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MEMORIAL VOLUME

OF THE

WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

1647-1897.

CONTAINING ELEVEN ADDRESSES DELIVERED BEFORE THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED
STATES, AT CHARLOTTE, N. C., IN MAY, 1897.

IN COMMEMORATION OF

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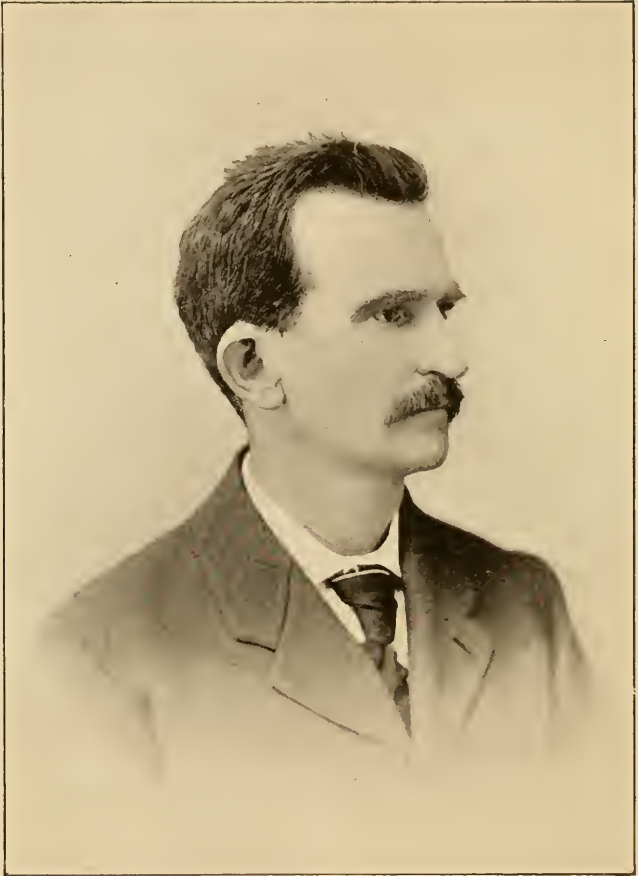


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HON. WILLIAM M. COX, A. M.

XI.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE WESTMINSTER SYSTEM
OF DOCTRINE, WORSHIP AND POLITY ON
CIVIL LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERN-
MENT.

BY

HON. WILLIAM M. COX, A. M.,

RULING ELDER IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT BALDWIN, MISS.

ANALYSIS.

The wide scope of the theme indicated.—The Westminster system older than the Standards.—It is Calvinism.—Its two great postulates.—God holy and sovereign, man sinful and lost.—Redemption founded in God's purpose of grace.—The system a complete philosophy.—The mode of worship simple and spiritual.—Its system of polity representative.—Christ the Head of the church.—Gradation of courts.—A balanced system.—It is popular government according to law.—Calvinism and Presbyterianism have affinity.—Influence of this doctrine, worship and polity great.—It is bold and positive.—Favors education.—Solves problems.—Compact system.—Requires study.—Develops noble character.—Reverences God.—Human government rests on Divine authority.—Noble citizens produced.—Unjust laws resisted.—Anarchy and despotism alike opposed.—Moral sense quickened.—Love of justice produced.—Hence civil liberty and responsible government fostered.—Civil liberty defined.—What it guarantees.—History shows what Calvinism has done for civil liberty.—Instances cited.—Presbyterian polity aided.—People trained to self-government and for leadership.—Specific doctrines aided.—Doctrine of sin humbles pride.—Absolutism destroyed.—Predestination exalts the humble.—Blind submission impossible.—Prince and peasant alike heirs of glory.—Freedom of conscience has same result.—God supreme.—The place and duty of civil magistrate.—No passive obedience.—Cases cited to illustrate.—Calvin's great work discussed.—Its influence traced from Geneva to Holland and Britain.—The dreadful conflict.—Fearful persecutions.—St. Bartholomew's Day.—Louis XIV.—Huguenots.—Philip II.—The Netherlands.—William the Silent.—Scotland and Knox.—England and Cromwell.—The English Revolution.—The Presbyterians and the Independents.—The Covenanters.—The Solemn League and Covenant.—Persecutions and final triumph in Scotland.—The American Revolution the culmination.—The origin and growth of the American colonies traced out.—The Puritans and the Scotch-Irish.—The part they played in securing civil liberty and responsible government in this country.—The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.—Bancroft, Ranke, Morley and Froude quoted.—The verdict of history confirms.

XI.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE WESTMINSTER SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE, WORSHIP AND POLITY ON CIVIL LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

THE theme assigned me is a large one. It will be observed that it is not the influence of the Westminster Standards, but of the Westminster System of Doctrine, Worship and Polity on Civil Liberty and Responsible Government which I am expected to discuss upon this occasion.

The system is older than the Standards, and in all its essential features had been formulated long before the sitting of the Westminster Assembly of divines.

The Westminster system of doctrine is, broadly stated, Calvinism. It makes two fundamental postulates: God, a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth; man, a creature made in the image of God, but fallen from his original state of innocence and blessedness into an estate of sin and misery; corrupted by sin throughout his entire nature, exposed to the penalty of God's retributive justice, and utterly and forever unable of himself to merit God's favor or forgiveness.

Correlated with these, indeed, flowing naturally out of them, is God's gracious scheme of atonement and redemption, determined upon in the divine mind from all eternity, and developed in the fulness of time by the sending forth of the Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to

be a mediator between God and man, who, moved by infinite love and compassion, took the place of those whom the Father had given him, and satisfied in his own person all the demands of the divine justice against them. These, it holds, having been from all eternity predestinated unto everlasting life, are called out of the world, regenerated by God's Spirit, justified by faith in his Son, adopted into the divine family, sanctified by the indwelling Spirit, and kept by the mighty power of God against all the wiles of the wicked one to eternal life.

Why God did not elect to save all men Calvinism does not know. It only knows that such was not his sovereign pleasure. Nor does it know why he chose some and passed by others; but it is assured that it was for reasons which satisfied the divine wisdom and the divine goodness, and it is convinced that but for this election and but for God's enabling grace all men alike had perished, for that all alike would have rejected God's gracious offer of mercy and life.

This system of doctrine is but the philosophic development in their true relation and just proportion of all the teachings of Scripture touching God and man, and God's relations to and dealings with his creatures. It is but the reduction to the crystalline form of science of that great mass of truth contained in the Scriptures in the fluid form of literature. It affords the *rationalé* of Christianity. It is the science of religion.

The Westminster system of worship is marked by great simplicity and the almost entire absence of ceremonial and ritual. It sets apart one day in seven, the Christian Sabbath, wholly to the Lord, to be employed in the private and public exercises of religion. It assembles the people reverently in their houses of worship, where they attend with decorum and gravity while the

Scriptures are read and expounded by an approved minister or teacher, and the congregation lead in the singing of hymns of praise to God and the offering of prayer, adoring his majesty and perfections, thanking him for his goodness and mercy, making confession of sin, and supplication for its forgiveness, and imploring his favor for themselves and all mankind. This system lays special emphasis upon the preaching of the word, holding it to be the power of God unto salvation. It demands of the minister thorough preparation and great diligence and care that he may rightly divide the word and bring the truth level with the understanding of the most unlearned of his hearers. It thus makes of preaching a mighty agency for the education of the people in the highest wisdom and their training in godliness and true holiness. It permits to the minister no assumption of the priestly office. It allows no human intermediary between the soul of man and God. It encourages all to come into the very presence of the Deity, to approach with boldness the throne of grace, and to worship God, who is a spirit, in Spirit and in truth.

The Westminster system of polity is representative republicanism. It acknowledges one, and one only, Head of the Church, and that Christ Jesus our Lord; and it denies that any king or pope is his vicegerent on earth. It holds that the people are, under God, the source of all power, and that no teacher or ruler can be placed over them save by their consent regularly expressed. It commits the government of the individual church to a body of elders freely elected by its members, It groups a number of contiguous churches under the care of a presbytery, composed of the resident ministers and the chosen representatives of the churches. All the presbyteries in any state or nation are, in their turn,

subject to the supervision and control of a General Assembly, composed of the representatives of all the presbyteries. It thus provides a gradation of courts from the session to the General Assembly, all of whose members are upon a footing of absolute equality. It secures local self-government in local affairs, and a true and efficient central authority. It avoids the unmixed despotism of a pope or hierarchy on the one hand, and the looseness of congregational independence on the other. It is throughout a system of popular government according to law. It provides a true authority resting, humanly speaking, in the consent of the governed, and defined by constitutional limitations prescribed by Christ himself, the founder and Head of his Church.

There is perfect congruity between the three systems; while Calvinism in doctrine may be found in connection with Prelacy or Independency in polity, and while Presbyterianism may be joined with Arminianism, and while great simplicity and spirituality in worship may be, and often is, found out of connection with either Calvinism or Presbyterianism, it is yet true that there is a strong natural affinity between them, and they have most often been found together. Each seems to be in a measure dependent on the others for its own fulness and perfection.

The influence of this triple system upon civil institutions has been manifold and great. Of necessity it could not be otherwise. Its influence, however, has been largely mediate and indirect. It has affected government as it has affected the characters, intellectual and moral, of the peoples who live under it.

Calvinism has been the most potent educator for the masses which the world has ever known. Nothing can surpass it as a means of mental culture. It cannot be equalled in its capacity to stimulate and nourish the mental

faculties and develop intellectual power. It invites to the study of problems the most abstruse and profound which ever engage the minds of men. It does not deal in barren negations; it is a bold, a positive and fruitful philosophy; it solves all mysteries; it resolves all doubts touching nature and her phenomena, touching man and his destiny, by its bold assumption of one supreme and eternally inscrutable mystery. In its doctrine of God, the Lord Jehovah, maker and upholder of all things, supreme and rightful ruler of the universe, who knoweth the end from the beginning, and doeth all things after the purpose of his own sovereign will, endowed by necessity with all moral perfections, and filled with love for his intelligent creatures, it lays a broad and deep foundation for a true and satisfying philosophy. Upon this it builds by the most severely logical processes a system of truth closely knit and compacted together, which solves the mystery of human existence and answers the perpetual questionings of the human consciousness. What am I? Whence am I? Whither do I go? are questions which have perplexed the minds of the thoughtful in all time. They are of everlasting human interest. They will not down, but clamor for an answer. Calvinism answers them with a fulness which no other system does, and to the mind accepting its fundamental postulates the answer is absolutely conclusive.

He who would comprehend this system must gird up the loins of his mind for strenuous endeavor. He has undertaken no idle task, to be accomplished in an hour, but one which will tax to the utmost all his powers of thought, and afford exercise for a lifetime to all his mental faculties. As a mere instrument of mental discipline it cannot be surpassed, for it lays under contribution all literature, all science, all philosophy; and, dealing

with the most difficult and pressing problems that present themselves to human thought, it resolves them by showing their relation to its great fundamental assumption. Wherever it has been wisely and generally taught it has mightily stimulated thought among the people and developed among them a high order of intellectual power. But it not only develops intellectual power, for it also begets mental poise and balance and conduces to intellectual repose. He who accepting its great regulative principles has traced them out to all which they logically involve can no longer be agitated by intellectual doubts and fears. The riddle of the universe for him has been solved. The mystery of his own being has been made plain. Chaos has become Cosmos.

The universe is seen to be the work of a supreme intelligence, and its moral government forever established. The distinction between good and evil, between right and wrong, between holiness and sin, is seen to be fundamental and everlasting, and the ultimate triumph of right inevitable. He who has reached these conclusions is no longer the sport of error and false doctrine. He is no more like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. But his convictions are established upon a rock, and he can exclaim, "My mind is fixed, O Lord, my mind is fixed." But great as have been its effects in developing intellectual power and stability, its influence upon moral character has been even greater. There is a subtle law of our spiritual natures by which we become assimilated to our thoughts, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

Our opinions, true or false, mightily influence our conduct and character. Especially is this true when men heartily receive and hospitably entertain a great system of truth dealing with matters of supremest moment and

interest, and having for its chief end the determination of conduct in the highest concerns of life. If, now, this system be a revelation of himself, his will and purposes by the supreme intelligence, and be applied to the mind and heart by his enlightening Spirit, it becomes a controlling and transforming power in character and life.

Calvinists have always been noted for certain great traits which may be taken as the natural fruitage of the system. Chief among them is a profound reverence for God and his authority, a profound conviction that he and he only is to be feared and obeyed. And as under this system all rightful human authority must be derived from and must rest ultimately upon God's sovereign authority, and as obedience to all rightful human authority is obedience to God himself, this supreme reverence for God is accomplished by a spirit of obedience to all just human authority and all righteous human law. This spirit of obedience to rightful authority has marked the Calvinistic peoples in their civil relations in every age and country, and has made of them orderly and law-abiding citizens in every just government under which they have lived. But this supreme reverence for God and supreme allegiance to his authority begets a spirit of instinctive resistance to all unjust authority and all unrighteous law. These are recognized as usurpations, which it is a duty to God to resist and put down. And so Calvinism opposes its adherents in their fundamental characteristics to anarchy and the license of the mob on the one hand, and to the autocratic misrule of a despot on the other.

With this reverence for God and his authority there goes ever a keen appreciation of moral distinctions and an abiding consciousness of human guilt, weakness, and imperfections. Truth, justice, right, perfect holiness,

are felt to be of everlasting obligation, and absolute perfection the only worthy end of human effort.

The Calvinistic standard of human character is a high one, so high, indeed, as to be recognized at once as impossible of attainment in this life and under present conditions. But it challenges to an unending struggle with the selfish and lawless appetites and professions of our fallen natures, and affords the strongest possible incentives to strenuous endeavor after moral excellence. It is not too much to claim that the Calvinistic peoples have been marked by a love of truth and justice, a devotion to duty, an unswerving allegiance to right, a personal uprightness and purity of character, not surpassed by the adherents of any other creed or system. We may with confidence maintain that the world has never known a higher type of stalwart manhood, nor a gentler, purer, or more lovable womanhood than have prevailed among those peoples into whose hearts and life has entered this Calvinistic creed, with its commingled elements of granitic strength and stability, and of supreme, because divine, tenderness and grace.

It can be seen, then, that Calvinism has made a most important contribution to the cause of civil liberty and responsible government, by developing in the peoples to whom it has been both a creed and a life-power those intellectual and moral qualities without which civil liberty and responsible government were forever impossible. No people can ever have a better government than they deserve; no people can ever achieve and enjoy civil liberty until they have learned that it does not mean unbridled license. Civil liberty is liberty regulated by law. It guarantees to every citizen the full enjoyment of all just rights and privileges, conditioned upon his own recognition and observance of the rights and privileges of

others. It presupposes a high degree of popular intelligence, and a general spirit of obedience to law.

Until these have been attained, the most perfect constitution of government the genius of man could possibly devise, it matters not how liberal it might be in theory, would prove worthless in practice, and though the forms of freedom might be preserved, would result in despotism and oppression.

It is a most notable fact in this connection that those nations, which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that crucial epoch in the liberty of free institutions, made the most determined struggle against absolutism in church and state, and for civil and religious freedom, were precisely those which had been brought most fully under the training and discipline of Calvinism.

The freest people in the world to-day must trace their institutions back through the England, the Scotland, the Netherlands, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to the Geneva of Calvin; and the England, the Scotland, the Netherlands of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were to their heart's core intensely Calvinistic. They won civil liberty and established responsible governments because Calvinism had made them desire to be free, and had fitted them to achieve and enjoy freedom.

The Presbyterian polity also contributed largely to this end. It furnished the people in their ecclesiastical affairs a pure type of representative republicanism. It habituated them to self-government. It trained them to self-restraint. It taught them independence and self-reliance. It developed among them a capacity for leadership, and a power of command which served them equally well when applied to affairs of state. It furnished a system equally as well adapted to the state as to the church. It stimulated in them a desire for civil liberty. No peo-

ple accustomed to govern themselves in one sphere could ever become reconciled to an unmixed despotism in the other.

There are, however, certain specific teachings of Calvinism which have had a more direct influence than those just mentioned upon civil government, and which in the long and desperate struggle which raged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries between absolutism and freedom, played an indispensable part.

Its doctrine of sin and depravity has been the greatest of all levellers. It includes all men under sin, from the slave in his hovel to the king on his throne. No rank or station, however exalted, can exempt from this universal condition. All men alike, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the noble and the base born, are involved in the same guilt, share the same depravity, are exposed to the same condemnation. In the light of this tremendous fact all earthly distinctions disappear, and the privileges of birth and caste are seen to be without adequate foundation. The pretensions of the high born to an innate superiority and consequent right to lord it over the masses are dissipated, and the pride of the great is humbled into the dust. The spell of their greatness is broken, and the meanest peasant can see and feel that the mightiest noble, or even the king himself, is, after all, barring the accidents of birth and fortune, but a man like himself. All men are seen to be equal in the sight of God and before his righteous law, all men are seen to owe to God supreme allegiance, and to all men alike it is seen that the same offer of mercy is made upon the same conditions.

The inference is easy, that if all men are equal before the law of God, they should also be recognized as equals by the law of man. Hence, there emerges clearly to

view the great axiom of modern democracy, that all men are created equal and vested with certain inalienable rights. This principle, properly limited, is Calvin's rather than Jefferson's.

But if its doctrine of sin abased the pride and humbled the pretensions of the great, its doctrine of predestination exalted the lowly. To the arrogance and pride which went with earthly power, the simple peasant, conscious within himself of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus, could oppose a yet higher pride. "Though his name did not appear in the register of heralds, it was recorded in the book of life." Though unknown among men beyond the limits of his lord's estate, he was known in the councils of heaven. His name was among those whom the Father from all eternity had given to the Son in an everlasting covenant. He had been bought with a great price, had been saved with a great salvation; for in his stead the Prince of Glory had died upon the tree. Though base born, he yet shared the highest royalty. Though poor in this world's goods, yet all things were his. He felt himself to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. God himself had made him free, and it was not within the province of earthly power to make him a slave. And he knew that it "had not pleased God to call many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but that God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and base things of the world, and things that were despised had God chosen; yea, and things which were not, to bring to naught the things which were." And all whom God had chosen were equals and brethren, and if any would be great among them, he must become the servant of all.

This conviction stimulated in those who cherished it a feeling of pride and a sense of dignity and worth which upheld and sustained them under the scorn and contempt of their earthly superiors, and enabled them, when occasion demanded, to outface the pride of nobles and kings. It transformed the hind into a man and a hero, and, when the days of fierce fighting came, it filled the armies of Condé, of William the Silent and of Cromwell with yeomen, artisans and shop-keepers fit to stand against the chivalry of Europe.

Another principle of Calvinism which has made an important contribution to the cause of civil liberty is its teaching concerning freedom of conscience, that "God only is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to his word or beside it in faith or worship." This is involved in the entire Calvinistic conception of man in his relations with God. It is of the very essence of Calvinism. It is a principle which is utterly subversive of the spiritual over-lordship of Pope and hierarchy and of all pretensions upon the part of the civil power to control the subject in matters of religion.

In its logical outcome it limits the authority of the state strictly to matters secular, and leads inevitably to the entire independence and separation of church and state.

Intimately connected with its teaching concerning freedom of conscience is its doctrine of the civil magistrate. It holds that he is a minister of God ordained to be under him over the people for God's glory and the public good, that he is armed with the power of the sword for the defence and encouragement of them that are good and the punishment of evil-doers, and that he is to be obeyed in all his lawful commands. There is a

vast deal contained in that last clause. It places a sharp limitation upon the duty of the subject to the ruler, and saps the very foundation of absolutism. If the civil magistrate is to be obeyed in his lawful commands, he is to be disobeyed in those which are unrighteous and unlawful and contrary to God's law of right and truth. Calvinism is perfectly consistent with itself and the written word in holding that we ought to obey God rather than man.

Calvinists have never held the craven doctrine of passive obedience. The Reformed or Calvinistic churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stood practically alone in teaching that tyrants were usurpers and were to be resisted and deposed. Luther himself counseled non-resistance to tyranny, declaring that a wicked tyrant was better than a wicked war. The prelates of the Anglican Church, when the liberties of Britain and the world were trembling in the balance, prostrated themselves at the feet of a wicked tyrant, proclaimed to the world that he could do no wrong, and exhorted the people to submit while their ancient liberties were trampled in the dust, the constitution of their country subverted, and themselves subjected to the irresponsible power of a corrupt, ruthless despotism.

But Calvinism proclaimed resistance to tyrants to be obedience to God. It nerved the people to undying opposition to absolutism in church and state, and transformed a simple peasantry into the most magnificent fighting force in Christendom.

When in the sixteenth century the human intellect, roused by the renaissance of the ancient learning from the torpor of centuries, and freed from the shackles of superstition, began to devote itself to the earnest and reverent study of God's word, especially when the truths

of that word loosely scattered upon its surface were by the transcendent genius of Calvin gathered up and wrought into a system, at once the true science of religion and the highest and most faithful philosophy ever promulgated among men, the seeds of revolution were scattered broadcast over Europe. Again was to be verified the saying of the Master, that he had not come to send peace on earth but a sword.

While the system dealt chiefly with the relations of men to God, it involved also incidentally their relations to each other. While concerned chiefly with the life to come, it did not disdain to teach men their rights in the life which now is.

In common with all Protestantism it was a revolt against spiritual sovereignties, but it went further and in its essential principles assailed the foundations of all despotism, civil as well as ecclesiastical. Radiating from Geneva, it spread rapidly over Central and Western Europe and the British Islands. Wherever it obtained a foothold it roused a spirit of opposition to civil despotism, as well as ecclesiastical domination. No more radical system had ever been promulgated, nor one more fitted to stir society as then constituted from centre to circumference. It struck at the root of all errors, whether in the church or state. It was at once instinctively recognized as the natural enemy of all irresponsible power; and it was perceived by princes and prelates alike that, if permitted to run unchecked, the world's dynasties and hierarchies were doomed, and that Europe must soon pass from the domination of kings and popes to a government in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs by the people and for the people.

This would have been a blessed consummation, but the powers of darkness were all roused to prevent it, and

in their furious onslaught the cause of civil liberty and human progress was held back for generations, and throughout the larger and fairer parts of Europe either hopelessly checked or grievously wounded and distorted.

There is nothing in human annals of more surpassing interest than the united struggle of the papacy and the great Catholic monarchs to beat back and stamp out the flaming truths of Calvinism, and to overwhelm and exterminate its adherents. The fires of the Inquisition prevented its ever getting a firm footing in Italy or Spain. It was soon throttled in Belgium, in Bavaria, in Bohemia, Austria, and Poland. It struggled long and desperately in France. The Calvinists of that country struggled for decades with what seemed an unconquerable courage to vindicate their right to live as freemen and worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. They poured out their blood like water.

“It has been reckoned,” says Jonathan Edwards, “that about this time within thirty years there were martyred in this kingdom, for the Protestant religion, thirty-nine princes, one hundred and forty-eight counts, two hundred and thirty-four barons, one hundred and forty-seven thousand five hundred and eighteen gentlemen, and seven hundred and sixty thousand of the common people.” What a holocaust of victims! What a contribution upon the part of Presbyterians and Calvinists of martyrs to civil liberty and freedom of conscience. In one day, the never-to-be-forgotten 24th day of August, 1572, upon signal given by the cathedral bell, there were butchered in cold blood seventy-five thousand men, women, and children by the minions of the Pope and with the consent of the king. This terrible atrocity was deemed worthy by the Pope of special commemoration by

the striking of a medal and services of thanksgiving in the churches of Rome. But it needed no special commemoration. The friends of human rights will never let it be forgotten. The massacre of St. Bartholomew will stand while men love justice and right and freedom of thought and of conscience, as the monumental crime against the rights of humanity. It is a damned spot which all great Neptune's ocean could never wash out. It is a flaming beacon light to warn all the generations of the future.

But the odds against the Calvinists were too great. They were conquered, but for a time were not utterly destroyed. Some measure of toleration was extended them until Louis XIV. revoked the edict of Nantes, formally suppressed the reformed religion, and banished every Protestant pastor from the realm. This blow practically destroyed the Reformed Church in France. It was followed by an enormous emigration of the Huguenots to the immense gain of every country which received them, but to the everlasting undoing of France. She has never recovered, can never recover, from the loss of their piety, their pure morality, their stability and strength of character, their patriotism, their aptness for all the arts of peace and war. In her madness, she had thrust out her best. France has been ever since like a ship without ballast, wallowing in the waves, which ever and anon threaten to engulf her. After the Revolution and the Terror, after her wild dreams of conquest, after her overthrow and humiliation by her ancient enemy, she again has peace. She has also the forms, but she lacks the genius and spirit of freedom. She is passing from the first place in Europe to one of comparative imbecility, while her place is taken by a nation of purer faith and sterner morals.

Cotemporary with the persecution of the Huguenots

in France was the effort of Philip II., head of the Austro-Spanish monarchy, to suppress the reformed religion in the Netherlands. This brave, enterprising, and intelligent people had early received the Calvinistic system in its entirety. They speedily renounced their spiritual subordination to the Pope and sympathized deeply with their co-religionists in other countries in their efforts to win freedom of conscience and worship. But they were not to be permitted to enjoy this sight themselves without first passing through the fires of a persecution unsurpassed in atrocity, and waging a defensive warfare for decades not less desperate, but in the end more fortunate than that of the Huguenots. Philip, who was a most bigoted Catholic, had made it the purpose of his life to destroy Protestantism and dragoon the peoples of Europe back into spiritual dependence upon Rome, while at the same time he utterly destroyed all their aspirations for civil liberty. He sent against the brave Hollanders not only the best equipped and most veteran troops in Europe, but also the most experienced and skilful generals then living. He employed in his crusade against the schismatics not only all the arts of honorable warfare, but also the axe of the executioner, the knife of the assassin and the torch of the incendiary. The brutality, the lust, the terrible atrocity of the Spaniards upon the taking and sacking of towns and cities had passed into history under the name of the Spanish Terror. The cruel Alva boasted that besides the multitudes slain in battle he had committed eighteen thousand to the executioner, and this because they feared God more than they feared Philip, and preferred to die rather than to play traitors to the truth. The brave Hollanders, under their great stadtholder, William the Silent, struggled on amid terrible reverses till Leyden alone of their principal cities held

out. This city was closely invested and was near its fall, and when Leyden should fall the good cause would be irretrievably lost. In this dire extremity their spirit equalled their peril. They resolved to invoke the aid of the elements. They cut the dykes which held back the North Sea. A mighty tempest from the northwest rolled in the raging waters and Leyden was saved. They saved their freedom though they drowned their land; and under the princes of the House of Orange they built up a great Protestant commonwealth which long served as a mighty bulwark against all the aggressions of absolutism, and furnished an asylum to fugitives from religious persecution from all the countries of Europe. They eventually furnished the prince under whom the liberties of the British people were firmly secured.

While these things were happening upon the continent a work was being done across the channel in Scotland, which has made of her an inspiration to the lovers of civil and religious freedom the world over, and has borne most notable fruit for these three centuries. John Knox, the third of the great triumvirate of reformers, after a season spent at Geneva, where he had enjoyed the tuition of Calvin had mastered his system and caught his spirit, returned to his native land. He labored diligently and fearlessly for the spread of the truth, and with so much success that Scotland was won for the Reformed faith and Presbyterianism fully established. So thoroughly was the work done that three centuries and more have not been able to undo it, and the consequent change in Scottish character and life was so great as to have been likened to a resurrection from death. But let Carlyle speak, "In the history of Scotland, too, I can find properly but one epoch. We may say that it contains nothing of world interest at all but this Reformation

by Knox. A poor barren country, full of continual broils, dissensions, massacings. Bravery enough, no doubt, fierce fighting in abundance, but not braver nor fiercer than that of their old Scandinavian sea-king ancestor—a country in the last stage of rudeness and destitution nothing developed in it but what was rude, external, semi-animal—and now at the Reformation the internal life was kindled under the ribs of this outward material death. This that Knox did for his nation we may really call a resurrection from death. The Puritanism of Scotland became that of England, of New England.

“A tumult in the High Church at Edinburgh spread into universal battle and struggle over all these realms. After fifty years struggling there came out what we call the glorious revolution, *habeas corpus* act, free parliaments, and much else. Alas, is it not too true what we said that many men in the van do always like Russian soldiers march into the ditch at Schwiednitz and fill it with their dead bodies, that the rear may pass over them dry-shod and gain the honor.

“How many earnest, rugged Cromwells, Knoxes, poor peasant Covenanters, wrestling, battling for very life in rough, miry places, have to suffer, and struggle, and fall, greatly censured, bemired, before a beautiful revolution of eighty-eight can step over them in official pumps and silk stockings, with universal three times three.”

Presbyterianism in Scotland was one of the chief factors in vindicating the liberties of the British people. It has always been obnoxious to the Stuart dynasty, who regarded it as inimical to monarchy. “Presbytery,” said James I., “doth consist with monarchy as well as God with the devil.” The attempt to suppress it in the interest of prelacy precipitated the civil war, which

ended as all know in the overthrow of the king and his execution by Parliament for treason against the laws and liberties of England.

This great struggle was upon the part of Parliament a war by the Calvinists of Scotland and England against absolutism in church and state, and for civil and religious freedom. For whatever the names by which the adherents of Parliament were known, whatever their views upon church polity, they were at one upon doctrine, and were strongly Calvinistic. That this is true is amply verified by the Westminster Standards, promulgated under the auspices of the Long Parliament, which we this day celebrate.

This is not the occasion to discuss the differences which sprung up between the Presbyterians and Independents. It can never be known whether had the views and plans of the former prevailed, England would have had as the immediate result of the war a limited monarchy, with ample guarantee for the liberties of the subject, and the Revolution of 1688 been anticipated for more than a generation. But it is evident that such was their hope and purpose.

The Independents, however, triumphed through the genius of Cromwell, who for some years, as Lord Protector gave to England a government of great power, vigor, and wisdom, but which was after all as thorough-going a despotism as that which Charles I. lost life and crown in seeking to establish. The restoration of Charles II., after the death of Cromwell, and consequent overthrow of the commonwealth, was for the time the utter undoing of all for which the Puritans had fought, and introduced a worse despotism than that of Charles I. The Presbyterians, especially, felt the utmost severity of the royal displeasure.

The Stuarts, though a Scottish house, had always hated and feared the Scottish kirk, and now for twenty-eight years Charles, and afterward his brother James, exhausted every resource of craft and power to break the spirit of the Scottish people, destroy their national church, and root out the last vestige of Presbyterianism from the realm.

The patient endurance, the inflexible resolution, the unshaken constancy, the heroic devotion of the Presbyterians of Scotland under this fiery ordeal constitute one of the marvels of history.

All Scotland was reddened with blood. Claverhouse and his troopers, like ravenous wolves, pursued God's elect through crags and fens. Eighteen thousand suffered martyrdom for the truth. Men, women and children were shot, were hanged, were beheaded, were thrust through with the sword, were drowned in the tide. This persecution recalls the suffering of God's ancient people. Paul seems to have been uttering prophecy as well as recording history when he said, "And some had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea also of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy). They wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth." But they conquered in the end. Had they proven recreant to the truth, had the stern old covenanters once yielded, the cause of civil and religious freedom would have met a reverse from which it might never have recovered. But they kept the faith, and succor came. Through their initiative and assistance the Revolution of '88 was made an accomplished fact. Through their invincible

courage and unyielding constancy they won for themselves freedom of conscience and worship, and prepared the way for the general diffusion of civil liberty throughout the English-speaking world.

But the chief act in the great drama was the American Revolution and the founding of the American Republic. Here the political principles of Calvinism have been most fully wrought out, and their beneficent effects most fully realized. Here, for the first time in history, the church has been made entirely independent of the state, and the fullest freedom of conscience guaranteed to all men. Here the Calvinistic principle of representative republicanism has been fully accepted; and through it has been secured local self-government in local affairs, together with a true and efficient central authority, while at the same time it has avoided imperial centralization with its inevitable tendency to despotism on the one hand, and the excessive multiplication of petty sovereignties with their conflicting interests and pretensions on the other, and the perpetuity of our institutions seeming now to be secured, absolutism is doomed. The principle of civil liberty and responsible government is triumphant, and nothing remains among civilized peoples but the gradual working of it out in detail. While the credit for this grand result does not belong exclusively to any one race or sect among the American people, it is yet true that the influences which brought it about were predominantly Calvinistic and largely Presbyterian.

The population of the colonies at the time of the Revolution had been drawn most largely from Calvinistic sources, had been brought up under Calvinistic discipline, and had imbibed freely of Calvinistic ideals. When we remember that the Puritans of New England, the Dutch of New York, a full half of the Germans of Penn-

sylvania, Maryland and Virginia, the Scotch of New Jersey, the Scotch-Irish of Pennsylvania, Virginia and the Carolinas, the Huguenots of South Carolina (but these people were scattered in considerable numbers through all the colonies), were all of them Calvinists, and practically all of them save the first-named were Presbyterians, we are prepared to appreciate the part borne by Calvinists and Presbyterians in the vindication of American rights and the establishment of our free institutions.

The part borne by the Puritans of New England in the agitation which led to the war is common history, and need not be recounted here. It is not so generally known that the Presbyterians in all the colonies were, to a man, the early and steadfast friends and champions of American rights, and were the first to declare for complete independence. The Presbyterian ministers contributed largely to the success of the Revolution by preaching the duty of resisting tyranny, and inspiring the people with confidence in God's overruling care and protection.

The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians were the first to adopt a policy looking to the severing of all connection with the mother country.

The Scotch-Irish settlers upon the Watauga and the Holston Assembly at Abingdon in January, 1775, resolved that "we are resolutely and unalterably determined never to surrender our inestimable privileges to any power on earth but at the expense of our lives."

The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of Western Pennsylvania, assembled at Hanna's Town in May, 1776, resolved to oppose by force of arms the aggressions of the British Parliament, and to coincide in any scheme that might be formed for the defence of America.

The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the good county of Mecklenburg, in the brave State of North Carolina, assembled in May, 1775, in the then hamlet, but now beautiful and historic city of Charlotte, and within ear-shot of your place of assembly, and adopted a Declaration of Independence and a well-digested scheme of government; and they did this more than a year before Washington and Jefferson had ceased to hope for a reconciliation with the mother country, or the Continental Congress sufficiently mastered its fears to renounce its allegiance to the British crown. Bancroft is fully warranted in declaring that the first voice publicly raised in America for severing all connection with Great Britain came not from the Puritans of New England, nor the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

The Mecklenburg declaration will stand while free institutions endure as a monument to the devotion of Presbyterians to civil liberty and responsible government.

But the lapse of time admonishes me that I must bring this address to a close. Though tempted to go more fully into the history of the war of the Revolution and the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and to show more in detail the part borne by Calvinists and Presbyterians both in field and council, I must desist, lest I weary you overmuch, nor can I, though the theme be an inviting one, consume more of your time to show the need of Calvinism for the future as a great conservative power to resist the disintegrating influence now at work in all civilized states, tending to the denial and subversion of all legitimate authority and the bringing in of anarchy and the wild license of the mob. I must be content to quote in support of the main contention of this address the testimony of some eminent, competent, and disinterested authorities.

Bancroft, the historian of the United States, in speaking of Calvinism, calls it "the system which for a century and a half assumed the guardianship of liberty for the English-speaking world"; and again he says that "the genius of Calvin infused enduring elements into the institution of Geneva, and made of it for the modern world the impregnable fortress of popular liberty, the fertile seed plot of democracy."

John Morley, the great radical, has recently declared that "Calvinism saved Europe."

Ranke, the historian of the Popes, asserts that "John Calvin was virtually the founder of America."

Froude, the English historian, in his lecture on "Calvinism" at St. Andrew's University, used this language: "I shall ask you again why, if it be a creed of intellectual servitude, it was able to inspire and sustain the bravest efforts ever made by men to break the yoke of unjust authority? When all else has failed, when patriotism has covered its face and human courage broken down, when intellect has yielded, as Gibbon says, with a smile or a sign, content to philosophize in the closet and abroad to worship with the vulgar, when emotion and sentiment and tender imaginative piety have become the handmaids of superstition, and have dreamt themselves into forgetfulness that there is any difference between lies and truth, this slavish belief called Calvinism has in one or another of its forms borne ever an inflexible front against illusions and mendacity, and has preferred rather to be ground to powder like flint than to bend before violence or melt under enervating temptation."

Upon these conclusions of history, I am satisfied to rest the case.