going further still, deemed Christ’s blessing of the meek to be the curse of humanity.

Now compare with all this the marvelous results of three centuries of Calvinism. Calvinism understood that the world was not to be saved by ethical philosophizing, but only by the restoration of tenderness of conscience. Therefore it did not indulge in reasoning but appealed directly to the soul, and placed it face to face with the living God, so that the heart trembled at his holy majesty, and in that majesty, discovered the glory of his love. And when, going back in this historical review, you observe how thoroughly corrupt and rotten Calvinism found the world, to what depth moral life at that time had sunk, in the courts, and among the people, in the clergy and among the leaders of science, among men and women, among the higher and the lower classes of society—then what censor among you will dare to deny the palm of moral victory to Calvinism, which in one generation, though hunted from the battlefield to the scaffold, created, throughout five nations at once, wide serious groups of noble men, and still nobler women, hitherto unsurpassed in the loftiness of their ideal conceptions and unequaled in the power of their moral self-control.

THIRD LECTURE

Calvinism and Politics

My third lecture leaves the sanctuary of religion and enters upon the domain of the state—the first transition from the sacred circle to the secular field of human life. Only now therefore we proceed, summarily and in principle, to combat the unhistorical suggestion that Calvinism represents an exclusively ecclesiastical and dogmatic movement.

The religious momentum of Calvinism has placed also beneath political society a fundamental conception, all its own, just because it not merely pruned the branches and cleaned the stem, but reached down to the very root of our human life.

That this had to be so becomes evident at once to everyone who is able to appreciate the fact that no political scheme has ever become dominant which was not founded in a specific religious or antireligious conception. And that this has been the fact, as regards Calvinism, may appear from the political
changes which it has effected in those three historic lands of political freedom, the Netherlands, England, and America.

Every competent historian will without exception confirm the words of Bancroft: "The fanatic for Calvinism was a fanatic for liberty, for in the moral warfare for freedom, his creed was a part of his army, and his most faithful ally in the battle." And Groen van Prinsterer has thus expressed it: "In Calvinism lies the origin and guarantee of our constitutional liberties." That Calvinism has led public law into new paths, first in western Europe, then in two continents, and today more and more among all civilized nations, is admitted by all scientific students, if not yet fully by public opinion.

But for the purpose I have in view, the mere statement of this important fact is insufficient.

In order that the influence of Calvinism on our political development may be felt, it must be shown for what fundamental political conceptions Calvinism has opened the door, and how these political conceptions sprang from its root principle.

This dominating principle was not, soteriologically, justification by faith, but, in the widest sense cosmologically, the sovereignty of the triune God over the whole cosmos, in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible. A primordial sovereignty which eradicates in mankind in a threefold deduced supremacy, viz., (1) the sovereignty in the state; (2) the sovereignty in society; and (3) the sovereignty in the church.

Allow me to argue this matter in detail by pointing out to you how this threefold deduced sovereignty was understood by Calvinism.

First, then, a deduced sovereignty in that political sphere, which is defined as the state. And then we admit that the impulse to form states arises from man's social nature, which was expressed already by Aristotle, when he called man a "όνομα πολιτικόν." God might have created men as disconnected individuals, standing side by side and without genealogical coherence. Just as 1

Adam was separately created, the second and third and every further man might have been individually called into existence; but this was not the case.

Man is created from man, and by virtue of his birth he is organically united with the whole race. Together we form one humanity, not only with those who are living now, but also with all the generations behind us and with all those who shall come after us—pulverized into millions though we may be. All the human race is from one blood. The conception of states, however, which subdivide the earth into continents, and each continent into morsels, does not harmonize with this idea. Then only would the organic unity of our race be realized politically, if one state could embrace all the world, and if the whole of humanity were associated in one world empire. Had sin not intervened, no doubt this would actually have been so. If sin, as a disintegrating force, had not divided humanity into different sections, nothing would have marred or broken the organic unity of our race. And the mistake of the Alexanders, and of the Augusti, and of the Napoleons, was not that they were charmed with the thought of the one world empire, but it was this—that they endeavored to realize this idea notwithstanding that the force of sin had dissolved our unity.

In like manner the international cosmopolitan endeavors of the social-democracy present, in their conception of union, an ideal, which on this very account charms us, even when we are aware that they try to reach the unattainable, in endeavoring to realize this high and holy ideal, now and in a sinful world. Nay, even anarchy, conceived as the attempt to undo all mechanical connections among men, together with the undoing of all human authority, and to encourage, in their stead, the growth of a new organic tie, arising from nature itself—I say, all this is nothing but a looking backward after a lost paradise.

For, indeed, without sin there would have been neither magistrate nor state-order; but political life, in its entirety, would have evolved itself, after a patriarchal fashion, from the life of the family. Neither bar of justice nor police nor army nor navy is conceivable in a world without sin; and thus every rule and ordinance and law would drop away, even as all control and assertion of the power of the magistrate would disappear, were life to develop itself, normally and without hindrance, from its own organic impulse. Who binds up, where nothing is broken? Who uses crutches, where the limbs are sound?
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Every state-formation, every assertion of the power of the magistrate, every mechanical means of compelling order and of guaranteeing a safe course of life is therefore always something unnatural; something against which the deeper aspirations of our nature rebel; and which, on this very account, may become the source both of a dreadful abuse of power, on the part of those who exercise it, and of a continuous revolt on the part of the multitude. Thus originated the battle of the ages between authority and liberty, and in this battle it was the very innate thirst for liberty which proved itself the God-ordained means to bridle the authority wheresoever it degenerated into despotism. And thus all true conception of the nature of the state and of the assumption of authority by the magistrate, and on the other hand all true conception of the right and duty of the people to defend liberty, depends on what Calvinism has here placed in the foreground, as the primordial truth—that God has instituted the magistrates, by reason of sin.

In this one thought are hidden both the light side and the shady side of the life of the state. The shady side for this multitude of states ought not to exist; there should be only one world empire. These magistrates rule mechanically and do not harmonize with our nature. And this authority of government is exercised by sinful men, and is therefore subject to all manner of despotic ambitions. But the light side also, for a sinful humanity, without division of states, without law and government, and without ruling authority, would be a veritable hell on earth; or at least a repetition of that which existed on earth when God drowned the first degenerate race in the deluge. Calvinism has, therefore, by its deep conception of sin laid bare the true root of state life, and has taught us two things: first—that we are grateful to receive, from the hand of God, the institution of the state with its magistrates, as a means of preservation, now indeed indispensable. And, on the other hand also, that, by virtue of our natural impulse, we must ever watch against the danger which lurks, for our personal liberty, in the power of the state.

But Calvinism has done more. In politics also it taught us that the human element—here the people—may not be considered as the principal thing, so that God is only dragged in to help this people in the hour of its need; but on the contrary that God, in his majesty, must flame before the eyes of every nation, and that all nations together are to be reckoned before him as a drop in a bucket and as the small dust of the balances. From the ends of the earth God cites all nations and peoples before his high judgment seat. For God created the nations. They exist for him. They are his own. And therefore all these nations, and in them humanity, must exist for his glory and consequently after his ordinances, in order that in their well-being, when they walk after his ordinances, his divine wisdom may shine forth.

When therefore humanity falls apart through sin, in a multiplicity of separate peoples; when sin, in the bosom of these nations, separates men and tears them apart, and when sin reveals itself in all manner of shame and unrighteousness—the glory of God demands that these horrors be briddled, that order return to this chaos, and that a compulsory force, from without, assert itself to make human society a possibility.

This right is possessed by God, and by him alone.

No man has the right to rule over another man, otherwise such a right necessarily, and immediately, becomes the right of the strongest. As the tiger in the jungle rules over the defenseless antelope, so on the banks of the Nile a pharaoh ruled over the progenitors of the fellahin of Egypt.

Nor can a group of men, by contract, from their own right, compel you to obey a fellowman. What binding force is there for me in the allegation that ages ago one of my progenitors made a "Contrat Social," with other men of that time? As man I stand free and bold, over against the most powerful of my fellowmen.

I do not speak of the family, for here organic, natural ties rule; but in the sphere of the state I do not yield or bow down to anyone, who is man, as I am.

Authority over men cannot arise from men. Just as little from a majority over against a minority, for history shows, almost on every page, that very often the minority was right. And thus to the first Calvinistic thesis that sin alone has necessitated the institution of governments, this second and no less momentous thesis is added, that all authority of governments on earth originates from the sovereignty of God alone. When God says to me, "obey," then I humbly bow my head, without compromising in the least my personal dignity, as a man. For, in like proportion as you degrade yourself, by bowing low to a
child of man, whose breath is in his nostrils; so, on the other hand, do you raise yourself, if you submit to the authority of the Lord of heaven and earth.

Thus the word of Scripture stands: “By me kings reign” [Prov 8:15], or as the apostle has elsewhere declared: “The powers, that be, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God” [Rom 13:1-2]. The magistrate is an instrument of “common grace,” to thwart all license and outrage and to shield the good against the evil. But he is more. Besides all this he is instituted by God as his servant, in order that he may preserve the glorious work of God, in the creation of humanity, from total destruction. Sin attacks God’s handiwork, God’s plan, God’s justice, God’s honor, as the supreme Artificer and Builder. Thus God, ordaining the powers that be, in order that, through their instrumentality, he might maintain his justice against the strivings of sin, has given to the magistrate the terrible right of life and death. Therefore all the powers that be, whether in empires or in republics, in cities or in states, rule “by the grace of God.” For the same reason justice bears a holy character. And from the same motive every citizen is bound to obey, not only from dread of punishment, but for the sake of conscience.

Further Calvin has expressly stated that authority, as such, is in no way affected by the question how a government is instituted and in what form it reveals itself. It is well known that personally he preferred a republic, and that he cherished no predilection for a monarchy, as if this were the divine and ideal form of government. This indeed would have been the case in a sinless state. For had sin not entered, God would have remained the sole king of all men, and this condition will return, in the glory to come, when God once more will be all and in all. God’s own direct government is absolutely monarchical; no monothist will deny it. But Calvin considered a cooperation of many persons under mutual control, i.e., a republic, desirable, now that a mechanical institution of government is necessitated by reason of sin.

In his system, however, this could only amount to a gradual difference in practical excellency, but never to a fundamental difference, as regards the essence of authority. He considers a monarchy and an aristocracy, as well as a democracy, both possible and practicable forms of government; provided it be unchangeably maintained, that no one on earth can claim authority over his fellowmen, unless it be laid upon him “by the grace of God”; and therefore, the ultimate duty of obedience is imposed upon us not by man, but by God himself.

The question how those persons, who by divine authority are to be clothed with power, are indicated, cannot, according to Calvin, be answered alike for all peoples and for all time. And yet he does not hesitate to state, in an ideal sense, that the most desirable conditions exist, where the people itself chooses its own magistrates. Where such a condition exists he thinks that the people should gratefully recognize therein a favor of God, precisely as it has been expressed in the preamble of more than one of your constitutions—“Grateful to almighty God that he gave us the power to choose our own magistrates.” In his Commentary on Samuel, Calvin therefore admonishes such peoples: “And ye, O peoples, to whom God gave the liberty to choose your own magistrates, see to it, that ye do not forfeit this favor, by electing to the positions of highest honor, rascals and enemies of God.”

I may add that the popular choice gains the day, as a matter of course, where no other rule exists, or where the existing rule falls away. Wherever new states have been founded, except by conquest or force, the first government has always been founded by popular choice; and so also where the highest authority had fallen into disorder, either by want of a determination of the right of succession, or through the violence of revolution, it has always been the people who, through their representatives, claimed the right to restore it. But with equal decision, Calvin asserts that God has the sovereign power, in the way of his dispensing providence, to take from a people this most desirable condition, or never to bestow it at all, when a nation is unfit for it, or by its sin, has utterly forfeited the blessing.

The historic development of a people shows, as a matter of course, in what other ways authority is bestowed. This bestowal may flow from the right of inheritance, as in a hereditary monarchy. It may result from a hard-fought war, even as Pilate had power over Jesus, “given him from above” [John 19:11]. It may proceed from electors, as it did in the old German empire. It may rest with the states of the country, as was the case in the old Dutch republic. In a word it may assume a variety of forms, because there is an endless difference in the development of nations. A form of government like your own could not exist one day in China. Even now, the people of Russia are unfit for any form of
constitutional government. And among the Kaffirs and Hottentots of Africa, even a government, such as exists in Russia, would be wholly inconceivable. All this is determined and appointed by God, through the hidden counsel of his providence.

All this, however, is no theocracy. A theocracy was only found in Israel, because in Israel, God intervened immediately. For both by Urim and Thummim and by prophecy; both by his saving miracles, and by his chastising judgments, he held in his own hand the jurisdiction and the leadership of his people. But the Calvinistic confession of the sovereignty of God holds good for all the world, is true for all nations, and is of force in all authority, which man exercises over man; even in the authority which parents possess over their children. It is therefore a political faith which may be summarily expressed in these three theses: (1) God only—and never any creature—is possessed of sovereign rights, in the destiny of the nations, because God alone created them, maintains them by his almighty power, and rules them by his ordinances. (2) Sin has, in the realm of politics, broken down the direct government of God, and therefore the exercise of authority for the purpose of government, has subsequently been invested in men, as a mechanical remedy. And (3) In whatever form this authority may reveal itself, man never possesses power over his fellowman in any other way than by an authority which descends upon him from the majesty of God.

Directly opposed to this Calvinistic confession there are two other theories. That of the popular sovereignty, as it has been antithetically proclaimed at Paris in 1789; and that of state sovereignty, as it has of late been developed by the historicist-pantheistic school of Germany. Both these theories are at heart identical, but for the sake of clearness they demand a separate treatment.

What was it that impelled and animated the spirits of men in the great French Revolution? Indignation at abuses, which had crept in? A horror of a crowned despotism? A noble defense of the rights and liberties of the people? In part certainly, but in all this there is so little that is sinful, that even a Calvinist gratefully recognizes, in these three particulars, the divine judgment, which at that time was executed in Paris.

But the impelling force of the French Revolution did not lie in this hatred of abuses. When Edmund Burke compares the "glorious Revolution" of 1688 with the principle of the Revolution of 1789, he says: "Our revolution and that of France are just the reverse of each other, in almost every particular, and in the whole spirit of the transaction."2

This same Edmund Burke, so bitter an antagonist of the French Revolution, has manfully defended your own rebellion against England, as "arising from a principle of energy, showing itself in this good people the main cause of a free spirit, the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion."

The three great revolutions in the Calvinistic world left untouched the glory of God, nay, they even proceeded from the acknowledgment of his majesty. Everyone will admit this of our rebellion against Spain, under William the Silent. Nor has it even been doubted of the "glorious Revolution," which was crowned by the arrival of William III of Orange and the overthrow of the Stuarts. But it is equally true of your own revolution. It is expressed in so many words in the Declaration of Independence, by John Hancock, that the Americans asserted themselves by virtue "of the law of nature and of nature's God; that they acted "as endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights"; that they appealed to "the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intention,"3 and that they sent forth their Declaration of Independence "With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence."4 In the Articles of Confederation it is confessed in the preamble, "that it hath pleased the great Governor of the world to incline the hearts of the legislators."5 It is also declared in the preamble of the Constitution of many of the states: "Grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty, which he has so long permitted us to enjoy and looking unto him, for a blessing upon our endeav-

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3 Franklin B. Hough, American Constutions; Albany; Weed, Parsons & Co., 1872. Vol. 1, p. 5.
4 Ibid., p. 8.
5 Ibid., p. 19.
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ors," God is there honored as "the Sovereign Ruler," and the "Legislator of the Universe," and it is there specifically admitted, that from God alone the people received "the right to choose their own form of government." In one of the meetings of the Convention, Franklin proposed, in a moment of supreme anxiety, that they should ask wisdom from God in prayer. And if anyone should still doubt whether or not the American Revolution was homogeneous with that of Paris, this doubt is fully set at rest by the bitter fight in 1793 between Jefferson and Hamilton. Therefore it remains as the German historian Von Holtz stated it: "Es wäre Thortonre zu sagen dass die Rousseauschen Schriften einen Einfluss auf die Entwicklung in America ausgeübt haben." ("Mere madness would it be to say that the American Revolution borrowed its impelling energy from Rousseau and his writings.") Or as Hamilton himself expressed it, that he considered "the French Revolution to be no more akin to the American Revolution than the faithless wife in a French novel is like the Puritan matron in New England."11

The French Revolution is in principle distinct from all these national revolutions, which were undertaken with praying lips and with trust in the help of God. The French Revolution ignores God. It opposes God. It refuses to recognize a deeper ground of political life than that which is found in nature, that is, in this instance, in man himself. Here the first article of the confession of the most absolute infidelity is "ni Dieu, ni maitre." The sovereign God is dethroned and man with his free will is placed on the vacant seat. It is the will of man which determines all things. All power, all authority proceeds from man. Thus one comes from the individual man to the many men; and in those many men conceived as the people, there is thus hidden the deepest fountain of all sovereignty. There is no question, as in your Constitution, of a sovereignty derived from God, which he, under certain conditions, implants in the people. Here an original sovereignty asserts itself, which everywhere and in all states can only proceed from the people itself, having no deeper root than in the human will. It is a sovereignty of the people therefore, which is perfectly identical with atheism. And therein lies its self-abasement. In the sphere of Calvinism, as also in your Declaration, the knee is bowed to God, while over against man the head is proudly lifted up. But here, from the standpoint of the sovereignty of the people, the fist is defiantly clenched against God, while man grovels before his fellowmen, insinuating over this self-abasement by the ludicrous fiction that, thousands of years ago, men, of whom no one has any remembrance, concluded a political contract, or, as they called it, "Contrat Social." Now, do you ask for the result? Then, let history tell you how the rebellion of the Netherlands, the "glorious Revolution" of England, and your own rebellion against the British crown have brought liberty to honor; and answer for yourself the question: Has the French Revolution resulted in anything else but the shackling of liberty in the irons of state omnipotence? Indeed, no country in our nineteenth century has had a sadder state history than France.

No wonder that scientific Germany has broken away from this fictitious sovereignty of the people, since the days of De Savigny and Niebuhr. The historical school, founded by these eminent men, has pilloried the a priori fiction of 1789. Every historical connoisseur now ridicules it. Only that which they recommended instead of it, bears no better stamp.

Now it was to be not the sovereignty of the people, but the sovereignty of the state, a product of Germanic philosophical pantheism. Ideas are incarnated in the reality, and among these the idea of the state was the highest, the richest, the most perfect idea of the relation between man and man. Thus the state became a mystical conception. The state was considered as a mysterious being, with a hidden ego; with a state-consciousness, slowly developing; and with an increasing potent state-will, which by a slow process endeavored to blindly reach the highest state-aim. The people was not understood, as with Rousseau, to be the sum total of the individuals. It was correctly seen that a

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6 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 549.
7 Ibid., p. 555.
8 Ibid., p. 555.
9 Ibid., p. 549.
11 John F. Morse, "Thomas Jefferson," Boston, 1883, p. 157. In a positively Christian sense Hamilton proposed in a letter to Bayard (April 1801) the founding of "A Christian Constitutional Society," and wrote in another letter, quoted by Henry Cabot Lodge, "Alexander Hamilton, Boston, 1892, p. 256: "When I find the doctrines of Atheism openly advanced in the Presbyterian Convention, and heard with loud applause; when I see the sword of fanaticism extended to force a political creed upon citizens, who were invited to subdue to the arms of France as the harbingers of Liberty, when I behold the hand of capacity outstretched to prostrate and revile the monuments of religious worship, I acknowledge, that I am glad to believe, that there is no real resemblance between what was the cause of America and the cause of France."

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people is no aggregate, but an organic whole. This organism must of necessity have its organic members. Slowly these organs arrived at their historic development. By these organs the will of the state operates, and everything must bow before this will. This sovereign state-will might reveal itself in a republic, in a monarchy, in a Caesar, in an Asiatic despot, in a tyrant as Philip of Spain, or in a dictator like Napoleon. All these were but forms, in which the one state-idea incorporated itself; the stages of development in a never-ending process. But in whatever form this mystical being of the state revealed itself, the idea remained supreme: the state shortly asserted its sovereignty and for every member of the state it remained the touchstone of wisdom to give way to this state apotheosis.

Thus all transcendent right in God, to which the oppressed lifted up his face, fails away. There is no other right, but the immanent right which is written down in the law. The law is right, not because its contents are in harmony with the eternal principles of right, but because it is law. If on the morrow it fixes the very opposite, this also must be right. And the fruit of this deadening theory is, as a matter of course, that the consciousness of right is blunted, that all fixedness of right departs from our minds, and that all higher enthusiasm for right is extinguished. That which exists is good, because it exists; and it is no longer the will of God, of him who created us and knows us, but it becomes the ever-changing will of the state, which, having no one above itself, actually becomes God, and has to decide how our life and our existence shall be.

And when you further consider that this mystical state expresses and enforces its will only through men—what further proof is demanded that this state sovereignty, even as popular sovereignty, does not outgrow the abasing subjection of man to his fellowman and never ascends to a duty of submission which finds its cogency in the conscience?

Therefore in opposition both to the atheistic popular sovereignty of the Encyclopedians, and the pantheistic state sovereignty of German philosophers, the Calvinist maintains the sovereignty of God as the source of all authority among men. The Calvinist upholds the highest and best in our aspirations by placing every man and every people before the face of our Father in heaven. He takes cognizance of the fact of sin, which erstwhile was juggled away in 1789, and which now, in pessimistic extravagance, is accounted the essence of our being. Calvinism points to the difference between the natural concatenation of our organic society and the mechanical tie, which the authority of the magistrate imposes. It makes it easy for us to obey authority, because, in all authority, it causes us to honor the demand of divine sovereignty. It lifts us from an obedience born of dread of the strong arm, into an obedience for conscience' sake. It teaches us to look upward from the existing law to the source of the eternal right in God, and it creates in us the indomitable courage incessantly to protest against the unrighteousness of the law in the name of this highest right. And however powerfully the state may assert itself and oppress the free individual development, above that powerful state there is always glittering, before our soul's eye, as infinitely more powerful, the majesty of the King of kings, whose righteous bar ever maintains the right of appeal for all the oppressed, and unto whom the prayer of the people ever ascend, to bless our nation and, in that nation, us and our house!

So much for the sovereignty of the state. We now come to sovereignty in the sphere of society.

In a Calvinistic sense we understand hereby, that the family, the business, science, art, and so forth are all social spheres, which do not owe their existence to the state, and which do not derive the law of their life from the superiority of the state, but obey a high authority within their own bosom; an authority which rules, by the grace of God, just as the sovereignty of the state does.

This involves the antithesis between state and society, but upon this condition, that we do not conceive this society as a conglomerate but as analyzed in its organic parts, to honor, in each of these parts, the independent character, which appertains to them.

In this independent character a special higher authority is of necessity involved and this highest authority we intentionally call sovereignty in the individual social spheres, in order that it may be sharply and decidedly expressed that these different developments of social life have nothing above themselves but God, and that the state cannot intrude here, and has nothing to command in
their domain. As you feel at once, this is the deeply interesting question of our civil liberties.\(^\text{12}\)

It is here of the highest importance sharply to keep in mind the difference in grade between the organic life of society and the mechanical character of the government. Whatever among men originates directly from creation is possessed of all the data for its development, in human nature as such. You see this at once in the family and in the connection of blood relations and other ties. From the duality of man and woman marriage arises. From the original existence of one man and one woman monogamy comes forth. The children exist by reason of the innate power of reproduction. Naturally the children are connected as brothers and sisters. And when by and by these children, in their turn, marry again, as a matter of course, all those connections originate from blood relationship and other ties, which dominate the whole family life. In all this there is nothing mechanical. The development is spontaneous, just as that of the stem and the branches of a plant. True, sin here also has exerted its disturbing influence and has distorted much which was intended for a blessing into a curse. But this fatal efficiency of sin has been stopped by common grace. Free love may try to dissolve, and the concubinate to desecrate, the holiest tie, as it pleases; but, for the vast majority of our race, marriage remains the foundation of human society and the family retains its position as the primordial sphere in sociology.

The same may be said of the other spheres of life.

Nature about us may have lost the glory of paradise by reason of sin, and the earth may bear thorns and thistles so that we can eat our bread only in the sweat of our brow; notwithstanding all this, the chief aim of all human effort remains what it was by virtue of our creation and before the Fall, namely dominion over nature. And this dominion cannot be acquired except by the exercise of the powers, which, by virtue of the ordinances of creation, are innate in nature itself. Accordingly all science is only the application to the cosmos of the powers of investigation and thought, created within us; and art is nothing but the natural productivity of the potencies of our imagination. When we admit therefore that sin, though arrested by "common grace," has caused many modifications of these several expressions of life, which originated only after paradise was lost, and will disappear again, with the coming of the kingdom of glory—we still maintain that the fundamental character of these expressions remains as it was originally. All together they form the life of creation, in accord with the ordinances of creation, and therefore are organically developed.

But the case is wholly different with the assertion of the powers of government. For though it be admitted that even without sin the need would have asserted itself of combining the many families in a higher unity, this unity would have internally been bound up in the kingship of God, which would have ruled regularly, directly, and harmoniously in the hearts of all men, and which would externally have incorporated itself in a patriarchal hierarchy. Thus no states would have existed, but only one organic world empire, with God as its King; exactly what is prophesied for the future which awaits us, when all sin shall have disappeared.

But it is exactly this, which sin has now eliminated from our human life. This unity does no longer exist. This government of God can no longer assert itself. This patriarchal hierarchy has been destroyed. A world empire neither cannot be established nor ought it to be. For in this very desire consisted the contumacy of the building of Babel's tower. Thus peoples and nations originated. These peoples formed states. And over these states God appointed governments. And thus, if I may be allowed the expression, it is not a natural head, which organically grew from the body of the people, but a mechanical head, which from without has been placed upon the trunk of the nation. A mere remedy, therefore, for a wrong condition supervening. A stick placed beside the plant to hold it up, since without it, by reason of its inherent weakness, it would fall to the ground.

The principal characteristic of government is the right of life and death. According to the apostolic testimony the magistrate bears the sword, and this sword has a threefold meaning. It is the sword of justice, to mete out corporeal punishment to the criminal. It is the sword of war to defend the honor and the rights and the interests of the state against its enemies. And it is the sword of order, to thwart at home all forcible rebellion. Luther and his co-Reformers have correctly pointed out that the institution proper and the full investiture

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\(^{12}\) Cf. Dr. A. Kuyper, Calvinism the Source and Conquering of Our Constitutional Liberalism, 1873; and Dr. A. Kuyper, Sovereignty in the Spheres of Society, 1880.
of the magistrate with power were only brought about after the flood, when God commanded that capital punishment should fall upon him who shed man's blood. The right of taking life belongs only to him, who can give life, i.e., to God; and therefore no one on earth is invested with this authority, except it be God-given. On this account, Roman law, which committed the jus vitae et necis to the father and to the slave owner stands intrinsically much lower than the law of Moses, which knows no other capital punishment but that by the magistrate and at his command.

The highest duty of the government remains therefore unchangeably that of justice, and in the second place it has to care for the people as a unit, partly at home, in order that its unity may grow ever deeper and may not be disturbed, and partly abroad, lest the national existence suffer harm. The consequence of all this is that on the one hand, in a people, all sorts of organic phenomena of life arise, from its social spheres but that, high above all these, the mechanical unifying force of the government is observable. From this arises all friction and clashing. For the government is always inclined, with its mechanical authority, to invade social life, to subject it and mechanically to arrange it. But on the other hand, social life always endeavors to shake off the authority of the government; just as this endeavor at the present time again culminates in social democracy and in anarchism, both of which aim at nothing less than the total overthrow of the institution of authority. But leaving these two extremes alone, it will be admitted that all healthy life of people or state has ever been the historical consequence of the struggle between these two powers. It was the so-called "constitutional government," which endeavored more firmly to regulate the mutual relation of these two. And in this struggle Calvinism was the first to take its stand. For just in proportion as it honored the authority of the magistrate, instituted by God, did it lift up that second sovereignty, which had been implanted by God in the social spheres, in accordance with the ordinances of creation.

It demanded for both independence in their own sphere and regulation of the relation between both, not by the executive, but under the law. And by this stern demand, Calvinism may be said to have generated constitutional public law, from its own fundamental idea.

The testimony of history is unassailable that this constitutional public law has not flourished in Roman Catholic or in Lutheran states, but among the nations of a Calvinistic type. The idea is here fundamental that the sovereignty of God, in its descent upon men, separates itself into two spheres. On the one hand, the mechanical sphere of state authority, and on the other hand, the organic sphere of the authority of the social circles. And in both these spheres the inherent authority is sovereign, that is to say, it has above itself nothing but God.

Now for the mechanically coercing authority of the government any further explanation is superfluous, not so, however, for the organic social authority.

Nowhere is the dominating character of this organic social authority more plainly discernible than in the sphere of science. In the introduction to an edition of the Sententiae of Lombard and of the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas, the learned Thomist wrote: "The work of Lombard has ruled one hundred and fifty years and has produced Thomas, and after him the Summa of Thomas has ruled all Europe (totam Europam rete) during five full centuries and has generated all the subsequent theologians." Suppose we admit that this language is overbold, yet the idea, here expressed, is unquestionably correct. The dominion of men like Aristotle and Plato, Lombard and Thomas, Luther and Calvin, Kant and Darwin, extends, for each of them, over a field of ages. Genius is a sovereign power; it forms schools; it lays hold on the spirits of men, with irresistible might; and it exercises an immeasurable influence on the whole condition of human life. This sovereignty of genius is a gift of God, possessed only by his grace. It is subject to no one and is responsible to him alone who has granted it this ascendency.

The same phenomenon is observable in the sphere of art. Every maestro is a king in the palace of art, not by the law of inheritance or by appointment, but only by the grace of God. And these maestros also impose authority, and are subject to no one, but rule over all and in the end receive from all the homage due to their artistic superiority.

And the same is to be said of the sovereign power of personality. There is no equality of persons. There are weak, narrow-minded persons, with no broader expanse of wings than a common sparrow; but there are also broad, imposing characters, with the wing stroke of the eagle. Among the last you will

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find a few of royal grandeur, and these rule in their own sphere, whether people draw back from them or thwart them; usually waxing all the stronger, the more they are opposed. And this entire process is carried out in all the spheres of life. In the labor of the mechanic, in the shop, or on the exchange, in commerce, on the sea, in the field of benevolence and philanthropy. Everywhere one man is more powerful than the other, by his personality, by his talent, and by circumstances. Dominion is exercised everywhere; but it is a dominion which works organically; not by virtue of a state investiture, but from life's sovereignty itself.

In relation herewith, and on entirely the same ground of organic superiority, there exists, side by side with this personal sovereignty, the sovereignty of the sphere. The university exercises scientific dominion; the academy of fine arts is possessed of art power; the guild exercised a technical dominion; the trades union rules over labor—and each of these spheres or corporations is conscious of the power of exclusive independent judgment and authoritative action, within its proper sphere of operation. Behind these organic spheres, with intellectual, aesthetic, and technical sovereignty, the sphere of the family opens itself, with its right of marriage, domestic peace, education, and possession; and in this sphere also the natural head is conscious of exercising an inherent authority—not because the government allows it, but because God has imposed it. Paternal authority roots itself in the very lifeblood and is proclaimed in the Fifth Commandment. And so also finally it may be remarked that the social life of cities and villages forms a sphere of existence, which arises from the very necessities of life, and which therefore must be autonomous.

In many different directions we see therefore that sovereignty in one's own sphere asserts itself: (1) in the social sphere, by personal superiority; (2) in the corporative sphere of universities, guilds, associations, etc.; (3) in the domestic sphere of the family and of married life; and (4) in communal autonomy.

In all these four spheres the state-government cannot impose its laws, but must reverence the innate law of life. God rules in these spheres, just as supremely and sovereignly through his chosen virtuosi, as he exercises dominion in the sphere of the state itself, through his chosen magistrates.

Bound by its own mandate, therefore, the government may neither ignore nor modify nor disrupt the divine mandate, under which these social spheres stand. The sovereignty, by the grace of God, of the government is here set aside and limited, for God's sake, by another sovereignty, which is equally divine in origin. Neither the life of science nor of art, nor of agriculture, nor of industry, nor of commerce, nor of navigation, nor of the family, nor of human relationship may be coerced to suit itself to the grace of the government. The state may never become an octopus, which stifles the whole of life. It must occupy its own place, on its own root, among all the other trees of the forest, and thus it has to honor and maintain every form of life which grows independently in its own sacred autonomy.

Does this mean that the government has no right whatever of interference in these autonomous spheres of life? Not at all.

It possesses the threefold right and duty: (1) whenever different spheres clash, to compel mutual regard for the boundary-lines of each; (2) to defend individuals and the weak ones, in those spheres, against the abuse of power of the rest; and (3) to coerce all together to bear personal and financial burdens for the maintenance of the natural unity of the state. The decision cannot, however, in these cases, unilaterally rest with the magistrate. The law here has to indicate the rights of each, and the rights of the citizens over their own purses must remain the invincible bulwark against the abuse of power on the part of the government.

And here exactly lies the starting point for that cooperation of the sovereignty of the government, with the sovereignty in the social sphere, which finds its regulation in the Constitution. According to the order of things, in his time, this became to Calvin the doctrine of the magistratus inferiorum. Knighthood, the rights of the city, the rights of guilds, and much more, led then to the self-assertion of social "states," with their own civil authority; and so Calvin wished the law to be made by the cooperation of these with the high magistrates.

Since that time these medieval relations, which in part arose from the feudal system, have become totally antiquated. These corporations or social orders are now no longer invested with ruling power, their place is taken by
parliament, or whatever name the general house of representatives may bear in different countries, and now it remains the duty of those assemblies to maintain the popular rights and liberties, of all and in the name of all, with and if need be against the government. A united defense which was preferred to individual resistance, both to simplify the construction and operation of state institutions and to accelerate their functions.

But in whatever way the form may be modified, it remains essentially the old Calvinistic plan, to assure to the people, in all its classes and orders, in all its circles and spheres, in all its corporations and independent institutions, a legal and orderly influence in the making of the law and the course of government, in a healthy democratic sense. And the only difference of opinion is yet on the important question whether we shall continue in the now prevailing solution of the special rights of those social spheres in the individual right of franchise; or whether it is desirable to place by its side a corporative right of franchise, which shall enable the different circles to make a separate defense. At present a new tendency to organization reveals itself even in the spheres of commerce and industry and not less in that of labor, and even from France voices, like that of Benoit, arise, which clamor for the juncture of the right of franchise with these organizations.

I, for one, would welcome such a move, provided its application were not one-sided, much less exclusive; but I may not linger over these side issues. Let it suffice to have shown that Calvinism protests against state omnipotence; against the horrible conception that no right exists above and beyond existing laws; and against the pride of absolutism, which recognizes no constitutional rights, except as the result of princely favor.

These three representations, which find so dangerous a nourishment in the ascendancy of pantheism, are death to our civil liberties. And Calvinism is to be praised for having built a dam across this absolutistic stream, not by appealing to popular force, not to the hallucination of human greatness, but by deducing those rights and liberties of social life from the same source from which the high authority of the government flows—even the absolute sovereignty of God. From this one source, in God, sovereignty in the individual sphere, in the family, and in every social circle, is just as directly derived as the supremacy of state authority. These two must therefore come to an understanding, and both have the same sacred obligation to maintain their God-given sovereign authority and to make it subservient to the majesty of God.

A people therefore which abandons to state supremacy the rights of the family, or a university which abandons to it the rights of science, is just as guilty before God as a nation which lays its hands upon the rights of the magistrates. And thus the struggle for liberty is not only declared permissible, but is made a duty for each individual in his own sphere. And this not as was done in the French Revolution, by setting God aside and by placing man on the throne of God’s omnipotence; but on the contrary, by causing all men, the magistrates included, to bow in deepest humility before the majesty of God almighty.

As third and last part of this lecture, the discussion remains of a question yet more difficult than the previous one, namely how we must conceive of the sovereignty of the church in the state.

I call this a difficult problem, not because I am in doubt as to the conclusions, or because I doubt your assent to these conclusions. For, as far as regards American life, all uncertainty in this respect is removed by what your Constitution at first declared—and has later been modified in your confessions concerning the liberty of worship and the coordination of church and state. And as far as I am personally concerned, more than a quarter of a century ago I wrote above my weekly paper the motto “A free church in a free state.” In a hard struggle this motto has ever been lifted on high by me, and our Netherland churches also are about to reconsider the article in our Confession which touches on this matter.

The difficulty of the problem lies elsewhere. It lies in the pile and fagots of Servetus. It lies in the attitude of the Presbyterians toward the independents. It lies in the restrictions of liberty of worship and in the “civil disabilities,” under which for centuries even in the Netherlands the Roman Catholics have suffered. The difficulty lies in the fact that an article of our old Calvinistic Confession of Faith entrusts to the government the task “of defending against and of extirpating every form of idolatry and false religion and to protect the sacred service of the Church.” The difficulty lies in the unanimous and
uniform advice of Calvin and his epigones, who demanded intervention of the government in the matter of religion.

The accusation is therefore a natural one that, by choosing in favor of liberty of religion, we do not pick up the gauntlet for Calvinism, but that we directly oppose it.

In order to shield myself from this undesirable suspicion, I advance the rule—that a system is not known in what it has in common with other preceding systems; but that it is distinguished by that in which it differs from those preceding systems.

The duty of the government to extirpate every form of false religion and idolatry was not a find of Calvinism, but dates from Constantine the Great, and was the reaction against the horrible persecutions which his pagan predecessors on the imperial throne had inflicted upon the sect of the Nazarene. Since that day this system had been defended by all Romish theologians and applied by all Christian princes. In the time of Luther and Calvin, it was a universal conviction that that system was the true one. Every famous theologian of the period, Melanchthon first of all, approved of the death by fire of Servetus; and the scaffold, which was erected by the Lutherans at Leipzig for Krell, the thorough Calvinist, was infinitely more reprehensible when looked at from a Protestant standpoint.

But while the Calvinists, in the age of Reformation, yielded their victims, by tens of thousands, to the scaffold and the stake (those of the Lutherans and Roman Catholics being hardly worth counting), history has been guilty of the great and far-reaching unfairness of ever casting in their teeth this one execution of fire of Servetus, as a crimen nefandum.

Notwithstanding all this, I not only deplore that one stake, but I unconditionally disapprove of it; yet not as if it were the expression of a special characteristic of Calvinism, but on the contrary as the fatal aftereffect of a system, grey with age, which Calvinism found in existence, under which it had grown up, and from which it had not yet been able entirely to liberate itself.

14 Editor's note: Nicholas Crelius, chancellor of Christian I, leader in the crypto-Calvinistic struggle in Germany. Beheaded in 1601, after ten years of harsh imprisonment. He had been much hated by the nobles. The process which led to his death was so as traitor was conducted very barbarously.

If I desire to know what in this respect must follow from the specific principles of Calvinism, then the question must be put quite differently. Then we must see and acknowledge that this system of bringing differences in religious matters under the criminal jurisdiction of the government resulted directly from the conviction that the church of Christ on earth could express itself only in one form and as one institution. This one church, alone, in the Middle Ages, was the church of Christ, and everything, which differed from her, was looked upon as inimical to this one true church. The government, therefore, was not called upon to judge, or to weigh or to decide for itself. There was only one church of Christ on earth, and it was the task of the magistrate to protect that church from schisms, heresies, and sects.

But break that one church into fragments, admit that the church of Christ can reveal itself in many forms, in different countries; nay, even in the same country, in a multiplicity of institutions; and immediately everything which was deduced from this unity of the visible church drops out of sight. And therefore, if it cannot be denied that Calvinism itself has ruptured the unity of the church, and that in Calvinistic countries a rich variety of all manner of church formations revealed itself, then it follows that we must not seek the true Calvinistic characteristic in what, for a time, it has retained of the old system, but rather in that, which, new and fresh, has sprung up from its own root.

Results have shown that, even after the lapse of three centuries, in all distinctly Roman Catholic countries, even in the South American republics, the Roman Catholic Church is and remains the state church, precisely as does the Lutheran Church in Lutheran countries. And the free churches have exclusively flourished in those countries which were touched by the breach of Calvinism, i.e., in Switzerland, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and the United States of North America.

In Roman Catholic countries, the identification of the invisible and the visible church, under papal unity, is still maintained. In Lutheran countries, with the aid of cuius regio eius religio, the court confession has been monstrously imposed on the people as the land confession; there the Reformed were treated harshly, they were exiled and outraged, as enemies of Christ. In the Calvinistic Netherlands, on the contrary, all those who were persecuted for religion's sake found a harbor of refuge. There the Jews were hospitably received;
there the Lutherans were in honor; there the Mennonites flourished; and even the Arminians and Roman Catholics were permitted the free exercise of their religion at home and in secluded churches. The Independents, driven from England, have found a resting place in the Calvinistic Netherlands; and from this same country the Mayflower sailed forth to transport the Pilgrim fathers to their new fatherland.

I do not build therefore on subterfuge, but I appeal to clear historical facts. And here I repeat the underlying characteristic of Calvinism must be sought, not in what it has adopted from the past, but in what it has newly created. It is remarkable, in this connection, that, from the very beginning, our Calvinistic theologians and jurists have defended liberty of conscience against the Inquisition. Rome perceived very clearly how liberty of conscience must loosen the foundations of the unity of the visible church, and therefore she opposed it. But on the other hand, it must be admitted that Calvinism, by praising aloud liberty of conscience, has in principle abandoned every absolute characteristic of the visible church.

As soon as in the bosom of one and the same people the conscience of one half witnessed against that of the other half, the breach had been accomplished, and placards were no longer of any avail. As early as 1649 it was declared that persecution, for faith's sake, was "A spiritual murder, an assassination of the soul, a rage against God himself, the most horrible of sins." And it is evident that Calvin himself wrote down the premises of the correct conclusion, by his acknowledgment that against atheists even the Catholics are our allies; by his open recognition of the Lutheran Church; and still more emphatically by his pertinent declaration "Scimus tres esse errorem gradus, et quoddam factum semper damnandum esse veniam, aliis medicam castigationem sufficeret, ut tamen manifesta impietas capitali supplicio plectatur."15 That is to say: "There exists a threefold departure from the Christian truth; a slight one, which had better be left alone; a moderate one, which must be restored by a moderate chastisement; and only manifest godlessness must be capitally punished." I admit that this is a harsh decision, but yet a decision in which in principle the visible unity is discarded; and where that unity is broken, there liberty will dawn as a matter of course. For here lies the solution of the problems with Rome the system of persecution issued from the identification

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of the visible with the invisible church, and from this dangerous line Calvin departed. But what he still persevered in defending was the identification of his confession of the truth with the absolute truth itself, and it only wanted fuller experience to realize that also this proposition, true as it must ever remain in our personal conviction, may never be imposed by force upon other people.

So much for the facts. Now let us put the theory itself to the test and look successively at the duty of the magistrate in things spiritual: (1) toward God; (2) toward the church; and (3) toward individuals. As regards the first point, the magistrates are and remain "God's servants." They have to recognize God as supreme Ruler, from whom they derive their power. They have to serve God, by ruling the people according to his ordinances. They have to restrain blasphemy, where it directly assumes the character of an affront to the divine Majesty. And God's supremacy is to be recognized by confessing his name in the Constitution as the Source of all political power, by maintaining the Sabbath, by proclaiming days of prayer and thanksgiving, and by invoking his divine blessing.

Therefore in order that they may govern, according to his holy ordinances, every magistrate is in duty bound to investigate the rights of God, both in the natural life and in his Word. Not to subject himself to the decision of any church, but in order that he himself may catch the light which he needs for the knowledge of the divine will. And as regards blasphemy, the right of the magistrate to restrain it rests in the God-consciousness innate in every man; and the duty to exercise this right flows from the fact that God is the supreme and sovereign Ruler over every state and over every nation. But for this very reason the fact of blasphemy is only then to be deemed established, when the intention is apparent contumaciously to affront this majesty of God as supreme Ruler of the state. What is then punished is not the religious offense, nor the impious sentiment, but the attack upon the foundation of public law, upon which both the state and its government are resting.

Meanwhile there is in this respect a noteworthy difference between states which are absolutely governed by a monarch, and states which are governed constitutionally, or in a republic, in a still wider range, by an extensive assembly.

15 Teme 8, p. 516c; Ed. Schippers.
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In the absolute monarch the consciousness and the personal will are one, and thus this one person is called to rule his people after his own personal conception of the ordinances of God. When on the contrary the consciousness and the will of many cooperate, this unity is lost and the subjective conception of the ordinances of God, by these many, can only be indirectly applied. But whether you are dealing with the will of a single individual, or with the will of many men, in a decision arrived at by a vote, the principal thing remains that the government has to judge and to decide independently. Not as an appendix to the church, nor as its pupil. The sphere of state stands itself under the majesty of the Lord. In that sphere therefore an independent responsibility to God is to be maintained. The sphere of the state is not profane. But both church and state must, each in their own sphere, obey God and serve his honor. And to that end in either sphere God's Word must rule, but in the sphere of the state only through the conscience of the persons invested with authority. The first thing of course is, and remains, that all nations shall be governed in a Christian way; that is to say, in accordance with the principle which, for all statecraft, flows from the Christ. But this can never be realized except through the subjective convictions of those in authority, according to their personal views of the demands of that Christian principle as regards the public service.

Of an entirely different nature is the second question: what ought to be the relation between the government and the visible church? If it had been the will of God to maintain the formal unity of this visible church, this question would have to be answered quite differently from what is now the case. That this unity was originally sought is natural. Unity of religion has great value for the life of a people and not a little charm. And only narrow mindedness can feel itself offended by the rage of despair wherewith Rome in the sixteenth century fought for the maintenance of that unity. It can also be easily understood that this unity was originally established. The lower a people stands in the scale of development, the less difference of opinion is revealed. We see therefore that nearly all nations begin with unity of religion. But it is equally natural that this unity is split up, where the individual life, in the process of development, gains in strength, and where multiformity asserts itself as the undeniable demand of a richer development of life. And thus we are confronted with the fact that the visible church has been split up, and that in no country whatever the absolute unity of the visible church can be any longer maintained.

What then is the duty of the government?

Must it—for the question may be reduced to this—must it now form an individual judgment, as to which of those many churches is the true one? And must it maintain this one over against the others? Or is it the duty of the government to suspend its own judgment and to consider the multiform complex of all these denominations as the totality of the manifestation of the church of Christ on earth?

From a Calvinistic standpoint we must decide in favor of the latter suggestion. Not from a false idea of neutrality, nor as if Calvinism could ever be indifferent to what is true and what false, but because the government lacks the data of judgment, and because every magisterial judgment here infringes the sovereignty of the church. For otherwise, if the government be an absolute monarchy, you get the casus regio eius religio of the Lutheran princes, which has ever been combated from the side of Calvinism. Or if the government rests with a plurality of persons, the church which yesterday was counted the false one, is today considered the true one, according to the decision of the vote; and thus all continuity of state administration and church position is lost.

Hence it is that the Calvinists have always struggled so proudly and courageously for the liberty, that is to say, for the sovereignty, of the church, within her own sphere, in distinction from the Lutheran theologians. In Christ, they contended, the church has her own King. Her position in the state is not assigned her by the permission of the government, but juris divino. She has her own organization. She possesses her own office bearers. And in a similar way she has her own gifts to distinguish truth from the lie. It is therefore her privilege, and not that of the state, to determine her own characteristics as the true church, and to proclaim her own confession as the confession of the truth.

If in this position she is opposed by other churches, she will fight against these her spiritual battle, with spiritual and social weapons; but she denies and contests the right of everyone whomsoever, and therefore also of the government, to pose...
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as a power above these different institutions and to render a decision between her and her sister churches. The government bears the sword which wounds; not the sword of the Spirit, which decides in spiritual questions. And for this reason the Calvinists have ever resisted the idea to assign to the government a *patria potestas*. To be sure a father regulates in his family the religion of that family. But when the government was organized, the family was not set aside, but remained; and the government received only a limited task, which is defined by the sovereignty in the individual sphere, and not least of all by the sovereignty of Christ in his church. Only let us guard here against exaggerated puritanism and let us not refuse, in Europe at least, to reckon with the effects of historical conditions. It is an entirely different matter whether one puts up a new building on a free lot or whether one must restore a house which is standing.

But this can in no regard break the fundamental rule that the government must honor the complex of Christian churches as the multiform manifestation of the church of Christ on earth. That the magistrate has to respect the liberty, i.e., the sovereignty, of the church of Christ in the individual sphere of these churches. That churches flourish most richly when the government allows them to live from their own strength on the voluntary principle. And that therefore neither the Caesareopacy of the czar of Russia; nor the subjection of the state to the church, taught by Rome nor the *cuius regio eius religio* of the Lutheran jurists; nor the irreligious neutral standpoint of the French Revolution; but that only the system of a free church, in a free state, may be honored from a Calvinistic standpoint.

The sovereignty of the state and the sovereignty of the church exist side by side, and they mutually limit each other.

Of an entirely different nature, on the contrary, is the last question to which I referred, namely, the duty of the government as regards the sovereignty of the individual person.

In the second part of this lecture, I have already indicated that the developed man also possesses an individual sphere of life, with sovereignty in his own circle. Here I do not refer to the family, for this is a social bond between several individuals. I have reference to that which is thus expressed by Prof. Weitbrecht: "In gewisser Beziehung wird jeder Mensch supremus oder Souverain sein, denn jeder Mensch muss eine Sphäre haben, und hat sie auch wirklich, in welcher er der Oberste ist."16 ("In some respects every man is a sovereign, for everybody must have and has a sphere of life of his own, in which he has no one above him, but God alone.") I do not point to this to overestimate the importance of conscience, for whosoever wishes to liberate conscience, where God and his Word are concerned, I meet as an opponent, not as an ally. This, however, does not prevent my maintaining the sovereignty of conscience as the palladium of all personal liberty, in this sense—that conscience is never subject to man but always and ever to God almighty.

This need of the personal liberty of conscience, however, does not immediately assert itself. It does not express itself with emphasis in the child, but only in the mature man; and in the same way it mostly slumbers among undeveloped peoples, and is irresistible only among highly developed nations. A man of ripe and rich development will rather become a voluntary exile, will rather suffer imprisonment, nay, even sacrifice life itself, than tolerate constraint in the forum of his conscience. And the deeply rooted repugnance against the Inquisition, which for three long centuries would not be assuaged, grew up from the conviction that its practices violated and assaulted human life in man. This imposes on the government a twofold obligation. In the first place, it must cause this liberty of conscience to be respected by the church, and in the second place, it must give way itself to the sovereign conscience.

As regards the first, the sovereignty of the church finds its natural limitation in the sovereignty of the free personality. Sovereign within her own domain, she has no power over those who live outside of that sphere. And wherever, in violation of this principle, transgression of power may occur, the

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government has to respect the claims on protection of every citizen. The church may not be forced to tolerate as a member one whom she feels obliged to expel from her circle; but on the other hand no citizen of the state must be compelled to remain in a church which his conscience forces him to leave.

Meantime what the government in this respect demands of the churches, it must practice itself, by allowing to each and every citizen liberty of conscience, as the primordial and inalienable right of all men.

It has cost a heroic struggle to wrest this greatest of all human liberties from the grasp of despotism; and streams of human blood have been poured out before the object was attained. But for this very reason every son of the Reformation tramples upon the honor of the fathers, who does not assiduously and without retrenching, defend this palladium of our liberties. In order that it may be able to rule men, the government must respect this deepest ethical power of our human existence. A nation, consisting of citizens whose consciences are bruised, is itself broken in its national strength.

And even if I am forced to admit that our fathers, in theory, had not the courage of the conclusions which follow from this liberty of conscience, for the liberty of speech, and the liberty of worship; even if I am well aware that they made a desperate effort to hinder the spread of literature which they disliked, by censure and refusal of publication—all this does not set aside the fact that the free expression of thought, by the spoken and printed word, has first achieved its victory in the Calvinistic Netherlands. Whosoever was elsewhere straitened could first enjoy the liberty of ideas and the liberty of the press on Calvinistic ground. And thus the logical development of what was ensnared in the liberty of conscience, as well as that liberty itself, first blessed the world from the side of Calvinism.

For it is true that, in Roman lands, spiritual and political despotism have been finally vanquished by the French Revolution, and that insofar we have gratefully to acknowledge that this revolution also began by promoting the cause of liberty. But whosoever learns from history that the guillotine, all over France, for years and years could not rest from the execution of those who were of a different mind; whosoever remembers how cruelly and wantonly the Roman Catholic clergy were murdered, because they refused to violate their conscience by an unholy oath; or whosoever, like myself, by a sad experience, knows the spiritual tyranny which liberalism and conservatism on the European continent have applied, and are still applying, to those who have chosen different paths, is forced to admit that liberty in Calvinism and liberty in the French Revolution are two quite different things.

In the French Revolution, a civil liberty for every Christian to agree with the unbelieving majority; in Calvinism, a liberty of conscience, which enables every man to serve God according to his own conviction and the dictates of his own heart.