

Notes on Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism¹

Reggie M. Kidd

(for classroom use only)

Lecture 1: Life-System

Uses of the Term: 1) sectarian; 2) confessional: one who believes in predestination; 3) denominational: specifying one wing of a tradition as opposed to another – Calvin would have criticized this practice (contrast with Lutheranism); 4) scientific: system of conceptions which, under the influence of Calvin, came to hold sway in several spheres of life – political movement that brought constitutional liberty to Holland, England, U.S. –

“a logical system of divinity, of a democratic church-order, impelled by severely moral sense, with enthusiasm for both moral and religious reformation of mankind”
(Fruin, Dutch scholar's sum)

“a theory of ontology, of ethics, of social happiness, and of human liberty, all derived from God” (historian, Bancroft)

Term should include less “pure” forms: Church of England's 39 Articles; Confession of the Independents (though individualism broke organic conception of the church)

Distinguish from Lutheranism and Socinianism (proto-Unitarianism: Jesus was just a man, and did not exist before he was born)

“It is the free character of Calvinism that accounts for the rise of these several shades and difference...” ... “With the free development of life, such as was intended by Calvinism, the distinction could not fail to appear between a *centre*, with its fullness and purity of vitality and strength, and the broad *circumference* with its threatening declensions. But in that very conflict between a purer *centre* and a less pure *circumference* the steady working of its spirit was guaranteed to Calvinism.

From its particular consciousness, there arose: 1) a peculiar theology; 2) a special church-order; 3) a given form for

¹ (Eerdmans 1931; 1994 reprint)

political and social life, for the interpretation of the moral world-order, for the relation between nature and grace, between Christianity and the world, between church and state, and finally for art and science (p. 17).

Distinguish from Paganism, Islamism, and Romanism

Though it would have asserted itself as a worthy philosophy, it did not begin that way. Life precedes philosophy. Life was the first object of Calvinism ... born in persecution and in pastoral responsibility – peoples among whom it emerged not esp. philosophically bent.

Romanism has a unified life-system. As does Islam. Protestantism wanders in the wilderness, thus giving birth to Modernism's Pantheism (birthed in Darwinism, bent on a hopeless modern Buddhism). Modernism: rising in Fr. Rev., and German philosophy, mod'm is a life-system diametrically opposed to Christianity:

- For the sake of man, not for the sake of the glory of God and a purified Christianity
- Wages war for the sake of the glory of man, inspired by the pride of Hero-worship, not by the humble mind of Golgotha

Need of the hour: an equal unity of life-conception – and that is not to be found "in a vague conception of Prot'm winding itself as it does in all kind of tortuosities, but you do find it in that might historic process, which as Calvinism dug a channel of its own for the power stream of its life.

Set this along side Romanism in opposition to modern Pantheism (p. 19).

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Conditions for Life-System – relat to God, to man, to the world

1: Relation to God

Paganism worships God in the creature. A definite interp of the relat bet/ finite and infinite, and produced its own form of life.

Islamism isolates God from the creature, to avoid all commingling w/ the creature (the only absolute antithesis to Paganism) ... able to originate an entirely peculiar world of human life.

Romanism teaches that God enters into fellowship with the creature *by means of a mystic middle-link*, which is the Church – with church bet/ God and man, Reformation able to create a form for its own society.

Calvinism proclaims that though standing in high majesty above the creature, God enters into *immediate fellowship with the creature*, as God the Holy Spirit. Even predest a function of this insight: communion with God begins with “his counsel of peace from all eternity” (p. 21). Dissent from Rome: dismissal of a church that placed itself bet/ the soul and God. The church is not an office or an institution, but the people who by faith stood in touch with the Almighty. Foundation of a distinct way of giving shape to life.

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Objections:

One: Aren't we just talking about Protestantism? No.

Luther's starting point was the special-soteriological principle of a justifying faith. Luther also continued to consider the church as the representative and authoritative “teacher,” standing bet/ God and the believer. Reformation extended from the princes – social/political implications limited – reformation ecclesiological and theological.

Calvin's starting point was the general cosmological principle of the sovereignty of God. Calvin was the first to seek the Church *in the believers themselves*. Reformation extended from the people – Reformation put its impress in and outside the church on every department of human life.

Two: Modernism doesn't start with God, but with a repudiation of God. Exactly.

Declaration of enmity with God – God as *hostile power*, even as dead – thus the expulsion of God from theoretical and practical life.

Calvinism not a matter of genius, but an implanted work of God – sprang, really, from the hearts of people (we don't even know where Calvin is buried). Evidenced itself in a singular sign: strong *Assurance of eternal Salvation* (p. 24). Strengthened by this Divine fellowship, “it discovered its high and holy calling to consecrate every department of life and every energy at its disposal to the glory of God.” Work of God by the HS. “Thanks to

this work of God in the heart, the persuasion that the whole of a man's life is to be lived as *in the Divine Presence* has become the fundamental thought of Calvinism" (p. 25).

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2: Relations among Men

Paganism says God dwells *in* the creature – so the high are superior, the low are inferior.

Islam dreams of sensual pleasure in paradise, so sensuality usurps public authority, woman is slave of man, unbeliever of believer.

Romanism relativizes distinctions by putting everybody someplace in a *hierarchy*.

Modernism denies all differences, and won't rest until it has "made woman man and man woman" ... and "kills life by placing it under the ban of uniformity" (p. 27).

Calvinism places all human life before God and therefore sees all people as creatures of God and as lost sinners – none has claim to lordship over any other – we stand as equals before God, and consequently equal one to the other. Authority exists, as does difference of ability – authority and abilities are given for the sake of those who do not have them. Calvinism opposes open and covert slavery. Tolerates no aristocracy save character or talent (either in individuals or families) that shows it is able to use its superiority, by the grace of God, to serve God, not self-aggrandizement or pride.

"So Calvinism was bound to find its utterance in the democratic interpretation of life; to proclaim the liberty of nations; and not to rest until both politically and socially every man, simply because he is a man, should be recognized, respected and dealt with as a creature created after the Divine likeness" (p. 27).

Not the outcome of envy (**contra Nietzsche, I think**).

3: Man to World

Paganism places *too high* an estimate on the world, and therefore to some extent both stands in fear of, and loses itself in it.

Islam places *too low* an estimate on the world, makes sport of it and triumphs over it in reaching after the visionary world of a sensual paradise.

Romanism set the Church (as sanctified) and the World (as still cursed) over against each other. What is not exorcised is still demonic, thus the church's hegemony over all of life. Emphasis on holiness in the center of the church's life (monastic & clerical orders) "in order to wink the more lightly at worldly excesses without" (p. 29). The world corrupted the church, and by its dominion over the world the church proved an obstacle to every free development of life.

Calvinism honors *the world* as a Divine creation – posits a *particular grace* which works Salvation, and a *common grace* by which God maintains the life of the world, relaxing the curse, arrests corruption, and allows life to develop to his glory. The church recedes to be no more nor no less than the congregation of believers, emancipating every dept of the life of the world from the church so it could be developed according to its own principles for the glory of God. Trade and commerce. Art and science. Realization of ancient humanistic impulse, minus intoxication (p. 30).

Anabaptists affirmed monastic ideal for all believers ... circle of baptized believers required to take all civil life under its guardianship. Calvinism had the church "withdraw again within its spiritual domain" so that in the world we should realize the potencies of God's grace (p. 31).

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Tries to argue for historical progression of the superiority of the Christian West.

Romanism: joint product of Israel's priesthood, cross of Calvary, and world-organization of Rom Emp

Islam: Israel's Monism, Prophet of Nazareth, trad of Koraishites.

Paganisms rooted in their respective pasts.

"... central development of the human race moved along successively" from Babylon and Egypt to Greece and Rome ... to Papal dominions and finally to the Calvinistic nations of Western Europe.

Commingling of blood – cross breeding is good – reaching its
zenith in America

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Calvinist impulse it to have the impulse of public activity
proceed from the people themselves.

Looks to free republic in Africa (South Afr) as full of promise
(this would be where the white Calvinist Dutch “elect” imposed
apartheid).

Yikes!

Lecture 2: ...and Religion

1) Religion as Such

- a) God's Sovereignty: It's for God, not for us.
- b) Election: It has to operate immediately, not mediately – save the mediation of the God-man (p. 47) and confirmed from God's side by the HS. Personal election. Priesthood of all believers. Liberty of conscience.
- c) Common Grace: It can't be partial, but must lay hold of our whole existence. Against limit of organ (it's about head as well as heart). Against limit of sphere (it's about science and the public life, not just the prayer closet and the heart). It's about everybody, not just monks and clerics.
- d) Soteriology: It can't spring from our fallen nature, but from our regeneration. Necessity of regeneration and revelation – work of HS.

2) Life of the Church

- a) Essence of the Church – heavenly, not earthly; invisible, not visible
- b) Manifestation of the Church – church found in confessing individuals, none superior to the others – but not in each individual separately, but in all of them taken together, and united, not as they themselves see fit, but according to the ordinances of Christ. Form of govt originates in heaven: Christ rules his church by the HS – therefore, only ministers, not priests – a thoroughly Presbyterian form of govt. Christ's sovereignty monarchic, but govt. of church on earth democratic – all churches equal to each other, connected by confederation. Multififormity of denominations depending on degrees of purity. Infant baptism. No national churches.
- c) Purpose of the Church – not preparation for heaven, but glory of God (p. 66). Spiritual cultus – evolving itself from symbolism (for the sake of God's glory) ... weird. Discipline – for the glory of God. Diaconate for the glory of God (pp. 67-68).

3) Practical Life

Predestination does not lead to antinomianism – believer lives before the God who saves him ... believer wants to please God.

Calvinism not *nomistic*, but embraces law – laws of various spheres, moral law. No divorce bet/ general moral ordinances and more special *Christian* commandments.

Comments on why Calvinists don't play cards (believers don't believe in Fortune), go to theatres (the prosperity of a theatre often increases in proportion to the moral degradation of the actors ... success purchased at the cost of manly character and female purity), dance (impurity).

For all of Modernism's philosophizing and ethicizing, it is not able to restore tenderness of conscience. Calvinism appeals straight to the soul and creates holiness of life.

Lecture 3: ...and Politics

No political scheme becomes dominant without foundation in a specific religious or anti-religious conception.

Calvinism has encouraged liberty.

Calvinism's root principle was cosmological *the Sovereignty of the Triune God over the whole Cosmos* (in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible) – not soteriological, justification by faith.

A primordial Sovereignty that yields a threefold deduced sovereignty: 1) in the State; 2) in Society; 3) in the Church.

In the State

God alone is sovereign – the race is one, and therefore w/o sin would have had one govt. under God himself.

Sin alone has necessitated the various States. Concession to sin – govt. itself subject to sin, therefore has to be held in check.

All authority is from God. All claims (divine right, social contract, sovereignty of the people) are penultimate claims. An instrument of "common grace," a means whereby God preserves a measure of his justice in a sinful world. (Democracy best in a fallen world, where people have shown their ability to choose.)

There is no theocracy.

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Separate discussion of popular-sovereignty and state-sovereignty.

Dutch, English, and American Revolutions preserved God's majesty.

French Revolution dethroned God ... from individual to many to "the people" ...

Calvinism bows the knee to God in order to lift the individual's head with respect to others. Fr. Rev. has the fist clinched against God, but the indiv groveling before his fellows (p. 88).

German reaction: pantheistic elevation of the State (**Hegel in view, I think**) ... State attributed a hidden *ego* ... a *consciousness* ... a *will*. State becomes God ... whatever it decrees is right, not because its decree agrees with any standard outside itself.

Advantages of Calvinism (p. 90)

In Society

Different social spheres (organic) that have their own life independent of the (mechanical) government (govt. like a stick placed next to a plant to keep it from falling over).

State's swords: justice, war, order.

The separate spheres receive their mandate from the organic nature of creation itself – the state's mechanical job is to keep things in place.

Organic social authority – **Science** (sovereignty of genius) – **Art** (sovereignty of *maestro*, of talent) – **Personality** (a dominion of each exercising their gift over their domain; varying abilities)

Sphere sovereignty – university, guild, family – each with a sovereignty granted not by the state but by God himself. 1) social sphere, by virtue of personal superiority; 2) corporate sphere of universities, guilds, etc.; 3) domestic sphere of family and married life; 4) communal sphere of civic life (autonomous govts)

State must not be an octopus that stifles the whole of life (p. 96).

Where, though, may the state interfere? 1) Where spheres clash; 2) Where individuals need protection; 3) Where the State's own existence needs shoring up through personnel (e.g., draft) or through finances (e.g., through taxes). Need for checks and balances – transportation between the spheres and the state.

Calvinism protests state-omnipotence; against the horrible conception that no right exists above and beyond existing laws; against the pride of absolutism, which recognizes no constitutional rights, except as the result of princely favor.

Of the Church in the State

Dissents from the notion that it is the duty of the govt to eliminate false religion and idolatry – says this notion goes back to Constantine and was a reaction against persecution – the system of bringing religious differences under the criminal jurisdiction of the govt resulted from the conviction that the Church of Christ on earth could express itself only in *one* form and as *one* institution. Admit that the Church of Christ can reveal itself in many forms, and everything deduced from this unity of the visible church drops out of sight.

Calvinism has shown its proclivity for free churches in free societies, whereas Romanism and Lutheranism depend on state sanction. Romanism still identifies the visible and the invisible church. Lutheran principle: "curius regio eius religio" means a ruler's religion is imposed on the people. Calv't countries harbored religious refugees of all types.

Duty of the magistrate towards God – to recognize God as Supreme Ruler – enforces ban on blasphemy for sake of protection of foundation of public law, upon which both state and its govt founded (he's obviously assuming a "Christian" nation that names God in its Constitution).

Something about the difference bet/ a monarchy and a democracy – in the latter, the indiv. and the govt. are one voice.

Duty of the magistrate towards the church – multiformity asserts itself as the undeniable demand of a richer development of life; thus the visible church is split up – the govt is to suspend its own judgement and to consider the multiform complex of all the denominations as the totality of the manifestation of the church of CHRIST on earth – not from a false idea of neutrality, but because the govt lacks the data of judgment, and because every magisterial judgment here infringes the sovereignty of the church. "The govt bears the sword which wounds; not the sword of the Spirit, which decides in spiritual questions" (p. 106).

Not Caesaropapy of Czar of Russia. Not subjection of State to Church in Romanism. Not "Cuius..." of Lutheranism. Not irreligious neutral standpoint of the Fr. Rev. (and contemporary USA!). But free church in a free state (apparently both "under the Christian God"). "The sovereignty of the State and the sovereignty of the Church exist side by side, and they mutually limit each other" (p. 107).

Duty of the magistrate towards the sovty of the individual person – liberty of conscience: conscience is never subject to man but always and ever to God Almighty. Something that comes

with maturity. State must cause liberty of conscience to be respected by the church (what does this mean?); and the state must give way to the sovereign conscience (what does this mean?).

The church may not be forbidden to excommunicate; nor may a church force an individual to stay.

"A nation, consisting of citizens whose consciences are bruised, is itself broken in its national strength" (p. 108).

Difference bet/ the ascendancy of liberty of conscience in Calvinist countries and in Fr. Rev.

Lecture 4: ...and Science

1) Fostered Love for Science

Siege of Leyden – founding of Univ.

Predestination as strongest motive for science.

Science isn't mere perception with strengthened eyes. Perception becomes science when you discover a *law*, and therefore reach the governing *thought* – Systematics becomes *queen of sciences* by virtue of being the place where all the sciences are gathered under one head. Theory of evolution emerged as necessary attempt at comprehensive explanation after empiricism had given up the quest. We need unity of view. Love for science comes from the need for unity of view. How related to predestination? Go back from decree of predestination to God's decree in general. Predestination is merely the courageous application of God's decreeing will to your own experience. Cosmos not a heap of stones, but a monumental building. If chance is king, then "man's capricious will is then the principal concern" (p. 114).

There is no interconnection, no development, no continuity; a chronicle, but no history. (p. 114) All you are left with is bare facts, but no interconnection or plan – no history.

Calvinism (unity and stability of God's decree) has prevailed over Arminianism (superficiality and looseness) – "unity" has won the field in philosophy. Buckle ("almost mathematical demonstrative force"), Lombroso (criminologist ... **uh, oh!**) – laws of heredity and variation adopted as "the common creed" by all evolutionists. "... the entire development of science in our age presupposes a cosmos which does not fall a prey to the freaks of chance, but exists and develops from one principle, according to a firm order, aiming at one fixed plan" (p. 115) – in harmony w/ Calvinism, at odds with Arminianism. Natural and spiritual laws form one high order, existing accord'g to God's command.

W/o conviction of unity, stability and order science unable to rise above conjecture. Only when there's faith in the organic interconnection of the universe will science be possible.

Medieval era so much under the sway of semi-Pelagianism and mysticism that Aquinas robbed of much potential. Science awaited Calvinism. Calvinists did not favor primacy of the will (humor, whim, fancy, chance) – demanded clear consciousness of majesty of the highest principle.

2) Restored to Science its Domain

Cosmical/worldly science begins among Greeks and Romans, was sublimated during the middle ages when the future life was the focus, and then was renewed under Calvinism (which did not lose "distant sights of future life"). Better to choose heaven over earth – not meaning to overrate the classical "to the detraction of the heavenly lustre which sparkled through all the haze of the middle ages" – still, "the one Aristotle knew more of the cosmos than all the church-fathers taken together ... under the dominion of Islam, better cosmic science flourished than in the cathedral- and monastic-schools of Europe ... the recovery of the writings of Aristotle was the first incentive to renewed though rather deficient study ... Calvinism alone, by means of its dominating principle, constantly urges us to go back from the Cross to Creation, and, by virtue of its doctrine of common grace, threw open science, now illumined by Sun of Righteousness (Col 2)

Calvinistic principle: Christianity is soteriological ("What must I do to be saved?"). But it's possible both to love this world at the expense of the other world, and the other world at the expense of this world. Christianity has not escaped the latter problem. Some sects have worshiped Christ alone, to the exclusion of God the Father Almighty (maybe the Marcionites in view?). Christ conceived of exclusively as Savior, and his *cosmological* significance was lost.

Biblical basis for resisting "this dualism": John 1:2-4; Col 1:16-17; work of redemption not limited to the salvation of individual sinners, but extends to the redemption of the world and the organic reunion of all things under Christ – Matt 19:28; Rom 8:19; Rev 10:6

Future "is not merely the spiritual existence of saved souls, but *the restoration of the entire cosmos*, when God will be all in all under the renewed heaven on the renewed earth. Now this wide, comprehensible, cosmical meaning of the gospel has been apprehended again by Calvin, apprehended not as a result of a dialectic process, but of the deep impression of God's majesty, which had moulded his personal life" (p. 119)

Our salvation is weighty, but not as weighty as the glory of God. Creation is God's handiwork. Its being marred by sin opened the way for more glorious revelation in its restoration – but restoration is salvation of that which

was first created, the theodicy of God's original handiwork. Even Christ's mediatorship was for the final end of the glory of the Father (1 Cor 15' submission of all to the Father).

"Thereby of course Calvinism puts an end once and for all to contempt for the world, neglect of temporal and under-valuation of cosmical things. Cosmical life has regained its worth not at the expense of things eternal, but by virtue of its capacity as God's handiwork and as a revelation of God's attributes" (p. 120).

In support, Kuyper says Catholic Archbishop Borromeo's heroic love in ministering to the dying during Milan's plague was noble, but Calvin did the better thing when he not only cared for the sick, but introduced hygienic measures to arrest the ravages of the plague. Also cites Reformed Pastor Plancius's investigation of longitude and latitude. "He saw himself placed before two works of God, the one in creation, the other in Christ, and in both he adored" God's majesty (p. 120).

Two means of knowing God: Scripture & Nature – for Calvin, Nature not just an accessory to theologians, but Scriptures like a pair of spectacles, enabling us to decipher God's thoughts written in nature but obliterated by the fall. Student of nature not wasting his time – study of body as well as soul, "and the social organization of mankind on earth was again looked upon as being as well worthy an object of human science as the congregation of the perfect saints in heaven. This also explains the close relation existing bet/ Calvinism and **Humanism**. In as far as Humanism endeavored to substitute life in this world for the eternal, every Calvinist opposed the Humanist. But in as much as the Humanist contented himself with a plea for a proper acknowledgment of **secular life**, the Calvinist was his ally" (p. 121).

Common grace: Might expect sin means the unregenerate are utterly wicked. But there's much to admire: Plato, Cicero, studies and literature, sparks of genius, beauty of character, zeal, devotion, love, candor, faithfulness, honesty, "the virtues of the heathen." Dogma of depravity does not always tally with experience in life. But can't run to opposite conclusion, e.g., human nature is good and incorrupt, villains are merely insane, regeneration is unnecessary to honorable living, higher grace is

ineffectual. A subterfuge to appeal to "splendid vices" or the old Adam.

Romanism: two spheres of life (earthly or merely human vs. heavenly, higher than human, vision of God). Adam equipped for both: for the former by nature given at creation, for the latter by the supernatural gift of original righteousness. By the fall, Adam lost the latter but not the former. Natural equipment left almost unimpaired – weaker to be sure, but still with integrity – Adam's natural endowments unaffected by the Fall (**Kidd: esp. reason**). Explains why fallen man often excels in the natural order of life. This schema tries to reconcile the dogma of the fall with the real state of things around us – the foundation of the Roman Catholic religion.

2 problems w/ Romanism: 1) lacks Scriptural conception of sin; 2) undervaluation of human nature. Rank: laity, clergy, monk stylite, hermit. Everything outside the church is lower; exorcism in baptism tells us these lower things are really unholy. No invitation to study earthly things here – only heavenly things worthy.

Calvinism has deeper view of sin, and credits *common grace* for the goodness in fallen man. Days before the flood indicate what would happen if God did not intervene. Common grace doesn't kill the core of sin, nor save unto eternal life, but arrests it. God restrains, breaks power, domesticates. Man's basic bestiality comes to the surface from time to time (as when a cat is returned to nature). When evil isn't as bad as it could be it's not because our nature is not so deeply corrupt, but because God keeps the smoking fire from breaking out in flames. Like a chain that pulls a ferry across a river. We thank God for hindering sin and for making it possible for us to live together in a well-ordered society, and for restraining us personally from horrible sins. For bringing to light human talents and developing human history as base for the church.

Church and world both belong to God, and in both we investigate the masterpiece of the supreme Architect and Artificer.

We don't think of sciences as of a lower character, to be left in the hands of unbelievers – we want to know God in all his works: nature and its wondrous works, industry, sociology, history.

Common grace had produced ancient Greece & Rome – life in philosophic light, treasures of art & justice. History not an aphoristic spectacle of cruel passions, but a coherent process with the Cross at its center, a process in which every nation has a special task, the knowledge of which may bless every people ... so the study of politics and national economy important ..

3) Delivered Science from Unnatural Bonds

Science's indispensable liberty, as determined by subject and method. Describes rise of university as counter to tug of war between state and church – universities' mistake in turning to either side for sanction (**I think Kuyper refers only to turning to church**). Calvinism banished monarchical hierarchy in the church, and "kept Church and State separate as two different spheres of life." Implications for govt: republican and federal organization. Implications for academy: degrees have meaning on their own, w/o church sanction.

Calvinist church got out of the business of adjudicating scientific claims. Theoretically, formulated *common grace*. Practically, offering safe harbor to scientists. Over time, commitment to "freedom of the word found its absolute expression in the principle that the church has to retire to the domain of *particular grace*," leaving "wide and free" the domain of *common grace* (p. 129). Thus, e.g., Descartes finds safe retreat in Netherlands.

Demand for science among the public, through rediscovery in the church's teaching of Christianity's "*divine commission*, a grand task with regard to the cosmos": "Replenish the earth..." Kuyper does a nice job explaining that this happens precisely as a function of depriving human merit and good works of salvific benefit – "certainty of faith" supplants the traffic of indulgences. "*Christian life as a pilgrimage was not changed, but the Calvinist became a pilgrim, who, while on his way to our eternal home, had yet to perform on earth an important task. The cosmos, in all the wealth of the kingdom of nature, was spread out before, under, and above man. This entire limitless field had to be worked. ... For the earth with all that is in it, had, according to God's Will, to be subjected to man*" (p. 130). In Holland there flourished: agriculture, industry, commerce, navigation – new nat'l life awakened new needs – subduing the earth required knowledge of the earth: its oceans, its nature and the attributes and laws of this nature.

4) Provided a Solution for the Unavoidable Scientific Conflict

All scientific inquiry will produce conflict, but there's none more significant than that between *Normalists* and *Abnormalists*.

Every scientific system presupposes faith: in self, self-consciousness, accuracy of our senses, laws of thought, something universal behind the phenomena, life, principles from which we proceed – proof that axioms don't come from proof, but are given with our self-consciousness (Schaeffer & CVT will call these presuppositions).

And faith necessarily speaks out – conflict not bet/ faith and science, but bet/ different faiths about the cosmos: *normal* (eternal evolution from potential to ideal) vs. *abnormal* (past disturbance requires regenerating power).

Lists different presuppositions (pp. 132-133).

Two systems of science, both of which begin w/ a suggestion of the Divine Being. Entire modern theology finds its home in the science of the Normalists. Differ over whole domain of life – cannot stop trying to pull down the entire edifice of each other's assertions – a function of the demand of unity of conception.

Discourse on "amphibious scholars." "The *normal* and the *abnormal* are two absolutely differing starting-points, which have nothing in common in their origins. Parallel lines never intersect. You have to choose either the one or the other" (p. 134).

Science timeline ... Christianity establishes abnormalists: nice summary of our worldview: with decay of old heathenism, emergence of general conviction that:

- everything was created by God;
- special acts of creation;
- man as image-bearer in original righteousness;
- original harmony broken by intervening sin;
- in order to restore things God introduced the abnormal means of regeneration, of Christ as Mediator and of Holy Scripture.

There were scoffers and indifferent people, but the scientific conviction was universal for 10 centuries. Renaissance favored an infidel tendency, felt even in the Vatican; Humanism created enthusiasm for Gk-Rom ideals; even though normalists made a beginning, the host of philologists, jurists, physicians, and

physicists for centuries left the foundations untouched. During the 18th cent. the opposition moved from the circumference to the center; declared for the first time that the principles of the Christian worldview were untenable. Proliferation of systems united in but one thing: opposition to abnormalism. Secured the assent of the leading men, and the new hypothesis was introduced as the starting point for jurisprudence, medicine, natural science and history.

Public opinion at first stupefied, but in the absence of *personal* faith among the masses, the superficial reluctance was shortlived. Only took 25 yrs. (**what time frame is Kuyper thinking of?**) for normalism to become the dominant principle. Only abnormalist with personal faith demurred at the claims of "modern thought" – abnormalist felt inclined to anathematize all science and retire to the tent of mysticism. Theologians sought for a while to defend their cause apologetically, but this amounted to a man adjusting a window-frame unaware the building is tottering on its foundations.

Attempt at "mediating theology," adopting one of the naturalistic systems as a prop – esp. popular in Germany. Theology becomes poorer and poorer, philosophy richer and richer, until at last modern theology tries to purge itself of the abnormalist element altogether:

- Christ transformed into a man just like us, not even free from sin
- Scripture transformed into a collection of writings, for the most part pseudepigraphic, interpolated with myths, legends, fables

Normality embraced as the only criterion of truth. Perfectly normal for a person to speak in such a way under the assumption of personal and cosmic normality – "nothing can be said against his personal stand-point, provided that, thinking as he does, he shows the courage to voluntarily leave the Christian church in all its denominations" (p. 136).

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Calvinism's superior position: won't mess with useless apologetics – a great battle that can't be reduced to skirmish for the outworks – Calvinism goes to *human consciousness*, from which every man of science has to proceed as *his* consciousness. Ultimate questions:

- Consciousness of sin?

- Certainty of faith?
- Testimony of Holy Spirit?

Normalist insists that his consciousness is everybody's. We admit that the normalist's is different than ours. We contend for *free science* – the normalist contends for uniform science. He believes we are deluded. We will resist. We've traded places: now normalists are in, we are out. Sinfully, we used to show them the door – now they are avenging themselves. May we now be as courageous as they were when they were excluded. We have to appreciate that they are only following their first principles; we can't seek reprisal, we can't retreat in "mystic feeling ... or ... unconfessional work" – we have to go back to our own first principles, and glut the press with our own studies. We have to respond to Calvin's call for a *Philosophia Christiana*. We have to account for all facts in all fields, minus the false hypotheses and conclusions of the naturalists.

Universities need a radical change – universities grounded in Christian presuppositions. If (as Calvinism says they should) the church and state withdraw their high authority (if not their liberal gifts!) from university life, things will work themselves out. History's lesson: Rome tried to have one State, but found it impossible given the different needs of different nations. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the church sought a one-world church, until Reformation dispelled the illusion and led to higher development of the Christian life – points to U.S., "where denominational multiformity gave a separate Church-embodiment to every differentiation. Demand for one science manifests old curse of uniformity – days of artificial unity are numbered – expects to see a multiformity of universities expressing the differing worldviews, at least, of Roman Catholic, Calvinistic, and Evolutionist. We need "systems in science, coherence in instruction, unity in education" (p. 141).

Calvinism will open the way to liberty of science: 1) by guaranteeing every system's freedom to develop a system based on its first principles; 2) by refusing the scientific name to whatsoever investigator dare not unroll the colors of his own banner, and does not admit the principle for which he lives, and from which his conclusions derive their power.

Lecture 5: ...and Art

Seems to bemoan the democratization of art, nonetheless acknowledges that love of art leads many so seek enjoyment in noble directions and lessens the appetite for lower sensuality. Where there's only materialism and rationalism, the human heart atrophies. The artistic instinct provides an antidote.

"Unchecked, the dominating influences of money and of barren intellectualism would reduce the life of the emotions to freezing-point. And unable to grasp the holier benefits of religion, the mysticism of the heart reacts in an art-intoxication" (p. 143). ... "even the most injudicious aesthetical fanaticism stands far higher than the common race for wealth, or an unholy prostration before the shrines of Bacchus and Venus. In this cold, irreligious and practical age the warmth of this devotion to art has kept alive many higher aspirations of our soul, which otherwise might readily have died, as they did in the middle of the last century" (p. 143).

"... one of the richest gifts of God to mankind"

Wants to counter the anti-art impression of Calvinism deduced from its iconoclasm.

Urges that while artistic instinct is universal, the development of that instinct is unequally divided among the nations – has a lot to do with climate and natural surroundings.

1) Why Calvinism not allowed to develop an art style of its own.

First proof: Calvinism represents a higher form of the religious life. Kuyper discusses architecture – art-styles emerged from the cult – distinguishes bet/ artistic urge that is basic and is fundamentally tied to religion and art-style. A sign of a lower stage of religion when the religion has to express itself in a distinctive art-style. A function of the age when religion is imposed upon a whole nation. Calvinism promoted religious liberty, and saw religion rise to a higher plain where it graduates from the symbolical into the clearly-conscious life, thereby necessitating both the division of worship into many forms, and the emancipation of matured religion from all sacerdotal and political guardianship. Calvinism broke the power of the state within the domain of religion and **made an end to sacerdotal religion – abandoned the symbolical form of worship** and refused, at the demand of art, to embody its religious spirit in monuments of splendor (p. 147).

Contrast with the situation in Israel – ministry of shadows over; cites Heb 8:13; John 4:24-25. In Israel a state-religion under sacerdotal leadership, appearing in symbols, w/ Solomon's temple its embodiment. Christ: in spirit and in truth – no trace or shadow of art for worship in apostolic literature. **"Aaron's visible priesthood on earth gives place to the invisible High-priesthood after the order of Melchizedek in Heaven. The purely spiritual breaks through the nebula of the symbolical"** (p. 147).

Second proof: Higher relat. bet/ art and religion as articulated by Hegel and von Hartmann. Hegel: art imparts to still sensual religion its highest expression till religion finally casts art off: "beautiful art is not its highest emancipation," for that is found only in the realm of the invisible and spiritual (**why doesn't this sound Gnostic to Kuyper?!?!?!).** Von Hartmann: early religion finds all art is religious, but when religion becomes fully mature it will "entirely abstain from the stimulant by which aesthetic pseudo-emotion intoxicated it" to focus on the *purely religious*. (**Again, why doesn't K denounce this thinking as Gnostic?**).

Calvinism led to the emancipation of art and religion – the desire for a reintegration is retrograde; like second childhood in old age – the desire for a reintroduction of the symbolical in our places of worship is a function of the sad reality that the pulsebeat of the religious life in our days is fainter than that during the time of the martyrs.

Objection: shouldn't Calvinism have at least resulted in an independent secular art style? How could it, when its impulse requires no aspect of life to be independent of religion? Discourses on the relation bet/ the four spheres of life: intellectual, ethical, religious, and aesthetic. They run parallel, and disallow the derivation of one from the other. Unity lies in the spring of the Infinite. Huh? Means at least that art is not an mere appendage to religion. Also means that it could only have been under the auspices of its religious impulse that Calvinism could have created art; but that since it had attained a higher stage of rel. that forbade symbolical expression, it simply couldn't create an art style (**what gobblede-gook!**).

2) What flows from Calvinism's principle for the nature of art.

Calvin esteemed art as a gift of the Holy Spirit – Jubal; commentary on Exod; defends art in Geneva; says 2nd Commandment not against art; pleasure not to be denied people, even common

sport; art's ability to disclose a higher reality than what is offered in this sinful and corrupted world.

Task of art: to produce a beautiful world that transcends the beauty of nature (in other words, true art is not merely imitative any more than true science consists in the mere collection of facts). For Calvin, given the fall, art is a means of reimagining lost beauty. Different from worldview of those who see the world as it is as the realization of the absolute good ... dismisses pantheist vision of progress to perfection.

"But if you confess that the world once was beautiful, but by the curse has become *undone*, and by a final catastrophe is to pass to its full state of glory, excelling even the beautiful of paradise, then art has the mystical task of reminding us in its productions of the beautiful that was lost and of anticipating its perfect coming luster" (p. 155).

Rehearses the redemptive story line according to Calvinism as opposed to Romanism.

"Calvinism honored art as a gift of the Holy Ghost and as a consolation in our present life, enabling us to discover in and behind this sinful life a richer and more glorious background. Standing by the ruins of this once so wonderfully beautiful creation, art points out to the Calvinist both the still visible lines of the original plan, and what is even more, the splendid restoration by which the Supreme Artist and Master-Builder will one day renew and enhance even the beauty of His original creation" (p. 155).

If God is sovereign (Calvinism's first principle), then art cannot originate from the Evil One. God creates; fashions us after his image, and gives us the capacity to create *unreal* things to reflect the beauty of his creation. It is our privilege as bearers of his image, "to have a perception of this beautiful world, artistically to reproduce it, and humanly to enjoy it" (p. 157).

3) What Calvinism has actually done for the advancement of art.

History of art: Christianity came on the scene when Gk-Rom world was, in its last convulsion, enchanting the beautiful world. The church necessarily opposed paganism by opposing art. Ascendency of the Holy Roman Empire (quick baptism of Germanic peoples): church becomes guardian of higher life – but all educational guardianship leads to its own dissolution. When Northern Europe came of age, four strong movements emerged: 1) the Renaissance

in the domain of art; 2) the Republicanism of Italy in politics; 3) Humanism in science; 4) the Reformation in religion. A quadruple alliance against the church's tutelage, and especially in alliance in 16th cent.

K credits Renaissance for a share of the victory (**what victory? liberation of art, I think**) – maintains that God had planted aesthetic genius in the Greek, giving her "the fundamental laws of art," which alone "justify her claim to an independent existence." The mere discovery of this connection (achieved by the Renaissance) alone couldn't liberate art. The high-Renaissance church simply co-opted the art, establishing a more permanent patronage. What had to happen was the church's retreat into the spiritual:

"The real liberation of art required much more patent energies. From principle, the Church was to be forced back to her spiritual realm. Art, having hitherto confined herself to the holy spheres, had now to make her appearance in the social world. And in the Church, Religion had to put aside her symbolical robes, in order that, after having ascended to the higher spiritual level, her life-giving breath might animate the whole world" (p. 159).

Von Hartmann: It is pure spiritual Religion which with one hand deprives the artist of his specifically religious art, but which, with the other, offers him, in exchange, a whole world, to be religiously animated" (p. 159).

Lutheranism had such aspirations, but it took Calvinism to break, first, from the *splendor ecclesiae* (outward glitter, vast possessions, by which art financially held in bondage), and second, **from symbolical religion as such.**

Further, Calvinism led to deeper interpretation of life and thus of human art via its doctrine of *common grace*. All liberal arts are gifts God gives promiscuously to believers and unbelievers – actually, even in larger measure outside the holy circle. Calvin: "These radiations of Divine Light shone more brilliantly among unbelieving people than among God's saints."

Art is not a function of particular grace – true of all aspects of natural life. "As far as holy things are concerned, Israel is chosen, ... But just in proportion as Israel shines forth from within the domain of Religion, so is it equally backward when you compare the development of its art, science, politics, commerce and trade to that of the surrounding nations" (p. 161)

– building of Temple requires Hiram – Solomon realizes this is “a natural ordinance of God.”

Every nation elect for something: Israel to be vessel of salvation. Greece to be vessel of art and philosophy. Rome: Law and State

Greece & art: the unchangeable foundation of arts ideal existence: such a revelation is *ephapax*, and is and remains classical, tone-giving and forever dominant. Calvinism recognized Greece’s prominence as a nation of art, and conceded art’s right of independent existence. Further, though art should radiate in the sphere of religion, art shouldn’t be dependent on the church. Calvinism welcomed the Renaissance’s contribution to this process.

Earth no lost planet ... no aimless mass of people ... not just the womb of Christians ... the world is the theatre of the mighty works of God ... even apart from salvation, in the present dispensation, the ungodly contribute to the glory of God. Art reveals ordinances of creation that neither science nor politics nor religious life reveal. Art must be allowed to develop accdg to (and in congruence with) her own laws (as discovered by the Gks), purged of Paganism, of course.

For Calvin: no estrangement between science, art and religion, but rather the permeation of all of life by these three vital powers together:

- There must be a science that doesn’t rest until it has thought out the entire cosmos.
- There must be a religion that cannot sit still until it has permeated every sphere of human life.
- There must be an art that, despising no aspect of life, adopts the whole of human life into her splendid world, religion included.

Calvinism’s particular contributions to art. Necessity of working with natural data ... different gifts (human and nonhuman) in different nations and regions. Calvinism’s contributions not in the objective, but in the subjective arts, esp. painting and music.

Rembrandt – learning to take account of the people – family no longer as annex of the church, but asserted its independent standing – by light of common grace, non-churchly life valued –

common life of man came out of its hiding place like a new world – the broad emancipation of our ordinary earthly life and the instinct for liberty.

Doctrine of election: makes art interested in the hidden importance of what was seemingly small and insignificant ... requires that the artist pay attention to what is common and everyday occurrence, to the emotions and the issues of the human heart. Everything human, even sin: even foolish and drastic extravagances, merely as revolutions and manifestations of human life – man should be shown the image of his folly that he might depart from evil. Not, as in past, only the idealized figures of prophets and apostles, of saints and priests: “now, however, when he saw how God had chosen the porter and the wage-earner for Himself, he found interest not only in the head, the figure and the entire personality of the man of the people, but began to reproduce the human expression of every rank and station” (p. 166).

Not just sufferings of the “Man of Sorrows,” “but an understanding that there was a mystical suffering also in the general woe of man, revealing hitherto unmeasured depths of the human heart, thereby enabling us to fathom much better the still deeper depths of the mysterious agonies of Golgotha” (pp. 166-167).

The artist freed from ecclesiastical power and princely gold, the artist now a man freely mingling among the people discovers a gap between life as portrayed by palace and castle. People’s maturity and love of liberty (awakened by Calvinism) discloses an entirely new world, “opening the eye for the small and the insignificant” and “opening the heart for the sorrows of mankind” – thus Dutch art leads the way for the nations to rediscover, through Christ, the human.

Music: relies on Douen’s book on Marot (**Calvin’s first musical collaborator**). Conservatism of Gregorian music (abandoned rhythm, despised harmony). Music of people was vulgar, inspired by worship of Venus, heard during “donkey festivals.” People forbidden to sing in church. Independent music allowed no standing. Calvinism (and Protestantism in general) bridled the tutelage of the church. Adopted people’s melodies to return them to the people purified and baptized in Christian seriousness. Wide fertile fields of common grace. Choir abandoned – the people sing – Bourgeois (**Calvin’s second musical collaborator**), et al., chose popular melodies so the people would “no longer sing in the saloon or in the street, but in the sanctuary, and

thus, in their melodies, cause the seriousness of the heart to triumph over the heat of the lower passions" (p. 168).

Idea of laity gives way to priesthood of believers. Bourgeois adopted rhythm; exchanged Gregorian 8 modes for the two of major and minor from popular music; also adopted harmony and wedded melody to verse via *expression*; singing by scale (*solfeggio*); reduction of chords; simplification of music. Goudimel (**Calvin's third musical collaborator**, and, according to Kuyper, once teacher to Palestrina) gave leading part to soprano.

Big contribution to music because Calvinism's spiritual worship of God provided no room for the more material arts, but assigned a new role to song and to music.

When Calvinism accused of aesthetical dullness, we need but recall that Goudimel was murdered in the St. Bartholomew massacre. Douen: has that man any right to complain about the stillness of the forest, who with his own hand has caught and killed the nightingale?

Lecture 5: ...and the Future

Not a call for imitative repristination. Go to the root, and clean and water it – figure out how to make it bud and blossom again, “now fully in accordance with our actual life in these modern times, and with the demands of the times to come” (p. 171).

A new Calvinistic development needed by the wants of the future.

Material, tangible side of life holds out the fairest of promises for the future. But the hypertrophy of our external life results in a serious atrophy of the spiritual.

Describes spiritual decline, and asks: can we expect that by natural evolution a higher phase of social life will develop out of the present spiritual decline?

On two occasions civilization saw resurrection: Roman empire's demoralization broken by gospel of Christ (not by evolution); medieval world falling into bankruptcy till second resurrection of Reformation.

In 7th cent. Mohammed created a “stir among the dead bones” – and in K's day he sees some people hoping for some glorious “Universal Spirit” – but the only thing that can surpass the God-given Christ is the second coming of the same Christ of Calvary. What's going on is either the death throes in anticipation of his return, or an anticipation of another rejuvenation through the same “old and ever new Gospel” that saved the threatened life of our race twice before.

Most alarming feature of the present situation is: in the past, there was a crying out, a receptivity to the gospel; moderns, however, think they have **outgrown** Christianity.

Fr. Rev's imitation of Calvinism – revenge for RCC suppression of Huegenots – but opposed to Calvinism's view of freedom. Train (of freedom) rushes forward, but with no tracks. Description of dissolution in France. German attempt to stem the tide through Pantheism – K says this holds together for now only because of trad of strong political and family institutions. In the end, though, Voltaire and Nietzsche agree on the most fundamental thing: they hate God.

Modern life: seeks the origin of man not in image of God, but in evolution from the animal. Two implications: 1) pt. of departure no longer the ideal of divine, but the material and low; 2) God

no longer sovereign, so man surrenders self to mystical current of endless process. Double life evolves: life of mind in the university, life of flesh among the masses. Money, pleasure, and social power the only pursuits. Where can it end but in the refuge of suicide (p. 179). Life is viewed as concrete, concentrated, practical. Decadence of parliamentarism, "ever stronger desire for a dictator," sharper conflict bet/ pauperism and capitalism ... bet/ strong & weak ... individuals and nations. Darwinism at national level, thanks to Bismarck. Scholars and experts demand submission to them. Can only result eventually in the emergence of a coarse and overbearing *kratistocracy* (= "rule by the powerful") of a brutal money power. "Such they tell us was the process of selection to which we, ourselves, owe our origin, and such is the process, which, in us and after us, must work itself out to its ultimate consequences." Contrast bet/ Nietzsche (the weak must be supplanted by the strong) & Christ (in divine compassion, He showed heart-winning sympathy for the weak – p. 180).

A side current, of nobler origin. Kuyper critiques modern theology. Crass dualism: acceptance of empiricism and rationalism, but leap into (still naturalistic) mysticism and ideal altruism.

- abolition of "Creator of heaven and earth" for creation supplanted by evolution
- abolition of belief in CHRIST as Son of God w/ loss of Virgin Birth
- abolition of belief in Christ's resurrection and return
- abolition of belief in our bodily resurrection
- metamorphosis of CHRIST that he might glitter from the throne of humanity (with simultaneous charge that traditional Christ is a metamorphosis of the historical Jesus – when it is only the former who conquered)
- virtually denies the authority of the Holy Scriptures
- sees in sin nothing but a lack of development
- recognizes Christ for no more than a religious genius of central significance
- views redemption as a mere reversal of our subjective mode of thinking
- indulges in a mysticism dualistically opposed to the world of the intellect

A quasi-theology powerless to restore our tottering morality.

Considers Rome: appreciates potential alliance on matters of the Creed, but points to RCC "mismanagement" of S. America and S. Europe. The Roman Catholic world, Kuyper believes, is in

decline. Even if it were to turn things around, politically, RCC represents a retrograde move.

Considers claims for non-theological Protestantism that focuses on the practical (philanthropy, evangelism, missions) and on the mystical (retreat into mere piety).

“God created hand, head, and heart; the hand for the deed, the head for the world, the heart for mysticism. King in deed, prophet in profession, and priest in heart, shall man in this threefold office stand before God, and a Christianity that neglects the mystic element grows frigid and congeals. ... But it would be a sad mistake to suppose that mysticism, taken by itself, can bring about a reversal in the spirit of the age. Not Bernard of Clairvaux but Thomas of Aquino, not Thomas a Kempis but Luther, have ruled the spirits of men” (pp. 188-189).

Need Truth of Salvation as well as mysticism and Christian works – convictions such as concern the acceptance of truth and the rejection of error.

Need a coherent world and life-view: “Only of Calvinism can it be said that it has consistently and logically followed out the lines of the Reformation, has established not only Churches but also States, has set its stamp upon social and public life, and has thus, in the full sense of the word, created for the whole life of man a world of thought entirely its own” (p. 190).

Not that all churches should subscribe to the Reformed symbols and all ecclesiastical multiformity be swallowed up in the unity of the Reformed church-organization. First, no Reformed standard is infallible the way Scripture is. Second, the Calvinistic confession so deeply religious, so highly spiritual, that it will never be realized by the large masses – but will be impress itself on a relatively small circle. Third, our inborn one-sidedness will always necessarily lead to the manifestation of the Church of Christ in many forms. Fourth, absorption runs counter to the whole argument: “Not ecclesiastically, confined to a narrow circle, but as a phenomenon of universal significance, have I commended to you the Calvinism of history” (p. 192).

What is the return to Calvinism?

1) Calvinism should no longer be ignored where it still exists, but rather be strengthened.

Owning, for instance, the Calvinistic origins of the U.S., and its after-effects.

2) Calvinism's principles should again be studied that the outside world may come to know it.

3) Calvinism's principles should again be developed in accordance with the needs of our time, and consistently applied to the various domains of life.

4) The churches that still lay claim to confessing it should stop being ashamed of their own confession.

Election vs. Selection – differentiation implies preference – selection based on strength – election brings a consolation that selection cannot. Weird remarks about the coming battle with Asian paganism – a difficult struggle to rise to when "pagan thought, pagan aspiration, pagan ideals are gaining ground even among us and penetrating to the very heart of the rising generation?" (p. 198).

Our period is one that is at low ebb religiously. Calvinism as the world's (he means the West's) Aeolian Harp (**Aeolus was the Greek god of the wind**), hung outside the window in hope that the Spirit will blow.