

Number

**4**

Mailing

# Individualism and Altruism

FREDERICK NYMEYER



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# Social Action, Hundred Nineteen

*Blind voor de uitkomst, maar ziende op't gebod.*  
Blind to consequences, but focusing on the Commandments.

"How I Love Thy Law"  
Obedience 100  
Alms 10  
Proclamation 9+  
PSALM 119

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- II THE SOCIAL GOSPEL MALADY (pp. 1-24) April 1971  
[Free offer on p. 23 to ordained clergymen: *No Civil War in the Cave* by Lüdecke Hoffelt, 96 p. \$1.00]
- III OVERTURES TOWARD RECONCILIATION IN ETHICS (pp. 25-56) October 1971 [Free offer on p. 56 of the reprint: *The Man Who Answered Marx* by Dean Lipton]
- IV INDIVIDUALISM AND ALTRUISM (pp. 57-88) June 1972  
[Free offers on p. 87: *The Ethics of Capitalism* by Henry Hazlitt, 24 p.; 1955 issues of *PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM* - February, 24 p.; March, April, May (32 p. each)]

## INDIVIDUALISM AND ALTRUISM

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## I ADMITTED PREJUDICE

Candor requires that we profess what we are; readers are therefore informed that this is a publication which will manifest prejudice.

Prejudices refer to prejudgments. A dictionary at hand gives four definitions:

1. To imbue with prejudice or aversion. [This applies to us; we aim to inculcate aversion toward the ideas and actions of some people.]
2. To cause detriment to; to impair; injure; derogate from in any way; especially, to cause moral injury to, as in respect to rights, reputation or status. [This in part applies to us; we aim to discredit the ideas of some people, and thereby indirectly (unfortunately) to cause "injury to" (their)... "reputation."]

The foregoing two definitions pertain to "prejudice" as a verb. There are also two definitions given for "prejudice" as a noun:

3. A judgment or opinion formed without due examination; a mental decision based on other grounds than reason or justice; a premature or biased opinion. [In this sense, we do not admit "prejudice"; we have formed our opinions only after (in our judgment) "due examination." We have considered conscientiously both "reason and justice"; in this situation, we reject the idea of being responsible for "premature or biased opinion."]
4. Detriment, as arising from a hasty and unfair judgment. [We plead not guilty to any "hasty and unfair judgment."]

The discrepancies between the definitions of the verb and the noun indicate an inadequacy in the dictionary used, and even more importantly reveal a general public confusion in the use of the term "prejudice."

The dictionary also adds that the preposition to use with "prejudice" is:

*against; rarely in favor of; in one's favor.*

The customary preposition is therefore "prejudice against" something, but we are using it in that more rare sense of "prejudice in favor" of something.

The next question is: What is the content of this prejudice? We have a prejudice in favor of morality. That is the key -- the sesame -- to understanding the ideas in SOCIAL ACTION, HUNDRED NINETEEN. In the uncertainties that ever lie before all of us, men may act in unexpected ways, and a man must often confess to himself:

In such and such circumstances, I do "not know in what direction this imp will jump."

SOCIAL ACTION, HUNDRED NINETEEN will instinctively jump on the side of disciplinary and corrective action, that is, on the side promoting morality. When we have "love" for others, it is on the side of promoting mutual morality, thereby promoting the welfare of all.

What is the exact idea contrary to this prejudice in favor of morality? The answer is that the contrary idea is: "The gentle sentiment of charity," associated with the soft-pedaling of discipline and morality. And if it is asked who opts for that sentiment of charity, then the answer is: The advocates of the Social Gospel.

We look upon private and public ills as evil; the Social Gospel looks upon them as a sickness. We look upon private and public ills as being individual; the Social Gospel looks upon them as being collective, and because they are collective rather than individual, it is hardly appropriate to call upon those who are doing evil "to be born again" -- to repent, to change their ways, and to correct themselves. And in this harsh (?) and unbrotherly (?) view that we hold, we are "discriminators" -- and therefore unloving, unBiblical and unrealistic. If A sins, that is not so much his fault, as it is the fault of his environment, his parents, his other relatives, his school, his fellow church members, and you and me; therefore toleration and gentleness is properly due from all to all who do not do so well as they should.

When a young person approaches adulthood and begins to ponder ideas (rather than merely prattle after his father and mother and other elders and associates), and if he has been given a religious education, he will discover that the Book which is used as being authoritative by Christians hardly refers to being "smart" or having a quick and good mind. It is as if the authors who wrote the various books in the Bible did not care about or wish to have brilliant minds themselves, or for their children, or admired such capabilities in others. Instead, the criterion for judgment in Scripture is invariably: Is (or was) the man moral, as defined in the Decalogue? If he was, then Scripture evaluates that man as wise. Morality is taught, in Scripture, as part of the road to virtue, happiness and prosperity -- the daily road to the favor of God. (It is not correct that "faith without works" is taught in Scripture as the right road to follow.)

The case for morality as requisite to happiness is not taught naively in Scripture only. Every great society, whether Hebrew, Greek or Roman, has been founded on the same principle, to wit, prejudice in favor of morality.

There is nothing new in this principle of favoring morality. It has been stated explicitly by the Irish-English thinker and statesman, Edmund Burke [Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), pp. 464-5 in EDMUND BURKE: SELECTED WRITINGS AND SPEECHES, Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1963, Edited by Peter J. Stanlis who used as the basic text in making selections: THE WORKS OF THE RT. HON. EDMUND BURKE (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1865-67), in twelve volumes]:

You see, Sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess that we are generally men of untaught feelings: that, instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree; and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices; and the longer they have lasted, and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them.

We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason [intelligence]; because we suspect that the stock [of intelligence] in each is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages [in prejudices or intelligence].

Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, (and they seldom fail,) they think it more wise to continue the prejudice, [together] with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice [in favor of ancient morality] is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in [points the mind toward] a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, skeptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice [in favor of morality] renders a man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice [in favor of morality] his duty becomes a part of his nature.

In his well-known orotund style, Burke is here saying that he has his glorious prejudice in favor of the ancient principles of morality.

Burke is a favorite author. He may be quoted at random as follows (emphasis supplied):

I hoped to see the surest of all reforms, perhaps the only sure reform, the [individual] ceasing to do ill [being born again].  
Op. cit. page 548

Such a republican spirit we perhaps fondly conceive to have animated the distinguished heroes and patriots of old, who knew no mode of policy except religion and virtue [morality].

Op. cit. page 550

The great must submit to the dominion of prudence and of virtue, or none will long submit to the dominion of the great.

Op. cit. page 550

Burke's idea that mankind has a long existing tried-and-tested set of principles of morality, which he calls "the general bank [stock]" and "capital" of nations, appeals to us. A stock of good morality is better than a stock of money in a bank. It does not appear debatable in the late twentieth century that the principles of morality of Hebrews, Greeks and Romans -- on which their civilizations were built -- should be questioned and experimented with, to wit, the rules against (1) violence, (2) sexual irresponsibility, (3) theft, (4) fraud and (5) envy.

The principles of the Social Gospel more or less emasculate those moral principles, especially numbers one and five.

The ethic of the historical Christian religion is based on "morality" as defined since ancient days. The ethic of the Social Gospel has a different, in fact a contrary, foundation: charity (almsgiving or alms coercion); or more correctly, the pretense of charity; or still more accurately, the coercion of equality (psychologically founded on envy); and therefore the ethic of the Social Gospel is immoral and revolutionary.

## II DEFINITION OF INDIVIDUALISM. IS SELFISHNESS SIN?

Sex is a problem in ethics. There are people who practically imply, "All sex is sin." There are other people who say, "Some sex is sin." Just as it is nonsensical and unrealistic to say, "All sex is sin," so it is proposed to demonstrate in what follows that it is equally nonsensical and unrealistic to say, "All selfishness is sin."

It is here aimed to be more natural, reasonable and human, and to say, "For human beings, sex outside of wedlock is sin"; similarly in regard to relations of all persons to each other, we submit the proposition, "Selfishness is sin only when it violates the Decalogue" (the Ten Commandments of the ancient Hebrew religion); or violates Natural Law, which for most philosophers is the nonreligious formulation of the ethical laws in the Decalogue; or the Law of Nations, which is the same

thing for international law between nations (formulated by political philosophers as Grotius and others).

That proposition, that selfishness is sin only when it violates the Decalogue, is farsighted, promotes universal welfare, is cooperative and peaceful, is not divisive and hostile, is born out by history and experience, utilizes human resources better, agrees with Moses, Solon, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Burke, Kant, Lincoln, and other great thinkers. They may have formulated their ethics in different words, but their basic position is restricted to the prohibition of specified evils, that is, to Individualism, properly understood. Of them all, the first mentioned, Moses, said it most briefly and simply: "Thou shalt not kill" (employ violence and coercion); "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (engage in sex activity without responsibility); "Thou shalt not steal" (alienate a neighbor's property by theft); "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (injure a neighbor by deceiving him); and "Thou shalt not covet" (poison human relationships by envy). That constitutes the viscera of morality and of Individualism. A corollary to such a definition of sin is that all else is properly to be left free.

Sex and selfishness, neither sinful in itself, are not learned. They are innate. Although sex urges may be dormant in childhood, somewhere in the teen years they come on with unsettling force. Philosophers talk about instincts, which is a word used to designate unlearned and unexplainable phenomena which are simple facts of creation, to be accepted despite their not being analyzable. Sex is "instinctive" and so is self-protection against the aforementioned specified evils.

Selfishness is as much a datum -- creational -- as is sex. God created selfishness originally; selfishness was not something introduced as a disturbing factor, by the devil operating through a serpent and Adam "falling." Selfishness is as much necessary to keep civilization going as is sex. If there is to be no sex, there will not be more babies, and in a short time there will be no more human beings on the earth. If there is to be no selfishness -- no indubitable and vigorous defense against evil, that irrepressible instinct toward survival and welfare -- then it will require only a few centuries to remove humankind from off the globe.

Selfishness as indicated is identical with the instinct of self-survival. Men consider almost anything justifiable in order to survive. If a man breaks into your house and threatens death or injury, your instinct will be to disable him in order to survive yourself, or to kill him condignly. To seek welfare (a comfortable

life), instinctively, is in the same category as to seek to protect existence (survival) instinctively.

The alternative to Individualism is Altruism.

In the secular world there are several variants of altruism; they can be identified under the names, (1) Welfare State; (2) Planning; (3) Socialism; (4) Communism. These programs lay claim to being wiser and nobler than a mere program to obey the Decalogue. Obeying the Decalogue is considered to be prosaic, negative, and cold. But endeavoring to meet the standards set by altruism is grander; more elevated; something manifesting greater goodwill toward the neighbor; and (most catastrophically wrong of all) something which will actually help the neighbor more than will obedience by yourself to the precepts of the Decalogue.

The term Individualism -- and the related terms of egoism and selfishness -- suffers from so great a handicap versus the preliminary advantage which altruism has from its favorable connotation of brotherly love and charity, that, if prejudices are not to bias final judgment, individualism should be listened to first. With Themistocles, a Greek in the fourth century before Christ, we say: "Strike, but hear us first [in a sober promotion of individualism]."

The first and most fundamental foundation of individualism is intellectual rather than moral.

Nobody can intelligently undertake to be a "keeper" of the billions of people on the surface of the earth. Nor is it reasonable that a person is held responsible for the people in the United States; nor in the State of Illinois only, in which the writer resides; nor in Cook County, the county in which he has lived his adult life and which includes Chicago and its suburbs; nor the town of South Holland which when the writer moved here had a population of 2,500 people and now has a population of 25,000. Even the congregation of which the writer is a member with maybe 600 souls is a larger list than the writer is qualified to endeavor to "keep." As an individualist, the writer rejects every grandiose evaluation of responsibilities beyond his intellectual capabilities.

But the case for a broader general responsibility for general welfare than an individualist can accept (because of the numbers involved) becomes even more preposterous when it is a question of what an individual man knows specifically about the individual "needs" and "wants" of the billions that inhabit the earth. What does one man know about specific housing requirements, specific clothing needs, specific food wants, specific health dangers? Intellectually, it is beyond man's capabilities to "know the problems" of almost anybody except himself and his immediate family.



There are, furthermore, innumerable crosscurrents of ideas and programs. The other man will wish to live his life his own way and "do his own thing."

And what I may try to impose on him may be something unconsciously to my own advantage rather than to his advantage.

How I might take advantage of my neighbor can best be classified under five headings:

1. I can engage in violence or threat of violence to his person or property; or inappropriate coercion, by some agency as a government;
2. I can endeavor to rob him of the exclusive possession of his mate;
3. I can steal items of property from him;
4. I can defraud him by lies;
5. I can be so envious that he is intimidated not to act to improve his own condition, and be comfortable about excelling beyond me.

Suppose I successfully undertake never to engage in violence against my neighbor, or steal his wife, or other possessions, or defraud him by falsehood, or to discourage him by my envy -- then I have done much for that neighbor. If everybody else had an equal resolve and acted accordingly, that is, if nobody ever injured another person by violence, adultery, theft, fraud or envy, this would be a good world for the neighbor in which to live.

The very essence of the psychology of an individualist is that it is humble and modest enough to understand the real limitations of the human mind, and not beguile itself that it can diagnose disinterestedly the problems and needs of many people other than himself. Intellectual humility is the bedrock on which individualism is founded.

An individualist must hold that other people have their own interpretation of their condition, and that they will wish to be consulted on what is to be decided which affects them, because their own interpretation of their needs may be different from, and better than, the ideas of other people.

We come next to the question of helping the weak, poor, disadvantaged, unfortunate, foolish, the very young and the needy old, and widows and orphans: What will individualism do for them?

The answer in Scripture is that they must be helped VOLUNTARILY. In Old Testament times the standard of

living was low; not more than the requisites of survival or less. Medical care was not what it is now; infant mortality was high; there were many widows and orphans. There was no insurance system to spread risks.

Charity -- almsgiving -- was [and is] necessary. Charity was considered to be a requisite for a good society. As machinery needs grease, so society and its moral law require in addition charity or alms as "social lubrication." Charity for the Old Testament Hebrews was a nonfunded social security system. Moses legislated that corners in harvest fields and other losses in regular harvest should be left for the poor to glean for themselves. Scripture urges that the strong and the able, the rich and the fortunate, distribute with a glad hand to the poor.

Time and circumstance should affect the percentage which the worthy and unfortunate poor should get. In time of pestilence and war the percentage would (should) be higher. If there was a catastrophe, and the best use of the proceeds of production called for (in the judgment of wise and virtuous men) the temporary halt of accumulation of capital, then almsgiving would sop up all production for current consumption purposes only. It might even require more than that; the temporary need might be so great that the rich would not only participate in gladly pouring out to the very unfortunate all current production, but even that they relinquish some (or all) of the capital accumulated in previous years. At the end of a catastrophe all might then be equally impoverished; none would be rich.

There is nothing in Scripture encouraging aid to those who are in need of alms unworthily, because of laziness, crime, folly, irresponsibility. If these people were to be helped, it was only after they had already suffered enough penalty from their folly so that they had learned their lesson well; and admonishment would attend the alms; and if all measures to restore such folk to self-reliance failed, they were apparently to be left to suffer the consequences of their own acts.

Is charity then an essential part of individualism? The answer is, Yes. Any man who declares that he has done his duty to his fellow man merely when he has done none of them any wrong -- and then adds that he has no pervasive duty (voluntarily and according to his own judgment) to help cushion the burdens of the weak, poor and unfortunate known to him -- is ignoring a phenomena not removable from this cosmology in which we find ourselves, namely, circumstances where the vicissitudes of life are such that anyone and everybody may be so buffeted by misfortune that he should be helped.

Because charity must be left to be "voluntary,"

therefore, for the same reason the "urgings" in Scripture to engage in alms are insistent and pertinacious. The ordinary man, having come by what he has by sacrifice and even privation, will often be reluctant to give even to the worthy poor.

The commandments not to injure others are apodictic, that is, absolute. But the requirement of charity is urgent but not absolute, nor does everyone in need have an equal claim to aid.

Moreover, if more than a limited part of production must be made available to others, then society will be so impoverished by the lack of "capital accumulation" that the poor themselves will be more injured (by the reduction in productivity) than they are benefited by the increase in alms that they receive. (Charity is not an unmixed good; it is a variable good, and sometimes an undoubted evil.) There is more to be said for and against charity which will be presented later.

We now come to a third ingredient of individualism which consists of:

The willing communication of helpful ideas to fellow men; (in the churches a narrower term is used, Gospel, and this may become a somewhat erroneous restriction).

In the church the Gospel means Good News, namely, that God is merciful to repentant sinners who put their trust in God, and mend their ways. This Gospel as sometimes defined is restricted to matters pertaining only to a future life. The benefits of the Christian Gospel also accrue in this life.

Nor should such requirements, according to which we are defining individualism, be held to be inappropriate for nonChristians. We hold that nonChristians have a "gospel" obligation too, as follows:

Whenever a man sees another moving in the direction of mischief, folly or imprudence, the first man has the obligation of pondering how he can tactfully warn the second man of the risks he is running, and then warning him. The first man should warn the second man without committing the offense of being overbearing in the second man's affairs. The first man has no obligation or authorization to compel the second man to hear him, to heed him, and/or to change his program; but he has the universal obligation to try.

Machiavelli, in one of his Discourses, tells of a potentate who had unwittingly pursued some folly. One day in the field, with his courtiers about him, it dawned on him that he had made a mistake; and he voiced it.

Behind him a courtier muttered that he had known all along that the king was pursuing a disastrous course. The king turned and asked, "You were of the opinion that my course was wrong but you did not warn me?" The courtier confirmed that, and justified himself on the ground that the king took unkindly to criticisms. The king insisted, "But you did not warn me?" Upon the courtier's confirmation of that, the king called a captain of his guard and said, "Take him away and execute him." We ought all to be shot for not warning neighbors of folly.

There is great merit in the Christian idea of trying to get other people's thinking straight for time and eternity. In that broad sense, we all have obligations to our fellows. How the other man "thinks" is critical for his real "welfare." If they will not listen, the responsibility becomes solely theirs.

What does a man owe his neighbor? Three things: (1) not to harm him; (2) voluntary charity; and (3) well-intentioned education.

That is all the "brotherly love" that the Scriptures of the Christian religion say that is owed to any man. That is the doctrine of individualism here; no more than that.

To do less than that for a neighbor hurts him. To do more than that for a neighbor also hurts him; and may tyrannize over him.

Individualism as outlined promotes freedom, wealth and peace. The alternative to such individualism, namely, altruism (as will be outlined), promotes tyranny, poverty, and strife.

### III DEFINITION OF ALTRUISM. ALTRUISM'S EASY TRANSFORMATION INTO SANCTIMONY.

In Mailing II, page 31, a dictionary definition of altruism was quoted as: "devotion to the interest of others; disinterested benevolence; opposed to egoism." So brief a definition is inadequate.

Many religious men now attach the same meaning to "brotherly love," or "neighborly love," as ethical thinkers ascribe to altruism; and they think or say that the answer to Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is Yes; and then they add, the idea of love, particularly love according to the Bible, is agape (a Greek word used in the New Testament), meaning wholly unselfish and completely outgoing love; and not that lower form of

love known as eros (as a man self-regardingly loves his wife), which is not elevated enough to be interpreted as broad, universal, self-forgetting and self-abnegating love.

A clergyman who was a delegate to the Evanston meeting of the World Council of Churches, at that time mentioned to the writer with devout awe a "great book" on Biblical and nonBiblical love, AGAPE AND EROS, by Professor Anders Nygren of the theological school at Upsala in Sweden. According to Nygren, eros is a relatively low grade of love because it is, in part, self-seeking and not exclusively for others. A Christian, so it is proposed by Nygren, must strive for agape, a pure love for others uncorrupted by any thought of self or selfishness.

Nygren's ideas about agape and the desirability of persons to have and/or exercise agape, as he defines it, alleging it to be based on Scripture, should bring believers and unbelievers alike to despair and vigorous dissent.

Doctrinaire altruists and agape enthusiasts have some fellow-travelers who do not themselves talk about philosophic altruism or so-called Christian agape, but have an alluring lingo of their own. They talk of fraternity as did the leaders of the French Revolution, and of equality as did the founders of communism. The nomenclature differs but the principles are the same.

When the idea of altruism is kept simple, its extremism is apparent. Imagine a society of ten adults and that the first nine consider themselves to be the "keepers" of the tenth; then, in turn, the last nine, the keepers of the first; etc. Altruists implicitly assume that nobody should be the keeper of himself because altruism in effect disputes self-responsibility by the very fact of making others responsible. Quibbling against this is self-contradictory. If nine are responsible for one, how can he be responsible for himself?

There must inescapably be real difficulties with that. First, suppose that the tenth man wishes to be a truck driver, but his nine "keepers" wish him to be a school teacher. Necessarily, when a man takes to altruism, he must in reality agree to his loss of pursuing his own preferences, that is, he will be losing his freedom. That is a high price to pay for altruism.

Secondly, the problem can become complicated by some of his "keepers" wishing to make a school teacher out of the would-be truck driver, but the others wishing to make him a farmer. Who is to prevail? The situation worsens in proportion as the nine are disagreed.

Altruism is inescapably a meddling in the lives of other people. Altruism sounds wonderful when it is defined as "devotion to the interest of others." But when the "interest of others" is defined, then what does it mean: (1) his idea of the "interests" of others; or (2) the ideas of others concerning their interests?

Difficulty with the nonfreedom aspect of altruism can be made more obvious. Imagine the ten people to be a family, consisting of a father, mother, and several children, bound together by affection and responsibility. If the oldest, say a son in his twenties, living with his parents in England, wishes to go to Australia, who is to decide? -- the son, the father, the mother, some sister, or brother? The Hebrew and Christian religions have never faltered in their answer. It is that the son, having come to maturity, is to make the decision.

Obviously, "brotherly love" taken in an altruistic sense is intellectual arrogance. If it can be pretended to be morality, it can never be pretended to be sense.

What is to be said for the morality of altruism?

When this question is considered, the horrendous inadequacy of the dictionary definitions quoted becomes apparent.

In order to appraise the morality of altruism, it is necessary to distinguish between two methods of being a neighbor's "keeper."

If A must be the "brotherly keeper" of Z, then at whose cost is A to do his obligation of keeping Z? Is A to "keep" Z:

- (1) at his own cost; or
- (2) is A authorized to compel B, and C, and D, and other men to help him (A) to "keep" Z as A thinks Z should be "kept"?

"Keeping a neighbor" must be at somebody's expense. If A is an altruist who talks about "devotion to the interest of others," and of "disinterested benevolence," and a pattern of life the opposite of "egoism," he must choose between (1) in the foregoing and (2).

If A is an altruist who carefully restricts his altruism to what will be at his own cost, he may be considered to be "moral" and well-intentioned; if contrarily A is an altruist whose program entails coercion to make others contribute to his altruistic program, he is immoral and helps one to the hurt of another.

No respectable ethic can teach that an altruist must "keep" people who do not need it or who may be unworthy.

If "unworthy" men are aided by altruist A but not exclusively at his own expense, he cannot properly be praised when it is considered that by relieving the troubles of Z, which may be voluntary on Z's part (he is poor because of his wishes or own willful folly), A has removed the incentive, or if you will, the pressure of circumstances, from Z to mend his ways. In other words, altruism is not only suspect but condemned if it removes from Z the incentive to be wiser, and to abandon his follies.

The specific case where altruism can be looked upon with unmixed approval is when it is solely at the giver's own expense, and when it is to worthy poor, who will not be induced, by the assistance they get, to have a disincentive to get themselves out of trouble by possible and reasonable exertions of their own.

Some poor may be so forlornly situated that their hope and incentive is so feeble they must be helped cheerfully and continuously. Such people are the genuinely unfortunate, and the words apply, "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

Altruists who are meritorious must undertake to calculate the effects of their charity on the recipients. Will the recipients be less motivated, after receiving charity, to getting "on their feet" again? It is possible for an altruist to be so pleased with his charitableness that he feels self-flattered.

The Hebrew-Christian religion narrows down meritorious charity to the following:

1. A man gives at his own cost (not at the cost of others);
- 2.. He gives aid to the worthy poor;
3. He does not give in order to enhance his own reputation -- "to be seen of men" -- but for the benefit of the poor only; in other words, he gives anonymously and tracelessly; and
4. He gives to get people "back on their feet" -- so that they can have the satisfaction of being self-supporting again (an ineffable satisfaction).

The welfare, self-respect and honor of the recipient of the charity are the only features that count. If the giver gets honor from giving, he already "has [lost] his reward."

There is something that is called altruism which is malignant. It is not altruism at all.

That so-called altruism consists of A openly proposing charity to Z at the expense of third persons -- B, C, D,

etc. This is a case where a man (who believes he is a true altruist but has a program which consists of nothing more than "to rob Peter to pay Paul") is grossly self-deceived.

And usually the so-called Paul is a voter, and can help to put the so-called altruists (demagogues?) in positions of power, and so the man who evaluates himself as an altruist is employing the unworthy means of bribery -- to offer special benefits for votes -- to advance himself!

This spurious altruism has been manifested occasionally by aspirants to the presidency and to congress; by some governors and members of state legislatures; by ambitious men who think they can profit for themselves and obtain honors and power by the promotion of the emotion of envy in the minds of others. Instead of the Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," the contrary program -- advocacy of unmitigated envy -- is promoted unabashed under the perverted slogan, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which for demagogues means, in practice, to stir up people to envy so that there will be laws to take a part of what some have honestly acquired, for transfer to others who covet what they do not have, and hate the possessors of what they want, and who readily let themselves be bribed for their votes by politicians whose program is to give the goods of B and C and D and other citizens to those who think they have a grievance, merely because they have less.

Robin Hood was, in semi-legendary times in England, a bandit, who was popular with the peasants and common folk. Robin Hood was not a bad sort, so the legend goes, because he robbed only the rich -- nobles, monks and merchants -- in order to redistribute to the "poor." The rich as a class were robbed in order to lighten the load on peasants and manual workers. Robin Hood by such reasoning is not a highwayman -- a robber -- but a "public" benefactor!

But Robin Hood was self-regardingly looking out for himself. To whomever he distributed part of his pelf would be under strong inducement to protect Robin against sheriffs and constables.

That the rich, whom Robin Hood robbed as a class, were not always meritorious persons, but may have obtained some of their wealth by coercive, illegal, corrupt and exploitive practices, is certainly correct. There are rogues in every class, whether upper-class, middle-class, or lower-class. That whoever has ill-got possession should be required to relinquish them is not debatable; it is a good rule to make the rascals pay back, and with penalties. But as it may be doubted that Robin Hood was well-informed and reasonable about robbing



prosperous wayfarers in his territory in England, so it may be doubted that presidents, senators, congressmen, judges, governors, or legislators are informed and reasonable about campaigning against the rich generally, inciting voters to envy and covetousness, in order to get votes, be elected, and then play Robin Hood through legislation against those who can be victimized by coercive laws.

Self-deceived altruists as have been described do not love the poor and needy as they think they do. There is in their psychology more of envy and dislike of those who have a larger share of this world's goods, honors and pleasures than they themselves and some others have. They are reluctant to reveal their envy as being self-motivated and so they use the poor generally as an excuse for favoring coerced charity by *B* and *C* and *D* and whoever has more than they (the pseudo-altruists) of this world's goods.

In a way, the Tenth Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," appears to be a maverick. It talks about a psychology rather than an action. Who can "read" another's mind? Who knows who is a coveter? Who knows who is envious? Let a man permit his envy and coveting to seethe in his mind; what does it matter? It is not necessarily translated into action.

Although the Tenth Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," may be the "weakest" of the Ten (who could know?), it is possibly the Commandment most sinned against. A man may not steal another man's goods or wife once, but he may covet them a thousand times. He may persuade himself that he has done no wrong; that coveting is not a public sin which others can sense and dislike; and finally, he may persuade himself that, as a rather secret and a merely psychological sin, coveting in the worst form -- that is, as envy -- will have no bad boomerang effect on himself or on society. But he deceives himself.

The practical consequences of envy are considerable. Whole cultures, as of Indians in northern New Mexico, have been reported to be held back by envy, by resentment that anyone stands out above the crowd and does better. Whereas the Decalogue admonishes lengthily against envy, some North American Indians seem not to have been clearly aware of its pernicious effects.

Murray N. Rothbard, in his essay, "Freedom, Inequality, Primitivism, and Division of Labor" (page 24 in PROJECTIONS OF LIBERTY No. 5, published by Institute for Humane Studies, Menlo Park, California 94025), has written:

...the anthropologist Clyde Kluckholm found among the Navaho the absence of any concept of "personal success" or "personal

achievement"; and such success was automatically attributed to exploitation of others [the unsuccessful], and therefore, the more prosperous Navaho Indian feels himself under constant pressure to give his money away.

Some sociologists have found that where envy is rampant prosperity is paralyzed. Sociologist Helmut Schoeck, in his informative book, *ENVY, A THEORY OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR*, has written (page 47):

*Institutionalized envy...or the ubiquitous fear of it, means that there is little possibility of individual economic advancement...[and] hope of progress. No one dares to show anything that might lead people to think he was better off. Innovations are unlikely. Agricultural methods remain traditional and primitive, to the detriment of the whole village, because every deviation from previous practice comes up against the limitations set by envy.*

In summary:

1. The intellectual foundation under altruism, as popularly formulated, is not respectable and must be challenged.
2. The moral foundation often believed to be the true undergirding of altruism is destroyed when an altruist undertakes to compel others to contribute also.
3. If a man compels, or endeavors to compel, others to participate in his particular form of altruism, the motive is probably envy toward and hatred of those he would compel to contribute.
4. Vociferous altruists are often seeking power for themselves, more than welfare of others.
5. Wise acts of altruism should, except in general calamities, be addressed to individuals and not to classes. Altruism addressed to whole classes will be disincentives to individuals concerning being motivated to help themselves, and thereby to recover the dignity of being self-sustaining.

#### IV INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS AND STATEMENT OF SPECIFIC PROBLEM

It may be helpful to pause and consider where we are -- to get our bearings.

Individualism has been more strongly espoused than customarily, and altruism has been more unfavorably evaluated than formerly. (Further justification by facts

and discursive reasoning for such appraisal are intended for later mailings.)

The history by which liberals and conservatives (both have been led to evaluate individualism as being at least dubious and almost certainly bad, should not be neglected.

How unpopular individualism can be is manifested by the fact that the writer has in conversation with other church members never mentioned that he was an individualist without thereby eliciting the reply that he must have misunderstood what individualism is, because "it is incompatible with Calvinism and with Christianity." For a Christian, in certain Calvinist circles, it is necessary, in order to avoid damage to reputation, to declare for altruism and against individualism.

The explanation for that error probably lies in past history. Maybe Christianity has long been synonymous with confusion about individualism and altruism, because the terms have generally been left inadequately defined.

In the forty years beginning with the Great Depression in the 1930s, the secular ideas which the Social Gospel took over from compulsory altruism have constituted a "breakthrough" so that the confusion among devout folk has switched from profession of voluntary altruism associated with historic individualism over to militant compulsory and almost exclusive altruism.

That compulsory altruism -- activated in the churches by the Social Gospel, under favorable terms as "social concern" -- should be resisted vigorously as a great evil. This appears to be the history of how this has come about:

1. Christian altruism, that is, voluntary altruism, was widely promoted by Christians; it was an ideal of generous voluntary assistance to others. In the past it has been the churches and devout people who built hospitals, schools, asylums, and gave extensively to the poor, etc. They were not taxed for them; at that time compulsory altruism was not vigorously demanded by the secular environment.

2. But the seeds for the current revolution in regard to altruism had been sown long before, in the time of the French Revolution (about 1785 and later) with its demand for "equality"; and later in the time of Marxian Socialism-Communism (about 1850 and after) with its slogan, "From each according to his ability to each according to his need." These programs had aggressive revolutionary undertones in their ethics. Christians, however, long

generally repudiated the ideas of both the French Revolution and of Socialism-Communism. The idea of compulsory altruism did not "catch on" in the churches until in this century.

3. Because the churches continued to reject compulsory altruism of both the French Revolution and Socialism-Communism, therefore the historical voluntary altruism of the churches could continue to be taught as an aspect of individualism, just because it was voluntary altruism.

4. In some Calvinist circles, so conservative as largely to be out-of-touch with the times, "orthodox" sermons are still preached which manifest a half-individualist and a half-altruist dualism without adequate warning to distinguish between the revolutionary difference between voluntary altruism and compulsory altruism.

5. The new item in the situation is the unexpectedly effective penetration of compulsory altruist ideas into the churches via the Social Gospel. The clergy are now tending to neglect to associate compulsory altruism with the French Revolution and Marxian Socialism-Communism, and they leave the impression that "social concern" is properly to be activated by compulsory altruism. Many clergymen neglect the fact that in the latest forty years the situation has changed, and the meritorious combination of morality and voluntary altruism has instead become in the minds of parishoners a combination involving less morality and compulsory altruism, with compulsory altruism steadily becoming more dominant, so that the "new ethic" is altogether different, and is now subversive to morals.

It appears permissible to summarize the consequences of these historic trends, as follows:

The Founder of the Christian religion declared, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17).

Whom did He probably designate as "the righteous"? Presumably those who did no violence, adultery, theft, fraud or envy. Whom did He designate as "sinners"? Presumably those who were guilty of violence, adultery, theft, fraud and envy. Such would be a classification based on morality.

The Social Gospel changes that to, "I came not to call the poor but the rich to repentance." This is a rule based on charity.

Scripture everywhere indicates that there is a rather sure road to welfare, namely, obedience to the Commandments. It teaches that the only permanent road to

prosperity is morality, except there be interference from immoral neighbors, or providential handicaps or catastrophes according to the cosmological structure of the world. It nowhere says that having followed that moral road, and become more-than-average in possessions per se, made a man a sinner. The place at which a man arrived did not prove him righteous or a sinner. It was what the road was that he had steadfastly (not unsteadily) travelled. If he had obeyed the moral law, then whether rich or poor, he was designated as "righteous." If he had not obeyed the moral law, then whether rich or poor, he was designated as a "sinner."

That is why the Social Gospel is either silent or at least weak in regard to morality. Quote, if you can, anything in the writing or speeches of advocates of the Social Gospel that gives foremost emphasis on morality. There is no emphasis, or only incidental emphasis. Instead, the emphasis is on need, or where people find themselves; there is little or no evidence that it is significant how they arrived there.

Let us then, in Social Gospel fashion, rewrite Christ's dictum on whom he had come to "call":

"I came not to call the poor to repentance,  
but all those who enjoy more than the  
average do."

As the Social Gospel would have it, the poor, for whatever moral or immoral cause, are righteous, and other folk except the very poorest are sinners.

Here, in essence, is the antithesis:

1. Individualism rests on individual morality (a daily intense striving at self-discipline and improvement, that is, being "born again"). The laws of God are absolute and enforceable. They are obligatory; apodictic. Then there are two ornaments to morality, urgently needed, namely, charity and education; these three constitute Christian ethics, but the greatest of these is morality.
2. Altruism rests on general charity (a compulsion to make everybody contribute to equality without primary regard to an individual's personal morality).

It may therefore be concluded that altruism, and its manifestation in the churches in the form of the Social Gospel reverses Christ's dictum. They make it read:

"I came not to call sinners, but the  
righteous to repentance."

If that is too strong, rewrite it your own way. The most obvious thing that can be said about the Social Gospel is that it certainly is not from the Founder of Christianity, except what He said be taken out of context.

Or maybe a reader will wish to describe the Social Gospel as: making obligatory what was previously optional (namely, charity); and making optional what was previously obligatory (namely, morality).

The Social Gospel is a new morality; see its manifestations on all sides: violence, lewdness, riots, theft (including inflation), lies and frauds, encouragement of seething envy. And who is responsible? Why those who were formerly considered righteous. If there is an evil of any kind in, say, Cleveland, the more respectable a citizen you are of, say, Grand Rapids, the more it is your fault, your sin. If you belong to a lower strata of society in Grand Rapids, what is going on in Cleveland (or anywhere else) is not so much your fault. To be "comfortably" situated is to be a sinner!

## V IS LOVE A DESCRIPTIVE TERM?

The Jews in Christ's time were not at the zenith of their intellectual contributions to the stock of human intelligence acquired up to that age.

They spent time, unfortunately, in considering the meaning of "brotherly love." They had inherited from Moses a brief list of forbidden actions some ten items long, including Thou shalt not kill [of course, including prohibition of mayhem, coercion, or threats]; or commit adultery; or steal; or lie; or covet. These were short and definite, but the contemporary Jews wanted something more general and less specific, and so they kept formulating and reformulating an alternative, and finally kept threshing over and over -- even harassing Christ about the hoped-for, all-explanatory slogan -- Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

True, that noble expression is shorter, and has only seven words. But it appears somewhat less clear and useful.

It is possible to apply to practical cases, and be able to exercise discipline, on the basis of the terms: no violence, no adultery, no theft, no fraud, no envy; but not even Moses could probably apply discipline on the basis of that ambiguous phrase, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which appears to be one of the most unfortunate of the affirmations that the brilliant and sagacious minds of the Jews invented.

Suppose a tribunal would be appointed, and across the facade of the Hall of Justice housing that tribunal there

would be written, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And let us further assume that discriminating and honorable judges endeavored to apply that law, and that that was the rule they had by which to judge.

It will be helpful to get down to cases.

Suppose *K* has a grievance against *M*, and *K* and his lawyer come to this tribunal and *K* declares, "*M* does not love me so well as *M* loves himself." And then the judges would close their eyes, pick up a balance, and say, "The defendant is guilty." But suppose that *M* clamorously protests and declares, "What proof is there that I do not love *K* as much as myself?" In response, *K* then reiterates, "*M* does not love me so well as *M* loves himself." And so the trial goes on.

Presumably *K* and *M* and the judges know specifically what "love" means; the word "love" would, it might be expected, be well understood by everybody. For two thousand years now "love" apparently explains itself, and everybody should know what "lack of love" is. Why, "love" is the clearest and most specific and most wonderful word in the world; it "explains" everything that Hebrew and Christian ethics has developed since the "days of Abraham."

Come, come, all the moralists and lawyers urge, "Let us get down to agreement on whether *M* is guilty or not of not loving *K* so much as himself."

Let us poll the justices: Mr. Chief Justice B\_\_\_\_\_, what is your verdict -- is *M* guilty of not loving *K* so much as *M* loves himself, and should *M* be freed, hanged, pay \$10,000, or go to jail for ten years? And then Mr. Chief Justice B\_\_\_\_\_ is to be expected to give his verdict: guilty or not guilty!

Next we poll Justices D\_\_\_\_\_ and M\_\_\_\_\_, and the others of the nine. And then the court adds the guilty votes and compares that total with the total nonguilty votes, and the verdict -- for weal or for woe -- falls on *M*. And *M* is to be considered that he had been judged justly on the basis of the basic law of the Hebrew-Christian religion, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But the trial will appear to have been farcical.

On Sunday mornings the Decalogue is read in the churches of Christendom around the globe, and then because the Decalogue is believed to be ambiguous and nonunderstandable, there is added explicitly as a luminous explanation of the obscure Decalogue, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The popular idea is that the phrase, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is the terminal explanation of "brotherly love." If a skeptical layman says, "It is the other way around, the Decalogue explains love and not love the

Decalogue," the response is that such ideas are ignorance, and a disgraceful underrating of the g-r-e-a-t sentiment of l-o-v-e.

After all this controversy, there is a sober conclusion which can be reached, namely, it must in some respects be intellectually absurd to believe that "love" explains the Decalogue, unless some other, nonobvious idea can be included in the definition of the expression, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

## VI FREEDOM ASPECT OF LOVING YOURSELF

In the preceding chapter the comprehensive interpretation and significance of the famous interpretation of the law of brotherly love, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," has been tested by questioning how it can be applied practically. If the rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," has meaning, then it is (so we are convinced) not the usual interpretation of it that can stand the test of being reasonable and valuable.

The problem of keeping the interpretation of, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," in the realm of good sense and sound reasoning, is not solved by (1) the customary interpretation, or by (2) comprehensive denial that it has any meaning at all. And so, as it is here viewed, the final question is, What can and does the expression, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," contribute to an understanding of the right ethics among men?

Rightly understood, that famous formulation can make an essential contribution to an understanding of that "summary" of the Second Table of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." While so many definitions are being submitted herewith, on individualism, on altruism, on "love," and on other terms, it is much in order to endeavor to submit a positive definition of brotherly love, which results in a genuine contribution to the concept of what men owe to each other in society.

Those who profess the Christian religion, and who therefore are interested in self-improvement (covered by such subjects as repentance, hope to improve, resolve to try to do better -- all covered by the term, "to be born again" -- obviously figurative language) have had their attention "fixated" on self-discipline and self-improvement to such an extent that they have neglected the "freedom" aspect of the ethical laws in the Decalogue. This is a striking deficiency in interpretation, which some famous secular thinkers have seen more clearly than professing Christians. Having been candid in critique of the cus-



tomary use of the rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," we shall endeavor to build up that rule, and to be appropriately appreciative. Readers will find it necessary to think differently than has been their custom; the emphasis will now be on freedom rather than law.

The norm, or standard, of brotherly love is "self-love." The law of brotherly love does not, according to Scripture, rise one-tenth of an inch above self-love; the law is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Attention is not thereby called to anything new or novel in the interpretation. Sir Francis Bacon, in his essay, "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature," calls attention to what the "standard" is for loving the neighbor, to wit:

"...God maketh the love of ourselves the pattern; the love of our neighbors only the portraiture."

Everybody must concur with Bacon on this.

Immediately, therefore, we are faced with the crucial question, In what does legitimate self-love consist? The answer to that question will also be the answer to what brotherly love must be. If the first question on self-love is answered correctly, the second question on brotherly love can be answered correctly, too. But the alternative is certainly reasonable; if the first question is answered incorrectly, so will the second be answered incorrectly.

As an individual you have needs and values. As you love yourself, you will seek to satisfy your needs, and maximally enjoy seeking your values.

Self-love primarily consists in your freedom to do what you wish to do, which will consist in your freedom to pursue what you consider more important for your happiness (regardless whether what you "value" is destined for your own happiness or the happiness of others).

Your liberty comes first. It is the huge terrain in which you can seek to enjoy yourself, according to your values; not somebody else's values, except as you yourself prefer to subordinate your own values to another's.

If you are a religious man, you may say: "You are wrong; you must live for the great Creator of the universe." Such a proposal is irrelevant by definition; the discussion here does not pertain to our relationship to God (covered in the earlier Commandments in the Decalogue) but our relationship to our fellows. You are to love your neighbor as yourself, and therefore "you yourself" are the standard.

But your freedom is not absolute. There are a few restrictions which apply to you, and in so far as they apply to you, they will of course apply to your fellow human beings. If freedom is valuable to you, freedom will also be valuable to them. As your freedom is properly restricted, their freedom should also be properly restricted. You may not, by the definition, restrict their freedom more than you restrict your own freedom. If you restrict their freedom more than your own, then patently you do not love them equally, but inferiorly.

How is your freedom properly restricted? Those restrictions have been presented earlier: You may not employ violence (Sixth Commandment in the Decalogue); be irresponsible in sex matters (Seventh Commandment); you may not steal (Eighth Commandment); you may not deceive your neighbor by false statements (Ninth Commandment); and you may not envy your neighbor (Tenth Commandment).

As you want these five items for yourself, without dispute or danger, so you must -- if you are to love your neighbor as yourself -- permit your neighbor to have his identical advantages.

But everything else is free; free for you and free for your neighbor. If you love yourself, you want freedom and safety; if you love him equally, you agree to identical freedom and safety for him.

Are you dissatisfied with this? Do you wish more freedom? Looking at reality soberly and honestly can bring you to only one conclusion, that you are unwise if you think you need more freedom. If you may injure others according to your own caprice, then if you are to love them equally you must agree to their having permission to injure you according to their caprice. Then freedom and peace are converted into anarchy and warfare.

If you assert that you will have a hard life on those terms because women and goods are scarcer than your demand for them, and therefore you feel yourself too hemmed in, and consider restraining law to be a misfortune and not a benefit -- then you have a skewed view of the circumstances of life. Under no other conditions can human existence be so good to all than as is specified in the foregoing.

FREEDOM and LAW are almost the whole of loving your neighbor as yourself. Freedom and law as defined are ABSOLUTES. But there are those two voluntary phases which are supplementarily requisite and cannot be neglected. You must be willing to contribute to the restoration of better conditions for those who are battered by the vicissitudes of life; and you must, secondly, systematically endeavor to communicate with and educate your

neighbor. Your manners may not be so deficient that you have thereby alienated a neighbor so that when you try to give him good advice he will not listen to you because you have been offensive to him in the past.

And so we can have under the label of "brotherly love":

1. A grand and magnificent LIBERTY;
2. Five reasonable restrictions;
3. A requirement of voluntary charity; and
4. An obligation voluntarily to communicate good advice.

Beyond that, no man owes some thing to his neighbors. Beyond that, his neighbors owe nothing to him. If we would all live that way, this would be the best of possible worlds. We would love our neighbors as ourselves.

The Social Gospel does not, and cannot according to its principles, accept the foregoing definition; the Social Gospel believes neither in "freedom" nor in "law" in the Hebrew-Christian sense.

The conclusion cannot be escaped that the Social Gospel has defective definitions, contrary-to-purpose programs, is divisive, is harmful to morality, is tyrannical, and reduces general well-being.

Cataloguing the disadvantages of altruism and its so-called Christian counterpart, the Social Gospel, yields the following:

1. Altruism is an anti-Biblical heresy and an anti-Christian ethic.
2. Altruism is intellectually nonrespectable because it is contrary to purpose.
3. The source of the concepts of altruism is men alien to the temper of the Hebrew and Christian religions and vociferously hostile to them.
4. No significant or stable civilization, pagan or Christian, has ever been founded on the principles of altruism; none ever.
5. Altruism thrives on envy, and blesses it; it hates the inequalities on which the social principle of cooperation (division of labor), producing greater prosperity, rests.
6. Altruism destroys incentives and inhibits prosperity: (a) discourages some men; (b) makes others irresponsible; (c) demoralizes social

ethics; (d) impoverishes society; (e) baptizes the sentiment of envy with a front of sanctimony that is somewhat contemptible.

7. Altruism's inescapable byproducts are: (a) hypocrisy; (b) hatred; (c) ingratitude.
8. Altruism is a tool of demagogues seeking power, based on bribery and corruption.
9. The principal victims of altruism are the weak, the disadvantaged, the poor; the principal beneficiaries are power seekers employing demagoguery; society generally loses.

## VII DIFFERENT ANSWERS OF INDIVIDUALISM AND ALTRUISM ON FOUR SUBJECTS

<u>The subject of:</u>	<u>The Answers of:</u>	
	<u>INDIVIDUALISM</u> (Historic Gospel)	<u>ALTRUISM</u> (Social Gospel)
1. FREEDOM	Men may be extraordinarily free; everything is free except harming the neighbor in forbidden specified ways.	Men are to have no freedom; under altruism a man is a slave to other individuals and to society collectively. The Social Gospel is synonymous with each man being interfered with by others; and he doing the same to them.
2. SELF-DISCIPLINE	Unalterably against five specified sins; violence, adultery, theft, fraud, envy. Individualism calls <u>sinners</u> to repentance and to reform.	Soft on discipline. The Social Gospel calls saints to repentance and not sinners; what is wrong is <u>always</u> the fault of somebody else.
3. CHARITY	<u>Voluntary</u> ; with obligation of careful discrimination, for the benefit of the individual recipient, rather than honor for the giver. Charity must not be a bonus on sin, folly or irresponsibility.	<u>Compulsory</u> ; tax the industrious, thrifty, and prudent; <u>coerce</u> them to charity. Advertise your charitable sentiments.

4. HELPFULNESS      Voluntary; you must not endeavor to escape your responsibility to all men whom you do and can reach to "get their thinking straight." You must have a "gospel" for others. You must rely on persuasion only. The other man must be permitted to accept or reject. Your helpfulness is to be kept humble, on your part, and not compulsory.
- Compulsory; your "gospel" to others must be made compulsory, because you are so right on your ideas, that they may be enforced. If people want "pop music" but you think they should have symphonies, enforce your standards of value. You are not to be so humble as merely to "sell" your ideas; as kings of old or aristocrats, you undertake to set the standards to which society must conform.

## VIII REMARKS ON BOOKS AND READING

There is a ready explanation why some people are individualists and others altruists; similarly, why some people are old-fashioned evangelicals, advocating "You must be born again"; and contrarily why others are advocates of the Social Gospel, promoting altruism, and calling not sinners but the righteous to repentance.

Such divergences can be ascribed to (1) differences of education, or (2) effective propaganda, or (3) prevailing climate of thought.

We comment on books from which we have quoted in this Mailing.

Page 61 Edmund Burke (1729-1797), Irish orator, statesman and writer, is famous as friend of the American colonists (prior to the Revolutionary War). Burke was son of a lawyer; his father was Protestant; his mother, Catholic; sons in the family were educated as Protestants (Church of England), and the daughters as Catholics. Burke promoted reduction of Catholic civil disabilities; he neither doubted nor undermined the basic tenets of Christianity; he solitarily attacked the principles of the French Revolution. Burke is invariably informing and elevating to the religious and the unreligious alike. Peter J. Stanlis, the editor who has published the book referred to on page 61 is a Burkean scholar. He is a professor at Rockford College. The book referred to is out-of-print, but demand for it may eventually result in a new issue. We again quote Burke (EDMUND BURKE: SELECTED WRITINGS AND SPEECHES, edited by Peter J. Stanlis, pages 463-4):

"We know that we have made no discoveries, and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality -- nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity."

Page 73 Murray N. Rothbard is author of a modern text in economics entitled *MAN, ECONOMY AND STATE*, available from Institute for Humane Studies, 1134 Crane Street, Menlo Park, California 94025. This book is based on, and organized according to, Neo-Classical economics (of the Austrian brand). To have a proper perspective of the science of economics and of its history, it is necessary to understand the "revolution," known as Neo-Classical, of about a century ago which made Classical economics in part obsolete, and which has provided the (only) "economic" rebuttal of socialism-communism which is conclusive. (It should be apprehended that Rothbard is radically for "freedom," and that he uses the term Libertarian for that stance. "Freedom" can, however, mean so light an emphasis on "law" that the experiment with less-law could result in anarchy.)

Page 74 Helmut Schoeck is a sociologist, formerly at Emory University in Georgia; now at University of Mainz. His book entitled *ENVY: A THEORY OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR*, has obviously had a strikingly illuminating impact on readers; theologians ought to know the book. A reader of Schoeck's book discovers, suddenly, how justified it was to include in the Decalogue the prohibition of envy.

Page 81 Sir Francis Bacon is usually proclaimed as the man who began closing the door on medieval thought and mental habits. In his *NOVUM ORGANUM*, Bacon anticipated the "modern" world, with its "inductive method" rather than "deductive method."

There are other books to which reference should be made in this connection:

1. There is the famous economist, now of advanced age, Ludwig von Mises, who is the fountainhead of many of the perspicuous and effective ideas of Neo-Classical economics. On the subject matter of this mailing, see a reprint from Mises' opus, *HUMAN ACTION*, with the title, "The Elite Under Capitalism," four pages long, reprinted by The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., Irvington-on-Hudson, New York 10533. The "framework" of Mises' ideas, being part of revolutionary new Neo-Classical economics, is so different from a typical American's mental framework, that the average American will (a) not at first readily understand, and/or (b) the unusual import of Mises' ideas will not be fully appreciated.

2. The man who has written most extensively on Individualism

is Friedrich A. von Hayek. Three of his books should be mentioned: (a) INDIVIDUALISM, TRUE AND FALSE; (b) THE CONSTITUTION OF LIBERTY; and (c) STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS. The first is a small book of essays which takes its name from the first essay; in it Hayek calls attention to the prevailing confusion that exists in regard to what Individualism really is. The second book is the most exhaustive on liberty in any language. The third, STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS, contains a group of extraordinary essays.

3. Henry Hazlitt is one of America's best-known economists and columnists. One of his books has the title, THE FOUNDATIONS OF MORALITY. This is out-of-print, but is probably to be republished by Institute for Humane Studies, Menlo Park, California. One of the chapters of this book has the title, "The Ethics of Capitalism." We have permission to reprint 5,000 copies; readers who will have asked will be sent a copy gratis when ready. "Capitalism" is erroneously thought by many to be "without ethics" and to be unmitigated selfishness.

This subject of ethics, this question of right or wrong -- this antithesis between individualism and altruism -- has interested us for many years. In 1955 the writer published a monthly with the title, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. In the issues for February, March, April and May a series of articles was published on the Biblical idea of "brotherly love." As long as individual copies last, these will be made available gratis to readers on a first-come/first-served basis.

Self-education is largely a matter of the selection of the right books. In this regard, there is no better principle to follow than that of Mortimer J. Adler in his HOW TO READ A BOOK. Adler's thesis is to read the best books; not the best current books; that is not selective enough; the rule should be: Read the best books of all time only.

## IX ENTERING WEDGE OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL VIA EDUCATION

Although late, the telephone rings. It is a clergyman, in another communion (conservative) employed as teacher. He has a program for a new Christian school.

But it develops that he is not sure that he wishes to continue in his present communion. When asked why, he replies: "It is a fine denomination, but it is turning liberal. I do not mean that it is turning liberal in its theology; it is turning liberal in its ethics, sociology, economics and political science."

That description may be another way of saying that his

denomination is turning toward the Social Gospel, and to the basic premises underlying its ethics; that it may be turning toward "social concern" rather than "conversion"; that it may be adopting the ideas of the French Revolution on "fraternity"; and of socialism-communism on "equality."

What policy should that young man follow? One "approach" would be: (1) First develop for himself conclusive rejoinders to the arguments put forward by the advocates of the Social Gospel. If his arguments are valid, they should be convincing; (2) Promote his ideas against the Social Gospel in his present communion. If he cannot "sell" them there, why should he think he can "sell" them elsewhere; or effectively resist Social Gospel inroads elsewhere; and (3) If the blind will not see, or cannot be helped to see, or if politics in the denomination frustrates his effectiveness, then thereafter he might do wisely to move on. But why move out before that has been tested? There is, after all, that requirement of Individualism to feel obligated to "educate" one's fellow men. If the "neighbors" of a man will not listen, he can follow Christ's instruction, namely, in the end to walk out of the city gates, and wipe the dust of responsibility off his feet.

Eventually it may become necessary to choose between the historic Gospel of being born again versus the Social Gospel of reforming the environment; and then the question arises: Will the new ethics have a bad boomerang effect on theology, too. It could work this way: (1) emphasis on reform of the environment; (2) neglect of self-improvement as important evidence of the effect of grace and being born again; (3) the idea of atonement may lose much of its significance; (4) theology may then have no "need" of a Trinity; (5) ideas of "God" may thereafter undergo a significant change. In that way, ethics (as a tail) can wag theology (as a dog).

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED