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## The CHURCH and MODERN CULTURE

by Otto Scott

All times are contemporary to those living in them, so when did "modern" times begin? It is the settled historical fashion to say, "during the Enlightenment" --- that period when what was called 'Reason' was set up as distinct from 'Religion.'

After the passage of decades, a date was set for this remarkable break in European civilization: 1660. In obedience to that, Columbia University some years ago cut off history courses after the fall of Rome, skipped the Middle Ages, and resumed them again at 1660. I don't know if Columbia maintains that practise today, or whether it makes an exception for the Renaissance, but I do believe that it has officially relegated the Ages of Faith to silence --- as have most other American universities.

Most students, therefore, are taught a smattering of ancient history, much about ancient Greece and Rome, and then a sudden jump to 1660 onwards. To some extent I must say that it seems to me that the Reformation unconsciously set an example for this, by dismissing the Catholic centuries as unimportant and concentrating first on the days of the early Church, and then jumping to Luther, Calvin and Knox. This was a serious error not on the part of Luther, Calvin or Knox, so much as on the part of those who forgot, in the heat of the struggle against the Papacy in the sixteenth century, that the Middle Ages had contained more than the Papacy. To omit the history of centuries is to mutilate the memory of this civilization.

We cannot blame the people for this practise: we must blame the scholars. When scholars decide to skip centuries

of our history it amounts to deception. Why would scholars so deceive?

There are many reasons. One is that the sheer weight and volume of the past makes it impossible to describe it in detail. Historians have to use a broad brush, if they want to retain their audiences --- or have any audience at all. Therefore we say the Ages of Faith. In reality, the Middle Ages were centuries

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of intense struggle between a swarm of pagan religions and Christianity. At no time was everybody in Europe converted. Remnants of paganism lurked on all levels: superstitions, belief in magic, witches covens and horoscopes and sheer atheism. All this and more lurked in shadows, in silences, and in mute rebellions; sometimes in actual rebellions, heresies and dissident movements.

What the Church proved, in the victory of Christianity during the Middle Ages, was not that religion is necessary to keep a society together, but that *religion creates society*. Without Christianity, there would not have been a European civilization that blended so many warring tribes together.

When the faith began to wane, therefore, Europe began to experience civil conflicts similar to those that afflicted Rome when it lost its faith. These appeared with prosperity and re-

newed pagan influences in the Renaissance and Christianity came close to the edge during those three centuries. It was pulled back from the brink by Luther, Calvin and Knox among others --- and that marks the first time in the history of the world, so far as I know, when any civilization came that close to an utter lack of faith, a complete collapse of morality, and recovered. In every other instance a civilization that came that close went over the edge into decay and death.

The Reformation, however, is not a favorite historical subject in the English-speaking world today. The sites of its birth: Holland and Switzerland and northern Germany, are as far from Reform principles as it is possible to find. Its history has been splintered by tens of thousands of tomes and themes, so that hardly any students can see it as a whole. Our church histories are denominational histories, which narrow the past into the activities of special groups, so to speak, as if Christianity is not a whole subject.

In fact, Christianity as a subject has been relegated to seminaries and special schools, and is not taught as an integral part of the history of our civilization in modern universities and history courses. The Church, by which we now mean all the Christian churches, is fragmented, and its past is discussed in ordinary history courses mainly in terms of its deficiencies and errors; hardly ever in terms of its accomplishments, its living presence and its significance.

All this is part of the fashion that marked the professional historians' decision to describe modernity as beginning in 1660. They say that this is because it was roughly between 1650 and 1750 that the ideas of Newton and

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Editor: Ian Hodge

Spinoza, John Locke and David Hume and finally of Diderot and Voltaire were the seminal years of modern intellectual history.<sup>1</sup>

The impression is given, by this treatment, that religion abruptly fell out of everybody's mind --- and this is, of course, nonsense. The fact is that Newton was intensely religious and spent most of his career attempting to trace Biblical science, and Spinoza was a religious heretic who was excommunicated by the Jews for his philosophic assaults on Judaism. That meant he was treated as dead by his people. When he died his archives were stuffed with letters --- all from persons in the Christian community.

That's the sort of seldom mentioned detail common to certain types of historians; the type that uses history as propaganda. To a certain limited extent this is, one might say, a part of scholarly history whether the historian admits it or not: there is a tendency to look at what bolsters a viewpoint, and to discount what contradicts it.

### An Age of Conflict

When we look at the Church in the Modern World, however, we are looking at a deliberate effort to pretend that the Church did not lead us into the modern world. That is a tremendous lie, easily disproven even by those who half-believe it.

For instance, Paul Johnson, the English historian, wrote an early and exuberant book titled *A History of the English People*,<sup>2</sup> which contains a brief summary of the religious situation in

England during its Civil War of 1640-1688.

As is usual in discussing so large a subject, the historians have splintered it into stages, so that hardly anyone can understand it overall. It started in 1640 as a rebellion against Charles I. This is almost always described as a politico-economic argument, but in reality it was a rebellion mounted by the Calvinists --- who represented a large part of the English and Scots people, against the Arminians who had captured the Court, Oxford University and much of the aristocracy and institutions of the realm.

This was, in every sense, a Church fight among Christians that involved all the issues of the Reformation. It was the only time in the long centuries of English history that this phlegmatic people were ever roused enough by religious issues to stake their lives, and it is a disservice to its complexity to simplify it.<sup>3</sup>

Let it suffice to say that the Arminian position was very close to Catholicism, in that it argued that salvation was possible only with the intercession of the Church. The Calvinist position was, of course, that God alone determines who is saved. The ramifications of these arguments led to two different views on the proper role of the Church and the clergy. This difference distorted the relations between the King, who was Arminian, because Arminians held the King aloft as the head of the Church --- and the Commons, which was Calvinist and believed that the Church should be independent of the Crown, and that the King was under the laws of the Bible, like all other persons.

Historians have simplified this dispute into one between the King and Parliament, but that is an evasion. The central argument was who would control the Church of England? The King, or the people? Or, in another light, the Calvinists or the Arminians?

We haven't time to describe all the vicissitudes of the war that ensued, and how its fortunes swayed back and forth. But at one time the King fell into the hands of Cromwell's forces, which at that moment were in control of the realm. The year was 1647, and the day was the 28th of October when a group of about 40 fairly young men met at the parish church of St. Mary in Putney, England.

## Education

Ian Hodge

Education is always a hot topic. Hot, because increasingly parents are opting for alternatives to the public schools. One educator recently told me that he had estimated that there were *at least* 40,000 home schooling students in Australia. The problem, he went on, is that it is difficult to determine. Many people would not respond to his survey questions for fear of being discovered. They were afraid that the information they gave him might find its way into the hands of bureaucratic officials. What does this mean?

First of all, it shows that there is widespread dissatisfaction with education that is provided by the public schools. Second, it indicates a growing trend in home education. Forty thousand students is a significant number. Third, it indicates a general willingness on the part of parents to disobey the government on the crucial matter of education.

If the government is going to crack down on home schooling, as it has threatened from time to time, then it has almost left it too late. One state attorney-general has advised his minister to leave the home schoolers alone, even though they were breaking the law. There were far more serious problems, such as truancy in the public schools, which should occupy the attention of officials, the attorney-general argued. Not bad advice at all! And good news for home schoolers.

Education everywhere, however, could improve if the educators adopted a few little rules. Discipline, for example, would be a great example. Where there is no discipline children will seldom learn. It is the loving environment where discipline and high expectations come together that children can learn. This is why home schooling is so successful. Many think that home schooling is successful because it is conducted by the parents, or because of a particular curriculum that is being used. But this is not the case.

Children will excel wherever there is basic family discipline. They will even succeed in learning in the public schools if they have loving discipline imposed upon them. This is why the major achievers in the state examinations are quite often Asians where family discipline is high, or in European families where a similar discipline is to be found.

Naturally, our real complaint against the public school system is twofold. First, education is not a prerogative of the state. If the Bible is to be our guide, there are no

1. Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

2. *A History of the English People* (New York: Harper & Row, [1972] 1985).

3. For more detail, see my book, *The Great Christian Revolution* (Murphys, CA: Uncommon Books, 1994).

The meeting was officially styled the Grand Council of the New Model Army . . . and those who attended include Oliver Cromwell and Commissary General Henry Ireton, his son in law. There was also Lt. Colonel Goffe, and Col. Rainsborough, and there were ordinary soldiers like Edward Sexby. There were even two whose names are lost, termed by the acting secretary as Buffe-Coate and 'Bedfordshire Man.' There were three citizens, or Levellers who had come to talk for the soldiers. The minutes were kept verbatim by William Clarke and have gaps --- and were unread and unknown for 250 years, buried in the archives of Worcester College, Oxford until the end of the 19th century.<sup>4</sup>

They were unknown, therefore, for two and a half centuries. But "the ideas flung across that communion table,"

### **"The rise of all sorts of religious hypocrites under Cromwell set teeth on edge . . ."**

wrote Johnson, ". . . had in the meantime travelled around the world, hurled down thrones and subverted empires, and had become the common, everyday currency of political exchange. They are still with us. Every major political concept known to us today, all the assumptions which underlie the thoughts of men in the White House, or the Kremlin, or Downing Street, or in presidential mansions or senates or parliaments through five continents, were expressed or adumbrated in the little church of St. Marys."<sup>5</sup>

The meeting was called in the first place because Cromwell was negotiating with Parliament regarding the problem of the King's captivity. Parliament regarded the war as won, and wanted to dismiss the Army --- without pay, and without indemnity for acts committed during the conflict. The King, meanwhile, made all sorts of promises contingent upon his release. Unfortunately, the King's promises were worthless: he was a man to whom truth was meaningless.

Cromwell's troops, meanwhile, had created subgroups of their own, consisting of Baptists, Anabaptists, Levellers, Puritans, Separatists, ordinary Calvinists like Cromwell, (who was devout but not fanatical like the Puritans), and

others. The troops had resolved their own differences by electing adjutators, or agitators, from each regiment to represent rank and file opinion. It was, truly, a New Model Army --- and probably the best in the world at the time.

The Army at Putney was confronted by Cromwell's opinion that the Army's right to resist its dismissal was based on the fact that it was not a mercenary group, paid for the purpose, but Englishmen resisting on the basis of the "Law of Nature and Nations." However, it would obey the orders of parliaments that were "rightly constituted, that is freely, equally, and successively chosen."<sup>6</sup>

The agitators at Putney, elected to speak for the troops, immediately objected. There remained in Parliament the inheritors of the Norman yoke.

They proposed a Parliament without Lords, elected by universal suffrage of all males, except those on wages or relief. Cromwell was appalled at the dimensions of such a change. "Where would it all end?" he asked. "England would become another Switzerland." He also demurred at a written Constitution, which he said was "worthless, unless the spirit and temper of the people are prepared to receive and go along with it."

Ireton argued that the right to vote went with property, which gave a man an interest in the stability of the State. Give the vote to a man with no more property than he could carry away with him, 'who is here today and gone tomorrow' and there would be nothing to prevent him "from stealing by confiscatory laws."

The agitators responded that freeborn was as important as freehold, and that people are more important than things. The chief end of Government was to protect people as well as estates. Property qualifications meant that power would be confined to the top fifty of the nation. How is it, it was asked, that some have properties and others have none? (This is an unanswerable question.)

Then Edward Sexby, a private soldier, said bitterly that men were asked to risk their lives to recover the rights and privileges of Englishmen, and now he heard that they had none. Those like himself, who had fought, had "the law of God and the law of their conscience on their side. I tell you," he concluded,

grounds for the state to be involved in running and operating schools. Neither is there any reason for the state to be determining the curriculum. And herein lies our second complaint. Public education as it is currently exercised, attempts to not only determine what will be taught, but it also determines at what age the student shall learn the knowledge that meets with its approval. This is not only foolish, but it ties the student down to a common denominator: age.

When students are freed from these absurd restrictions of the public school, they are free to work according to their own motivation levels and the encouragement they find from other sources, such as parents.

What has also become known is that human beings have a propensity to learn things rapidly. See, for example, how long it takes a child to learn his native tongue. It has also been found that a great amount of human knowledge is built in: learning, it seems, is unnecessary. This inbuilt knowledge is necessary because it has been discovered that in order to learn effectively, people must already know a great deal. Children, it would thus appear, are a long distance from Locke's *tabula rasa*. The child, contrary to recent opinion, is not an empty shell waiting for information to be drilled into his brain. Rather, he has a great amount of knowledge already stored, and education needs to learn how to tap into this storehouse of knowledge.

If man is made in the image of God, then this discovery should not surprise us. While sin, and the effects of sin, have clouded and distorted that image, it has not been obliterated. Still, man is the image of God. And, as Romans 1:18ff declares, everyone has knowledge of God, at the very least. Since God is the source and fountain of all wisdom and knowledge, then learning for the child should be easy, unless, in rebellion, he is holding down and suppressing the truth about God in unrighteousness. For to do this, he must deny all knowledge, for all knowledge points to the Author who created all things: God Almighty.

Thus, the future of education is in the hands of those who acknowledge the source of all knowledge. Armed with this information, Christian parents will soon see that their children can excel in education without any great effort. The fact that the Christian schools are not producing academically superior children yet, is because Christian parents and Christian educators have failed to break with the humanistic notion of the child as a clean slate.

4. *The Clarke Papers*, ed by C.H. Firthe, the Camden Society, 1891, Vol. I.

5. Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

6. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

"I am resolved to give my birthright to none."

Cromwell then saw that compromise was imperative, otherwise logic would split the Army and doom their cause. "Let us be doing," he said, "but let us be united in doing." He suggested that those who fought should have a vote, and larger matters left for later days. The agitators accepted that, for the nonce,<sup>7</sup> and the meeting ended. Matters did not, of course, end there.

Cromwell proceeded, by careful steps, to depoliticize the Army, but in the meantime he gave the agitators much that they demanded. He had the King executed. He abolished the House of Lords. He did not abolish property, and he turned --- as always at every stage in his life --- to the Bible for guidance.

It is the year 1640, therefore, and not 1660, that was the great watershed of European history. It was the Calvinist Revolution that broke the idea of an absolute monarchy that had risen during the Renaissance to destroy the freedoms of Christianity. Knox, it is true, had released the Scots from such a thrall when he chased Mary Stuart out of her realm for sharing in the murder of her husband. Knox had argued that the monarch was subject to the same laws as all the rest of the kingdom, and he wanted to put Mary Stuart on trial for murder. That insistence that God's Law is above Kings and Queens horrified non-Calvinist Christendom, but Scotland was a poor and remote country, and the lesson was lost, except in small intellectual Protestant circles.

But when Charles I of England was tried as an Enemy of the People, Europe was so startled that some men fainted on hearing the news. The Divine Right of Kings fell with the headsman's axe. It was, on all counts, the great Religious Civil War of England that ushered modern times into being.

"All great revolutions," wrote Johnson --- the Americans in 1776, the French in 1789, the Russian in 1917, the Chinese in 1949 --- are in one vital sense patriotic, springing from a sense of national frustration. . . . In this, as in other respects, the English revolution of 1640 set the pattern. Suddenly the presses poured forth a torrent of forbidden books, and new ideas, openly expressed. . . . It was Cromwell who allowed the phoenix to rise. . . . And Cromwell was convinced of his divine mission."<sup>8</sup>

## The Results

What happened after that? A great tragedy: one of the greatest. Cromwell was not young when he became Lord Protector of England, and although he restored England's military prestige and position and put the Calvinists in charge, it was impossible to make England whole again. The Arminian Church, with its pomp and ceremonies and the assurance of its priests that they could use the keys of Heaven on behalf of all sinners, maintained the allegiance of large numbers.

The rise of all sorts of religious hypocrites under Cromwell set teeth on edge: some people strutted about saying prayers on all occasions; there were complaints that men were promoted because of their beliefs and not their behavior.

Some brief flurries of disorder caused more alarm among Cromwell's generals than necessary, and he responded by placing them in charge of various parts of the realm. Some immediately passed rules against any public gathering, which ended cock fights and bear baits, racing and the freedoms of actors and Gypsies.

This created much more resentment than may, at distant, seem intelligent --- but to halt sports, TV and most theater today would have the same result. Cromwell made some lame excuses, but they did not change matters. Meanwhile he allowed Jews back to the realm after centuries of official ostracism. And, most importantly, he permitted religious toleration among the Protestant denominations.

Catholicism was still banned, because in that century no Catholic power allowed any variance from its beliefs. In fact, the history of the Catholic counter-Reformation is one of the most savage in all history; so savage that the English did not feel they dared allow it another toe-hold in their midst.

But Quakers were allowed --- and they were remarkably disruptive in those days. A non-Episcopal Evangelical Church of England was created, and preachers were appointed after being tested for their qualifications. The Cromwellian government was silent about rites, ceremonies and sacraments. How to administer the Lord's Supper and Baptism was left to each congregation. And the denominations were all allowed to use Church buildings at different hours. The Government pro-

When Christians can realise this, and they can accept that God has given each child unique gifts and talents --- which means all children do not need to follow the same curriculum, even for the first 12 years of school life --- then we will begin to see the Christian student excel over those who have opted for the humanistic and statist approach to education.

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Flower power was the cry of the 1960s. Yet nothing had the power of tulips in Holland during the first part of the seventeenth century. Prices for tulips skyrocketed. People bartered their entire wealth for the flowers as prices climbed ever higher. But when the bubble burst, people rushed to the Dutch government for help. Dutchmen began to realise that tulips were, after all, only tulips, and that prices had gotten out of hand. As prices fell, people who had promised to take delivery of tulips at very high prices defaulted on their obligations as prices fell to a fraction of their former dizzy heights. The government, however, refused to assist, and said the tulip growers should find their own solution to the problem.

"To find a remedy," said Charles Mackay, "was beyond the power of the government" (*Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1869, p.91). People in this generation must learn the same lesson. Governments cannot solve the financial problems of the world because it is not only beyond their power, they lack the will to do anything about it. And while they lack the will to fix the problems, things only get worse, since it is government policy which is creating the problem.

When people learn the government cannot solve their problems, perhaps then they will turn to the One who can solve their problems. But this means men and women must give up their autonomous lifestyles and live in obedience to the laws of the King of the universe. This is the message that must be taken into a world that is increasingly coming unstuck as it attempts to build a future without God. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

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Twenty-five years ago, 1969, 12 percent of households controlled about 25 percent of all income. These people were considered well off. At the same time, the poor represented 17 percent of households controlling five percent of all income.

By 1984, the well-off group had grown to 30 percent, and controlled 56 percent

7. "For the nonce" means "for the particular occasion" (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary) --- editor.

8. Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 201, 202, 205, 206, 207.

vided tithes to all, and insisted only that the Episcopal Prayer Book not be used. In effect, Cromwell created a Congregational system that was partly endowed, partly unendowed.

### Betrayal

All that ended soon after Cromwell's death. The Parliament he left soon descended into discord, the Army Generals jockeyed for position. Elections brought a Presbyterian majority to Parliament, which naively negotiated with Charles II, in exile in France. He promised to remake the Church of England along Presbyterian lines, which would have eliminated the Quakers, the Puritans --- and all the non Presbyterians in the realm. The Presbyterians, to their

***"The Arminians returned to take control of the Church, and they pressed Parliament to make sure they would not again lose it."***

subsequent sorrow, believed him and --- together with Royalists restored to Parliament --- invited Charles to the throne.

I don't know how Presbyterian historians deal with this folly, this betrayal of a great revolution; but the Calvinists of all varieties paid dearly for it. So did the Presbyterians themselves.

Doom did not arrive at once: cheering crowds greeted Charles II, who had become a secret Catholic.<sup>9</sup> All that happened immediately was that those who had voted for his father's execution were themselves executed by Charles II. The cadavers of Cromwell, Ireton and John Bradshaw were removed from Westminster Abbey, publicly hanged, their heads cut off and placed on poles for weather and the birds to destroy.

The Presbyterians did not foresee that a restoration in the State would bring about a restoration of the Arminians, whose name had been changed to Anglicans. They did not foresee that the very name of the Calvinists would be changed to Roundheads during the war --- and "Dissenters and Puritans" afterward. They learned all this slowly and painfully.

The Arminians returned to take control of the Church, and they pressed Parliament to make sure they would not again lose it. This resulted in the Act of Uniformity which threw Calvinist clergymen out of their posts, re-established

the Book of Common Prayer, punished attendance at religious rites other than those of the Established Church by imprisonment for the first two offenses, transportation for the third and death for attempts to return.

A Five Mile Act forbade any clergyman or schoolteacher to come within five miles of a corporate town or city unless he swore "he would not at any time try to change the government of State or Church. Because Calvinists were mostly city people, this cut them off from their faith entirely."

This --- and more --- sent tens of thousands streaming from England to America. It is this period that created the colonies in a true sense, and that led directly to our War of Independence.

"Dissenters" in Britain --- Calvinists to you --- were not allowed to hold public office or enter the great universities. Lord Acton, a [Roman] Catholic, was not able to enter Oxford or Cambridge for that reason in the mid-19th century. For these restrictions were not lifted soon: they lasted for centuries.

Meanwhile, we have the year 1660, when Charles II landed in England. Its real significance is not that it launched the time of Newton and others, or even that it began the time when the English civil war came to an end, for the English civil war did not really end then at all. The persecutions of the Calvinists of all varieties can be considered simple counter-revolutionary tactics, designed to suppress the majority of the people for once and for all.

The Crown of England, even under Charles II, never again regained absolute power. That's why Cromwell's statue stands outside the English Parliament to this day. But revolutionary fires continued to flare in England under Charles --- and even under his successor, James II. James --- tried to bring Catholicism back, and that led to a final uprising, which ended only with the arrival of William and Mary.

Then, and only then, in 1688, did England's great religious civil wars come to an end, but their influence lingers to this day. It also had several stages, but they can be briefly summarized. The first effect of the Restoration was to bring back the most licentious theater since the waning days of the Romans. The second was to release a wave of ridicule against religion and, specifically, Christianity, again since the Romans. It was then that a separation was

of income. The poor, on the other hand, had expanded to thirty percent of households, but controlled only 10 percent of income.

Both these groups expanded at the expense of the middle class, contracting from 30 percent holding 70 percent of incomes to 40 percent controlling 34 percent of income.. And since 1984 things have continued along the same course.

At the same time, Australians became more class conscious. Australians, once egalitarian in their outlook, began to identify themselves in terms of money and income. They began to measure themselves in terms of their neighbour. The classless society had been replaced by one in which people identified themselves in terms of class and, in particular, wealth.

Meanwhile, the middle class has continued to disappear. The rich have become richer, and the poor have increased in numbers. This is not a good sign, since a strong middle class is indicative of a society where people have been able to progress out of the poorer classes into the middle class, perhaps on their way to the class of the very rich.

These shifts, however, have not come about by chance. They are, instead, the result of deliberate government policy. On the one hand, social welfare has worked to destroy the middle class family and its position in society. At the same time, taxes have confiscated wealth from the middle class, thereby impoverishing it in order to finance the welfare programs. The rich, in the meantime, have continued to protect their assets, since they alone could afford the protection from government confiscation, either with elaborate tax avoidance and evasion schemes, or by moving wealth offshore where it could not be touched by government.

What is the significance of this? No one can tell for certain. But if history is a guide, then ancient Rome indicates what to expect: increased government control, increased taxation, decreased productivity, continued debasement of the currency --- and eventually the citizens welcomed the barbarians into the Empire.

Well, the barbarians are no longer at the gate: they are running the city. In fact, they are running the country. They too, have been welcomed by the people with open arms in a belief that the barbarians can deliver the soul into paradise on earth.

The foolishness of this is obvious, at least to some. Meanwhile, the rest of us suffer awaiting the deliverance that can come only as men and women turn to the One who can truly liberate from sin and all its manifestations, even death.

9. *The Secret History of Charles II* Essays in the Study and Writing of History, Vol. III, Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, p. 135.

said to exist between Reason and Religion, and it was then that self-styled free-thinkers began to rise. The Enlightenment, in other words, began in Britain.

It was in London that Voltaire grasped the power of ridicule against Christianity and it was from there that he carried the fashion back to Paris. Its progress in France does not need any explanation; it is too well known. But it explains why the date 1660 was selected as the beginning of modern times. For it was 1660 that began the defeat of the greatest religious revolution of the West.

Meanwhile, what of the Calvinists? They were the descendants of those who fought Charles I, and who fled the England of Charles II and his successors. These were people who feared, beyond all other dangers, that the British Crown would send the Church of England to America, to fasten its oppression on Americans, to push American Calvinists into the ghettos reserved for "dissenters" in Britain. That eternal menace, coupled with increasing controls from Parliament, led finally to the War of Independence and to the government created at Philadelphia.

When they wrote the American Constitution they deliberately limited the powers of Congress, the Presidency and the Courts in the spirit of their predecessors at Putney in Cromwell's army. When they said America would not allow an Established Church they reflected the experience of their forbears. When they spoke about the right of all citizens to run for office, they reflected Cromwell, the Puritans and the Presbyterians and Levellers and all who fought against tyranny in the 1640s. During our War of Independence, Presbyterian clergymen fought and died in remarkably high numbers. And when Pitt the younger was asked to explain the American rebellion, he said, "Brother Jonathan has run away with a Presbyterian parson."

The fact that we have forgotten much of this; forgotten that it was the English experience that laid the foundations for the American experience is, really, due to the fact that American education starts with 1776, instead of its foundations. If we knew about the English Civil War, we would not today allow the encroachments of Govern-

ment upon our existing churches. The lessons of history are, after all, not realized if they are not taught.

### The Decline

Meanwhile, England after 1688 underwent its own decline. Voltaire, in London in the 1720s, found the fashion of anti-Christian ridicule in full flower, and carried it back to Paris. We all know how it flourished there, and we have all been drenched in the idea that it was the French Revolution that created modern times. We are, however, less often told that the French mounted the first revolution against religion ever

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***"Let us, therefore, disprove the scoffers, and learn from a victorious past --- that victory is possible, once again."***

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conducted in any civilization at any time, anywhere. We are far less often reminded that it was against Christianity that the leaders of the French Revolution led the people, and rarely reminded of the Terror, the murder, the insanity that accompanied that effort.

Again, we need not cover what is generally well-known. What seems far more worth the telling is the course of events after the French Revolution was defeated by the British, joined by the Germans, the Russians, the Belgians at Waterloo.

It is seldom recalled that the Industrial Revolution rose at the same time as the French Revolution. One was dedicated to building factories and machinery; the other was dedicated to anti-Christianity, anti-industry, anti-morality. The American contribution to the Industrial Revolution was, as is generally admitted, immense. Weber believed that capitalism, in the best sense, was a product of Calvinism and what he called The Protestant Ethic.

He mentioned that this ethic was powered, so to speak, by the argument that all men are priests, and that their vocations are forms of worship, equal in the eyes of God to that of the clergy. It seems to me that it was that insight that led the Calvinists to abandon their forefather's efforts to attain political power, to challenge the Arminians of England and their counterparts elsewhere, and

to turn instead toward world improvements.

This seemed a reasonable course of action in the United States in the early 1800s. After all, we had the Constitution, limits on Government, no Established Church to fear and to resist.

That absence of Church challenge, and the phenomenal expansion of American power and prosperity, allowed American attention to religious matters to gradually decline in terms of serious intellectual content.

When Unitarianism spread from Britain to the US, it penetrated a lazy Church like a knife through butter. When Arminianism appeared in the form of evangelism, millions of Americans accepted the theory that God's salvation is available by calling Room Service.

Meanwhile the dark legend of the French Revolution continued to be extolled in our schools and national literature; our press and theater. Capitalism, which lifted the living standards of the world, extended the life spans of every race in all parts of the world, which eased the burdens of work and improved the methods of health, was termed the most evil of exploitations. People were encouraged to believe that it was not God, not the Church, but governments that could bring Heaven to Earth.

We all know the results. We know now, from the example of the collapsed Soviet central government and the horrors it committed in its days of power, that God will not be mocked. We know that we struggle today with powers of darkness reawakened by their triumphs in the last two centuries. But we also know that a minority of Calvinists once led England into a brief summer, and we know that their principles are alive again, among us, here today.

### Conclusion

We know that victories once won can be won again, and that there is a revival under way, of which we are a significant part. We know that the modern world is essentially, in terms of people and emotion and argument and faith, really no different than the world in the past; the world which brought us here. Let us, therefore, disprove the scoffers, and learn from a victorious past --- that victory is possible, once again.