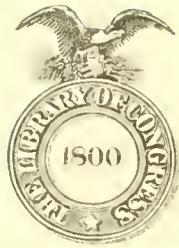


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CALVINISM
AND
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

THOMAS BALCH



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CALVINISM
AND
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

BY THOMAS BALCH.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS fourth centenary year of the birth of the leading religious reformer of the French race, a son of Picardy, seems an appropriate time to reprint this article, *Calvinism and American Independence*. For this paper shows the great influence that the religious ideas that emanated from Geneva had upon the development and formation of the political institutions of the United States. It was originally printed in *The Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, for July, 1876. The author, Mr. Balch, a member of the Philadelphia Bar, who died March 29th, 1877, was the author or editor of many historical or economic works. Among these were:—

Letters and Papers relating chiefly to the Provincial History of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, 1855.

Papers relating chiefly to the Maryland Line during the Revolution: published by the Seventy-Six Society, Philadelphia, 1857.

Les Français en Amérique pendant la Guerre de l'Indépendance des Etats-Unis, 1777-1783: Paris, 1872.

International Courts of Arbitration: The Law Magazine and Review: London, November, 1874, reprinted at Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1874.

Free Coinage and a Self-Adjusting Ratio: Philadelphia, 1877.

CALVINISM AND AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

By THOMAS BALCH.

CALVINISM has been discussed so often, and in so many ways, and from such diverse standpoints, has been the theme of such acrimonious attack and of such loyal defense and eulogy, that it appears almost superfluous to add another to the numerous essays concerning it. But its remnant force as a political instrument, oftener recognized by publicists than by theologians, does not seem to have been examined with a care worthy of the vast effects it has wrought. The learned historian of the Reformation (Merle d'Aubigné) proposed to make this the subject of the crowning chapter of his last and profoundest work.¹ He died without having commenced what would have been a much needed and much valued contribution to political science, as well as to religious history, for it may be fairly asserted, that to the social mechanism, instituted by the great reformer, developed and modified by time and the experience of succeeding generations, we owe that form of political organization under which we live, commonly called Constitutional Republicanism. This species of government was wholly unknown to the ancients. As late as Montesquieu, that eminent publicist held that republicanism could flourish only in

¹ See preface to Mr. Cate's admirable translation of *The Reformation in the Time of Calvin*, by Merle d'Aubigné London, 1875.

communities of limited territory, for at the time he wrote, the effects of Calvinism were but partially experienced, and Calvinism itself seemed almost perishing beneath a brutal and unsparing persecution. His rare judicial sagacity failed not, however, to discern that Protestantism, from its very nature,² ought to develop political independence.

Not in Europe, not until transplanted beyond the ocean, did the reformed religion yield its most beneficent fruits. The earliest attempts at colonization within the territory occupied by the revolting colonies were made by French Protestants on the banks of the river Saint John. These attempts were unsuccessful, but from the day that the Huguenots, sent out by Coligny, put their feet upon the soil of the New World, it seems as though they took possession of it as the home of liberty of conscience and of political liberty.

It is the fashion, perhaps too much so, for historians to seek the solution of great events in purely material causes, and thus our separation from the mother country

²The opinion enunciated by Montesquieu *Esprit des Loix*, XXIV: 4, have been controverted by a distinguished Roman Catholic writer of our own day, M. de Parieu, who contends, *Principes de la Science Politique*, Paris, 1870, p. 16, that although it was asserted that Protestantism should have led to political freedom, "yet it has not attained this result generally, or to a considerable extent, as may be seen by an examination of the constitution of many of the Protestant States of modern Europe."

[With de Parieu's book, compare the essay of another Roman Catholic writer, Émile de Laveleye, professor in the faculty of the University of Liege: *Le Protéstantisme et le Catholicisme dans leur rapports avec la liberté et la prospérité des peuples*, first published in the *Revue de Belgique*, Brussels, January 15th, 1875, and reprinted in de Laveleye's *Essais et Etudes, Première Serie*, Paris and Ghent, 1894, page 371. See also in the same volume, page 404, de Laveleye's paper, *De l'influence de la religion sur les formes de gouvernement.*]

is laboriously traced to the legislation about taxes and imposts. But so momentous a change in the condition of a people must be ascribed rather to moral and political influences, long existing and rooted in its hearts and habits, chief among which was the Calvinism of a large part of the population. We propose, therefore, to trace in the following pages the political vicissitudes of the combat which that form of religious belief waged with imperial and pontifical absolutism in Europe, and the part it had in the creation of a new nation, whose mere existence is a living, disturbing force in the world's economy, and whose future is far beyond the ken of mortal vision.

The successive reformations of Christianity were the natural results of its development, and here we propose to examine more particularly the last of these phases, Calvinism, the effects of which were felt in France through the Huguenots, in Holland through the Anabaptists, in Scotland through the Presbyterians, and in England through the Non-Conformists and the Puritans. This examination will enable us to see why the agents of France in the English Colonies of America, such as DeKalb and Bon Vouloir, found in the religious principles of the colonists an element of disaffection toward the mother country, and why they counseled the French government to foster and cherish it, as it was the only force capable of arousing public opinion to such a degree as to produce a rupture with England at the first opportunity.³

³ See, upon this subject, *La Vie de Thomas Jefferson*. By Cornelis DeWitt. Paris, 1861.

A New Journey in North America. By the Abbé Robin. Philadelphia, 1782. "Intolerant Presbyterianism must have long ago

The religious perturbations set three different peoples in motion, and had a different character and result in each of them.

Among the Slaves, the movement of which John Huss was the leader, was rather national than religious. It resembled the last glimmers of the pile lit by the Council of Constance, at which the reformer perished (1415).⁴

The Reformation promoted by Luther, took its deepest roots among the Germans. It was also more thorough, while preserving an exclusively national character. The diatribes of Hans Sachs were in verses, scarcely understood except by the laboring classes of Franconia. The fiercest invectives of the chivalrous but unhappy Von Hütten were in the uncouth dialect of the day. It not only denied the authority of the Pope, but rejected that of Councils, then that of the Fathers, in order to bring itself face to face with the Holy Scripture. This manly and energetic monk, whose square and jovial face made him popular, exercised a commanding influence. The vigorous hatred with which he combated the Roman clergy, then owning one-third of the soil of Germany, drew around him all who suffered

sowed the seeds of hatred and discord between them and the mother country."

Presbyterianism and the Revolution. By the Rev. Thomas Smith, 1845.

The Real Origin of the Declaration of Independence. By the Rev. Thomas Smith. Columbia, 1847.

DeKalb's Correspondence, has lately been given to us by the industry and labor of Dr. Frederic Kapp, member of the German Imperial Parliament, in his genial and eloquent life of DeKalb.

⁴ See *The Reformers and the Reformation; John Huss and the Council of Constance.* By Emile de Bonnechese. 2 vols. 12 mo. 3d edition. Paris, 1870. A very learned and interesting work.

in fortune from this imposition, all who detested the alien occupants of their native land, all who revolted at the vices and disorders of the professed teachers of holiness. The war, which the German princes then had to maintain against the Catholic sovereigns and the allies of the Pope, ended in giving to Luther's Reformation that essentially Teutonic character which it ever afterward maintained.

In the Latin race, the most advanced of all in an intellectual point of view at that period—which to-day still pretends to the empire of the world (*urbi et orbi*)—John Calvin organized a transformation, the most thorough and most fruitful in political results. Born in France, at Noyon (in Picardy), in 1509, the new reformer, after having studied theology and subsequently law, published at Basle, when twenty-seven years of age, his *Institutio Christianæ Religionis*,⁵ which he dedicated to the King of France. Driven from Geneva, and then recalled to that city, thenceforth he was all powerful there. He desired to reform alike morals and creeds, and himself furnished an example of the most austere morality.⁶ His theocratic rule deprived the Genevese of some of the most innocent enjoyments of life; but owing to his vigorous impulse, Geneva acquired great importance in Europe.

⁵ Calvin writes Oct. 13, 1536, to his friend Farel, about a French edition which preceded that cited in the text. As far as known this French publication is lost. The copy in the library at Zurich seems to be a translation of it into Latin, and in a lengthy title-page is stated to be by Joanne Calvino, Novio dunensi autore, Basiliæ, MDXXXVI. The Amsterdam edition of Calvin's work from Shipper's Press, 1668, has a finely engraved portrait of the Reformer.

⁶ This sternness of character had been early displayed. While at school his comrades had nicknamed him, "*the accusative case.*"

Bolder in his reforms than Luther, he was also more thorough and systematic. He clearly comprehended that his doctrines would neither spread nor last if they were not condensed into a code. A summary of them, the Profession of Faith, in twenty-one articles,⁷ was given to the world (Nov. 10, 1536),⁸ and we find the spirit of it, though not the letter, in many a political document of after days. According to this code, the pastors were to preach, to administer the sacraments, to examine candidates for the office of the ministry. Authority was in the hands of a synod or consistory, essentially democratic in its construction, for it was composed one-third of pastors and two-thirds of laymen.

Calvin perfectly understood the secret of the increasing strength of the disciples of Loyola. Like the founder of the order of Jesuits, he desired to place the new social condition upon the most absolute equality, operating under the control of the severest discipline. He retained the power of ex-communication⁹ for his church, and himself exercised authority over his followers with such rigid inflexibility, that it amounted almost to cruelty. When the man had disappeared, his principles survived him in the social organization which was his work. The equality of men was recognized and publicly professed; the most austere morality was practiced, and when the hour of agony or death arrived,

⁷ As to the real authorship, see *Merle d'Aubigné*, vi: 337, who examines the question, whether Calvin's draft was probably lost and Farel's adopted. But the two friends labored so much in common, and Calvin dominated Farel so much, that the document is generally considered to have been the work of Calvin.

⁸ D'Aubigné, citing *Registers of Council*.

⁹ D'Aubigné vi: 343.

their faith and discipline enabled the Calvinists to make the most heroic efforts, to endure the most frightful tortures, for the sake of conscience and political liberty.¹⁰

From Geneva this form of religion passed into France and through Alsace into Holland and Scotland. In Great Britain the two systems—a reform proceeding from the people, a reform directed by the government—reached the most complete development. In fact, the Anglican Church, with its archbishops, its different orders in the priesthood, its unchanged liturgy, its immense income, its universities, its institutions for learning or charity, hardly differed in anything from the outward organization of orthodox Romanism. The change consisted in the costume, a greater simplicity of worship, the marriage of the priests, the ejection of the Pope, the lands wrested from monks and transferred to royal favorites. The existence of the church was intimately connected with the existence of the monarchy, of which it was the most faithful, the most loyal support.

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland, on the contrary, developed the democratic tendencies which were the very essence of Calvinism. No distinction of rank or riches existed among the clergy. They were hardly separated from the faithful except in the execution of their spiritual duties. There was no delegation of the

¹⁰ In August, 1870, the writer expressed similar views in a little volume published at Paris, entitled *Les Français en Amérique*. They were commented on by J. Lorimer, Regius Prof. of Public Law and the Law of Nations, in the University of Edinburgh, in his treatise on *The Institutes of Law*, 1872 (p. 301). I am not insensible to the honor of having my opinions discussed in so learned and authoritative a work, but I feel bound to suggest that any observations scarcely went so far as to say, that Calvin's system was the cause or model of the Constitution of Geneva.

priesthood. Every Christian was fit for the sacred office who had true piety and a call from God. The ministers were poor, but it was because they "lived of the sacrifice." The power they exercised was purely moral, but in Scotland, as well as at Geneva, magistrates and nobles were more than once compelled to listen to the stern and energetic voices of their pastors. *× Vox populi, vox Dei* was henceforth the watchword of the peoples. It displaced the maxim of divine right. Upon the principles summed up in it, the States General relied when they pronounced (July 26, 1581) the deposition of Philip the Second, and created the Batavian Republic.

Some years previously Buchanan,¹¹ and later on, other British writers, expanding the views of Saint Augustin and Calvin, maintained that nations had a conscience like individuals, that the Christian revelation ought to be the foundation of civil law, and that only where it was in default had the State a right to legislate and establish rules of action for itself; that whatever might be the form of government chosen by a people, republic, monarchy, or oligarchy, that government was only the machinery which the people employed to administer affairs, and that its continuance or its arrest depended solely upon the way in which it discharged the duty entrusted to it.

These are the principles which are found in the teachings of the primitive church, revived by Calvin, and which tended to nothing else than to overturn the ideas

¹¹ Buchanan's work, which had the greatest renown in England and in Scotland *De jure regni apud Scotos*, was printed in 1579. The *Lex, Rex* of Rutherford, in 1641. *Pro populo angliae defensio*, by Milton, in 1651.

then admitted in the organization of empires, and to sap the foundation of the absolute power of sovereigns; and their antagonism, therefore, provoked violent persecutions of the dissenters of all sects and all classes.

This denial of human authority in the spiritual system, led to the denial of authority in the philosophical system—to Descartes and Spinoza.¹² The protest against royal prerogatives could not fail to produce, later on, declarations more or less akin to those of the States General and the American Colonies. It was not without reason that sovereigns considered Calvinism the religion of rebels, and waged so bitter a warfare against it. "We must obey princes only in so far as we can do so without offending God."¹³ "It furnished the nations" says Mignet,¹⁴ "with a model and a method of righting themselves." In effect, it nourished the love of liberty and independence. "We must combat not only for the truth, but for liberty," writes Calvin. It kept alive in the hearts of his disciples that republican and anti-sacerdotal spirit,¹⁵ which was to become all powerful in America, and which certainly has not uttered its last word in Europe.

Thus, by a singular coincidence, France gave to the world Calvin, the originator of ideas which she at first rejected, but in whose triumph she was to share, arms in hand, two and a half centuries later in America.

¹² *Benedicti Spinoza Opera* 21, i: 24, Tauchnitz, 1843.

¹³ *Harmonie Évangélique*.

¹⁴ *History of the Reformation at Geneva*.

¹⁵ As poisons of the deadliest kind
Are to their own unhappy coasts confined;
So Presbytery and its pestilential zeal
Can flourish only in a Common Weal.

Dryden, Hind and Panther.

It was not so much the Catholic religion that the Pope upheld by promoting the crusades against the Albigenes and the Huguenots, by establishing the inquisition, by condemning the heresies of Luther and Calvin; it was his temporal power and his supremacy that he so fiercely defended by the terror of the secular arm, when spiritual thunders failed him. Nor was it in zeal for religion, but from a motive altogether political, that Francis the First caused the Vaudois to be massacred, and the Protestants to be burnt in France, while he sustained them in Germany against his rival, Charles the Fifth.¹⁶ His task was to keep down that leaven of liberalism which offended his despotism, and gave so much uneasiness to his successors. Catharine de Medicis by the Saint Bartholomew massacre, Richelieu¹⁷ by the siege of La Rochelle, and Louis the Fourteenth by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, steadily endeavored to regain the absolute power which the Protestants denied them. They did not desire this "State within State," according to Richelieu's expression. Like the Catholic Philip in the Netherlands, they erected gibbets and stakes and scaffolds,¹⁸ and under pretense of opposing the religious reformation, it was political reform that they hoped to stifle.

¹⁶ Brantome relates, that the King, after reading Calvin's dedication, allowed an observation to escape him one day: "This novelty (said he) will overthrow all monarchy, human and divine."

¹⁷ "If this man had not had despotism in his heart, he would have had it in his head."—*Montesquieu, Spirit of Laws*, v: 10.

¹⁸ "The odor of burning martyrs," they said, "was a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God." *Beza, Hist. Eccles.* i: 23. Some examples will be found in the *History of the Anabaptists*, Amsterdam, 1669. The interview of William the Silent with the Mennonite envoys is an affecting episode.—*P.* 233

But the persecutions, banishments, tortures, and massacres ended in results entirely different from those for which their sanguinary authors had hoped. The popes, far from recovering that supremacy of which they were so jealous, beheld half of the Christian populations, formerly subject to the Holy See, escaping from their spiritual jurisdiction. Spain, bowed down beneath the cruel yoke of the inquisition and despotism, lost all social energy, all political life. She sank to rise no more. The Low Countries organized themselves into a republic. Two-thirds of Germany became Protestant, and America, England, Germany, received into their bosoms some of the most skillful artisans, some of the noblest families of France,¹⁹ banished by an act as unjust as it was impolitic, the Revocation of the EDICT OF NANTES.

Crushed forever, religious opposition disappeared from France. But its political and social work was resumed by the philosophy of the eighteenth century, which, freed from all religious restraint, engendered results terrible in quite another way. The example of America, in shaking off a royal yoke, was not without influence there, and the Protestants of the New World, saw that throne totter, from which Louis the Fourteenth had issued orders against them for the dragonnades and exile.

¹⁹ *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, by the Right Rev. Dr. Meade, Protestant Bishop, Philadelphia, 1857. Vol. i. art. xliii. See, also, *The Westover MSS.*, in the possession of Colonel Harrison, of Brandon, Virginia; *History of Virginia*, by Charles Campbell, Richmond, 1847; *America*, by Oldmixon, i: 727, London, 1741. Among the French names prominent in the war were Bayard, Gervais, Marion, the two Laurenses, John Jay, Elias Boudinot, the two Manigaults, Gadsden, Huger, Fontaine, Maury, DeFrouville, Le Fevre, Benezet, etc.

One single state in Europe, a republic, Switzerland, found in the principles of a liberal constitution, as the United States of America afterward did, the solution of its religious quarrels. At first the Catholics had also taken up arms against the dissenters of Zwingle,²⁰ and

²⁰ Two works lately published make us much more thoroughly acquainted with the life, the actions, and the doctrines of Zwingle than heretofore. They are:

Zwingly Studien, by Doctor Herman Spærri, Leipzig, 1866.

Ulrich Zwingli, from unknown sources, by S. C. Moerihoffer, Leipzig, 1867.

Born in 1484, at Wildhaus, in the Canton of St. Gall, he was Vicar of Glaris at twenty-two years of age, where he remained twelve years. A year before Luther, he attacked the vices and abuses of the court of Rome, and his numerous adherents called him to the vicarage of Zurich in 1510. In 1524-5 he suppressed the celibacy of the priests and the mass, and was married. More logical and milder than Luther, he had not the same power of arousing the masses. He taught, with prophetic inspiration, that the moral, social, religious, and political difficulties would end in the separation from the Bishop of Rome of many of his subordinates; that the constitution of the church ought to be congregational, and all its business transacted by the congregations themselves. These views were solemnly adopted at the Conference of 1523, as the foundation of the Helvetic Church. He differed from Luther in some points, especially respecting the Real Presence in the Eucharist, which Zwingle positively denied. He tried in vain to come to some understanding with the German reformer in the interview at Marburg. Berne adopted his doctrines in 1528, he says, "I hope to see them extend throughout all Switzerland." When the war broke out between the Catholics and Protestants, the Catholics were victorious at Cappel, 1531, and Zwingle was killed in the battle.

He published *Civitas Christiana—De falsa et vera Religione*.

"Religious and political matters were confounded in his mind," says D'Aubigné. "Christians and citizens were the same to him." This universal Christian citizenship, was the dominant idea of his life and his works. It was adopted by Grotius, and has been thus expressed by Tennyson:

"With the standards of the peoples, plunging through the
thunder-storm,
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags
were furled,
In the Parliament of Man, the federation of the world."

had defeated them. But the conflict taught both parties the wisdom of a pacific solution, and they speedily agreed that each of the Cantons should be free to adopt the mode of faith which it preferred. Thus, only where political liberty existed could religious liberty be established without danger to the public peace.

To revert to the Reformation in England, which contributed at each successive phase a contingent, either Puritan, Covenanter, Cameronian, or Presbyterian, to the increasing emigration to the colonies. The declaration (March 30th) by which the deputies of the English clergy acknowledged the king to be the Defender of the Faith and the Head of the Church of England, was the unexpected result of an amorous caprice of Henry the Eighth for Anna Boleyn, and the refusal of the Pope to approve of the king's divorce from Katharine.²¹ The people were wholly unprepared for this schism. The separation of England from Rome effected little else than the transfer of the authority of the church to the king, and her possessions to his favorites. Religious despotism was none the less complete for assuming a dissenting form and name. The Catholics resisted spoliation. They were hanged by hundreds. The continental Protestants believed they could find an asylum in the domains of Henry. They found only persecution. The governmental reformation had nothing in common with the teachings of the Lutherans, the

²¹ It should not be overlooked, that the pope had originally granted a dispensation for King Henry's marriage with his brother's widow. The schism of the Anglican church dates from the subsequent refusal of the pope to consent to a divorce. See W. Beach Lawrence, *Revue du Droit International*, 1870, p. 65; Froude, *Hist. of England*, i: 446, for details.

Anabaptists, the Calvinists. It never lost the cruel fanaticism of the expeditions against the Vaudois in Italy, the Albigenses and Camisards in France, the Anabaptists in the Netherlands. Mary Tudor persecuted in the name of Catholicism. Elizabeth proscribed that sect. The Stuarts ferociously pursued the Non-Conformists, the Presbyterians, the Puritans, the Cameronians. The Tudors exercised absolute power as a matter of fact. The Stuarts pretended that it existed by right. James the First was the most audacious advocate of the doctrine of divine right. "No Bishop, no King," said he. He asserted that kings reigned by authority derived from God, and were therefore above human laws; that their decrees were of more force than parliamentary statutes; that they could disregard charters and conventions. Though the son of Marie Stuart, he furthered the severest enactments against the Catholics, using the Gunpowder Plot (1605) as a pretext for consigning them to a condition of abject political inferiority, from which they were not emancipated until within the last half century. The Puritans, while in power under Cromwell, were no more tolerant than their adversaries. The Protector waged a war of extermination in Ireland. He had no pity on the Scotch prisoners. "The Lord has delivered them into our hands." The officers and soldiers, their wives and children, were transported to America and sold to the planters.²² The restoration of the Stuarts brought

²² A work ascribed to General Fairfax's Chaplain, *England's Recovery*, which there is every reason to believe was written by the General himself, gives the prices at which some of the captives were sold. Many of them were not destitute of merit. For instance, Colonel Ninian Beall, captured at the battle of Dunbar, was sent

about bloody reprisals. At last came the Revolution of 1688, which gave victory decidedly to the constitutional party. But the triumphs of the people's right was not effected without energetic protests, of which some, celebrated in history, such as the Solemn League and Covenant, the Declaration of Rights, express in precise and energetic language the claims and purposes of their authors. This Revolution of 1688 was like that of Holland, 1584—a momentous European event, and not merely an English conflict like that of 1648. The principles affirmed by it were transported to America, and persistently claimed by the colonists as their political heritage. Like the Genevese, they demanded their ancient *libertates, franchises, usus et consuetudines civitatis*.

In fact, these principles were carried in the New World to their full and logical development. While English statesmen were speaking of the omnipotence of parliament, and its right to tax the colonies without admitting their representatives to its bosom, the Calvinistic colonists were asserting "the prerogatives which they derived from Jesus Christ." We are authorized, they said, by the law of God, as by that of nature, to defend our religious liberty and our political rights. This liberty, these rights, are innate and

into Maryland, where he was soon appointed commander-in-chief of the troops of that colony. A victory which he gained over the "*Susquehannochs*" secured him the eulogies and thanks of the province, with extraordinary gifts and honors.

Historical Magazine of America, 1857; *Middle British Colonies*, by Lewis Evans, Philadelphia, 1755, pages 12 and 14; *Terra Maria*, by Ed. Neil, Philadelphia, 1867, p. 193; Bacon's *Laws of Maryland*, contains the *Act of Gratitude*, 1659, to Ninian Beall and his wife, Elizabeth. See also, *Vie de Cromwell*, par Raguenet, Paris, 1691; *Les Conspirations D'Angleterre*, Cologne, 1680.

indefeasible. They are inscribed in the code of eternal justice, and governments are established among men, not to encroach upon or undermine them, but to protect and maintain them among the governed. When a government fails in this duty, the people ought to overthrow it, and construct another conformable to their needs and their welfare.

A valiant Scotchman, the Reverend Mr. Craighead, had much to do with the spread of these ideas, and with giving "form and pressure" to the political principles inspired by the religious Reformation, which, later on, found their noblest and most complete expression in the Declaration of Independence.

On the 11th of November, 1743, just as Walpole's corrupt ministry was expiring, Mr. Craighead convened a meeting at Octorara, in Pennsylvania.²³ The congregation appealed to the rights which Jesus Christ had transmitted to us. They deposed King George the Second because he "has none of the qualities which the Holy Scripture requires for governing this country." "They" made a solemn covenant, which "they" swore to with uplifted hands and drawn swords, according to the custom of our ancestors, and of soldiers ready to conquer or to die, "to protect our persons, our property,

²³ *A Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League, A Confession of Sins, and an Engagement to Duties, and a Testimony, as they were carried on at Middle Octorara, Pennsylvania, November 11, 1743.* Psalm lxxvi: 11; Jeremiah 1: 5. This curious and very interesting pamphlet was reprinted at Philadelphia in 1748. It is quite probable that it was known to Mr. Jefferson, who says (*Autobiography*): "We rummaged everywhere to find the biblical formulas of the 'old Puritans.'" Franklin, his colleague in the committee, could not, as printer and politician, have been ignorant of its existence. The only copy which I have seen was said to have been brought from North Carolina.

and our consciences against all attacks, and to defend the Gospel of Christ and the liberty of the nation against enemies within and without."

Shortly after this meeting was held at Octorara, this same Mr. Craighead removed to Mecklenburg County, in North Carolina. He died before the war began, but his work lived after him.

As soon as the news from Lexington arrived, meetings were held at Charlotte, the county-town (May, 1775), whereat the people, in view of their violated rights, and resolved for the struggle, directed three of its most respected and influential members, all Presbyterians, all graduates of Princeton College—the Reverend Hezekiah James Baleb, Doctor Ephriam Brevard, and William Kennon—to propose resolutions²⁴ befitting the solemn occasion. This intrepid conduct greatly cheered the hearts of the patriotic party²⁵ and aided their cause.

Thus the English colonies in America were largely peopled by adherents of the Reformed faith, who fled from religious intolerance and political oppression, and

²⁴ Two of them read thus: "Whoever, directly or indirectly, shall have directed, in any way whatsoever, or favored attacks as unlawful and serious as those which Great Britain directs against us, is the enemy of this country, of America, and of all the indefeasible and inalienable rights of men.

"*Secondly.* We, the citizens of the County of Mecklenburg, break, from this time forward, the political bonds which attach us to the mother country; we free ourselves for the future from all dependence upon the crown of England, and reject all agreement, contract, or alliance with that nation, which has cruelly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington." *American Archives* (1th Series), ii: 855; *The History of North Carolina*, by Wheeler, Foote, and Martin; *Field-Book of the Revolution*, by Lossing, ii: 617, and the numerous authorities therein cited.

²⁵ *Elbridge Gerry to Sam. Adams, Amer. Arch.*

who were animated by a profound dislike to the form of government which had driven them into exile. Here, in this immense country, lived a population of diverse origins, but united by the recollections of kindred wrongs and sufferings in the Old World, by common wants and interests and hopes in the New. The constant contests in which they engaged, either with a virgin soil covered with forests and swamps, or with the natives who were unwilling to be dispossessed, inured them to hardship, developed their inventive capacities and resources, and gave them that moral and physical vigor needed by new-born nations. Religion, divided into numerous sects, had the same body of doctrine in the Bible and Gospel, inculcated the same rules of life—the fear of God and the love of one's neighbor. The purity of morals was notable. It excited the surprise and admiration of the French officers. In their various journals and letters they mention the beauty, more often the innocence and unsullied conduct, of the American woman.²⁶ The laity entertained the same aspirations for freedom of conscience and political liberty. The pastors—rigid, pious, austere, simple in life, energetic in soul, strengthened by privations—set an example of duty to their flocks, and more than one proved on the field of battle,²⁷ that they knew how to defend their rights as Christian freemen.

²⁶ *Journal of Claude Blanchard*. Preface. Munsell, Albany, 1876. See, also, Chastellux and others.

²⁷ In the *American Archives and Revolutionary Records* are to be found the names of several clergymen who served as officers in the Continental army.













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