religion teaches theology and ethics. Ethics, of course, underlies the "economic order" of society and is determinative for private conduct. The question arises then: where ethics and economics meet and practically flow together, which ethics go with which economics? In general, social gospel ethics go with socialist and interventionist economics. In general, *historic* Christian ethics go with the free enterprise group, despite any personal disinterest or hostility of a free enterprise economist to Christian theology.

The schematic information we have here presented is intended to be a background for some major attention to the destructiveness for society of the social gospel. The principles of the social gospel are presently being assiduously promoted in otherwise orthodox Calvinist denominations.

An attack on the social gospel can be on its intellectual aspects or on its moral aspects. We intend to attack it on both fronts — as intellectually untenable and as morally sanctimonious and consequently malignant.

In the January 1957 issue we shall consider the social gospel in the light of one of the essays in *God-Centered Living*, where the unfortunate relationship between Calvinism and the social gospel can be clearly read.

fn

### The January 1957 Issue

The January 1957 issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM will be devoted largely to the "social gospel," which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM considers to be one of the greatest evils in the world.

Attention will be given to the device by which the social gospel is being successfully introduced into an otherwise conservative

denomination, the Christian Reformed church, while hardly anyone is aware of what is occurring.

### Notice To Subscribers

This issue completes the second year of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

Subscriptions are on a *calendar*-year basis, from January each year through December. We shall appreciate those intending to renew their subscription to do so in December or in January 1957. The subscription price is \$2 for all except students for whom the price is \$1.

Paperbound copies of the 1956 issues will be available in a month or so at \$2 a copy.

We solicit new subscribers for 1957. Such subscribers should begin their reading of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM with the first issue, January 1955. As a special offer to 1957 subscribers, we will provide paperbound copies of 1955 and 1956 at a combined price of \$3; that, plus the new subscription of \$2 for 1957, is a total of \$5. There are 368 pages in the 1955 volume, and 384 pages in the 1956 volume.

Renew *now*, subscribe *now*.

### Correction

The book review in this issue is not the one referred to on page 330 in the November 1956 issue. That reference is to a book by Edmund Opitz entitled *The Powers That Be* which we plan to review early in 1957.

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