

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

CALVINISM: THE ORIGIN AND SAFEGUARD OF  
OUR CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES.<sup>1</sup>

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THE ability of a plant to live depends on the root from which it springs. He who would guarantee our liberty to us should know where it originated and be able to tell whence it came. This requires a simple knowledge of history; hence the character of this paper is purely scientific.

Our field of inquiry is determined by general and well-known facts. It needs no proof at our hand, that in com-

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Dutch by the Rev. J. Hendrik de Vries, M.A., Bronxville, N. Y.

[The author here uses the word Calvinism in its broadest scope to signify the tendency, or life-principle, which makes the *Soli Deo Gloria* according to the Old and New Testament Scriptures comprehend all of life. This was the attitude assumed by the Church in Geneva; this is the attitude which the Reformed churches in the Netherlands strive to maintain in the face of the various isms of our times, all of which in lesser and greater degree tend to wrest the Scriptures away from under the feet of evangelical Christianity. And as natural outcome or consequence of this, there has been founded in Holland the Free University—1880—which claims the entire world of science (philosophy, medicine, law, and the arts) in willing and grateful subjection to the Absolute Authority of the Scriptures, by which the *Soli Deo Gloria* becomes the standard planted in every domain occupied by human research and thought. Of this whole tendency, Dr. Kuyper is the living exponent in our time.—TR.]

parison with Europe liberty has no name in Africa or Asia. In Europe no one will look for the cradle of liberty in Russia or in Turkey, in Spain or Austria. One would even hesitate to do this in Italy and the northern kingdoms, in Germany or France. Whoever, on the other hand, boasts of England, Holland, Switzerland, and America as being countries of political liberty, is assured of universal approval. These geographic lines coincide with the chronological. From Reformation times to the French Revolution, political liberty is claimed and tried almost exclusively by England, Holland, Switzerland, and America; and after the revolution of 1789 the acclimation of a still broader liberty has thus far been tried in vain outside of these four nations. There is good reason to extend to these four powers a special patent of fitness for political liberty. The origin of our liberty is not found outside of their domain.

Whence comes this favorable exception?

Bancroft, the celebrated historian of America, says: "The fanatic for Calvinism was a fanatic for liberty." De Tocqueville testifies: "America's liberty considers Christianity the guardian angel of her struggle and victory, the cradle of her life, the divine source of her right." In his recent work "*L'Angleterre politique et sociale*," Auguste Laugel declares, "The doctrinaires of France derived liberty from an idea. In England, however, religious liberty was mother of all political liberty. The Holy Bible has set the Englishman free, by making him submit to its Authority." Groen van Prinsteren, who also as an historian is a corypheus among us, wrote only recently that "In the Calvinistic Reformation according to the Holy Scriptures lies the origin and safeguard of these blessings, of which 1789 gave us the deceptive promise and the pitiable caricature."

Hence the origin of our liberty is found in Calvinism. This solution commends itself to us already by so much that in the four above-named countries the Reformation bore a se-

verely Calvinistic stamp, and was governed by Geneva. This is true of Switzerland and England, of Holland and America.

But this is not enough. The *propter hoc* may readily appear to differ from the *post hoc*, and our assertion will prove true only when the progress of Calvinism along the lines of its three stages—the French religious wars, the English Revolution, and the founding of America's Union, shows us indeed the development of those political liberties, of whose possession we are so justly proud. For this let us investigate.

But first a twofold observation.

Our Calvinists call themselves anti-revolutionists. How are we to understand this term? Is it right that this tendency be identified with the Prussian party of Stahl or the ultramontanic world party? In one way it certainly is. When the question is put: Whether the state can flourish without the root of the faith, our answer is the same with theirs. In opposition to the fundamental thought of the French Revolution, "to emancipate the creature from the Creator," they and we are one. If, on the other hand, it is held that from this common principle the self-same public law is derived by us all, then I insist on liquidation, and maintain for Calvinistic public law the independence which belongs to the Reformed life. Upon the basis of its Confession, Rome built a political system of its own, which, after the character of the hierarchy, was preponderantly monarchic. And Rome knew how to bring this system into practice. All the states of the Middle Ages were instituted in accordance with the theory of the two swords. It cannot be denied that in Rome was found the germ of a creative thought for public law. This was not the case with the Lutheran reformation, which reconstructed things, but which built nothing new. In Germany and in the northern empires the political life of the Middle Ages was simply continued after the Reformation, with Cæseropapism however, instead of the hierarchy, by the transposition

of spiritual authority from the Romish chair to the princely cabinet. Calvinism, on the other hand, was shown to possess the power, which the Lutheran reformation lacked, and has, even as Rome, derived from a principle of its own a system of its own for political life, which, even under the monarchic form, is always recognized by its republican character. Calvin achieved what Luther could not do: Calvin has founded nationalities. Our Union, the England of "the glorious revolution," the Scotland of the Covenant, the United States of America, are institutions of his spirit. Understand me well. I know that the Church of Rome, whenever it is required, is able to accommodate herself to every form of state; I know that before Reformation times the liberties of the people received homage in these countries; I know that learned Jesuits have been the advocates of democratic doctrines. At this moment, however, when the question in hand is not concerning abnormal utterances, but concerning the life-principle itself, the fundamental thought of Rome may not be designated as otherwise than being severely monarchical: over against which we have the definite utterance of Calvin in his "Institutes": "I shall by no means deny that the republican form of government, which consists either of pure aristocracy, or of a mixture of aristocracy and democracy, far excels all others." And this conviction was not founded on his notions of human excellency, but, on the contrary, was born of his profound interpretation of sin. For he adds: "The vice or imperfection of men renders it safer and more tolerable for the government to be in the hands of many, that they may afford each other mutual assistance and admonition, and if any one arrogate to himself more than is right, the many may act as censors and masters to restrain his ambition."

It is evident that this does not exclude constitutional monarchy. And this brings us to the point where we can show how we may recognize Stahl to be a great leader, and still refuse to be his followers. Stahl is, without question,

the most illustrious advocate of the anti-revolutionary principles of recent date; no one has made distinction between the useful and the objectionable in modern public law with greater decision of stroke and finer tact than he; he too is an adherent to a monarchy that is constitutional. But he who deems that, for this reason, Holland's anti-revolutionists have but to copy Stahl, offends our independence. Stahl desires a constitutional monarchy; and so do we. But while he is zealous for a monarchy which is constitutional, we are zealous for a constitution which shall be monarchic. He begins with monarchy and reaches the constitution: we begin with the constitution and reach the monarchy. Stahl is a Lutheran, we are Reformed, for this have we another state law. To elect him as our leader, without criterion, would betray our want of wisdom and of insight. Stahl admits this himself by saying that the character trait of Lutheranism is "the strongest foundation for monarchic loyalty"; and that Calvinism "tends towards republicanism, and encourages the importance of legal order to preponderate over personal authority and to be a check to it." Stahl is therefore no standard for us. In royal and aristocratic circles, where there is more religion by the reveille than by Calvinism, Stahl's un-Reformed and un-Holland-like forms, together with his eternal principles, may have been accepted by some, for reasons easily conceived, but Groen von Prinsteren was from the very beginning too good a Netherlander and too broadly a man of the people, not to have honored and loved our Puritanic and Calvinistic people. To this he owed his invincible strength in the face of one so congenial in mind with him as Van Zuylen. And is the question raised, with whom our Calvinistic people most gladly sympathize, provided the heaven wide difference in principle be in nowise sacrificed, then be it known, that it is not with the ultramontanes, nor with the conservatives, nor with the doctrinal liberals, but with those who are zealous for broader liberties still. The heart of our people,

—and I think I know it well—was never in the rear guard, but always under the colors in the van, in the struggle for liberty, the development of national traits, and the maintenance of law.

The second observation is added in briefer form. To guard against misunderstanding let us emphasize the assertion that the Calvinistic faith is the mother of our political liberty, and not of the French Revolution. If this were not our conviction, there would be no need of any further demonstration. On every hand it is proclaimed that our present-day revolution stands in close family relation with Calvinism. The Romish historian prefers to call Calvin the spiritual father of the French Revolution. Professor Alzog, of the Freiburg Romish University, declares that "the intended results of the Reformation came clearly to light, only when from religious interests they passed over to political platforms. In the root, the French Revolution and the Reformation are one." From Cousin's well-known utterance, "The sixteenth century began the revolution in philosophy, the eighteenth made it general and broadcast," it clearly appears that in the liberal camp equal reckonings are made with the factor of the Reformation. Stahl responds to this: "In their essential character Puritanism and Revolution are not allied, but antagonistic to one another." Why so? Are not both intent upon liberty as their prize? In very deed, but they strive to raise it from a different root. "Liberty from the philosophical *idée*" is the motto of the Encyclopedists; "Liberty of the faith" is the magic word of the Reformation. And our assertion is that the Revolution brought no liberty, while the Reformation did. Just consider facts. In Spain, Austria, and France the Reformation was rooted out, and the Revolution nursed, and how weak has their political liberty been ever since! In Switzerland and Holland, where, after the Reformation, the Revolution exerted its influence, the inner elasticity of liberty became debased rather than exalted. En-

gland, on the other hand, which allowed the Reformation to permeate it as a leaven, and not the Revolution of 1789, is still the guide of Europe's nations in the struggle against religious persecution and political tyranny.

Consider the proof from history, in which by preference the developmental stages of Calvinism are taken in their reverse order. Beginning with America, then England, we go, by the way of the French religious wars, and Beza, back to Calvin.

### I.

We begin with America, since he who champions American liberties will certainly not be suspected of being reactionary. Not that the conditions in America appear altogether without spot or wrinkle; on the contrary, much might be said against the Yankee spirit in the seaport towns and among the money kings. But he who would criticise, should do so with fairness and justice, and not forget that America is still very young; that, more than any other nation, it had to receive within itself the degraded elements of other climes, and that, by its vast extent of territory, it stood readily exposed to a degeneration of its national character. But enough: the fact is above question that America lacks no single liberty for which in Europe we struggle. In America there is absolute liberty of conscience; liberty of trade and commerce; free participation by the citizens in all matters of public interest; a government which is responsible in all things; a small army; few onerous taxes; liberty of organization; liberty of the press; liberty of public worship; liberty of thought. The administration of justice is quick and cheap. No such thing as a privileged class is known. There is common equality before law without any reservation. In America modern liberties flourish without limitation. Complaint might be made about too much liberty; to complain of a want of it were surely an absurdity there. In order to determine whether

this abounding political liberty finds its origin in the French Revolution, or in the Genevan Reformation, we should know the attitude of the American Union towards France at the close of the last century. Did it manifest its unconcealed sympathies for France, and did it hasten to appropriate for itself the new findings of the National Convention? If so, then the plea for Calvinism is lost. If, on the other hand, it appears that the Federal government, supported by the best elements of the nation, and most clearly conscious of all its doings, turned with abhorrence from the France of the Mirabeau, then every idea of affiliation between America and France of 1789 is readily dismissed.

We are prepared to treat with utmost consideration the current opinion, which represents the American and French revolutions as twin shoots on one stem. A striking similarity marks the demands of the New York mob and the Parisian commonalty. For a time the American press was as inflated with empty enthusiasm on abstractions and generalities as were the French pamphleteers. There was even a momentary danger that the Jacobinism of Montaigne would sweep across to the clubs of Charleston and Baltimore. An after-thrill of the French Revolution has undoubtedly been felt by the newly constituted Union. But how much does this prove? Could the assistance France had rendered in the revolution against England so quickly be forgotten? Or could the name of La Fayette have lost its magic power? Is it strange that the public mind could not grasp at once the vast difference between French phrases and Calvinistic liberty?

Granting this does by no means weaken our position; for if it can be shown, that, notwithstanding its attachment to France, in spite of England's refusal to execute the peace that had been made, and in spite of all that was enticing in the republican form of the French government, America deliberately deserted France, in order to seek England's friend-

ship, then the inference of America's liberty from France's revolution falls away.

This was done by the Federal government, and the best element of the nation supported Washington and Hamilton energetically in their politics, which were adverse to France, in direct opposition to Jefferson the demagogue, and his following from the Slave States, who were in sympathy with France. It needs scarcely be mentioned that New England and the North in general constituted the main strength of the Union, and not the South. The Southern States, with their stamp of aristocracy, and slave element in their economy, have never been amalgamated by the real, genuine people of the Union, not even to this day. From the very first they formed too sharp an antithesis with the real Union; they followed another political policy; they lived by another spirit. And this political antagonism made itself known upon the occasion of the very question we now deal with, when in 1793 the South, under Jefferson, took sides with France, and the real Union, under Washington, undertook to disarm Jefferson and render harmless his sympathies for France. The struggle was hot and violent. The apostles of the revolution—Genet and Adet—came over from Paris to Charleston to feed the fires of division. Washington writes: "To sum the whole up in a few words, I have never, since I have been in the administration of the government, seen a crisis which in my judgment has been so pregnant with interesting events, nor from which more is to be apprehended, whether viewed on one side or the other." England and France were at war, England against, and France in favor of revolution. This question was likewise to be settled by the Union. It was readily seen that great principles were at stake. Would sides be taken with the historic government of Great Britain or with the revolutionary leadership of Paris? Thus the question stood, and Hamilton made answer, according to Jefferson's own testimony, saying: "That he considered the Brit-

ish constitution, with all the corruption of its administration, as the most perfect model of government." "The Federal government saw," writes Professor Holst from Strasburg, "that the hollow abstractions of Paris were altogether impracticable. Their politics were founded on real relations, and not on abstractions, and they knew that they could not deal with human beings as with dead numbers or logical ideas." Strong in this conviction, they were ready for action; Jay was deputed to London to assure the peace with England; the convention in Paris was ignored. The position, once taken, was maintained, though France severed its diplomatic connection, and tidings were wafted across the deep, that France in the exalted possession of her glory deemed it beneath herself to continue dealings with a Union that courted the favor of England and licked the dust off the feet of its former oppressors.

Whether the people favored this policy would be shown, as it always is in America, by the presidential election. This occurred in 1796. Adams and Jefferson were the candidates for office. Jefferson's candidacy implied a triumph for the France-loving South: Adams' name implied the approval of the policy of the government, and . . . Adams was elected, the foreign element had to lower its flag, the best elements of the nation took sides against the revolution, and that New England, the heart of the Union, stood strongly by the side of Washington, appears notably from the writings of Dwight to Wollcott: "Our good people of New England will never permit a war with Great Britain; sooner would ninety-nine out of a hundred of our inhabitants separate at once from the Union."

Is the question asked, whether the American Constitution of March, 1789, was copy of Rousseau literature, then Holst replies that, "It is folly to assert that the Rousseau writings exerted an influence on the development in America"; which opinion is supported by the following facts: that in a session of the committee charged with the framing of this

constitution, at a critical period Franklin arose and proposed prayer for light from the All-wise God, since he (Franklin) saw no way out by which to solve the problem;—that in the congress of 1797 the debates on the slave question were conducted not merely by religious but scriptural arguments;—and that in one of America's most widely-read periodicals appeared this statement: "Such a government we regard as more than the expression of calm wisdom and lofty enthusiasm, it has its distinctively providential element. It was God's saving gift to a distracted and imperiled people. It was his creative fiat over a weltering chaos, 'let a nation be born in a day.'"

If this is not sufficient proof, and the suggestion is made that the War of the Revolution against England was the prelude to the tearing down of the Bastille, and early fruit of the labors of the Encyclopedists, then we refer to Burke, that eminent anti-revolutionist who defended America's insurrection with loud enthusiasm; and better still, to have America speak for herself, we refer to Green's description of the attachment of the colonists to the mother country. "They loved England," he writes, "with the love of a child which, forced to leave home, remembers the past with self-reproach rather than with anger, as soon as the first bitterness is gone. A trip to old England was their ideal hope. To have been there gave celebrity and fame. They were proud of England's history, of England's literature, and of England's heroes. An Englishman was always welcome. Every door was open to him. No circle which opened not itself for him with enthusiasm." No: America's insurrection was as little a turning-upside-down of things, in the sense of the French Revolution, as was our insurrection against Spain, or England's "glorious revolution." The American insurrection tore nothing down; it replaced no ancient *régime* by a new order of things. Things remained as they were, only a congress appeared in the place of the royal commissary. America's insurrection was no eman-

icipation from the Creator, it was done by leaning on his help. Filled with gratitude for the mercies of our God, reads the preamble of the New York constitution, we, the citizens of New York, adopt this constitution.

One more protest may be entered. With Holst some one may say, that nothing was modified in America by the French Revolution, but that, far worse, as early as the founding of the New England colonies, the adder of unbelief was hssing in the grass. But against this, the Christian character which America exhibits to this day is witness conclusive, as well as the incontestable charter of the founding of its States.

Even now the people of the Union bear the Christian stamp with sharp incisiveness more than any nation of the world. This cannot be denied. With a small exception, the citizens of the United States, not merely in their lower and middle classes, but also in the ranks of their scholars and statesmen, are positive believers, Christian in a definite sense; what we call orthodox. And this is true, in spite of the fact that Christianity costs almost nothing in Europe, while in America it takes large fortunes to support it. Fifteen hundred dollars have been paid for a pew in church. So predominant is orthodoxy in free America, that the larger part of immigrants who arrive in its seaport towns with skeptical ideas and irreligious habits, quickly adopt America's supernatural life-view. Existing conditions there are the opposite from ours in Europe. If with us it has every appearance that the liberty of the people must be purchased at the sacrifice of the faith, there it is Calvinism which, according to the general conviction, offers the surest safeguard for the continued possession of those liberties. It is therefore a grave mistake to interpret America's separation of church and state after the rule of Cavour. It is much more sharply defined than in Europe, but starts from a different principle: not from the desire to be released from church duties; on the contrary, it starts from the consciousness that the welfare of the church and the

progress of Christianity demand this freedom and independence. This separation does not forbid, therefore, that the sessions of Congress should be opened with prayer, as well as all other political meetings; that the Sabbath should be inviolate; that thanksgiving days are appointed by the Cabinet at Washington; and that in plain English mention be made of the High God, in every important political message, with such reverence and devotion as becomes the creature in the presence of its Creator. Equal mistake is made when the common-school system of America is considered parallel to our theory of the neutral school. Read the bulky report on the common-school system in the United States, presented to English Parliament by Dr. Fraser, and the twofold fact appears: that the public school in America is a school *with the Bible*; and that since the Irish population has protested against the Bible in the schools, the downfall of the common-school system is foretold. A school of the state without Bible would simply be unthinkable in America. The influence exerted by Christianity is altogether too potent for this. Of the freest country in the world it is asserted by the man who knew it well, "that domestic morals there are much stricter than in Europe, and that Christianity reigns without opposition and is the common heritage of all."

In this threefold constellation of unlimited political liberty, strictness of morals, and faithful devotion to Christianity, the Union points back directly to its puritanical origin, to the invincible spirit of the Pilgrim fathers and to the spiritual descent from Calvin. New England has impressed its stamp upon the entire Union, and all New England's States were founded by martyrs to our Reformed faith. Robinson's followers went to New Plymouth, according to their own confession, not to organize a model state, but to find a spot where to worship God according to the dictates of their heart. They were no impoverished fortune hunters, but substantial and cultured representatives of the best classes of English society.

They were no ranting fanatics, but wise men of practical sense, impelled by the one motive, "the glory of the Most High," and impassioned by the one thought, "religious liberty for all men." On board of the *Mayflower* they wrote this preamble to their code of agreement, "We who have undertaken to plant a colony for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith." And their oldest historian narrates, that "to enjoy religious liberty was the known end of their coming to this wilderness." According to Adams' solemn confession, New England is not a colony of commerce, not a colony of deportation, not a colony for oppression, but a colony of the free conscience. In this liberty of conscience lay concealed the secret of their strength. A Puritan is a born enemy of clericalism. "Clerical overruling," says Bancroft, "is of all tyranny the most grievous to bear, for it weakens every energy, extinguishes enthusiasm, and takes away all courage." Puritanism, on the other hand, is a vitalizing principle, which engenders vigor, activity, and wisdom; and as for courage, a Puritan and a coward are antipodes born. He who stands in fear of God fears not the creature. "He that prays best will fight best," wrote Cromwell, and Cromwell was the greatest general of his age.

## II.

The founders of the American colonies were exiles from Great Britain; and we follow the development of Calvinism step by step, when, in the second place, we fix our eye upon its historic progress in England. Here it must needs appear in a different form. While in America it could freely unfold the character of its principle, this was not possible in the British Isles, where it had to deal with an historic past and with existing conditions. Calvinism is not a stark, intractable power which, during Calvin's lifetime, had discovered its ultimate possible development or attained its full completion. On the contrary, it is a principle which only gradually reveals

its inner strength, which has a thought of its own for every age; which is able to assume a form convenient for every land, and in these very series of transfigurations continues its progress of development. And the history of the English disturbances of the seventeenth century forms preëminently an important moment in this progress.

It is only lately that we have reached a more correct opinion on these troubles. Guizot has greatly helped us in this, by the publication of his *Memoirs*, and honor is due to Merle d'Aubigné, and Macaulay, for having sounded the deeply serious and interesting character of this powerful movement of the war of the Independents. This needs not, however, occasion surprise. The Independents were defeated, and never obtained a hearing for their cause. It was to be expected that Romish historians would antagonize them. On the strength of slanderous reports the Presbyterian churches have always misunderstood and misappreciated them, and in Lutheran countries knowledge and inclination both were wanting to fathom this anti-monarchical commotion. No one plead their cause for them; their own testimony was invalid; in America, public thought was busily making history, rather than writing it, and so it happened that the opinion concerning the Independents which was formulated by their enemies has been echoed, without question, by every later historian, until it was analyzed for the first time by Weingarten and thereby destroyed.

For, as it now appears, the struggle of the Independents aimed to solve the twofold question: first, the formal inquiry, hinted at above: Is Calvinism to degenerate into petrefaction, or prove itself a life-principle for future development, both for church and state? and, what is of more importance still, touching the root of all liberties: Is liberty of conscience, which Calvinism includes in its programme, to be realized or not? Let history show the meaning of the English disturbances touching these two inquiries.

For the first question: Is Calvinism petrification or a life-principle, we refer at once to Robinson, the fine thinker and gentle Christian, whose essays are still a literary delight, and who, as spiritual father of the Independency, far excels the silly renegade Brown, in vigor of intellect and greatness of soul. Robinson had fled from England, and lived first in Amsterdam, and afterward in Leyden, and was the leader of the Brownist church. We have in hand noteworthy words, spoken by him to the Pilgrim fathers as they embarked for America, which place us in the heart of the question better than broadest annals. "Brethren," said he to the departing pilgrims, "I charge you, before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We have not reached the end. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation; the Lutheran halting with Luther, the Calvinists with Calvin. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, but they penetrated not the whole council of God, and, were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you to remember, it is an article of your church covenant, that you should be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God. But I must here withal exhort you to take care what you receive as truth, for it is not possible that the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick antichristian darkness, and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."<sup>1</sup> Is not this manliness and nobility of speech, and does it occasion no surprise that such a man and his followers should have been persecuted with bitterest sarcasm, wildest anger, abuse, and disdain?

How, moreover, is it to be explained, that the Presby-

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, Vol. i. pp. 306, 307.

terians in England, who also were Calvinists, were accessory to this evil? The justly celebrated masterpiece of Bunyan is well known, at least by name; this most beautiful allegory is but a single utterance of the deep spirituality of life, of the tenderness of heart, and of holiest mysticism, which comes to us from the circles of these Independents. How then explain the phenomenon that the Reformed churches, which boast of Bunyan to this day, and warm their hearts by the glow of his mysticism, have lived in relentless hostility to the Independency, and have transposed into its opposite the "de mortuis nil nisi bonum," when it concerned them? The antithesis alone between petrefaction and life-principle offers us the solution. Repristination or development was the issue at stake between Presbyterians and Independents.

In England the Reformation under Henry VIII. limited itself to a meaningless exchange of spiritual authority. Henceforth England's King, and not the Lord Bishop of Rome, was to be clothed with the spiritual authority of England's church, but the church itself remained almost wholly unchanged. The humiliation of John Londerland was revenged. Nothing was done beyond that. Edward VI. died young. During Mary's reign Rome was again preferred, and Elizabeth, "the maiden queen," was the first to infuse the old hierarchical and now national church form with the substance of the Reformed and very positive Calvinistic doctrine. So it continued to be a reformation beginning with the throne, and therefore met with no response from the heart of the people. Three-fourths of all England remained in sympathy with Rome. Not the sixteenth, but the seventeenth, century witnessed the energetic reformation of the English people. By far the larger part of the nation turned with heart and soul toward the Reformation, only during those later periods, under the combined influence of Scotland and Holland. Hence all the sorrows that came upon England. That twofold reformation—one having its rise with the throne, the other with the people; one of

the sixteenth, the other of the seventeenth century—must lead to collisions. In the cities especially, and in the north of England, the Reformed people resisted the Episcopal Church. They were Calvinists, and they demanded that their church form should be Calvinistic too. That church form had assumed its own outlines in Geneva, France, and Holland. As the Reformed church was there and in Scotland, their church in England should be. And this is the stand these Presbyterians took. Calvinism is petrefaction, they said; it is bound to the form it had assumed once. Reject it therefore on account of the form, or with that form take it.

And against this Robinson rebelled, and Milton hurled the bolts of his eloquence against this stand, and the uttermost efforts of the Independents were directed against this grievous error. And rightly so. They fought with Calvin on their side. He had emphatically denounced being bound to any one form. By pressing this claim the Independents saved the future of Calvinistic reformation. They spake after the heart of England's people, which could not bide the form of the French church government. And the outcome, even now, puts the seal upon their struggle, for there is still a Presbyterian Church in England, but, reduced to utter insignificance, it is small and of feeble spiritual power. It was not English, and in the French form it could not flourish on English soil.

This is what the Independents foresaw. They had no thought of rejecting Calvinism. In loyal attachment to the central dogma of the election they far excelled the Presbyterians, but they desired an idiomatic church form for England, which at the same time should be a development of Calvinism. They claimed separation of church and state; autonomy of the individual churches; free combination into synods, no compulsion; free suffrage of the laity and ecclesiastical gatherings with open doors,—virtually the same system which now prevails in Scotland and America, in France, Switzer-

land, and Holland. The Presbyterians suffered defeat. After Milton's rise they were scattered as chaff before the wind, and after a mechanical existence of nearly two centuries, their vitality is exhausted. But they have revenged themselves. When Hornius the historian came from Leyden to London, they gave him the most inane reports of the movement of the Independents. Hornius accepted them readily, and embodied them in his "*de statu ecclesiæ Britannicæ hodierno.*" From this work Böhme drew his information, Tzschirner repeated it, Staüdlin copied it, even Arnold and Schrokh thought they could rely on his fictitious story; and so the tracks appear along which calumny pursued its course, to stigmatize one of the richest developments of Calvinism.

The second question at stake in the war of the Independents was of greater importance still: Is liberty of conscience a dead letter in the Calvinistic programme or not? The Inquisition tolerated not the slightest divergence from the confessions of Rome. Compared with this, Calvin's declaration in his "*Institutes,*" "*As long as the central truths of Christianity are held intact, difference of opinion is to be tolerated,*" was the first life-utterance of a glorious principle, but which, as shown by Servetus' judicial death, lay still enwrapped in the swaddling clothes of the old mother church. In Germany the question of the liberty of conscience was stifled by the "*Cujus regio, ejus religio.*" In France, also, it appeared mixed up with other interests. Everywhere else it met with abuse. All honor to the Dutch, therefore; the union of the seven provinces took longest strides forward in the solution of this problem. Banished from London, Robinson found a safe shelter in Amsterdam; driven from Spain and Portugal, the Jews found quarters in Holland's capital; and diverging sects had liberty of worship, though within closed doors. Chief thanks for this, however, are due to practice rather than theory. Our Holland placards against Rome were anything but tolerant. The state church ruled

supreme. Difference of opinion might be tolerated, but liberty of conscience was not recognized as a principle. But matters were worse in England. The progress of episcopacy was identified more and more with the glory of the nation; the gates of the Tower admitted in turn Romanists and Presbyterians; and more than once the followers of Geneva and Rome faced each other on the scaffold. This state of things became more and more untenable by the people's reformation in the seventeenth century. Thousands could be oppressed and persecuted, but when these thousands became millions, and presently constituted half of the realm, the scourge became powerless in the hand of the chastiser.

Now the question of the liberty of conscience assumed a new phase. Quite unexpectedly the practical question was put: What is the claim of your principle, when exiles not merely seek your protection, and minor sects your toleration, but when half the nation despises your state church? The answer which the Presbyterians made, did not mend matters; on the contrary, it created more bitter grievances, and it became the spiritual cause of the death of King Charles. They said in substance: "Abandon episcopacy, and let our church be the state church, as it is in Scotland, Holland, and Geneva." This was but a shifting of the question. For then the episcopal portion of the nation would have been the aggrieved party, and liberty of conscience as far removed as ever from the people. It was not the Presbyterians, but their enthusiastic opponents, the Independents, who then found the answer that brought salvation. Their motto was: Separation of church and state; and, as outcome of this, Absolute liberty to worship God according to the dictates of the heart. Greatly has Barebone's Parliament been slandered; but the following statement, copied from its records, is its own justification: "As for the truth and power of religion, it being a matter intrinsical between God and the soul, we conceive there is no power of coercion thereunto." Liberty of con-

science "to all that profess Christ, without exception," was already then the cry of the Yorkshire farmers. Milton makes exception with the Romanists only, for the sake of their attachment to a foreign prince. Godwin went so far as to demand "a full liberty of conscience to all sects, even Turks, Jews, and papists." "It is the will and the law of God," wrote the compassionate Samaritan, that after the coming of Christ on the earth, fullest liberty should be conceded to every soul of every nation, of conscience as well as of public worship, to Christian and Jew, to Turk and heathen both. And is it asked on what grounds this claim was entered, then let it not be thought that it is, as held by the French revolutionists and by our doctrinaires: "that the State has nothing to do with religion"; but, on the contrary, in the very interest of religion and in the fear of sin is found the motive which induced them to honor the most absolute liberty. In 1649 appeared a pamphlet under the title of "The Liberty of Conscience asserted," by one who calls himself "A Well-wisher to the Kingdom of God." In this we read: "He who in matters of religion acts contrary to the dictates of his conscience, commits an accursed sin. Whoever, therefore, forces another by violence or trickery to do this thing, is cause of his sin." "Persecution for the sake of the faith," continues he, "is a spiritual murder, an assassination of the soul, it is a rage against God himself, the most horrible of sins." And what has the French Revolution done but taken the fruit from the Calvinistic stem, and placed it on its liberty tree, with the perversion however of its moral motives, in that it rejected every faith. This does not claim innocency for the Independents on every score. In the heat of battle they often tolerated "Levelers" in their ranks; and in their pamphlets they often desecrated their glorious ideals with Leveler theories; and some of the more enthusiastic among them became fanatical spiritualists, whereby the State was greatly endangered. Yes, some Quakers of the left fell away into a

radicalism which sneered at every practical claim of faith and life, and threatened the entire overthrow of society and of all Christendom besides; even Cromwell's notion of convoking the "saints" in a parliament was an unpardonable political mistake. But if, on the other hand, it can be shown that public safety in England was never as secure as it was under their rule; that Cromwell's army is almost the only example in history of a soldiery which was not profane, but devout; which did not rob, but doled out charities; which outraged no women, but punished the violator with the switch; that the demon of robbery and sensuality never lurked back of their pious features, to bring into question the honesty and the integrity of their convictions,—in all honesty, there is then no reason why, for the sake of the excesses of their enthusiastic partisans, their manly struggle for the highest ideal of liberty should be depreciated. Some concession is due to a company of heroes, such as they, who were the first to fathom and confess the deep thought and uttermost consequence of conscience liberty.

It goes without saying that this led to a modification of public law. Theocracy was maintained, but in a different form. There was no mention now of a church in the state, nor of a state united with the church. The church of Christ was the point of departure. Hers was the care to see that the principles of right and truth swayed the hearts of the people, and for the people the indispensable but free organization in the state lay in their social life. The liberty idea fully realized in the consciousness of the church, must also discover for itself civil right within the domain of the state. From the idea of conscience liberty, grasped in its deepest meaning, sprang of itself the development of political liberty. Of course, no mention was made of the sovereignty of the people by men who, as Christians and civilians both, honored Christ as their king. But the plea for other matters, such as the liberty of the press, is found with Milton, and with God-

win for official sittings with open doors, and for the holy and yet civil contract of marriage, it is found in the acts of Barebone's Parliament. And though it seems scarcely credible, it is nevertheless a fact that the first report of state care for science was made out by a committee appointed by that self-same parliament. They were the first to introduce our modern idea of one treasury for all revenues of state. The introduction of the Burgher class dates from their appearance. They simplified the process of the judicatory, they applied economy in the expenditures of state; and amelioration and lessening of corporal punishments were first advocated by Independents.

That in Great Britain, however, they should be worsted, was inevitable. The statesmen on whom England leaned were Episcopalians, and remained so, and even holiest enthusiasm is not able with a single stroke to turn industrious citizens into masters of state-craft. Their ideas were most excellent, but for reforming English economics they fell short in molding power and strength. This is what effected their defeat, says Guizot, and not their eccentricities. In America for the first time, and upon a smaller scale, the principle was to exhibit its vital power, the first unfoldings of which delight and enchant the readers of the memoirs of Mrs. Hutchinson. As exiles cast on American shores, they brought with them to the New World the spiritual fruit of their struggles and sufferings. Whatever of greatness and glory was wrought in America by the power of a liberty subject to God, was engendered by their spirit.

But it was not America alone that reaped benefit from them. England, the Reformed church, and all the nations of Europe are indebted to them for the moral strength which they developed.

It is well known that only with the accession to the throne of our Stadtholder William III. was political quiet re-

established in England, and that the "glorious revolution" marks the beginning of England's power and influence. This change of dynasty had nothing in common with the French Revolution, it laid no violent hand on the organism of the people, it broke not up the wheelwork of the state, it was no outcome of new and abstract notions, but an act of practical necessity, forced by the existing, universally valid and historic theory. The Stuarts wanted reipristination. They wanted England back in old beaten tracks, as though its spirit had not been stirred in the Cromwell period. This was an anachronism, an effort, condemned from the start, to repress the stream in its bed, and which threatened Great Britain with political death. The nation had been plowed, and precious seed had been cast in the widely-opened furrows, and the people would not suffer itself to be robbed of the harvest of this activity. William of Orange, the brave king, heroic general, and clever statesman, was permitted to associate his noble name with the ripening of that harvest, and the Toleration Act, the liberation of the Reformed church in Scotland, the introduction of a yearly budget, the extension of the rights of parliament, and the abolishing of the secret judicature, offered the English nation the fruits obtained by the Independents, whose Utopia it had mocked, but whose spirit it had imbibed. The false theory of the wrongly-interpreted "divine right" was ended; the Whigs could safely introduce the ideal of the Independents into our constitutional public law. And is it asked: Whether the emancipated Great Britain, after a century of increasing greatness, greeted the French Revolution as a product of its spirit, or disdained it as a poisonous fruit of foreign origin, then read the *Memoirs of Burke*, the hero who opposed Hastings, in which he defended America, and bravely took the part of every victim of persecution, and branded France's revolution as the acme of human frenzy; or better still, look for an answer to the millions of pounds England freely gave, and the stream of blood she

freely shed, to redeem the exhausted continent from the violence of that revolution.

The Reformed church also was saved by the war of the Independents. She was threatened with petrefaction, desirous to enjoy the fruits of the Reformers' toils rather than continue labor in their spirit. In the Synod of Dort the last sign of life of the church in Holland was seen, when she introduced in the post-acta the obligation of continued reformation, but which obligation was never met. And England's and Scotland's churches were fast asleep; in Switzerland the church rested on laurels of the past; in France she was reduced to utter helplessness by the crafty cunning of the court, supported by the sword of the dragoons. But now, look at the great church in the United States, is not she a spiritual fruit of the Independency? Look at the influential group of the Dissenters in England, which gathers in its houses of prayer nearly half of the entire nation, is she not Wesley's trophy, and is not Wesley himself a spiritual descendant of the Robinsons and Godwins? Look at the Free Scotch Church, which, with the yoke cast from its shoulders by the heroic faith of Chalmers, has realized the ideal in a flourishing church life, after which the Puritans hungered with all their heart. Of the free churches in Switzerland, France, and Holland there is little to say. They are smaller and furnish less argument for proof. But when in our Reformed churches we pride ourselves on the right of vote by the laity, and demand separation from the state, and assemblies with open doors, what else then do we do but copy Robinson, letter by letter? What is Calvinism of the free churches other than the thing which in principle the Independents so greatly desired?

Finally, all Europe shared the blessing, even though it was extended at the hand of the most atrocious revolution; ever since the French Revolution political liberty has steadily gained ground in Europe, and much that is precious has been obtained by its means. Let not this confession cause sur-

prise. We are anti-revolutionists, not because we reject the fruits of the revolution period, but because we think ourselves able, with history in hand, to contest the fatherhood of that which is so precious. Together with great evil, the French Revolution brought Europe some good, but that good was stolen fruit, ripened on the stem of Calvinism under the fostering glow of the faith of our martyrs, first on our own soil, then in England, and presently in America. Proof for this assertion follows later on; it is sufficient here to say, that not from the September massacres, but from the blood-pools of our Spain defying towns; not from the guillotine, but from the stakes of the Backers and De Bressen; not from the libraries of the Encyclopedists, but from the prayer cells of the Independents; not from the fury of the *sans-cullottes*, but from the ruggedness of the Pilgrim fathers, arose that more beautiful dawn which now illuminates free Europe.

[To be concluded.]