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The Biography and Biology of Liberty: Abraham Kuyper and the American Experiment

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Abstract

This Article reviews the theory of rights and liberties developed by Dutch theologian, philosopher, and statesman Abraham Kuyper at the turn of the twentieth century. Drawing generously on the Calvinist tradition, Kuyper distinguished religious, ecclesiastical, associational, and political liberties, which he grounded in his signature theories of the created order, social pluralism, covenant doctrine, and sphere sovereignty. The Article then compares Kuyper's theory of liberty with one historical Calvinist community in Puritan New England.

Keywords: Abraham Kuyper; religious liberty; associational liberty; social pluralism; covenant; sphere sovereignty; New England Puritanism

The tree [of liberty has] blossomed and yielded its fruit, but without any one having made a botanic study of its nature and growth. Calvinism, in its rise, rather acted than argued [in cultivating this tree]. But now this study may no longer be delayed. Both the biography and the biology of Calvinism must be thoroughly investigated and thought through, or, with our lack of self-knowledge, we shall be side-tracked into a world of ideas that is more at discord than in consonance with the life of our Christian democracy, and cut loose from the root on which we once blossomed so vigorously.

-- Abraham Kuyper, *The Stone Lectures* (1898)¹

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I. Kuyper on the American Experiment

It is well known that Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) was one of the great polymaths in the history of the Netherlands -- a formidable theologian and philosopher, journalist and educator, churchman and statesman of extraordinary accomplishment. He was the author of more than 200 books and major articles. He served for nearly half a century as editor-in-chief of both the Dutch daily *Standaard* and the weekly *Heraut*. He founded the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880, and taught there for two decades. Throughout much of his career, he was a leader of the Protestant Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands, and served as Member of Parliament, Minister of Justice, and then Prime Minister from 1901 to 1905. On the national celebration of his seventieth birthday in 1907, his toastmaster declared: "The history of the Netherlands, in Church, in State, in Society, in Press, in School, and in the Sciences of the last forty years, cannot be written without the mention of his name on almost every page, for during this period the biography of Dr. Kuyper is to a considerable extent the history of the Netherlands."²

It is less well known that Abraham Kuyper was also one of the great Tocquevilles in the history of America -- a keen European observer of American law, religion, and politics in the tradition of Alexis de Tocqueville, Philip Schaff, Lord Acton, and many others. To be sure, Kuyper wrote no famous two volume *Democracy in America*, like Tocqueville, nor even a popular *American Journal*, like Acton.³ But Kuyper's Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898, together with several of his other writings, held up a comparable mirror in which America could reflect on itself.

Kuyper's mirror offered a rather flattering impression -- particularly of the American experiment in ordered liberty and orderly pluralism. "America lacks no single liberty for which in Europe we struggle," Kuyper wrote. "In America, modern liberties flourish without reservation." The robust exercise of these liberties has led America neither to an atomistic individualism nor to a monopolistic constitutionalism. Instead, it has led to an orderly pluralism that has become the envy of the world. In America, liberty and pluralism cohere

¹ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, repr. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 194 [hereafter Stone Lectures].

² Quoted by John Hendrik de Vries, "Biographical Note," in *ibid.*, ii. See P.A. Diepenhorst, *Dr. A. Kuyper* (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn, 1931); G. Puchinger, *Gesprek over de Onbekende Kuyper* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1971); James W. Skillen and Rockne M. McCarthy, eds., *Political Order and the Plural Structure of Society* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 229-264, 397-418.

³ See John Bolt, *A Free Church, A Holy Nation: Abraham Kuyper's American Political Theology* (forthcoming), ch. 2 and Appendices B and C. The closest Kuyper came is his 191 page *Varia Americana* (Amsterdam and Pretoria: H"veker & Wormser, c. 1899). But much of this volume is focussed on sociological anecdotes and the presence of Dutch people, institutions, and practices in the United States. His critical insights in this volume are referenced hereafter.

in a "lively correspondence" -- liberty serving as the source of pluralism, and pluralism as the condition for liberty.⁴

A. Four Types of Liberty and Pluralism

Kuyper singled out for special praise four types of liberty and pluralism that American law had cultivated to an enviable degree by the later nineteenth century.

First, Kuyper praised the American principle of religious liberty and religious pluralism. "In America there is absolute liberty of conscience," he wrote, with attendant rights of "liberty of organization; liberty of the press; liberty of public worship; liberty of thought." "Conscience is the source of human personality, the root of civil rights, and the source of national identity." America was "the first country fully to develop the principle" that conscience is "the palladium of all personal liberty" and to construct its bill of rights on the foundation of its absolute guarantee. Liberty of conscience means, inter alia, that each citizen has the liberty to form and to reform religious opinions, to enter and to exit religious organizations, without jeopardizing other civil liberties. A plurality of religious opinions and organizations is available from which to choose. "[N]o citizen of the State may be compelled to remain in a church which his conscience forces him to leave."⁵

Second, Kuyper praised the related American principle of ecclesiastical liberty and confessional pluralism. The American legal doctrine of "separation of church and state," Kuyper wrote, is a "better guarantee [of] ... ecclesiastical liberty than anything that now prevails in Europe."⁶ In America, separation of church and state does not mean the separation of religion and politics. "Magistrates are God-fearing, by proclaiming days of public thanksgiving, honoring public prayer, observing the Sabbath Day -- indeed, declaring in the preamble of their Constitution that it was from God that they received the laws by which they are ruled."⁷ Separation of church and state means, instead, that "churches are entirely free" from state interference in their doctrines and liturgies, in their politics and properties, in their education and catechization. The state does not prescribe the religious texts, beliefs, and practices of any religious group. The state "does not subsidize the churches," through the donation of property or the collection of tithes. The

⁴ Abraham Kuyper, "The Origin and Safeguard of our Constitutional Liberties," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 52 (1895): 391-398, a translation and expansion of his *Het Calvinisme, Oorsprong en Waarborg onzer constitutioneele Vrijheden. Eene Nederlandsche gedachte* (Amsterdam: J.A. Wormser, 1874); Abraham Kuyper, *Ons Program*, 4th ed. (Amsterdam and Pretoria: H'vaker and Pretoria, 1897), 80. See further id., *Encyclopaedie der heilige Godgeleerdheid* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1909), 3:614-624; id., *Vrijheid. Rede ter Bevestiging van Dr. Ph. S. Ronkel* (Amsterdam: H. de Hoogh & Co., 1873), passim. For references to America in Kuyper's work, see the list in P. Kasteel, *Abraham Kuyper* (Kampen: J.H. Kok), 289n.

⁵ Stone Lectures, 108-109; "Constitutional Liberties," 391; *Ons Program*, 93.

⁶ Abraham Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 2d ed. (Kampen: J.H. Kok, n.d.), 5/1:444. For Kuyper's analysis of European church-state relations, see *ibid.*, 5/1:359-443 and *Ons Program*, 382-394.

⁷ *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:444-445; "Constitutional Liberties," 397.

state does not interfere in the church's organization and order, discipline and discipleship.⁸ "In America, Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Baptists, and Methodists are equally respected," despite the plurality of confessions, canons, and cults among them.⁹ It is "a fundamental rule that the government must honor the complex of Christian churches as the multiform manifestation of the Church of Christ on earth...."¹⁰ America has adopted this rule "not from the desire to be released from church duties" but "from the consciousness that the welfare of the church and the progress of Christianity demand this freedom and independence."¹¹

Third, Kuyper praised the American principle of associational liberty and social pluralism. The American tradition of voluntarism and fraternity, Kuyper wrote, has led to ample legal protection not only of churches and religious organizations but also of a plurality of other "social spheres"--families, schools, unions, guilds, plantations, clubs, convents, and corporations.¹² Each of these social spheres is amply protected by the provisions of state criminal law. Each is amply facilitated by the procedures of state private law. But none of these social spheres is ultimately dependent upon the state for its existence or for its competence. The formation and maintenance of each social sphere depend upon the voluntary association and activity of private parties.¹³ The competence and authority of each social sphere depend upon "its innate norms," its "God-given liberty" -- its "inherent sphere sovereignty," in Kuyper's famous phrase.¹⁴ "Sphere sovereignty" does not render a social sphere "a law unto itself" -- just as personal sovereignty does not make each person a law unto himself or herself. Instead, sphere sovereignty entails that each of these social spheres has the liberty to operate independently of the state in accordance with its own God-given norms, and in deference to the liberty interests of other social spheres and of all individuals. "[T]here exists side-by-side with the personal sovereignty [of the individual conscience], the sovereignty of the [social] sphere."¹⁵ This understanding of associational liberty and social pluralism, which Kuyper found so well expressed in late nineteenth century America, was an essential plank of his own political platform in the Netherlands.¹⁶

⁸ *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:444-445; *Varia Americana*, 18-22, 52-54, 151-162. See also Kuyper's more general theological and political reflections on this theme in *Ons Program*, 385; *Encyclopaedie*, 3:328; Abraham Kuyper, *Vrijmaking der Kerk* (Amsterdam: H. de Hoogh, 1869).

⁹ Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:445; see also *Varia Americana*, 136-151 (summarizing the religious demography of America).

¹⁰ Stone Lectures, 106. Elsewhere, Kuyper insisted on the inclusion of Jews within the ambit of religious liberty. See, e.g., Abraham Kuyper, *Liberalisten en Joden* (Amsterdam: J.A. Wormser, 1878). At another point, he stretched even further: "[A]ll things within the forum of conscience and on domestic and private life must be free -- for the atheist as much as for the full devout....indeed, for all sects." *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:415.

¹¹ "Constitutional Liberties," 396-397. See also *Ons Program*, 385; *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:387-388.

¹² Stone Lectures, 90-99.

¹³ *Varia Americana*, 38-49.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, with elaboration in Abraham Kuyper, *Sovereiniteit in eigen Kring* (Amsterdam: J.H. Kruyt, 1880), esp. 19ff.; *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:73-186; *Encyclopaedie*, 3:322-330. See also comparative asides about the American law of associations, in *Ons Program*, 114-123, 237-254; *Varia Americana*, 1-54.

¹⁵ Stone Lectures, 95-96.

¹⁶ See *Ons Program*, passim, and discussion in McKendree Langley, *The Practice of Political Spirituality: Episodes from the Public Career of Abraham Kuyper* (Jordan Station, Ontario: Paideia Press, 1984); James

Fourth, Kuyper praised the American principle of political liberty and political pluralism. The American constitutional doctrine of a "federalist political unity" within a "republican form of democracy," Kuyper argued, sagely balances the demands of liberty and order, local rule and national unity.¹⁷ On the one hand, political authority in America is divided among federal, state, and local governments. America does have a strong federal government that tends to the nation's common economic, administrative, military, and diplomatic needs. America does have a strong civic faith that manifests itself in Presidential prayers and proclamations, Congressional support for basic religious education, federal judicial protections of cardinal moral and cultural values.¹⁸ But America also recognizes that, historically, "constitutional rights and freedoms first came within local communities," and that these local roots must be retained.¹⁹ It further recognizes that, practically, the protection of liberty and the cultivation of virtue must begin at the local level -- through local elections of officials, local town meetings, local participation in juries, local administration of justice, local education in schools and churches.²⁰ The American constitution thus guarantees each state its own republican form of government and reserves to it all powers not directly delegated to the federal government. The constitution further assures "the decentralized and autonomous character of ... local governments."²¹ On the other hand, political power at each level is separated among executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Each of these branches of government checks and balances the power of the other -- through executive vetoes, legislative impeachments, and judicial review. This separation of powers, Kuyper believed, ensures that the offices of the state are protected against the sinfulness of their officials. It further ensures that the powers of government are sufficiently nuanced to provide ample protection to the liberties of persons, churches, and other social spheres.²²

B. Calvinist Conditions

W. Skillen and W. Carlson Thies, "Religion and Political Development in Nineteenth Century Holland," *Publius* (Summer, 1982): 43-64.

¹⁷ *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:289-296; *Stone Lectures*, 79-90. Kuyper was more equivocal about the natural superiority of this political form of liberty and pluralism. "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.... 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 [in America] could not exist one day in China. Even now, the people of Russia are unfit for any form of constitutional government." *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* See also *Varia Americana*, 21-24; "Constitutional Liberties," 394-397; *Ons Program*, 82-83, 96-108.

¹⁹ *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:289.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5/1:289-308; *Varia Americana*, 28-33, 181-184.

²¹ *Ibid.*; *Stone Lectures*, 86-88, 191-192. See also Kuyper's panegyric for "political decentralization" in *Ons Program*, 158-212.

²² *Ibid.* See also *Souvereiniteit in eigen Kring*, 19-25 (arguing that "the various spheres of life cannot be maintained without the sphere of the State"); *Ons Program*, 63-68, 109-123, 213-236, 268-301, 382-394, 411-476 (arguing for many of these same guarantees in Dutch law and politics).

Kuyper's robust reflections on the success of the American experiment in ordered liberty and orderly pluralism -- though strangely silent on its many failings for women, children, blacks, Indians, abused workers, the poor, and various minorities of the day -- were flattering enough to his American audience.²³ Even more flattering were his robust projections of the place and promise of the American experiment in the course of world history. In his Stone Lectures, Kuyper predicted that America would soon inherit from Europe the leadership of the Western world.²⁴ In a followup lecture in Michigan, Kuyper made an even grander prediction: "America is destined in the providence of God to become the most glorious and noble nation the world has ever seen. Some day its renown will eclipse the renown and splendor of Rome, Greece, and older races."²⁵

Kuyper did not wax so grandly simply to flatter his American audience. He attached strong theological conditions both to his reflections of the past and to his projections of the future of the American experiment. This move was considerably more controversial -- in his day and in our own.

First, Kuyper argued that the source and strength of the American experiment was Calvinist theology, not Enlightenment liberalism or any other ideology. Calvinism, Kuyper wrote, was not only a spiritual movement but also "a political movement which has guaranteed the liberty of nations in constitutional statesmanship; first in Holland, then in England, and since the close of the last century in the United States."²⁶ The American experiment in liberty and pluralism "points back directly to its puritanical origin, to the invincible spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers and to the spiritual descent from Calvin."²⁷ "If with us [in Europe today] it has every appearance that the liberty of the people must be purchased at the sacrifice of the faith, there [in America] it is Calvinism which, according to the general conviction, offers the surest safeguards for the continued presence of those liberties."²⁸

It was Calvinists, Kuyper repeatedly argued, who first "lifted up freedom of conscience" and insisted that "the magistrate has nothing to do with a person's innermost

²³ See, e.g., the contributions of John Bolt, Sarah Croakley, Peter Paris, and Mary Stewart van Leeuwen to this anthology. I say "strangely" because Kuyper was hardly blind to these problems at home. See, e.g., his *Het Sociale Vraagstuk en de Christelijke religie* (Amsterdam: J. Wormser, 1891), translated as *The Problem of Poverty*, trans and ed. James W. Skillen (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991). In *Varia Americana*, 3-5, 9-12, Kuyper did criticize briefly the impoverishment and lynching of blacks, and the problems of alcoholism and poverty among the working classes.

²⁴ Stone Lectures, 9-10: "Old Europe remains even now the bearer of a longer historical past, and therefore stands before us as a tree rooted more deeply, hiding between its leaves some matured fruits of life. You are yet in your Springtide--we are passing through our Fall...."

²⁵ Lecture on October 26, 1898, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, transcribed in *The Grand Rapids Herald* (October 29, 1898), quoted and analyzed in John Bolt, "The Holland-American Line of Liberty," *Morality and Markets* 1 (1998): 1.

²⁶ Stone Lectures, 14. See also *ibid.*, 17, 78.

²⁷ "Constitutional Liberties," 397. See also *Varia Americana*, 119.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 396. See also *Varia Americana*, 86-87: "In America it is wholly different [from Europe]. The state machinery still, for the most part, answers to the Calvinist fundamentals laid down by the Puritans and Pilgrim fathers. Religion still lives in the public realm. And in social life, Calvinism still finds an open door."

beliefs ... or with a person's domestic life or friendships."²⁹ It was Calvinists who first "reached the conclusions that follow from this liberty of conscience, for the liberty of speech, and the liberty of worship ... and the free expression of thought ... and ideas."³⁰ It was Calvinists who "first developed the principle of separation of church and state," and the constitutional recognition that "the Church derives its authority directly from God, not mediately through the state or through the community."³¹ It was Calvinists who first effectively "protest[ed] against State-omnicompetence; against the horrible conception that no right exists above and beyond existing [positive] laws; and against the pride of absolutism [which is] death to our civil liberties."³² It was Calvinists who first pressed classical theories of mixed government into constitutional principles of federalism and republicanism.

Though, historically, Calvinists often betrayed their own political principles, Kuyper argued, their views ultimately prevailed in America because of their firm theological mooring. American Calvinists derived their claims of liberty "not by appealing to popular force, nor to the hallucinations of human greatness, but by deducing those rights and liberties of social life from the same source from which the high authority of 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."³³ A plurality of spheres of personal, ecclesiastical, social, and political liberty thus stand alongside each other -- each created by God, each governed by God, each accountable to God. A plurality of offices and activities within each sphere of liberty also stand alongside each other -- each designed to discharge some portion of God's special calling for that sphere.

Second, Kuyper argued, this Calvinist origin and orientation of the American experiment was in danger of being lost on America, and needed to be restored if America was to live up to promise. Kuyper's concluding Stone Lecture at Princeton in 1898 had the tone almost of a wizened Dutch uncle gently admonishing his young American relatives to live up to their pedigree: "[L]o and behold, while you are thus enjoying the fruits of Calvinism, and while even outside of your borders the constitutional system of government as an outcome of Calvinist warfare, upholds the national honor, it is whispered abroad that all these [fruits] are to be accounted blessings of Humanism, and scarcely anyone still thinks of honoring in them the after-effects of Calvinism, the latter believed to lead a lingering life only in a few dogmatically petrified circles. What I demand ... is that this ungrateful ignoring of Calvinism shall come to an end.... I contend in the second place, for an historical study of the principles of Calvinism.... [that cultivated] the tree of liberty.... I [demand] in the third place the development of the principles of Calvinism in accordance with the needs of modern consciousness and their application to every department of life.... Finally, I would add ... that those Churches which lay claim to professing the Reformed faith, shall cease being ashamed of this confession.... I exalt

²⁹ *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:415.

³⁰ Stone Lectures, 108-109.

³¹ *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:387-388; Stone Lectures, 105.

³² Stone Lectures, 98.

³³ *Ibid.*

multiformity and hail it in a higher stage of development. Even for the Church that has the purest confession, I would not dispense with the aid of other Churches in order that its inevitable one-sidedness may thus be complemented. But what ... one confesses to be the truth, one must also dare to practice in word, deed, and whole manner of life."³⁴

II. The Calvinist Foundations of the American Experiment

Kuyper's four demands, while controversial, have not gone unanswered in America during the past century. Calvinism is certainly not ignored today, either in various Christian institutions or in the broader secular world. The historical contributions of Calvinism to Western law, politics, and culture, have come under increasingly close study. The expansion and adaptation of these contributions to modern American life have continued apace. Calvinism is proudly confessed in a number of American churches today, though not always without the "dogmatic petrification" against which Kuyper warned.

As an historian, of Dutch Calvinist stock, I am especially drawn to the second of Kuyper's demands -- the need for close "historical study of ... the biography and biology of Calvinism" in the history of liberty. Elsewhere, I have taken up Kuyper's demand to study the sources of liberty in John Calvin's biography and its "biological" growth in early modern Calvinist communities in France, England, the Netherlands, and colonial America.³⁵ Using that material, permit me put briefly two caveats to Kuyper's robust assessment of the influence of Puritan Calvinists in the formation of the American experiment, and offer two illustrations of this Puritan influence.

A. Two Caveats to Kuyper's Historiography

First, Kuyper's insistence that Puritan Calvinism was the driving intellectual force of the American experiment is vastly overstated. Kuyper had reason to put his case so strongly. A century ago when he wrote, the Puritans were often depicted as rigid theonomists and belligerent theocrats who knew neither true law nor true liberty.³⁶

³⁴ Stone Lectures, 194-195.

³⁵ See my "Blest be the Ties that Bind: Covenant and Community in Puritan Thought," *Emory Law Journal* 36 (1987): 579-601; "How to Govern a City on a Hill: The Early Puritan Contribution to American Constitutionalism," *Emory Law Journal* 39 (1990): 41-64; "The Catholic Origins and Calvinist Orientation of Dutch Reformed Church Law," *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993): 328-351; "The Development of Herman Dooyeweerd's Concept of Rights," *South African Law Journal* 110/3 (1993): 543-562 and in Jonathan Chaplin and Paul Marshall, eds., *Political Theory and Christian Vision* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 27-56; "Law, Religion, and Human Rights," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 28 (1996): 1-31; "Moderate Religious Liberty in the Theology of John Calvin," *Calvin Theological Journal* 31 (1996): 359-403; *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997), 74-129, 238-253.

³⁶ For a good treatment of this earlier historiography, see Gordon S. Wood, "Struggle over the Puritans," *New York Review of Books* 36 (1989): 26.

Subsequent study has made clear that these Calvinists must be included among the "leaders of American political thought," and that their political experimentation in colonial New England and their revolutionary sermons were indispensable to the success of both the American Revolution and the state and federal constitutional conventions that followed.³⁷

This same subsequent study, however, has also uncovered sundry other intellectual sources of the American experiment, besides Calvinism: natural law traditions from classical Greece and Rome and from various schools of early modern continental jurisprudence; legal and political positivist traditions from Machiavelli to Thomas Hobbes; common law traditions celebrated by everyone from Edward Coke to Edmund Burke; indigenous American traditions of constitutionalism; English Leveller and Whig writings from the early seventeenth century forward; Free Church traditions grounded in the theology of Anabaptism and energized by the Great Awakening; and a host of intellectual movements associated with the English, French, and Scottish Enlightenments.³⁸ The Puritans wove many threads into the fabric of the early American experiment. But they held no monopoly on the constitutional or cultural loom.

Second, the Calvinist ideas that were influential in the formation of the American experiment were not all of the same Genevan color. Kuyper tended to draw direct and easy lines from Geneva to Holland to England to America -- often thereby deprecating the conceptual variations and expansions on basic Calvinist themes that occurred in different areas and eras. "The 20th chapter of the fourth book of Calvin's Institutes ["On Civil Government"] is the starting point," Kuyper wrote in his survey of Western political theory. "Everything that later came forth in reformed theology is nothing but a repetition of foundational insights of Calvin's work."³⁹ Calvin's insights, he was convinced, included Kuyper's favorite doctrine of "sphere sovereignty." The first of these propositions takes too little account of the pluriformity and plasticity of the Calvinist tradition. The second proposition takes too little account of the originality and profundity of Kuyper's doctrine of sphere sovereignty.

The Puritans of seventeenth and eighteenth century New England did develop robust ideas and institutions of liberty and pluralism. But the Puritans' formulations were predicated neither upon Calvin's doctrine of divine sovereignty nor upon Kuyper's doctrine of sphere sovereignty, but upon their own distinctive theological doctrine of covenant. This covenant doctrine was theologically consistent with Calvinist doctrines of divine and

³⁷ See, e.g., Clinton Rossiter, *The Political Thought of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 8. See generally Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Natan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Barry A. Shain, *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

³⁸ See *ibid.* and other sources and discussion in "Symposium on Religious Dimensions of American Constitutionalism," *Emory Law Journal* 39 (1990): 1-216 and in Mark A. Noll, "The American Revolution and Protestant Evangelicalism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1993): 615-638.

³⁹ Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5/1:7.

sphere sovereignty, but it provided the Puritans with a distinctive and integrated understanding of religious, social, ecclesiastical, and political liberty and pluralism.

B. Two Illustrations of Puritan Influence

The idea of a divine covenant between God and man had always been a part of Western Christian theology. Theologians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, had discussed the Biblical covenants: (1) the covenant of works whereby the chosen people of Israel, through obedience to God's law, are promised eternal salvation and blessing; and (2) the covenant of grace whereby the elect, through faith in Christ's incarnation and atonement, are promised eternal salvation and beatitude. The covenant of works was created in Abraham, confirmed in Moses, and consummated with the promulgation and acceptance of the Torah. The covenant of grace was created in Christ, confirmed in the Gospel, and consummated with the confession and conversion of the Christian. On the whole, however, discussion of covenant in this earlier period was were only incidental and isolated.⁴⁰

The New England Puritans raised the Biblical doctrine of covenant to the center of both their theology and their sociology. The covenant defined both a person's spiritual relationship with God, and a person's temporal relationships with others.⁴¹

Liberty of Covenant. The Puritans made two innovations to traditional understandings of God's covenant with persons. First, Puritan writers developed a more participatory theory of the covenant of works. Traditionally, the covenant of works was treated as God's special relation with the chosen people of Israel and their representatives, Abraham, Moses, and David. It designated the Israelites as God's elect nation and called them to serve as special agents in God's kingdom. It divulged to them in detail the requirements of God's law -- their obligations towards God, neighbor, and self. For many Puritan writers, the covenant of works was not so limited in participation or purpose. This covenant was not created in Abraham, the representative of the Jews, but in Adam, the representative of all humanity. It was not a privileged relation in which only elect persons participated, but a natural relation, in which all persons participated. For the covenant of works was established at the creation of the world, before the fall into sin, the Puritans argued. Through Adam, the "federal head of the human race," all persons were parties to this covenant. This covenant constituted "God's special constitution for mankind, ... His providential plan for [all] creation" and for every creature.⁴² The covenant

⁴⁰ See sources and discussion in Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Commonwealth: From Christian Separation through the Protestant Reformation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996); Max L. Stackhouse, *Covenant & Commitments: Faith, Family, and Economic Life* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997).

⁴¹ Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," *Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1933-1937* (1937). What follows in this section is a distillation of fuller discussion and sources in my "Blest be the Ties That Bind," 580-590, 598-600, and in my "How to Govern a City on a Hill," 41-64.

⁴² John Norton, *Orthodox Evangelist* (Boston, 1654), 102.

of works defined every person's roles, rights, and responsibilities in the unfolding of God's divine plan.

Second, Puritan writers recharacterized the concept of the covenant of grace itself. Traditionally, the covenant of grace was treated primarily as God's merciful gift to his elect. God set the terms of the covenant and determined its parties. Many Puritan writers came to describe the covenant of grace as a bargained contract. Acts of divine will and human will were required to form this covenant. Through "voluntary condescension," God offered the terms of salvation and promised to abide by the offer. Through a voluntary act of faith, a person accepted God's offer. Once God and man had accepted the terms, both parties were contractually bound to the covenant. Each could insist upon the faithful compliance of the other. God could demand faithful devotion and service from the person; if the person refused it, God was released from the covenant and free to consign the person to hell. But the person may also demand God to abide by His promise of salvation. "You may sue [God] of his bond written and sealed," wrote one Puritan, "and he cannot deny it." "Take no denyall, though the Lord may defer long, yet he will doe it, he cannot chuse; for it is part of his covenant."⁴³

Both the expansion of the parties and the contractualization of the terms of the covenant of salvation helped to expand Puritan understandings of religious liberty and pluralism. Initially, seventeenth century Puritans still treated this covenant as something of a "divine adhesion contract." God set the covenantal terms for salvation in the Bible; a person had only the freedom to accept or reject them. Such sentiments can be seen in the Samuel Willard's lengthy 1682 tract on "covenant liberty." Willard argued that every person had the "equal right," "title," "claim," "liberty" and "prerogative" "to enter and to enjoy every blessing of the covenant." But, by the time Willard finished spelling out all the standard terms and conditions of the covenant, there seemed to be few at liberty to enter the covenant, and little liberty left for those who could.⁴⁴ Such sentiments can also be seen in the early Puritan practice of banning parties, from Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams onwards, who advocated alternative constructions of the covenant of salvation.⁴⁵

By the eighteenth century, however, some Puritan writers began to view this covenantal relationship between God and persons in more open and voluntarist terms. Not only was the covenant made more accessible to parties of various Christian faiths. The terms of the divine covenant were made more open to personal deliberation and innovation. Elisha Williams put the matter thus in 1744: "Every man has an equal right to follow the dictates of his own conscience in the affairs of religion. Every one is under an indispensable obligation to search the Scriptures for himself ... and to make the best use

⁴³ John Preston, quoted by Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1958), 246.

⁴⁴ Samuel Willard, *Covenant-Keeping the Way to Blessedness, or A Brief Discourse Wherein is Shewn the Connexion which there is Between the Promise on God's Part and Duty on our Parts in the Covenant of Grace* (Boston: James Glen, 1682). See further id., *Morality not be Relied on for Life, or A Brief Discourse, Discovering the One Thing Wanting in the Legalist Short of Life Eternal* (Boston: B. Green & J. Allen, 1700); id., *Walking with God, The Great Duty and Privilege of true Christians* (Boston: B. Green & J. Allen, 1701).

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Samuel Willard, *Ne sutor ultra crepidam, or Brief Animadversions Upon the New-England Anabaptists Late Fallacious Narrative* (Boston: S. Green, 1681), and more generally William C. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent 1630-1833* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2 vols.

of it he can for his own information in the will of God, the nature and duties of Christianity. And as every Christian is so bound; so he has the inalienable right to judge of the sense and meaning of it, and to follow his judgment wherever it leads him; even an equal right with any rulers be they civil or ecclesiastical."⁴⁶ Such formulations became increasingly common among Puritan writers in the later eighteenth century. These sentiments helped lead the New England leaders to greater toleration of Baptists, Anglicans, and other Christians who abided by the basic terms of the biblical covenants.⁴⁷

It was only a short step from this formulation to the more generic and generous religious liberty guarantee of the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution: "It is the right as well as the duty of all in society, publicly and at stated seasons, to worship the Supreme Being, the great Creator and Preserver of the universe. And no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience, or for his religious profession or sentiments, provided he doth not disturb the public peace or obstruct others in the public worship."⁴⁸

Puritan covenant theology was not the only catalyst for the experiment in religious liberty in New England, let alone in America altogether.⁴⁹ But, for New England Puritans, covenant theology provided a sturdy foundation for a theory of ordered religious liberty and orderly religious pluralism. By expanding the ambit of the covenant of works, the Puritans had expanded the realm of religious liberty to all persons, not just the elect. By contractualizing the terms of the covenant of grace, the Puritans had expanded the range of religious exercises, no longer privileging established forms. But not all claims of religious liberty could be accepted. Legitimate claims had to be anchored in some semblance of a covenant with a trinitarian God, however each person chose to define this God. Legitimate claimants had to abide by the natural duties to love God, neighbor, and self, as taught by the covenant of works, however each community chose to delineate these duties.

Covenants of Liberty. The Puritans regarded themselves not only as covenant persons in their relationship to God, but also a covenant people bound together by a variety of covenants with each other. Each of these covenants, they believed, though formed by voluntary human acts, was ultimately founded on the norms set forth in the covenant of works. Each of these covenants had a place and purpose in God's providential plan. The Puritans distinguished three such covenants: (1) a social or communal covenant; (2) an ecclesiastical or church covenant; and (3) a political or governmental covenant. The social covenant created the society or commonwealth as a

⁴⁶ Elisha Williams, *The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants: A Seasonable Plea for the Liberty of Conscience, and the Right of Private Judgment in Matters of Religion, Without Any Controul from Human Authority* (Boston: S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1744), 3, 7-8.

⁴⁷ See generally McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*.

⁴⁸ Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, Pt. I, Art. II. See comparable provisions in Vermont Constitution of 1793, Ch. I, Art. III.

⁴⁹ For other formulations, grounded in Enlightenment, republican, and evangelical theologies, see sources and discussion in my "The Essential Rights and Liberties of the American Constitutional Experiment," *Notre Dame Law Review* 71 (1996): 371-445, at 389ff.

whole. The political and ecclesiastical covenants created the two chief seats of authority within that society, the church and the state, whose authority was both separated and self-limited.

The Puritans swore allegiance to social covenants before God and each other when forming their new communities. "We whose names are underwritten," reads the famous Mayflower Compact of 1620, "[h]aving undertaken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian Faith, ... a Voyage to plant the first Colony ... doe by these presents, solemnly & mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant, and combine our selues together into a civill body politike, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid."⁵⁰ The citizens of the new town of Salem convened in 1629 to swear: "We Covenant with the Lord and one with an other; and doe bynd our selves in the presence of God, to walke together in all his waies, according as he is pleased to reveale himself unto us in his Blessed word of truth."⁵¹ The following year John Winthrop declared to the new citizens of Massachusetts Bay: "Thus stands the cause betweene God and us, wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke, wee have taken out a Commission, [and He] will expect a strickt performance of the Articles contained in it."⁵²

Those who joined the social covenant were subject to the benevolence of the community. Charity and public spiritedness were prized. Churlishness and private sumptuousness were scorned. The Puritans prescribed and practiced good samaritanism. They punished citizens who failed to aid their neighbors in need or peril. They set up public trusts, community chests, and work programs for indigents and immigrants. They developed elaborate systems of relief for the poor, the elderly, and the handicapped. They established rather sophisticated systems of academic and vocational education.

Those who joined the social covenant were also subject to the discipline of the community. This covenant, the Puritans believed, placed the community "under a solemn divine Probation" and under threat of "eminent [divine] trial."⁵³ This belief translated the most mundane of human affairs into cosmic terms. The Puritans stressed ambition, austerity, frugality and other virtues in their lives precisely because the social covenant rendered them agents of God, instruments of God's providential plan. For them to be lax in zeal, loose in discipline, or sumptuous in living would be a disservice to God, a breach of the social covenant. Such a breach would inevitably bring divine condemnation on the community in the form of war, pestilence, poverty, and other divine acts.

The Puritan construction of the social covenant was a recipe for both associational liberty and social pluralism. "There can be no necessary tye of mutuall accord and fellowship come, but by free engagement," wrote Thomas Hooker, who had left

⁵⁰ The Agreement Between the Settlers of New Plymouth (1620), reprinted in Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1960), 92.

⁵¹ Reprinted in *ibid.*, 116.

⁵² *Winthrop's Journal*, 92.

⁵³ W. Stoughton, *New Englands True Interest: Not to Lie* (1670), reprinted in *The Puritans*, 243.

Massachusetts Bay colony to form the colony of New Haven. "[H]e that will enter must also willingly binde and ingage himself to each member of that society ... or else a member actually he is not."⁵⁴ The voluntary participation of both the entering individual and the existing community were essential. No person could be forced to join the community whose covenant and culture he or she found objectionable. No community could be forced to accept or retain a person whose convictions or conduct it found objectionable. Each community could set its own standards of entrance and egress. Each community could form its own preferred norms and habits, within the broad parameters of the covenant of works and the natural law. In colonial America, this understanding was an open invitation to colonize anew, to press constantly on the frontier. In the republic, this understanding lay at the heart of the constitutional struggle for individual freedoms of contract and association, on the one hand, and for rights of corporate governance and local rule, on the other.

According to Puritan lore, church and state were the two principal seats of authority within the broader social community -- each formed by a further covenant among those who had already joined the social covenant.

God has vested in the church the spiritual power of the Word. The church was called to preach the Gospel, to administer the sacraments, to teach the young, to fight injustice, and to care for the poor and the needy. By such activities, the church would lead all members of the community to a greater understanding of their covenantal responsibilities of benevolence and love. The church was also empowered to devise its own polity, to define its own doctrine, and to discipline its own members who had sinned through the spiritual means of instruction, the ban, and excommunication. By such activities, the church would confirm and reinforce the natural law and the divine authority that undergirded it.⁵⁵

Each church was constituted by a covenant between God and like-minded believers. By this covenant, these believers swore to God and to each other to uphold God's ordinances, to discharge the special calling of the church, and to be subject to those who came into authority within the church. "Saints by Calling," reads one Puritan document, "must have a Visible-Political-Union amongst themselves ... [and form a] Co[m]pany of professed believers Ecclesiastically Confoederat." "This Form is the Visible Covenant, Agreement, consent wherby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the Church's Covenant; For wee see not otherwise how members can have Church's power one over another mutually."⁵⁶ Many of the Puritan congregational churches swore to such covenants both upon initially forming the church and upon subsequently admitting new members to it.

⁵⁴ Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline* (1648), pt. 1 47, 50, repr. ed. (New York: Research Library of Colonial Americana ed. 1972).

⁵⁵ See generally *The Cambridge Synod and Platform* (1648), chaps. 1-3, 5 (1648), reprinted in Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 203-210; R. Mather, *Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed* (1643), reprinted in R. Robey, ed., *Church Covenant: Two Tracts* (New York: AMS Press, 1972).

⁵⁶ *Cambridge Synod and Platform*, 207-209, 217.

God has vested in the state the temporal power of the sword. Civil rulers, the Puritans believed, were God's Vicereagents on earth. They were called to reflect and represent God's majesty and authority, to exemplify God's justice, mercy, discipline and benevolence. They were responsible to enforce and extend the natural law, to protect a person's natural liberties and rights, and to catalyze the perpetual reforming discipline of the community. Political rulers were vested in their offices by a tripartite covenant between God, the people, and themselves. By this covenant, the rulers accepted the divine mandate for their political office. The people, in turn, vowed to God and to the rulers to oblige and submit to this rule, to accept and respect his laws.⁵⁷

The doctrine of separation of church and state went hand in hand with the doctrine of covenant. The Puritans conceived the church and the state as two separate covenantal associations, two coordinate seats of godly authority and power in society. Each institution had a distinctive calling and responsibility. Each had a distinctive polity and practice, which could not be confounded. The Puritans thus devised a variety of safeguards to keep church and state separate. Church officials were prohibited from holding political office, from serving on juries, from interfering in governmental affairs, from endorsing political candidates, or from censuring the official conduct of a statesman who was also a parishioner in the church. Political officials, in turn, were prohibited from holding ministerial office, from interfering in internal ecclesiastical government, from performing sacerdotal functions of clergy, or from censuring the official conduct of a cleric who was also a citizen of the commonwealth.⁵⁸

Although church and state were not to be confounded, they were still to cooperate in the achievement of the covenant ideals of the community. "I look upon this as a little model of the Glorieu[s] Kingdome of Christ on Earth," wrote Uriah Oakes. "Christ Reigns among us in the Common wealth as well as in the Church, and hath his glorious Interest involved and wrapt up in the good of both Societies respectively." Thus "the Interest of Righteousness in the Common wealth, and Holiness in the Churches are inseparable. The prosperity of Church and Common wealth are twisted together. Break one Cord, you weaken and break the other also."⁵⁹

The state thus provided various forms of material and mooral aid to the church. Public lands were donated to church groups for the construction of meetinghouses, parsonages, day schools, orphanages, and other structures used in the church's ministry. Tithe rates and church rates were collected to support congregational ministers and teachers, elders and deacons. Tax exemptions and immunities were accorded to some of the religious, educational, and charitable organizations that they operated. Subsidies and military protections were provided for missionaries. Special criminal laws prohibited interference with religious services and ceremonies. Sabbath day laws prohibited all forms of unnecessary labor and uncouth leisure on Sundays and holy days. Blasphemy

⁵⁷ Samuel Willard, *The Character of a Good Ruler* (Boston: B. Harris, 1694).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-20; *Cambridge Synod and Platform*, 23-37.

⁵⁹ Uriah Oakes, *New England Pleaded With, and Pressed to Consider the Things Which Concern Her* (Boston, S. Green, 1673), 49.

laws prohibited all forms of false swearing, foul language, and irreverence. Idolatry laws sanctioned various forms of sacrilege, witchcraft, sorcery, and magic, alchemy.⁶⁰

Churches, in turn, provided various forms of material aid and accommodation to the state. Church meetinghouses and chapels were used not only to conduct religious services, but also to host town assemblies, political rallies, and public auctions, to hold educational and vocational classes, to house the community library and bookstore, to maintain census rolls and birth, marriage, and death certificates, and to discharge several other public functions. Parsonages were used not only to house the minister and his family, but also to harbor orphans and widows, the sick and the aged, victims of abuse and disaster, and other wards of the state. Ministers preached obedience to the authorities and public participation in political affairs.

Beyond insisting on the separation of church and state, New England Puritans were rather pragmatic in developing the appropriate forms of government for the church and the state. "I know of no particular Form of ... Government," wrote Willard, "that God Himself has, directly, and immediately, appointed, by any clear Revelation of His Mind and Will, to any People whatever.... God Almighty has left it to the natural Reason of Mankind, in every Nation and Country, to set up that Form, which, upon a thorow Consideration of the Nature, Temper, Inclinations, Customs, Manners, Business, and other Circumstances of a People, may be thought best for them."⁶¹

One constant element in human "nature, temper, and inclination," however, was sin. Each person the Puritans believed, is a fallen, sinful, and depraved creature, by nature tempted to greed and corruption. "Sin has ... vitiated the humane Nature," wrote one Puritan, and driven man to "unruly Lusts," "rampant Passions," and "a constant Endeavour ... to promote his own, and gratify Self."⁶² Such sinful temptation was particularly strong and dangerous among political and ecclesiastical officials. "Power is too intoxicating and liable to abuse," wrote one Puritan leader. Many officials succumb to their corrupt natures and "make no other use of their higher station, than to swagger over their neighbors, and command their obsequious flatteries, and enrich themselves with the spoils of which they are able to pillage them."⁶³

On the basis of the doctrine of sin, the Puritans thus advocated and adopted a variety of constitutional safeguards against autocracy and abuse within both the church and the state. First, the Puritans insisted that officials must have as "godly a character" as possible, despite their sinfulness. They were to be models of spirituality and morality for the community, and to swear oaths of allegiance to God and the Bible. They were also to be diligent, upright, respectful, and free from guile and graft. Second, the Puritans insisted that both church and state officials occupy their offices only for limited tenures and then rotate out of office, lest they slowly convert their office into an instrument of self-again and

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; *Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts*, 1820; *Cambridge Synod and Platform*, chap. 17.

⁶¹ Barnard, *The Throne Established by Righteousness* (1734), reprinted in P. Miller and T. Johnson, eds., *The Puritans* (New York, 1938), 273.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 272.

⁶³ P. Whitney, *The Transgression of a Land Punished by a Multitude of Rulers* (Boston, 1774), 21.

self-aggrandizement. Third, they advocated the development of self-limiting "republican" forms of government for both the church and the state. Rather than consolidate all forms of authority in one person or one office, they insisted on separate forms or branches of authority, each checking the sinful excesses of the other. Fourth, they adopted what they called a "federalist" (from foedus, "covenantal") structure of government for both the church and the state. The church was divided into semi-autonomous congregations, each with its own internal structures of pastoral, pedagogical, and diaconal authority and discipline but each loosely conjoined in a broader synod. The state was divided into semi-autonomous town governments, each with its own internal structures of executive, legislative, and judicial authority, but conjoined in a broader colonial government. Fifth, they advocated the development of legal codes and clear statutes so that magistrates might not proceed according to their "sinful" discretions. Sixth, the Puritans advocated the democratic election of both political and ecclesiastical officials.

The Puritans' constitutional experimentation proved to be a fertile seedbed out of which American constitutionalism grew. Many of the basic ideas and institutions of the social, ecclesiastical, and political covenants were written directly into the original constitutions of the New England states, and openly advocated for the nation by a variety of Puritan sermonizers and political conservatives in the early republic.

Fundamental Puritan ideas survived among both the "liberal" and the "republican" schools of the later eighteenth century. "Liberal" writers found in the Puritan ideas of natural man and natural law important sources for their ideas of the state of nature and natural liberty. They found in the Puritan ideas of a social covenant and a political covenant pristine prototypes for their theories of a social contract and a governmental contract. They found in the doctrine of separation of church and state a foundation for their ideas of disestablishment and free exercise of religion. "Republican" writers, by contrast, transformed the Puritan idea of the elect nation into a revolutionary theory of American nationalism. They recast the Puritan ideal of the covenant community into a theory of public virtue, discipline, and order. They translated the Puritans' insistence on spiritual discipline and reformation into a general call for "moral reformation" and "republican regeneration."

Puritan constitutional institutions survived within the state and federal constitutions of the later eighteenth century that formed the backbone of the American experiment. Political rulers were required to manifest a moral, virtuous, and godly character -- and in most states, to swear religious oaths of office. Most officials were required to stand for democratic elections to their offices. Many political offices had limited tenures. Political authority was distributed among executive, legislative, and judicial branches, each with authority to check the others. Federalism was constitutionally prescribed. Liberties of citizens were copiously enumerated. Church and state were separated, yet allowed to cooperate.

Conclusions

Ten years before Abraham Kuyper delivered his Stone Lectures at Princeton, James Bryce delivered his Commonwealth Lectures at Harvard. In the course of a long oration on American political thought, he made this brief aside: "Someone has said that the American Government and Constitution are based on the theology of Calvin and the philosophy of Hobbes. This at least is true, that there is a hearty Puritanism in the view of human nature which pervades the instrument of 1787. It is the work of men who believed in original sin, and were resolved to leave open for transgressors no door which they could possibly shut. Compare this spirit with the enthusiastic optimism of the Frenchman of 1789. It is not merely a difference of race temperaments; it is a difference of fundamental ideas."⁶⁴

James Bryce's passing aside was Abraham Kuyper's abiding passion. For Kuyper, the "fundamental ideas" of Calvinism provided the genesis and genius of the American experiment in ordered liberty and orderly pluralism. American religious, ecclesiastical, associational, and political liberty, he believed, were grounded in fundamental Calvinist ideas of conscience, confession, community, and commonwealth. American religious, confessional, social, and political pluralism, in turn, were bounded by fundamental Calvinist ideas of divine sovereignty and created order. Remove these Calvinist roots altogether, Kuyper believed, and the tree of liberty will wither. Restore these Calvinist roots, along with other vital religious roots, and the tree of liberty will thrive. While a century of scholarship may well have called into question some of Kuyper's history, theology, and sociology, this cardinal insight into the necessary religious sources and dimensions of liberty, democracy, and pluralism, cannot be lost on us, even in our day.

⁶⁴ James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1889), 1:299.