

The Cross Versus the Tree of Liberty

Lecture Delivered at the Opening of the
Tenth Annual Meeting of the
Anti-Revolutionary Party
During the Centennial of the
French Revolution

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2017

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Original Dutch title:

Niet de Vrijheidsboom Maar het Kruis: Toespraak ten Opening van de Tiende Deputatenvergadering in het Eeuwjaar der Fransche Revolutie

Original author: Dr. Abraham Kuyper

Original publisher: Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser

Website of original text:

<https://archive.org/details/nietdevrijheidsb00kuyp>

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Vancouver, Canada

2017

Since, thanks to the continued trust of your party in me, it is once again my honour as Chairman to open your tenth Annual Meeting, I would misinterpret the requirement of this hour if I did not pause for a moment in this centennial year of the “Great Revolution” to consider that revolution of 1789.¹

The national Netherlands party that concentrates all its power in your Annual Meeting and that presents itself as a unified body, calls itself “*Anti-Revolutionary*.” This does not mean that it opposes every revolution, which sometimes is unavoidable, but is often an expression of revenge against God. How could that be, when our first Prince of Orange earned his heroic status in the people’s armed struggle against Count Philip; when William III earned his honour in the Glorious Revolution in Great Britain; and when, even in our own century, our first King of Orange tied his fortune to the rebellion against Napoleon?

Our party calls itself “*Anti-Revolutionary*,” or “*Christian-Historical*,” i.e. principally rooted in Christ and connected in a divinely ordained order through ongoing *History*. It was through the force of conviction no less than due to the lessons from experience that the Party opposed and continues to oppose the destructive and blasphemous *principles* that triumphed briefly in France’s terrible Revolution in such an appalling way.

In that same Paris, still drunk from the blood of its noblest sons, that repeated the gruesome spectacles from Robespierre’s days on smaller scale in 1830, in 1848 and even a mere eighteen years into the insurrection of the Communards, the descendants of Girondin and Jacobin are currently preparing to celebrate the memory of 1789 boisterously with the playful abandonment of the mindless. The fires of celebration are lit bright. Everything that blinds the eye and that beclouds the spirit is brought into

¹The original Dutch title: “*Niet de vrijheidsboom maar het kruis: Toespraak ter opening van de tiende Deputatenvergadering in het eeuwjaar der Fransche Revolutie*” Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser, This document can be accessed at: <https://archive.org/details/nietdevrijheidsb00kuyp>. A wider treatment of this topic is given in James Eglinton and George Harinck, eds., *Neo-Calvinism and the French Revolution*. For information about that book go to the section “Guest Writings about Kuyper” further down on this page.

play during the daytime, in order to arouse the hotspots of pleasure-loving European and American nomads, while at night they are carousing at Venetian-like carnivals. But would I be wrong imagining that, if Mirabeau could arise from his grave or if Rousseau could listen in on the rustle and bustle of all this vanity, a bitter cry of disappointment would escape from their breasts over this calamitous deterioration that leads almost all Europe to ridicule France's impotence and the unprofitable course of her revolutionary system?

Or is this not divine judgement on what was committed in 1789, that, among all the European states, it is particularly France that currently displays the pitiful spectacle of inner laceration, of national self-humiliation over against her neighbor and of complete moral impotence to raise herself out of her shameful collapse? The jubilant France, so prophesied her Voltaires and Diderots at one time, would unlock for all peoples the way to unprecedented prosperity; the one and only Paris would open for our entire continent the door to a paradise of human happiness. Paris would be "the city on the hill," with the gospel of the Revolution glittering like "the light on the candlestick." Indeed, initially it took the guillotine and wholesale murder, but that was only the fallout of the imperative of the pain of birth. For France, a glory would emerge, an ideal earthly bliss, the zenith of her state of bliss that would be the envy of the nations.

But now, look. Has ever prophecy disappointed more bitterly? Is there even one nation in the last century that was shocked and ravaged more by inner agitation and that surpassed France as an embodiment of political self delusion? The France that experienced every political system but wore them all out in short order. The France that traded in its liberty for dictatorship and its envied parliamentary skills for Wilsonianism. It reduced its constitutional government to ridicule by its endlessly changing administration. The France that now, as in 1852, stands ready to throw herself into the arms of any self-centred general and that, as a final convulsion, in order to turn away from this threatening danger, seeks its rescue in unpredictable justice administration as a weapon borrowed from the riff-raff of its former ancient regime. "Liberty" was the motto on which people cast their hope, while the border patrol watched one group of citizens after another cross the border to escape. "Equality" was to be the mantra, but the contrast between the suffering masses and the powerful

wealthy elite who played with their millions was never more glaring. “Fraternity” was to unite all citizens, but was there ever a nation that, like the French today, has rooted up their own innards?

And what is the current stance and attitude that surrounding nations have with respect to this self-abuse of the French nation? Initially, almost all the countries allowed the song from the City on the Seine to caress their ears and followed France. The spirit of the French Revolution penetrated everywhere. Even when the Restoration, after Leipzig and Waterloo, erected its paper dam against this powerful current, the surge of the revolutionary force was still so irresistibly strong that, when the signal was given by France, as well as by the events of 1830 and 1848, almost all of Europe rose up in feverish agitation.

But how great was the disillusionment that followed in its wake! How have the researchers of this history and philosophy exposed the hollowness and the failure of the revolutionary or liberal theory in the brightest of lights! Who still adheres to the constitutional nonsense that for half a century served as a proud title over that imaginary Social Contract?

Just look at how differently things went. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, instead of being bent on a restoration, in almost all European nations, by way of a more wholesome and decent politics, triumph upon triumph was achieved over the once highly lauded Liberalism, that intoxicating and overly fashionable embodiment of the principle of Revolution. What has become of the National-Liberals, once so supreme, in Germany? And have their fellow travelers in Austria’s monarchy not long since rebelled against the throne of power and honour? Indeed, wherever you look around in Europe, the antiquated Liberalism has outlived its day of glory almost everywhere. There is undoubtedly an element of the divine ridicule of which we read in Psalm 2 in the remarkable fact that in the centennial of the French Revolution, Liberalism has at last been forced out of nearly all the cabinets of Europe-- in England, Scandinavia, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany or Austria.

The conclusion of all this is that on the centennial of its fantastic Revolution, Paris, as it were, invites all nations to come to the Field or

Temple of Mars² to be personally convinced that the French genius is still tingling, how competent and creative the French still are; but also how its constitutional theory became a complete fiasco: how blunt, unwise and dumb it turned out to be in respect of national government and what political tinsmiths its philosophers and politicians were. It is as if France's protector preaches to all of Europe from the top of the Eiffel Tower: "Oh nations, learn from the only Paris the art of living tastefully, sensuously, luxuriously and gracefully; but also learn from my national defamation and political humiliation how *not* to arrange your nation and how *not* to govern your people, if you want to avoid sinking into a deep pit of shame as did my indescribably unhappy France, in spite of all its brouhaha.

So then the nature of the tree became known by its fruit. Among the nations of Europe, including our own, the inclination grew to turn our backs to the deceitful Tree of Liberty and once again to seek the quiet shade of Golgotha's cross. It is, gentlemen, almost unbelievable that one hundred years after Voltaire defamed himself forever with his "*Ecrasez l'infame*,"³ Christ, once so cursed by Voltaire, should once again become the object of worship for the powerful in both America and Europe. In distant Washington, in the America of Lafayette, is a president, the head of the United States, who each morning kneels for God's Word. In Germany, there is an emperor who humbles himself each evening before his Saviour. In both Austria and Belgium there are authorities who honour the crucified One of Golgotha, even if according to Catholic rites. And, God be praised, even in our own fatherland a Mackay-Keuchenius cabinet has arisen, men who only last year prayed with us here in the Name of Christ and who now, with prayers for divine guidance on their lips, are the governors of the throne.

This is something totally different from what the Restoration intended and what initially was put in place under the Bourbons in France and under the Von Metternichs in Austria. In the Restoration there was an embedded thirst for revenge. It constituted a battle to returning to what was thought to be irrevocable. The hate of those supporting the Restoration was not so much against the *principle* of the Revolution as it was against its

²Trans: A mythological place north of Rome where the gods allegedly held discussions, according to a book published in 1792.

³Trans: "Crush the infamous thing," a term Voltaire apparently never defined clearly.

consequences. And as long as those supporters could recover their lost power and privilege, in so far as it was well grounded, they were prepared to allow their new political structures to be based on the root of the Revolution. In our own country also the power of the ancient Regent regime was fully engulfed by this stream that swelled up in France. Here as well, those supporters were prepared to make peace with the revolutionary system, on condition that the oppression of the citizenry could be revived in favour of the club of Regents under the new version of Liberalism.

In opposition to the above, people like Chateaubriand and Stahl came to the fore, while at home we produced Groen and Elout and then, woken up by their word, our entire constituency presented itself in increasingly wider circles as the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP). *Our* struggle is not primarily against the *consequences*, but, to the contrary, in its basis and goal against the *principle* of the Revolution. It gave primacy to God's order, not to human design; to *Christ*, the Messiah of the nations, not to Voltaire! We accepted Groen's undying powerful aphorism: "Against the Revolution, the Evangel!" Or, to put this contrast in other terms: "Not the Tree of Liberty, but the Cross!"

The consequence, gentlemen, of this is that we are the least among the praise singers of the ancient regime. Rather, we disapprove of the *status quo* as it obtained in 1789 in Paris as well as in our own country even stronger than did the Revolutionaries.

Allow me to recount how we had gotten lost in this swamp. From way back, in Asia, as a consequence of sin, despotism was indigenous. The nation existed for the benefit of the sovereign. The whole system circled around the ruler; the people did not count.

But our God, so full of grace, allowed our ears to hear the angelic song of freedom. This came first through Israel, where all the people cooperated and shared as one holy family in the established order of the land. Then it came to Greece, where He opened up the power of the person. From there to Rome, where He placed the blessing of a free community under the guarantee of justice. And later, but not least, it arrived among the Germanic peoples, nations of free men who had never known the burden of force.

However, because of a lack of *moral* freedom among these nations, *political* liberty could not maintain itself. In a way even more appalling than

did the Jacobins in Paris, Israel executed its anointed King and now wanders like a people without a head, scattered among the nations. Greece began to doubt its system and hence harvested the Caesarism of Alexander and his successors. In Rome, human rights went under because of moral deterioration, while its subjects were forced to kneel before the inhuman Nero during the shouting of “*Divus Augustus*” or “Divine Majesty.” And we Germanics consumed each other in mutual recriminations for so long that the Roman legions penetrated our defences.⁴

A divine lesson was apparent in this sad development. Asian despotism demonstrated to what depth a sinner can sink when no divine mercy ameliorates such situations. Even in their best days, Athens, Rome and Germany demonstrated how regional rulers can restore common grace in our human lives. But then it also became bitterly clear in Israel’s downfall, in Athen’s bleeding to death, in the destruction of the Germanic peoples, and in Rome’s shameful Caesarism, that it was impossible to maintain the liberty of any nation as long as the constitutional liberty is not supported by the moral liberation of mankind, but merely hangs like a loose gown on their shoulders. Liberty cannot trickle down from the state to the people. Instead, liberty must *ascend* or “*trickle upwards*” from the liberated individuals at the bottom up to the life of the entire population. At that point, our Father, who is in heaven, gave His only Son to that world out of pure divine mercy. That Son, in turn, the only truly liberated Human that was ever born from woman, before He ascended the mountain of the cross, bequeathed this undying, deeply humiliating, this touching mighty testament to all peoples as well as to all nations that thirst after freedom: *Only if the Son has set you free, will you be free indeed.*

In this Testament lies the root and the point of departure of all Christian-Historical constitutional law and, thanks to this Testament, the most radical u-turn started at Golgotha. Through this Testament something new, something that upset all existing conditions, penetrated the life of nations. It was the beginning of our Christian era. Now, also freedom, but freedom for the people and release from despotism by way of the return of the sinner to obedience to his God. Prostrating himself in the dust before God meant

⁴Trans: It would be interesting and helpful if a historian would favour us with an analysis of this synopsis of the roots and history of the West .

therefore no more bowing before any human. There was freedom once again, but this time based on *moral* regeneration. It was a matter of first throwing off the yoke of slavery of the soul to sin, thereby escaping the yoke of slavery to the tyrant. The ruler would exist for the benefit of the people. The people subjected to the ruler only because of God's will; both, ruler and people, together bowed down before God Almighty, bound together by His holy law.

But, and pay close attention here, observe how this humiliating circumstance came about, to which 1789 became such a tragic end as a divine judgement. The waters of sin rose again; the moral regeneration reversed and the yoke of sin returned. That, in turn, caused the un-liberated human race to be subjected once again to an un-liberated political system, but in its most jarring and revolting form. Again despots arose, first in the circle of knights and clergy, but when these saw their power weaken, in royal palaces. "*L'etat e'est moi*," that is, "I am the State," said the self-designated "Most Christian" monarch, but one who never jeered the Name of Christ with greater audacity than in this declaration. Now the angel of liberty left us again and a despotism that reminded us of the days of the Belshazzars and Pharaohs moved back in. The most upsetting of all this was that now it was all dressed and adorned as Christian. That is how the divine right of kings became a provocation to the nations. The divine authority of majesty, bereft of its own pride, was turned into a mockery. What the Stuarts in London, the Bourbons in Paris and the Regents in the cities of The Netherlands dared to establish was worse than trampling human rights under foot; it was trampling the honour of our God under their feet!

Well then, the divine judgment of 1789 put a stop to this condition that so provoked the nations and challenged God in both Paris as well as in our country. If you perceive the events of the French turnaround from that perspective, even including the terrors created by Robespierre, we bow our heads with fearful reverence. Everything invited revenge and it came, horribly so. It is only because of the amazing muddle that failed to recognize the distinction between that divine judgement embedded in the Revolution and the principle that drove it, that we could declare praise and sympathy for the Revolution, even for men like Vinet, De Pressense and their lackeys in our country.

May this warn you, gentlemen, to be constantly on your guard against such an offensive muddle. Never open your lips to utter even one single plea for the height of this ungodly despotism which foreign monarchs and local regents have locked themselves in. At the same time, never fail to recognize the justified judgement of God that came over these conditions so dishonouring to the human spirit during these frightful horrors of the Revolution. And also watch that you would ever admit that Nebuchadnezzar had it right when he carried out the sentence over Israel through the power of God. Or, to apply this to 1789, never allow yourself to declare Rousseau and Voltaire, Mirabeau and Sieyes, Robespierre or Napoleon innocent, *just because God used them as a whip* to humiliate monarchs and regents and to punish them for the sins they committed against *His* people and against *Him*.

Here one single but twin question will provide the answer to it all. Has the French Revolution, along with the nations under its wild inspiration, sought, first, moral liberation, liberation from the yoke of slavery to sin, and along that avenue, *by kneeling before God*, deliverance from their tyrants? Or have both the Revolution and the nations drawn in by her music, allowed themselves to be driven by wild passion and enmity towards God? We admit that the situation could not and should not continue as it was. It was not allowed for baptized nations to be oppressed by blind tyranny. The judgement *had* to come. But even here, no power on earth could bring to naught the eternal legitimacy and validity of the Testament of Christ. The nations could once again be liberated, but only if they accepted that liberty *through the Son*.

However, this is precisely what the nations under their blind leaders have rejected. To the contrary, instead of realizing that deliverance from the yoke of tyranny can be obtained only at the price of and on condition that we as people subject ourselves to our God, out of Satan the poisonous idea of "*ni Dieu ni maître*" ("neither God nor master") snuck into the hearts of the nations. Europe deluded itself into thinking that the only effective means of achieving true political freedom was to break the bond that ties us to God. But there is an excuse here. The rulers who put their feet on the necks of the people as "Most Christian Kings," and who, just like our Regents, have turned the prayers of the church for their protection into a state quarrel, but at the same time ruled the people in an oligarchic

manner, are guilty, immensely guilty, that this evil delusion took hold, while the church, cowardly and without spirit, lacked the courage to resist this tyranny and lead the people on to *moral* liberation. But none of this filters the sinfulness out of the Revolution; nor can it ever justify the false basis of this ungodly system. For that, the sharp contrast between truth and lie is too absolute.

Every human being, as both creature and moral being, ought to be totally subject to the Triune God. Our sin was precisely that we renounced this subject status since Paradise. The penalty for that sin was that we lost our liberty *as humans* in that God allowed despots and tyrants to oppress us. And thus it speaks for itself that the rescue, the liberation of the nation was not and is not possible, unless everyone returns personally to the recognition of God's sovereignty. It is not about *political* liberation so much as the fruit of *moral* liberation. From that point of view, Christ is also the *Messiah of the nations*, because He alone breaks the work of the devil in your heart. That's how God's Word speaks; that's how the Christian conscience expresses its praise; and thus goes the witness of Christian-Historical politics. The French Revolution turns this around and claims that it is precisely this subjection to God that enslaves the human spirit and is the cause of all tyranny among humans. Thus, the Revolution positions itself consequently in principle against all religion, against God and His Christ, and promises freedom to the citizen at no other price than that he be silent with respect to Christ and His cross, especially in politics.

The point at stake here is the struggle for power. We have been equipped with triple power. Our *heart*, our *head* and our *hand* are the primary organs for these three and in that specific order. The *heart* is where the impulses for life reside; the *head* is where impulses of the heart are given conscious form; by the hand these raised impulses, led by a conscious power, are brought to the surface. Agreeing with this scheme, the adherent of Christian-Historical persuasion will insist that Liberty is born in our *heart*, that only those free in their heart can understand real Liberty in order to struggle lawfully for the honour of that Liberty with sturdy hand, by pen or sword. That is the issue from the *moral* perspective. However, the French Revolution, ignoring the significance of the *human heart*, skips over it, neglects the *moral* liberation, and throws all its weight on the power of the *head* only, at least when people are civilized. But when it comes to the

uncivilized masses, it moves on to the violence of the hand. It is not the *leaders of moral character*, but philosophers who are their spiritual fathers. It has sought to base its power not on the *moral ideal* so much as on erudition and education through a sinful *intellectualism*. And when it reached its critical point, it lifted up its offending *hand* and, pushed on by raw violence, turned the *barricades* into its throne. *Ours* is a Messiah, who gives Himself over to death, who renounces Himself before His enemies, and who even in His dying on the cursed cross is great through the omnipotence of a divine love. But *their* Messiah is either a *Voltaire*, who, depraved in his heart, shines brilliantly through sheer cleverness and intellectual gifts, or a Robespierre, who with a dehumanized heart, seeks his reward in heartless brutality.

The net result, gentlemen, shows the cruel disappointment to which this falsely chosen means to free the people ended up. Its history earned world judgement. For indeed, the Girondines⁵ liberated France from the hands of courtiers, but only in order to be dragged to the guillotine by their spiritual heirs, the Jacobines. Lodewijk XVI was rendered harmless on the scaffold, but Danton and Marat were his successors. Even though moderation made a comeback, what else did the Revolution, even in its more moderate phase, effect but an exchange of one tyranny with another? One dragon has its head crushed only for seven other monsters soon to grow out of his mutilated body.⁶ True, the despots of that day were disarmed and God in His righteous judgement made an end of their blind lust for power, but what else has the Revolution in its genetic makeup of Pseudo-Conservatism, Liberalism, Radicalism, Socialism and Communism, offered European nations but disguised tyranny and unbearable *party* despotism? Now it was no longer a case of a king over the people, but, even more insulting, of one people's group or class over another. The yoke of slavery was embellished with beautiful wreaths, but it did not lighten its burden on the nations. This time it was not a matter of royal orders, but even worse, of the law that the people laid upon themselves. It was a splendid phrase of "common interest," and a blinding sop to "the sovereign People." But it was exactly through that phrase as well as through the smoke of the incense of this fashionable worship of honour of the liberated citizen and his freedom

⁵Trans: A moderate left political faction at the early stages of the Revolution.

⁶Trans: The reference here is to Matthew 12:43-45.

of conscience, regardless of how highly touted, that in fact it was all smothered by the *silver chord* of the Revolution, that is to say, the chord of the *stock exchange*.

Oh, if only at the end of the last century the Church of Christ had understood her calling better and, in place of seeking the favour of kings and oligarchs, had defended the people mistreated by the throne and by the folk conscience, before the government, with the courage of Ambrosius and in the name of the Messiah of the nations! How much shameful drama and how much outpouring of human blood and brutalization of human life would we not have been spared . How different the course of history would have been.

But in order to achieve that, the Church would have had to take the higher moral ground, equip herself with the burning fever of the Gospel that it would have to preach, believe, and recognize that the secret of her power is found in the cross of Christ. Alas, that was not the situation with the church of that time. Along with the nations, she had partially suffered a moral collapse. She had taken the life out of her Gospel by banal and cowardly rationalism, frozen her prayer life, and cut the pit and marrow out of her profession. Worse, they would rationally speak of Christ in cool intellectualistic fashion, rather than allowing Him to develop a burning holy love in their hearts. Among those who were supposed to be the shepherds of the flock, it was considered the height of wisdom to avoid the embarrassment of the Cross of Golgotha. No less than two hundred and fifty clergy supported the madness of the Revolutionaries in the *Etats Generaux* in Versailles. Nearly all Protestant academics followed their reckless example, while here locally numerous preachers danced around the Tree of Liberty. When the evil oath of allegiance was demanded of Christ confessors also here in our country, it was Bilderdijk who took the lead in showing the courage of manly resistance, when he chose exile, renounced honour, and suffered loss of income and influence rather than renouncing the principles by which he lived. Now bring these three factors together: the offending tyranny of the powerful elite, the moral degeneration of the oppressed peoples, and the shameful failure of the Church of Christ in pursuing her divine calling, of course the result *could* not be but what it necessarily became. It *had* to come to this terrible upheaval that, turning equally hostile to both throne and altar, soon unchained all evil demons.

But, thank God, it did not remain that way, for the Church of Christ, precisely because she is the carrier of an indestructible spiritual power, can fall, but not expire or cease to exist. Napoleon was hardly done whipping and flogging Europe, when in all parts of the Church and among different groups of Christians a new life began to sprout. *It is to this revival of the Christian life that also our ARP can trace its beginning.*

The task of Christianity that it had so shamefully neglected, was once again picked up after Leipzig and Waterloo. The rumour of a wonderful Revival spread, a movement of the spirits, not tied to any country or denomination, that almost totally and unexpectedly blazed a new glow of faith across the entire Christian landscape, created new sounds from the Word and an awareness of prophecy about the regeneration of the nations.

The first tremor of this push was still an undefined form of Christianity, largely unhistorical, and still far removed from anti-revolutionary. That is to say, it stimulated the stream of the Christian life into flowing anew, but, in the naiveté of her initial child-like joy, she had not yet regained the memory of her past and had no awareness that a struggle for life and death was awaiting her against the principle of the Revolution. This was actually delightful. The new stream was pure and undefiled. It was granted the time to mature quietly and kept the force of the Restoration at bay. Soon the calling of Christianity would be to announce this double *Credo*: To begin with, there is no political liberation among the nations without *moral* liberation from sin. In this connection, it must be realized that liberation from sin comes through no one but Christ, our Lord. Thanks to the blessed influence of this godly, naive Revival, that action also began in our country just at that point from where it had to come, namely the *conversion of hearts* and the *moral* elevation of what had been drowned in sin. At the time, politics was far from anyone's mind, but the enthusiasm for Jesus as the only Loved one was enflamed. By means of a powerful evangelization thrust, those driven away were sought out and the wandering people were called back to Christ. A place of asylum was opened for the destitute; a helping hand was extended to wayward women. Alcoholism was resisted; the blind were comforted; youths were brought together in healthier circles; tract upon tract was circulated; God's Holy Word was placed on the family table; healthy literature was distributed among the people; even love for mission to Israel and the heathens was aroused. In short, a spirit awoke

that did not seek itself but others; that did not seek to rule but to serve; that once again echoed the beautiful sounds of God's mercy over the fields of the land.

This was the way to go. Back to Christ to achieve liberty from the bonds of sin in order at the end, freed in the *moral* sense, the nations would also achieve their *political* liberty. Along this way, without noticing it, the people became anti-revolutionary, not out of political consideration, but by a robust manifesto that Da Costa turned into a song. His "Objections against the spirit of the century"⁷ became the cry of distress of the Christian heart that was offended in increasingly wider circles by the destruction that the revolutionary fever had created in all social relationships. And when the halting writer almost turned to the street organ and expressed his prophecy in this flowing song, "They will not overcome us, the idols of our age,"⁸ thereby interpreting it poetically, it was as if an electric spark shot through the entire Christian Netherlands. Since then the anti-revolutionary nature of our struggle was determined.

It *could* not be otherwise. It was necessary to wake up from the idle dream to spread the Gospel among our people without coming into conflict with the spirit of the Revolution, as if that were possible. The leaders of the Revolution took good care of that one. Because people wanted to be Christian and not deny the Christ in His honour, *people simply had no choice but to become anti-revolutionary*, that is to say, to take up the struggle against the *spirit of the Revolution* at every front. This emerged first and the most powerfully in our school struggle. For in education also, whether you want to minimize it or deny it, the *Spirit of Christ* faced the *spirit of the Revolution* squarely. The focus was on the baptized child, on the seed of the Church; in fact, on the very future of our entire nation. That is why the *spirit of the Revolution*, true to its intellectualistic principle, insisted that with the head first and then the heart as second, our upcoming generation would be inspired by the prestige of *Reason* and not the Name of Christ. This was totally unacceptable to the *Spirit of Christ*. The Saviour of the world, who had sacrificed Himself to death also for children and upon whose authority that child was served Holy Baptism, neither may nor could

⁷"Bezwaren tegen den geest der eeuw."

⁸"Zij zullen ons niet hebben, de goden onzer eeuw."

tolerate making moral upbringing subservient to rationalistic development. For the school children it was imperative to focus on their created nature, while, with all the appreciation for the teaching of social skills, it must never be forgotten that the child is also created for a higher purpose and *called* to an eternal life. That is the reason a Christian child *may not* be offered up to the *School of Revolution* permanently and therefore the *School of Christ* *must* stand up against that of the Revolution. And so it happened that not only in our own country but throughout Europe the spirit that would dominate in our schools became the bone of contention among the nations.

However, it was for the sake of those schools that we could not restrict ourselves to them and thus, consequently, we marched on *to the political arena* under the sole leadership of Groen van Prinsterer. After all, most of the state had come to comfortably nestle itself in the spirit of the Revolution. With the power of state money behind it, the Revolution erected a bulwark of the so-called “neutral” school. That being the case, how in the world could the spell of the Revolution that had bewitched our people ever be broken, unless we would also contest the Revolutionary power monopoly at the political front? Thus, it *had* to come to a political struggle, for the public schools were merely a manifestation of the root the French Revolution had embodied in our political system. What took place in 1789 was first of all a political upheaval. Its magical power lay in its own plan for the political direction of the nations. Now the Christians had to reject this revolutionary manner of liberation as illegitimate and misdirected, because it amounted to separating the state from God, and countering it with her own system, namely the political liberation by means of *moral* subjection to God. It was only natural that the struggle, once started, *could* not be halted, but simply *had* to be extended to the political realm. And so, Gentlemen, did we become an anti-revolutionary political party by force of our principles, in spite of the political phobia that was part of our Christian timidity.

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The *principles* that we advocate as a national party and need to plant in the hearts of the people, cannot be selected arbitrarily, but they emerge automatically from our opposition to the French Revolution.

In the political sector, sin never produces anything but unbearable despotism, but all baptized nations have obtained the grace never to need to bow to any yoke.

Political liberation for our people is a motif that never ceases to inspire us, with the guarantee that this liberation is more than mere glitter and is sustainable. But in view of the fact that *the source of life is from the heart*, we keep insisting that this liberation can never be the fruit of the *head* nor can it be forged by the raw *hand*, but must be rooted in the *moral* liberation of the citizens. And since there is no name given under Heaven through which the heart can be put at peace and be freed from sin, except the Name of Christ Jesus, it is and remains our deepest intention that *His Gospel* have free range among all the ranks and classes through church, school and media. *Over against the pretended liberation of the people by dissolving the covenant that binds us to God, the ARP advances the exact opposite principle, namely political liberty by subjecting both state and nation to God.* That's the origin of our resistance to the *Etat athee* or godless state: our adherence to our confession that the King reigns by the grace of God. It is also the origin of the opposite, namely our protest against every attempt to sacrifice the sovereignty of the "free civic life in its own sphere" to the power of the state. Both of these, the free course of the Gospel among all the people and the acknowledgement of *God's sovereignty* by the King and his subjects, come together for us in the sacred conclusion that all spiritual coercion imposed on the free heart of the citizenry is cursed. Cursed is all spiritual coercion that runs up against the Gospel and that wants to chain us to revolutionary theory. Cursed as well is all spiritual coercion to adopt the Gospel any way apart from free conviction. Yes, also this last point, for nothing undermines the honour of the Christ more than anything but to be loved without coercion and to see the acceptance of His salvation out of free gratitude. Yes, also this last point, for nothing promotes the honour of Christ more than to be loved without coercion and to witness the acceptance of his salvation only out of free gratitude. ...⁹ Gentlemen, you see, a national government needs to

⁹ The ellipses represent the original Dutch, which reads: "*Voor dwang en overmacht gaat alzoop Gezag en Vrijheid, door het Recht aaneengeschalkeld, onze aanloop.*" Neither I nor my Dutch consultant, Aly Dekker of The Netherlands, could determine the meaning or intention of this sentence.

reflect something of divine majesty. And what would make this majesty glitter, if not justice that elevates each nation, and mercy that lifts up a nation sunk in misery out of its sorrow?

The ARP lives out of these principles; and every Christian who confesses the same principles with us, is actually part of us, even though for some secondary reason he may temporarily oppose us. To be sure, our party has a programme and gives in that programme a more concrete form to her principles, but *this programme was never meant to be doctrinaire*. Though the principle creates a certain bond, and through that bond a certain order, which is indispensable for all political endeavours, that bond does not tie the (natural) stream of life to that principial line. All those who work outside of our framework but recognize no liberation of the nations apart from the *moral* liberation of the individual and in turn seek this nowhere except in Christ Jesus, work for us and for our benefit. All who labour to bring God's Word into the family, the Gospel in home and heart as well as the hope for eternal life to the upcoming generation, work for us and for our benefit. Everyone who places the majesty of the Lord of Lords above the imaginary delusion of human sovereignty, works for us and on our behalf. Indeed, every action that values *moral development* more highly than intellectual, or noble character and a love that sacrifices itself more than the brilliance of talents and smarts, is for us and must prosper.

The above prevents us from being exclusive and narrow of heart. Rather, it compels us to open our ranks broadly and mildly to everyone who is prepared to join us in this perilous struggle. In this struggle, our *persons* mean little; our *principle*, everything. And should there be among us those who are sometimes shunned, vilified and hurt by their own friends because of their devotion to this principle, such vilification is a badge of honour and joy, as long as it serves to strengthen our membership. Everything doctrinaire ends up as *clever mechanics*. What we value is a *free organic* life. It is from here that our strength, which is definitely not restricted to our own membership, still finds new recruits among the upcoming generation. What's more, however miraculous this may seem, it is being strengthened also by the grassroots among the dissenting brothers, even against their own will, as long as they continue to call on Jesus and His Gospel.

The fact that at the beginning not all *could* join our movement is due to its *historical* nature, which at first we lacked, then recovered too late, and now that we have recovered it, can no longer renounce. The Revival, like the Revolution, had no roots in our past history and thus had more of a European stamp than national. Even Groen van Prinsterer did not choose its historical-national foundation at his initial appearance. It was his studies at the *Archives of the House of Orange*, devoted to the *History of the Fatherland*, that brought him to this point. When later our ancient Christian nation woke up again and welcomed the action of the Revival with joyful jubilation, it *had* to be that the stream of our anti-revolutionary life once again became *Calvinist* and only through *that, National*.

More fortunate than Catholic and Lutheran countries, it was granted our Calvinistic forbears of the sixteenth century to graft the political liberation of the people already then into the trunk of the Gospel. Calvin, appearing on the scene after Luther, represents that incredible step forward in the political arena that made the political liberty of the nations bloom in the root of the Christian Religion. The single effective solution to the problem, not recognized during the darkest hour in 1789, but currently increasingly sought after by each Christian nation, was already grasped by Calvinism in the sixteenth century. It is to the genius of this grasp on the part of Calvin that, not only in ecclesiastical and social sectors, but also in the political, according to the unanimous witnesses, that our fatherland can thank the flowering of its freedom from Spain and its constitutional political framework.

It could not be otherwise but that the revival of the Christian national conscience automatically led back along this historic trail. It is especially due to this sharp outline of her *historical* and *national* character that the ARP took the high road for which it may take credit ever since 1869. But unfortunately, that process could not be pursued without a part of our brotherhood becoming temporarily estranged and that for an obvious cause. It is an open secret that a small group of our respected brothers in our country sought their Christian inspiration not from the historic-national confession so much as from either *Schleiermacher* or *Vinet*. Schleiermacher was the noblest product of the German-Lutheran spirit, while Vinet was the eminent plea bargainer for French individualism. This simply *had* to prevent their followers in our country from participating in our

action. After all, Schleiermacher, whom Rothe interprets as pleading for the absorption of the Church into the State, can never nurture love for a free people independent from the State, but must trap the people, the school and the church into leaning upon the instruments of State.

And Vinet, who, among his spiritual offspring, taught De Pressense and Leon Pilatte to enthusiastically support the Revolution, nurtured also among his followers in our own country that monster hybrid that sought *moral* liberation in the Gospel, but *political* liberation of the people in Liberalism. Let us not allow the roots of bitterness to sprout up in our hearts, even where many of these brothers currently choose other paths. There are here all kinds of understandable factors at work. What appears to be only a product of differences in various ecclesiastical orientations, is really deeply rooted in the sad but nevertheless culpable fact that our Calvinism put a veil before its face for thirty years and thereby paved the way for German and French influences. Furthermore, once that process got started, it could not be countered. For, however these influences temporarily impacted the elite, *our people* remained Calvinist through and through. The pitiful fiasco that group of Germanized and Frankified Dutchmen presented as the *National* party, was eloquently demonstrated in both the voting booth during March 1888 and by what our former respected co-member, Buytendijk, openly and generously acknowledged.

Please do not suspect us of being democratic in the bad sense of the word. A democracy in which the lower class rules the higher, can never be a party in which both rich and poor sit at the same table of the New Covenant. It requires that *both* prostrate themselves in worship before the majesty of our God. But when German influences seek to strengthen the state at the expense of society, ah, yes, then our Calvinistic heart begins to resist such foreign influences and we continue to await the political liberation of our people as the fruit of Gospel influence. That would be our opinion even if a *social question* had never arisen, but which we hold presently with a clearer awareness now that one of the most bitter fruits of the French Revolution is exactly that distortion in social relations between the blessed possessors and those who only eat their bread in the sweat of their brow. It is not possible, to speak the language of the apostle, for a Christian to reject his own flesh and blood. Now the lips of every Christian must praise and uphold mercy over against the hard law of necessity. The

ARP will not rest until a solution to this difficult problem has been found, namely that the peace between the rich and the poor be restored and that civic contentment once again lead to the creation of common purposes among all the citizens of the one fatherland.

To summarize, Gentlemen, our action took a course that was healthy and free of coercion. At the time the terrible revolution, whose centennial is currently celebrated by its spiritual children, broke out, to her shame the Church of Christ was sleeping. The believers in Christ among us, with the exception of a single Bilderdijk here and there, cowardly and dejectedly kept their mouths shut. Lack of faith undermined their resilience; derailment of their sense of obligation froze the hope in their hearts. The best among us asked as a special favour to be allowed to hide in oblivion as the silent party outside of the national main stream. This situation remained until the Revival, to its undying merit, restored our faith in the power of the Gospel and sparked the courage in us to kickstart the moral regeneration of our people. Da Costa, Bilderdijk's illustrious son, was the first to foresee with his prophetic vision how this new orientation was bound to bring us into a principial conflict with the spirit of the Revolution; he sang his songs against the idols of this century. Then Groen van Prinsterer arose, who extended the same line of argument to the political sector in order to protest there also the rejection of God's majesty in the area of the State. Before long, the Calvinist population, once woken up again, put the *historical-national* stamp on this effort. In reaction to this development, those who sympathized with German and French ideals increasingly chose their own paths. And when finally the struggle between society and the state forced the social question upon us, Christ the Comforter forced us to rise up in this struggle for what divine compassion offered to our suffering nations.

So, then, our present position is the fruit of a natural, spontaneous movement, shorn of all dispassionate calculation and stiff mechanisms. So far we never had statesmen in the diplomatic sense of the word and possibly our party will never have them. Those among us who spoke up and led, did so because they were inspired by a higher impulse. Honour was earned only by serving the brothers. And even though we paid a price for whatever sin among us spoiled in word and deed, we have every reason on this tenth annual meeting to praise the God of our fathers with gratitude for the fact that in every country a political party like ours will

come together consisting of men who fought so indefatigably for the public interest of the fatherland, but who hardly ever demanded anything for themselves. This was a preference that proved beneficial to us. It did not arise as if we were better than our opponents, but for which we can only thank the Gospel, under whose flag we march, that resisted within us any ambition that might well up and which made us free and independent of even the best among our leaders. It is precisely here that the unconquerable nature of our striving lies. Our plans can be obstructed; our intensions can be temporarily resisted; at more than one point we can be driven back temporarily. But none of this benefits Liberalism, for after each setback we come back with stronger manpower. Yes, *if* you could prevent the progress of the Gospel, then our strength could also be broken. But as long as this proves impossible, no strengthening of the dykes will help against the constantly rising , constantly increasing stream of anti-revolutionary life. After all, the secret of our power lies neither in our talent nor in our organization, but only in what the Man of Sorrows, whom the French Revolution sought to dethrone, but who is now glorified at the right hand of the Father, works out of heaven in the hearts of the citizens of our nation. The Revolution proclaims, "Knowledge alone is power and to mankind belongs the glory!" But He lives and keeps testifying out of heaven: "To Me all power is given, also over the territory of The Netherlands as well as the hearts of its people." And He makes that cry and call of victory come true.

That, Gentlemen, is the source of the flexibility and pliability of our actual performance. All doctrinaire politics that is imposed on life turns stiff in form and rigid in movement. It lives out of a system; tries to force the culture of the people into this mold, but it must regard its game lost as soon as the cord of this lifestyle snaps. That is the direction the Liberals would prefer us to take. You have a programme and you create a programme of action. Oh, what would it not be worth to the Liberal if the ARP would fall for the temptation to tie every supporter and all the Kings' ministers to every article of this programme of action! Then we would fall into their error and our party would also quickly freeze into a fragile sheet of ice under which the stream of life had flowed away. But, fortunately, that's not how we are. Our strength does not rest on the staid mechanism of theory, but on the leading thoughts that are embedded in organic life. Because we *believe*,

we are not in a hurry, but we work according to our schedule. Because the power of *love* works amongst us, our leadership possesses inexhaustible patience to wait for the grassroots to catch up. And because *that hope* can never abandon us, disappointment sometimes steels us more than the success and victory of moral power.

Furthermore, the entire position which Revolution supporters forced us to take on in the struggle, turns that flexibility into a condition for life. After all, *our Constitution* binds us and with it the organic laws that Liberalism, under the inspiration of Thorbecke, forced upon us for an entire thirty year period. And since this political structure was erected and completed as much as possible in the style of the French Revolution, it became necessary for us to initially adjust to this foreign framework. We can reach the end goal of our struggle only when we are strong and numerous enough in our membership, that we can create a new façade for the old house. Groen van Prinsterer said it in 1874: “We are gunning for a general revision of the Constitution!” When the most recent revision offered us merely an incomplete Reform bill, we properly recorded that *we are awaiting an actual revision* in the future. In the meantime, we can do nothing but re-arrange the current State structure as well as we can, while waiting in expectation for a better day to come. The ARP does not want to force anything. Averse to force, she wants only to triumph through the conversion of popular conviction. Even though we have made considerable progress in affecting that conversion, we are still far from the moment at which the last trace of revolutionary theory will be erased from our Constitution.

Precisely because we are aware that this popular conviction absolutely cannot be affected only by the press and other writings, but much more through the Law and the manner of governing, we refuse to just wait it out passively but participate vigorously in the *real politics*.

Our primary priority in all of this is our struggle against an all State-imposed orthodoxy in the areas of religion, morality and scholarship. The mistake in the past was a government that, though subject to the Reformed Confessions, would push citizens with other perspectives to the back and oppress them as serfs. The mistake of Liberalism and *our* deserved punishment for our earlier exclusivism, is also the current subjection of the government to a “Christendom above religious divisions,” to an

autonomous morality and to the declarations of a one-sided scholarship. Peace among the divided citizens of our land can only be achieved when the State leaves religion to its adherents, morality to their conscience and scholarship to its inherent power. It is simply God's arrangement that our four million citizens are divided into almost three equal parts: Rationalists, Calvinists and Catholics, all of whom live together. We accept this fact.

But we insist that in a mixed or diversified nation so composed, the Government not grant special supremacy of the one over the other two.¹⁰ We regard all spiritual coercion on the part of the State an insult to the nobility of the spiritual life and an offence to the liberty of its citizens, hateful and cursed.

I do not hesitate to pronounce this with such certainty, even though I am aware this touches upon the thorny church issue. Precisely because of our firm principle, we are not in the least at a loss with this question. This could be the case if the orientation of the one group were in our direction and would force the situation at the expense of the third party. However, such an approach would amount to a renunciation of our code of conduct and thus we will never entertain it. Since at the moment the supporters of the Free Church and those of the Church that leans on the State continue their serious struggle in all of our cities and towns, another purpose, neither left nor right, beckons us to try to convince our brothers, motivated by the same ideal, to change our constitution in the future.

Not comprehending us, the Liberals have badly miscalculated this ecclesiastical struggle. They expected with great certainty that we, now divided into two halves, would grant them the benefit of our divided perspectives at the ballot box. But that hope of malicious pleasure turned into a bitter disappointment for them. They experienced in 1888 and will experience again in 1889 that the supporters of 1816, 1834 and 1886, had they chosen for the Evangel of Jesus and as one man gathered under the banner of that Evangel, would have beckoned us to fight against the Liberals and, through them, against the spirit of the French Revolution.

The same holds true for the *electoral* question. Undoubtedly, here, too, opposite sympathies will surface. But however much the democratic and

¹⁰Trans.: bold is mine.

the aristocratic elements among us differ, we all stand united in this that sovereignty of the people is a sinful idea; that a right to vote tied only to the level of wealth is turning our constitutional right into a laughing stock; that applying the same criterion for suffrage to national, provincial and local levels militates against the demands for life choice. We will not reach our ideal until each level of citizens can exercise its rightful influence without either the lower dominating the higher or vice versa.

We don't turn national defence into a political issue. Sacrificing our blood, if necessary, for the liberty of our fatherland is an inherent instinct we have in common with all people, whether Indonesian or Ethiopian, German or Russian, Japanese or Philippine. Whatever may be required for defense against the enemy or for the security of our own territory is a question that is never determined on basis of party politics so much as by the type of armaments of the attacker. The only principle the ARP has to uphold in this respect is to call for Christian schools where patriotism is encouraged through adequate knowledge of our national history; and that she demand a healthy diplomacy in order that the struggle for human rights trumps the struggle for power; that in our armed forces the most powerful weapon , which is moral strength, will shine forth; and, finally, that she protest against every military institution that subjects the drafted sons of the nation to the undermining of their morals and to blasphemy.

The ideal continues to beckon us with respect to schools at all levels, that both teaching and scholarship may develop freely and proudly from their own roots and affected as little as possible by Government influence. In the struggle between Capital and Labour we will not relent in our demand that every citizen of The Netherlands who desires the common good, be assured of a human or, what's more, a Christian life, provided that Labour also be granted the constitutional right to organize and thus be free from state tutelage, which would break its resilience, in order to reconcile, through the struggle for rights, what currently threatens to degenerate into a struggle of power versus violence.

We favour a doctrinaire form of Free Trade no more than a hard push for Protectionism. We only demand that the Government allow trade to take its natural course; not sacrifice the resident to the alien nor the citizen to the merchant. Instead, we want to follow a system whereby The Netherlands is

in a strong position over against foreign countries and the most abundant blossoming of Trade, Industry and Agriculture be guaranteed in their mutual relationships.

And, finally, when it comes to our colonies, the main principle flowing out of the Evangel is that the unhindered progress of the Gospel not be stopped. In addition, the sin or evil of the opium trade must not reduce the free preaching of the Gospel to a hypocritical demonstration of fake piety. The Dutch Christians must honour the image of God also in the Javanese and the Timorese, so that they are neither sucked dry by the government nor exploited for private (colonial) profit. And not the least, the Dutch government must be aware of her responsibility before God, who will one day demand accountability over our colonial policies, saying, “Oh people, Oh King of The Netherlands, what have you done with my beautiful Indonesia, with my nearly thirty million people living on these my islands?”

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Gentlemen, if the Cabinet of Mackay-Keuchenius did not indicate her readiness to move with us in that direction, for what reason then would it inspire our sympathy or how count on our support? But that’s what they hope for. Of course, it’s not as if they could lead us into this promised land within one year or even within four years. They know as well as we do that we are still wandering in the desert and that we will not reach the shores of the Jordan except after the most rigorous opposition. But that does not matter, as long as we are moving into a better direction. We ourselves must guard our *programme of principles* at the ballot box, while our caucus has to guard our *programme of action* in the Chamber. The members of the caucus already find reasons to rejoice, when some Cabinet members stem the further decay of the culture through the influence of liberal ministries. It is safe even to ask how large the group would be in the whole of our country that at this point in time would eagerly trade a Van der Loeff—Van Houten cabinet or a Heemskerk—Golstein cabinet for the current one of Mackay—Keuchenius. The members of the Cabinet who currently rule in the name of the King, stand out precisely in that hurting or excluding their opponents is not among their goals and that they have no desire to force the people or to rule over them. There is something

Christian, something paternal, something human in all their demeanour. The accusation that they are not accomplishing anything is simply ridiculous, especially when it comes from the lips of our Liberal opponents who for years only gave the impression as if both the Cabinet and the Chamber sought a solution in a political labour strike. True, they are not an anti-revolutionary Cabinet and they definitely may not merely be dismissed as a *cabinet de combat*, but no matter how moderately and how carefully they go about their work, our people have already felt time and again that these leaders have much love for the Gospel, but none whatsoever for the Revolution. Their administration offers relief to all our people after the era of our painful defeat and scornful oppression. What is more, our people know that currently there is much prayer for the government among our people, but also that those serving the Crown pray for the people.

It is regrettable that there is one single precarious obstruction in their way that prevents them from continuing in their course with such energy that they themselves would think best for the national interest. That obstacle is our First Chamber. I am not talking about its composition or its constitutional position. You know how many among us would prefer a totally different First Chamber, namely one that does not simply rubber stamp the contribution of the Second Chamber with a duller tint, but one that develops its own life from its own root, not representing political insights so much as social and economic interest.

However, that topic would lead us too far astray. This touches upon the revision of the Constitution as well as the badly needed revision of the organic provincial and local laws. Already now the pitiful situation that the revolutionary system that Thorbecke grafted into our Constitution and created as an impediment to our national development, irritates us. We have a senseless, atomistic election system also for the provincial governments with their damaging mix of political and provincial interests, instead of an organic regional administration of a delegated national government administration through a national department that is called "Gelderland" or "Friesland."¹¹ From those levels there is an upward climb via constantly untenable tiered elections to the First Chamber. From that

¹¹Names of two provinces in the country.

would emerge a collegiate that would push the people's movement from behind as they sing their drinking songs.

Together with our opponents, we became guilty with harbouring wrong upon wrong and committing mistake upon mistake. The guilt was theirs for many reasons. They refused to cooperate in ordering the cancellation of the governing bodies of both provincial and local councils. They are responsible for time and again sacrificing the interest of the provinces to politics. They are responsible that the First Chamber no longer represents the people, but only a disbanded group of electors. They are no less guilty that the above distorted arrangements have either prevented or retarded the essential correction of numerous situations.

However, Gentlemen, the anti-revolutionary electorate cannot wash its hands of all this in innocence either. To the contrary, we are guilty of indifference, of spiritual laxity, of lack of appropriate interest. For it is true that, against the advice of Groen van Prinsterer, our Thornbeckian provincial administration was literally designed to render the people indifferent. But that does not absolve us. We should have resisted this bitter fruit of the revolutionary system with unremitting diligence. Didn't the Liberals themselves give us a better example? They would come and vote at election time. The province of Utrecht and, partially, of Gelderland gave us a worthy incentive, while we never lacked admonishment in the press. Oh, if only you had your current enthusiasm for provincial elections three or even six years ago, how different things would have been in Zeeland province, in South Holland or even in Overijssel, now that the composition of your administrations, including that of your First Chamber, has been determined.

May our behavior this time be characterized not by pride but, rather, with penance in our hearts and may the shameful memory of our failure of three and six years ago serve us as a sharp stimulant so that this time we all arise in our cities and villages as never before, not even in 1888, and show up at our voting booths. Citizens of anti-revolutionary persuasion, do not show yourself unworthy of the expanded liberty that our King granted us in 1887. Because of that expanded freedom, our numbers climbed from 150,000 to 350,000. What would still attract you to the uncomfortable choices that the Electoral Office sent to your houses during those lukewarm

days? Make a clean break from the rut of incumbent candidates. The decisive point is not who currently *sits*, but who has his *heart* in the right place. Even if the incumbent were your landlord, your most respected citizen or even your mayor, be sure that you do not betray the interest of the fatherland because of that prominent name on your ballot. Whoever imprints that sentiment in you, secretly laughs at you as soon as he has your vote in his grasp.

But for now, there is interest and diligence as never before. In more than one district the atmosphere is red hot. This is thanks to the attempts of Liberals, who by means of their obstructionism against the election measures designed by Mackay, suddenly turned the provincial question into a crucial issue for the entire nation. Please, do not forget that steam is a useful thing, but steam by itself is not enough. In order for your train to move forward, the steam must be directed to the cylinder, the cylinder to the wheel, and the wheel must be on the correct rail. You would emerge bitterly disappointed, if on May 14 you had undermined the strength of your opponent, or you disregarded the unity of your action, or allowed a gaping hole to develop between your own corps and that of your allies.

It isn't that we feared that Dr. Jonker would cause a split between you and your allies with his brochure about alleged Calvinist friendship with Roman Catholics that he extricated from the writings of Calvin himself.¹² But I do wish to bind this on your heart: Do not forget that the Mackay-Keuchenius Cabinet cannot exist for one moment without this alliance and that anyone who lacks the practical sense to seriously live up to that alliance is likely to vote against that cabinet.

Allow me to add a confidential note of a personal nature to this, one of significance to you. When I was elected to the Second Chamber in 1874 by the Gouda constituency, Groen van Prinsterer said to me that he would now move away from Article 194 about the general constitutional review out of the consideration that every obstacle to cooperation with our Catholic compatriots must be removed. To be honest, this did not appeal to me and so I persisted in the demand that Article 194 be reviewed. But then Van

¹²Trans: I omit a lengthy footnote of a page and a half that deals extensively with that brochure and its alleged poor level of Latin. This could hardly have been part of the speech itself and would make little sense to today's reader of this translation.

Prinsterer explained to me our victory over revolutionary theory and the disarming of Liberalism *could* not succeed as long as we did not work along with supporters of anti-revolutionaries among our Catholic compatriots. Resistance to this on the part of a faithful Evangel believer would amount to a slap in the face of the tangible truth. Since then, I have constantly pushed in that direction. It isn't that I thereby even for a moment forgot the principal contradiction between us, namely the point of the freedom of the Word over against the Catholic system and the Papal hierarchy. But though the prediction that this system could one day triumph in our free Netherlands can indeed serve as a scarecrow at the ballot box, not a single one among our best thinkers, whether Liberal, Catholic or Calvinist, ever embraces that conviction.

Gentlemen, I am about to finish. For a hundred years the Liberals have been penetrating our country and, with the help of their French friends, have planted the voluptuous Tree of Liberty here, while the people, having been estranged from the blessings of the Gospel, nestled in under the shadow of its branches. In 1889, it so happened that nearly on the same day that the Estates General met in Versailles, the entire Dutch nation was invited to determine the Electors for the First Chamber of *our* Estates General. I challenge you, the people of The Netherlands, to give a unified witness, learned through the sad experiences of a frightening century, that you have found the Tree of Liberty to be a poison. And now, having turned to something better through the Evangel, we again seek a better and safer shadow against the heat of the day. May your serious witness on the fourteenth of May constitute true repentance over how our nation, represented by the fathers of the time, has sinned against the Majesty of the Lord. And while our Liberals enthusiastically cheered the heroes of the French Revolution in private, it was only their fear of losing the support of the people that withheld them from lighting the celebrative fires in honour of that terrible revolution.

Revive, oh Christian Netherlands, the covenant of our people with the God of our fathers and may the testimony of us all rise out of the deepest of our national conscience with enthusiasm: "As to us and our children, we will no longer kneel before the idol of the French Revolution. The God of our fathers will again be *our* God!"

Abraham Kuyper, "Onnauwkeurig?" Aan "Het Vaderland" in zake Mr. W. H. De Beaufort's Verweerschrift. Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser, 1989 (51 pp.).
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