

1 *Does Calvin Bear Any Responsibility for Later Slaughters by Catholics of Calvinists?*

Calvin Was Begged To Repent in 1554 To Save Lives

In 1554, critics of Calvin warned that Calvin's killing of Servetus as a mere heretic would give fresh impetus to the Roman Catholic Church to repeal the toleration that it exercised since 1520 toward the Protestant 'heresy' (as Catholics viewed it.) The danger by Calvin's actions was an obvious one.

Having had Servetus killed for heresy, Calvin provided Catholics, as Pastor Benson pointed out in 1753, with "an *invincible argument* against themselves [*i.e.*, the Calvinists]" that killing of Calvinist Protestant heretics was just.¹ Fritz Barth (1856-1912) made the same point in *Calvin und Servet* (1909), saying Calvin's instigating a heresy trial as a death-penalty trial "gravely compromised Calvinism and put into the hands of the Catholics...the *very best weapon* for the persecution of the Huguenots [*i.e.*, Calvinists of France], who were nothing but heretics in their eyes."²

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1. George Benson, D.D., "The Old Whig, or the Consistent Protestant," February 2, 1737-38," reprinted in G. Benson, *A Collection of Tracts* (London: 1753) at 189.
 2. Quoted by Walter Nigg, *The Heretics* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1962) at 328-29.

Zagorin summarizes Calvin's response in his *Defensio* of 1554 to the critics warning his new principle of killing heretics will lead to the Catholics revisiting their current pattern of tolerating Protestants:

He dismissed the argument that the Protestants' punishment of heretics would likewise justify the Catholics' persecution of Protestants, answering that Catholics were wrong because they persecuted the truth, whereas Protestants defended the true religion ordained by God.³

Calvin is using a lawyer's trick. He is changing the issue and then answering the question which he prefers. Calvin never addresses the problem whether Calvin's violent ideas toward heretics could revive Catholic violent intolerance of Protestant heretics. In other words, if Calvin's principle of death-to-heretics is well-publicized, as it was, then the Catholic leaders will learn Calvinists concur on that issue. Then, based upon Calvin's clear defense of killing heretics, Roman Catholics can *re-assert* death to Protestant heretics. At least, the Catholics would be justified killing **Calvinist** Protestants because their founder *conceded* the principle. The Calvinist Protestants did not all live in safety like Calvin did in Geneva. Over 100,000 Calvinist Huguenots lived in Catholic France. Several million Calvinists lived in the Netherlands under Catholic rule. They were all at risk if Calvin miscalculated what his example of murderous intolerance would signal to Rome.

The question the critic wanted answered was a good one: 'What if the Catholics of France or the Netherlands learn from you a principle, unless you repent quickly, that will be turned on the Calvinists in each land, leaving them no moral defense to say the *principle* of killing them as heretics is wrong?'

3. Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, 2003) at 80.

The lives of all the Calvinists of the Netherlands snatched in 1568 and those in France killed in 1572, as we shall soon discuss, turned on the failure of Calvin to repent. He side-stepped the issue by using an old lawyer trick. When you cannot answer the question put to you, *answer a different question*. It has many names. It is sometimes called raising a *red herring*. It is sometimes called using a *diversion*. Most simply, it typically is called *ignoring the issue*.

That's the reason why Calvin did not address this crucial point. As a consequence, the lives of over 25,000 Huguenots — perhaps as many as 100,000 — were seized prematurely in 1572. It appears an even far greater number were killed in the Netherlands in 1568. This all due to the fact their spiritual leader — Calvin — did not have the good sense of repenting.

Let's review this in more detail. The salient facts are simply more tragedies that belong on Calvin's long list of bad "fruit."

*Roman Catholic Toleration Is Ended Only
For Calvinist Protestants As A Matter of
Self-Defense*

Calvin can be blamed for subsequent Catholic resort to killing of Calvinists as heretics. As a French text bitterly relates this consequence from Calvin's defense of the right to kill heretics: "[Calvin's *Defensio* of 1554] furnished the Catholics *an invincible argument*... against the Protestants who had reproached them previously against any killing the Calvinists of France." (Louis Mayeul Chaudon, "Servetus," *Dictionnaire universel historique* (1812) XIX:156.) One can hear the bitterness between the lines of Chaudon's heartbreak over what happened next.

What Calvin had single-handedly done is unwind all the progress at fostering tolerance by Catholics for the Calvinist Protestants in particular, and especially those of France and the Netherlands.

For Erasmus in 1520 successfully poured shame on the Catholics which insulated Lutherans. Erasmus' pleas created an era of Catholic tolerance of the Lutheran Protestants from 1520 onward. The Catholics still regarded all Protestants as heretics, yet took no effort at massive violent suppression until its clear hand in the Huguenot massacres of 1572.

Lord Acton (a Catholic) pointed out this Catholic tolerance lasted from 1520 until the Catholic church's wars on the Calvinists, plotted in the late 1560s.⁴

*Calvin's Responsibility for the 1568 Decree
That All Inhabitants Of The Netherlands
Should Be Killed*

After 1537, "Calvinism became the theological system of the majority in...the Netherlands."⁵ "The third wave of the Reformation, Calvinism, arrived in the Netherlands in the **1560s**, converting both parts of the elite and the common population, mostly in Flanders."⁶ "By the 1560s, the Protes-

4. Acton omits considering Queen Mary I killing of 300 Protestants during her reign. He evidently does not consider her actions as the responsibility of the Pope. This may be but she may have relied on the example of Calvin, for her killings were all subsequent to the execution of Servetus. Mary I became Queen of England on August 3, 1553, just a few days before Servetus' arrest. In the next year after Servetus' execution, Mary I in 1554 "orders bishops to suppress heresy beginning a long period of Protestant martyrdom." In 1555, "300 Protestants are executed." (See http://estc.ucr.edu/CHRONOLOGY_1473-1640.html.)

5. "Calvinism," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism> (accessed 7/5/08).

tant community had become a significant influence in the Netherlands, although it clearly formed a minority then.”⁷ Yet, this was a Catholic land. Its Spanish ruler, Philip II, King of Spain, engaged in various oppressions of the Calvinists. Then in 1566, the Calvinists committed a systematic vandalism of Catholic churches.⁸ This was not a political but a religious rebellion. However, Philip called it a ‘rebellion’ and sent Spanish troops into the Netherlands to suppress it. In 1568, the “Spanish government, under Phillip II started harsh prosecution campaigns, supported by the Spanish Inquisition.”⁹

These “harsh prosecution campaigns” against defenseless citizens is recounted in John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877)’s *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (N.Y.: 1856)(reprint Thomas Crowell, 1901). He relates:

Upon the 15th of February 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office **condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics**. From this universal doom only a few persons, especially named, were excepted. A proclamation of the King [Phillip II of Spain], dated ten days later **confirmed this decree of the Inqui-**

6. “History of religion in the Netherlands,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_religion_in_the_Netherlands (accessed 7/5/2008).

7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eighty_Years%27_War (accessed 7/5/2008).

8. “Early August 1566, a mob stormed the church of Hondschoote in Flanders (now in Northern France). This relatively small incident spread North and led to a massive iconoclastic movement by Calvinists, who stormed churches and other religious buildings to desecrate and destroy statues and images of Catholic saints all over the Netherlands. According to the Calvinists, these statues represented worship of idols. The number of actual image-breakers appears to have been relatively small and the exact backgrounds of the movement are debated.” See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eighty_Years%27_War (accessed 7/5/2008).

9. “History of religion in the Netherlands,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_religion_in_the_Netherlands (accessed 7/5/2008).

sition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution without regard to age, sex, or condition. This is probably the most concise death-warrant that was ever framed..... Three *millions of people*, men, women and children, *were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines.* Under the new decree, the executions certainly did not slacken. Men in the highest and humblest positions were *daily and hourly dragged to the stake.* Alba, in a single letter to Phillip II, coolly estimates the number of executions which were to take place immediately after the expiration of Holy Week at “eight hundred heads.” (*Id.*, Vol. 1 at 597-98.)

This is confirmed by other historians. King Philip through the Duke of Alba set up “arbitrary and sanguinary tribunals” throughout the Netherlands, and “*multitudes were daily delivered over to the executioner*; nothing was to be seen or heard but seizure, confiscation, imprisonment, torture and death.”¹⁰ The Protestant William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, sought to rescue the Protestants from further murder, but his army of 28,000 were no match for the Spaniards stationed in the Netherlands.

The Inquisition was working hand-in-glove with Fernando Alvarez de Toledo known as the Duke of Alba aka Alva. He was the right-hand man of King Philip II of Spain. In one episode just prior to the Inquisition decree of 1568, some had come to the Duke of Alba, pleading for clemency on behalf of those imprisoned for being tolerant of Protestantism.¹¹ The Duke of Alba made a “passionate and ferocious

10. William Russell, *The History of Modern Europe: with an account of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire* (H. Maxwell, 1802) II at 450.

11. “Egmont and Horne [arrested in 1567] had been Catholic nobles who were loyal to the King of Spain until their death. The reason for their execution [in 1568] was that Alba considered they had been treasonous to the king in their tolerance to Protestantism.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eighty_Years%27_War (accessed 7/5/2008).

reply” that “his Majesty would rather the *whole land should become an uninhabited wilderness* than that a single *Dissenter should exist within its territory.*” (Motley, *id.*, I: 597.)

Connection to the Events To Come in France in 1572

These sanguinary events, incidentally, in the Netherlands have a connection to those in 1572 in France, which we discuss in the next section. In 1572, King Charles of France instigated by a Catholic cardinal orchestrated the murder of 25,000-100,000 Calvinists known as Huguenots, not pitying woman or children.

What politically transpired in the case of the Netherlands in 1568 directly relates to what happens in France in 1572. Cardinal Lorraine of France in 1568 was conspiring with Spain to have King Philip put at the head of France should King Charles of France perchance “die.” (Motley, I: 590.) At minimum, Spain in recompense would receive a few territories in France if it suppressed Calvinism in the Netherlands.

The royal throne of France appears to have gotten wind of what was afoot, and felt the pressure from the Catholic Church to kill the Calvinist Huguenots. Soon after this Catholic conspiracy was begun with Spain, the Queen dowager of France (the effective monarch because Charles was still a young boy) wrote to her counterpart in Spain—the Duke of Alva. She discussed the Calvinist Huguenot problem. She said that unless she had 2000 Spanish musketeers, she would have to succumb to a peace, *i.e.*, enter into a peace with the Huguenots. (This did take place in 1570.) But the reply came from the Duke of Alva on behalf of King Philip of Spain. In Motley’s account, Alva said “it was much better to have *a kingdom ruined preserving it for God* and the king by war, than to have it kept entire without war, to the *profit of the devil* and his followers.”¹²

12.Motley, I: at 591.

As we shall see, it was this same Roman Catholic ferocious pressure that was applied upon the Queen Mother of France and the young King Charles in 1572 to slaughter the Huguenots without mercy — whether man, woman or child.

Calvin's Moral Responsibility For the Deaths of the Calvinists of the Netherlands

But to repeat, Calvin remains *morally* responsible although obviously not in the same degree as those ordering the murders. For had Calvin not unleashed the dogs of war by saying (Calvinist) Protestants should kill heretics, the alarm at (Calvinist) Protestants gaining power in the Netherlands or in France, would have posed no risk to Roman Catholics. But the rise of Calvinist Protestants politically put themselves at risk due to the new policy Calvin announced in 1554 in the wake of the Servetus Affair. Calvin declared that Protestants of Calvinist persuasion would kill heretics, and felt it their duty to do so. ***No Catholic ruler could ever let them rise to power.*** Calvin made it become ***a life-and-death*** struggle. For to Calvinists, Roman Catholics were heretics, proven by Calvin's treatment of the Catholic Church in Geneva in 1535.¹³ Hence, if the Roman Catholics did not kill the Calvinists now, it would be too late once they gained political power which appeared only a matter of time.¹⁴

This Catholic thought-process is precisely what Castellio warned Calvin would be the consequence of killing Servetus, and defending it on the principle of 'death-to-heretics.' Calvin did not listen. Calvin was wrong. Calvin thus

13. For discussion on the proofs of Calvin's moral responsibility, see "History Proves Calvin's Moral Responsibility" on page 10.

14. The reaction led eventually to revolution in 1572, and by the Act of Abdication in 1581—a declaration of independence.

ends up morally responsible for all the predictable responses of the Roman Catholics in thereafter murdering pre-emptively the Calvinist Protestants throughout Europe.

Calvin's Responsibility for The Killings of French Huguenots

The Roman Catholic Lord Acton in his famous article on the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France exposes the Roman church's role in that mass murder. It took place in 1572, beginning in Paris and spreading throughout France. When it ended, 25,000 to 100,000 Calvinist Huguenots of France were murdered as alleged heretics. Acton says up to that point, the "Protestants...*had won toleration*" from the Roman Catholic church. Until this epoch, the attempt to "arrest [Protestantism's] advance by force *had been abandoned*."¹⁵

In 1572, the Roman Pope's agents directly orchestrated at the pope's command the French king's actions to suppress the Calvinist Huguenots. Prior to 1572, tensions were rising in France. Catholic meddling only had emerged in 1569 in a minor skirmish. But in 1572, the cat was out of the bag. Death to heretics of the Calvinist stripe was in full swing in France!¹⁶

In 1572, beginning with the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the Roman church of France turned to killing Huguenots *en masse*. The Huguenots were a sect of Calvinists, so the irony should not be lost on anyone. Lord Acton was a famous Roman Catholic as well as objective historian. Acton commented on this 1572 episode: "I... point[] out that the Popes had, after long endeavours, *nearly succeeded in getting all the Calvinists murdered*."¹⁷ For the full account

15. John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, *History of Freedom* (MacMillan, 1907) at 102, 103.

of the pope's instigation and orchestration of these events, derived from Lord Acton's famous history, see online at [www.jesuswordsonly.com/Appendix O: End of Tolerance of Protestants in 1572 With Catholic Execution of Protestants As Heretics in France](http://www.jesuswordsonly.com/Appendix_O:_End_of_Tolerance_of_Protestants_in_1572_With_Catholic_Execution_of_Protestants_As_Heretics_in_France).

History Proves Calvin's Moral Responsibility

The reason for this change in Roman Catholic policy toward Calvinists in particular was directly related to Calvin's actions in 1553 and his later defense of those actions.

16. The outbreaks of religious violence in 1562-1563 in France were evidently not orchestrated by the Catholic church, unlike the killings of 1572. This 1562-1563 episode is called the first 'Religious War' with Huguenots. It arose in 1562 merely out of a misunderstanding between servants of the Duc de Guise and a Huguenot congregation on a Sunday afternoon. The Duc de Guise ended up later being assassinated. Tensions mounted, and the Huguenots formed an army within France, and called for aid from Protestants of Germany and England. The Crown decided to peaceably settle the dispute. Prisoners were exchanged. The Edict of Amboise issued March 16, 1563 granted "freedom of conscience" to nobles of the "reformed" faith with their "families and subjects." Next, in 1567-1568, when Spain's armies were passing the "Spanish road" from Italy to Flanders to subjugate the Netherlands, the Huguenots suspected treachery. They heard rumours that the pope wanted to invade France via Spain's armies and exterminate the Huguenots. The Huguenots overreacted, and attempted a coup at Meaux, and the capture of the king. The plan fizzled. Another edict of peace was signed, called the Peace of Longjumeau. Finally, during 1568-1570, the Catholic Cardinal de Lorraine this time planned to capture the Huguenot military leaders. He failed initially. The Huguenot army in the south held off the royal armies. Finally another peace was signed at St. Germain. This last episode did involve a Catholic prelate directly meddling, and is the precursor to the St. Bartholomew's Massacre of 1572. (This is based in part on <http://www.lepg.org/wars.htm> (2/24/08).)

For Calvin's change in the standard Protestant refrain that the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares meant *no death of heretics* was rejected in 1554 by Calvin. He boldly proclaimed killing of Servetus was defensible under the notion that Servetus was a heretic. Calvin now defended the killing heretics as perfectly *legal* and *mandatory* for member of Calvin's church. This had grave implications upon the safety of Roman Catholics in Geneva or in any land that might adopt Calvinist Protestantism.

For in Geneva, Farel and Calvin banned the Catholic church, expelling all Catholic practitioners in 1535, while brazenly treating the Catholics who remained as all suspected heretics. In fact, the Confession of Faith of 1535 in Geneva, written by Calvin and Farel, said anyone who continued to associate with Catholicism belonged to the "synagogue of the Devil."¹⁸

On August 27, 1535, Geneva banned any saying of the Mass. Geneva also expropriated the property of the Roman Catholic church, which was a penalty Catholics previously applied historically to heretics.¹⁹ Calvin's view of Catholicism as a heresy was obvious and open for all to see. If Catholics were heretics, and Servetus was a heretic, it does not take a brilliant mind to know the logical deduction of the Roman Catholic pope. He would expect Catholics in France to be persecuted even unto death if Calvinism triumphed over France any time after 1554.

As long as this murderous view of this Frenchman (Calvin) was limited to a small city, it was contained. As long as this Frenchman had stood by the firm resolve of all the other Protestants that Jesus' Parable of the Wheat and the Tares meant no death to heretics, Catholics would have to

17. John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, *Selections from the Correspondence of the First Lord Acton* (Longman's Green, 1917) at 55-56.

18. See Footnote 539 on page 363 and accompanying text.

19. See "Appendix D: Geneva, An Independent Republic" on page 567 *et seq.*

grin and bear Calvin's success at Geneva. But with the killing of Servetus in 1553, and the subsequent dogmatic defense by Calvin of killing of heretics (departing radically from Protestant norms and teachings), the Roman pope knew there was no hope for clemency in a Calvinist France for Catholics, should the Calvinists of France take power.

To head off this possibility, in 1561, the Pope tried to obtain reconciliation with the Calvinists of France. This meeting was "sponsored by the French government at the Colloquy of Poisy in 1561, where Calvinist and Catholic divines fruitlessly debated their differences."²⁰

Having failed to find common ground, the Pope could not ignore that Calvin's Geneva thereafter gave him fresh and notorious examples of how those who are heretics in Calvinist eyes would be burned at the stake.

In 1566, Gentilis was arrested at Geneva.²¹ He was handed over to authorities in Bern in 1566 for execution. The Calvinist magistrates there "beheaded [Valentine] Gentilis" for his alleged Arian teaching of an inferiority of Jesus to the Father.²² Gentilis "did not hold the opinions of Servetus, as many writers affirm; but held Arian sentiments, and made the Son and the Holy Spirit to be inferior to the Father."²³ Here is only heresy, not blasphemy. The verdict was death.

20. Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, 2003) at 87.

21. George Benson, D.D., "The Old Whig, or the Consistent Protestant," February 2, 1737-38," reprinted in G. Benson, *A Collection of Tracts* (London: 1753) at 190 ("Valentinus Gentilis... was afterwards imprisoned at Geneva for heresy...").

22. E. William Monter, *Calvin's Geneva* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967) at 83-84.

23. Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History* (Harper & Bros., 1841) at 227.

Incidentally, Calvin held the same Arian view as Gentilis.²⁴ However, with Calvin's death in 1564, his followers in 1566 began to rectify this error by their deceased leader. They now persecuted unto death those holding to the Arian heresy.

Continuing on, there was another case initiated in 1566 at Geneva. This was another heresy "blasphemy" trial pending of a jurist named Grabaldus. A death sentence was hanging over him. However, the defendant died in prison, and the case never went to trial.²⁵

In 1572, these several cases were still in recent memory of the Roman Pope who would see them as an alarm to the safety of French Catholics if the Calvinist Huguenots gained political supremacy in France.

Now obviously due to the abandonment of toleration by Calvinist Protestants of heretics, the Roman Catholic church had to abandon toleration in return of Calvinist Protestants. *It was a simple equation of self-defense.*

24. See Calvin's letter to the Polish Brethren quoted at length in Gaston Bonet-Maury & Edward Potter Hall, *Early Sources of English Unitarian Christianity* (1884) at 16 fn. 4. Here, Calvin clearly says Jesus is inferior to God-the-Father because of the verses where Jesus was speaking of his limitations in knowledge compared to the Father, etc.

This proves, incidentally, the superiority of Servetus' solution which sees two natures in Jesus rather than two distinct 'Gods' — one inferior to the other. Servetus explained that the human Jesus is a *human*, but otherwise, the Word was made flesh which is the divine in Jesus, and hence Jesus is identical to God *in* Jesus. Thus, Calvin should not have talked of the *human* limitations of Jesus as if they made Jesus an inferior God to God-the-Father.

25. Mosheim relates: "Not much different [from Gentilis] were the views of Matthew Gribaldus, a jurist of Pavia, who was removed by a timely death, at Geneva, in 1566, when about to undergo a capital trial: for he distributed the divine nature into three Eternal Spirits, differing in rank, as well as numerically." Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History* (Harper & Bros., 1841) at 227.

Thus, when Calvin and Beza in 1554 defended the right to kill *anyone* who they thought was a heretic,²⁶ these were chilling words to Catholics as well. At that time, the Calvinist Huguenots in France openly operated with military field generals, especially in the South of France. They mustered militia-armies in self-defense whenever frightened of Catholic designs.²⁷ If the Huguenots should come to power in France — which was not a far-fetched possibility because several members of the Royal family were Protestant, the Roman Catholics could then face a retaliatory Inquisition at the hands of the armed Calvinist Huguenots.

Hence, because the Geneva Reformer named Calvin insisted Catholics were heretics, Catholics in 1572 had to realize *the best defense was an aggressive offense*. Thus, Calvin's principle of 'death to heretics,' proven by the killing of Servetus and many Genevans thereafter, was a direct threat to Roman Catholics if Calvinism should ascend into dominance in France.

By contrast, the Roman Catholics had no need to violently persecute Lutherans. In 1555, the Lutheran and Catholic churches had *agreed to co-exist* within the Holy Roman Empire. Neither would persecute the other as heretics. This was settled in the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. ("Peace of Augsburg," *Wikipedia*.)

This contrast proves how crucial were the events in 1553 when Calvin had Servetus killed as a mere heretic. To repeat, Calvin's *Defensio* in 1554 and Beza's similar fulminations that same year made it absolutely clear to Catholics that they had to kill off the Calvinist Huguenots of France. How could the Catholics permit the Calvinists to gain ascendancy in France and potentially turn the tables on the Catholics? If

26. See "Beza Tries To Defend Calvin in September 1554" on page 380 *et seq.*

27. See Footnote 16 on page 10.

they did not do something violent themselves now, they would find themselves bitterly being killed as heretics later in a Calvinist Huguenot France.

Hence, by inexorable logic, directly deduced from the killing of Servetus in 1553, and the dogma upon which Calvin later defended that killing, the Roman Catholic church orchestrated what remains the *most bloody episode of all time of the killing of people merely for being perceived as heretics*.

In 1572, the Roman Catholic church instigated the Catholic King to mark the homes of Huguenots throughout the country. In a systematic wave of terror, the agents of the church and king slaughtered man, woman and child without any trial. Their homes and personages were marked as *Huguenot heretics*, and they were doomed. The smallest estimate of those murdered in the two month terror was 25,000. The largest estimate was 100,000.²⁸ The blood of each murdered soul cries out: 'Thanks Calvin! You put the sword in the hands of our mortal enemies.'

No one can remove the Roman Catholic stigma from these events. But Calvin's bloody hands were an important contributing factor to the events of 1572. For it was his example with Servetus and his unrepentant doctrine of 1554 that opened the floodgates. *It opened them specifically only as to Calvinist Protestants*. In 1572, the Lutheran Protestants went to bed as peacefully in those two months as they had since 1555. They had the Peace of Augsburg protecting them. They enjoyed the mutual understanding that no Lutheran or Catholic "heretic" in the other's domain would be killed merely for heresy.

Thus, one can now understand that killing Servetus for heresy had a far reaching impact on the history of Europe. That execution, and the subsequent and radically new Calvinist dogma of 'death to heretics' (belatedly raised to justify the

28. See "Calvin Was Begged To Repent in 1554 To Save Lives" on page 1 *et seq.*

crime) clearly led to the mass murder of numerous good Christian souls. They paid the price of the sin of their leader — John Calvin. Each of those 25,000 to 100,000 dead souls were no less murdered by John Calvin than by the unholy alliance of the Pope at Rome and the King of France.

The Danger of Calvinism To the Freedom of Religion in the Netherlands

As an aside, the Netherlands is a lesson in how a constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion in a true democratic republic can be usurped by a militant religious party. This is more important than ever as candidates from both the Democrat and Republic parties both support ‘faith-based’ initiatives—a dangerous precedent to the freedom of religion to those ‘faiths’ not favored by government largesse.

After the Netherlands declaration of independence, it formed a new government known as The United Provinces of the Netherlands or the Dutch Republic. It lasted from 1581 to 1795. The Dutch Republic was a compromise system between Catholics and Protestants.

Like the USA in Almost Every Way: Our Clear Model

The Dutch Republic provided the best example of a true confederative republic to our young United States. Upon closer examination, it is obviously the source of our own Constitution in almost every detail, even on the guarantee of the freedom of religion.

Each of the seven provinces was governed by its local Provincial States, and by a stadtholder (governor) who was subordinate to his respective Provincial State. Some provinces were Catholic, and others Protestant. Some were democratic and some were aristocratic, such as Holland. Each province had one vote in the senate of sovereign states also known as the States General. The States General alone could

declare war or conclude peace. Their resolutions were decisive law for the Republic. It alone appointed ambassadors although the ambassadors reported to the President of the Republic (soon to be discussed). All cities formed virtual independent states. At the same time, the primary stadtholder akin to a President was elected and subject to the States General, i.e., the national legislative body. He was also the captain-general and admiral-general, but he could not declare war or make peace. This president alone had the right to appoint magistrates. This confederative republic lasted just over 200 years.²⁹

In the Dutch Republic, freedom of conscience was enshrined in the 1579 Union of Utrecht, the Republic's basic constitutional document. Article 13 of the Union specifically states, "each person shall remain free, especially in his religion, and that no one shall be persecuted or investigated because of their religion."

However, the Calvinists used their influence to come to dominate the Dutch Republic and soon made Calvinism the *de facto* state religion in violation of the Netherlands Constitution.³⁰ Soon laws were made that outlawed Catholic, Lutheran or Anabaptist worship. In the Catholic provinces, an oath was required of public servants that they would fight the "papist religion" which had the effect of disqualifying all Catholics from public office.³¹

29. See Friedrich Edler, *The Dutch Republic and the American Revolution* (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1911) at 11-12 fn. 2. See also, "Dutch Republic," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Republic (accessed 7/5/2008).

30. In 1651, a law was passed that no organized religion that had not existed when the republic was formed could be authorized to be practiced in the Netherlands. See Joris van Eijnatten, *Liberty and Concord in the United Provinces: Religious Toleration and the Republic in the Eighteenth Century Netherlands* (Brill, 2002) at 257.

31. "Dutch Republic," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Republic (accessed 7/5/2008).

There were efforts to correct this Constitutional imbalance in favor of the Calvinist Reformed Church. This effort at enforcing the freedom-of-religion clause in the Dutch Constitution began ironically in what later became the United States.

Calvinist Death Penalties At Boston

In 1656, the Quakers of Boston were threatened by death by the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony—chartered and thus controlled by the Dutch Republic. In 1656, Endicott, the governor, threatened the Quakers³² with the death penalty. “Take heed,” he said, “ye break not our ecclesiastical laws, for then ye are sure to stretch by a halter.”³³

The Dutch rulers were serious. Four Quakers were executed thereafter solely for their beliefs. These became known as the Boston martyrs. These three were English members of the Society of Friends: Marmaduke Stephenson, William Robinson and Mary Dyer, and to the Friend William Leddra of Barbados. Each were “condemned to death and executed by public hanging for their religious beliefs under the legislature of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1659, 1660 and 1661.”³⁴

32. “The Friends believed that God’s grace did not filter through the hierarchy of the religious elite, but reached each person directly. In taking this theological approach, the Quakers bypassed the authority of clergy and rulers, and recognized that the common person could be elevated to the ‘priesthood of all believers.’ This rendered the current cultural order obsolete and formed the core ideal of the American republic that would arise more than a century later.” “The Flushing Remonstrance” in the *Liberty Magazine*, available online at <http://www.libertymagazine.org/article/articleview/532/1/86/> (accessed 7/5/2008).

33. “The Flushing Remonstrance” in the *Liberty Magazine*, available online at <http://www.libertymagazine.org/article/articleview/532/1/86/> (accessed 7/5/2008).

34. “Boston Martyrs,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_martyrs (accessed 7/5/2008).

The 1657 Remonstrance

It is in this context that we can now understand the courage of those who in 1657 signed a petition called the Flushing Remonstrance. It sought to correct this error, asking that freedom of conscience be restored.³⁵ Flushing was in what is today Long Island, New York. Those who signed it happened to also be Englishman, thus revealing how their ideas later percolated in the British colonies. Also, one can see the demand for religious freedom in what later became the United States was first sought *against* Calvinist encroachment under the Dutch Constitution. A mild irony from our Creator to teach us how history runs in circles.

Edward Hart was the town clerk of Vlissingen (as Flushing, Long Island, was then known in Dutch) wrote this remarkable remonstrance. It was signed by thirty-one fellow townsmen on December 27, 1657. It was in opposition to West India Company Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant's harsh ordinance against anyone found harboring Quakers. (Baptists too had been persecuted under the same ordinance.)

The Remonstrance cited the Flushing patent of 1645. It had promised "the right to have and enjoy *liberty of conscience*, according to the custom and manner of Holland, *without molestation* or disturbance *from any magistrates*, or any other *ecclesiastical minister*."³⁶ The Remonstrance asked for enforcement of this provision, which was based upon Article 13 of the Netherlands Utrecht Union Constitution.

The Remonstrance stated that the "molestation" clause of their town charter of 1645 was granted "in the name of the States General" by West India Company resident direc-

35. See "The Flushing Remonstrance," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flushing_Remonstrance (accessed 7/5/2008).

36. The patent is quoted in "The Flushing Remonstrance" in the *Liberty Magazine*, available online at <http://www.libertymagazine.org/article/articleview/532/1/86/> (accessed 7/5/2008).

tor Willem Kieft, and could not be withdrawn by a later director. The petitioners protested “we can not condemn them [Quakers]” nor “punish, banish or persecute them.”

Stuyvesant replied with reasoning reminiscent of Calvin’s own, that this freedom of religion had permitted the moral license of this “disobedient community” and thus freedom of religion was justly abridged.

As a result, Stuyvesant charged that the town had violated the director-general’s orders and New Netherland’s charters, which stated “no other religion shall be publicly admitted in New Netherland except the Reformed.” Stuyvesant arrested Hart, Vlissingen schout Tobias Feake, who delivered the remonstrance to him, and two other Vlissingen magistrates who had signed the document. Under this pressure the signatories recanted the document and admitted their “error.”

Thus, the first effort to hold up the constitutional and foundational city-charters against later decrees failed.

Legal Scholars in the 1700s Try to Voice Constitutional Concerns

In the mid-1700s, Christian Trotz, a legal scholar and professor at Utrecht in the Netherlands in 1755, did a thorough analysis of the Netherlands Constitution. He concluded the Calvinist Reformed Church had usurped, in essence, the freedom of religion granted in Article 13. He claimed religion was irrelevant to the nature of the Netherlands state.³⁷

But in reply, Cornelis van Bynkershoek (1673-1743) argued that Article 13 did not trump ‘states rights’—the independence of each province to determine the public faith to perpetuate. *Id.*

37. See Joris van Eijnatten, *Liberty and Concord in the United Provinces: Religious Toleration and the Republic in the Eighteenth Century Netherlands* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2002) at 255.

However, under that approach, Article 13 would thereby be gutted. It said: “*each person* shall remain free, especially in his religion, and that no one shall be persecuted or investigated because of their religion.” Thus, in the Netherlands, no law could infringe the freedom of religion of any *person*, regardless of which state made the law.

Yet, Joris van Eijnatten points out that “contemporary commentators eagerly appropriated the argument” of Bynkershoek.³⁸ Thus, because Article 13 did not explicitly prohibit *laws* abridging freedom of religion, each individual state could do so and somehow not violate the right of “each person” to their own religious belief.

Obviously, this reading was ignoring the implied prohibition on making any law abridging the freedom of conscience. Article 13 had come to be a dead letter. The Calvinists in each province came to control the laws, and thus defeated the right of “each person” to their own religious beliefs.

Notice How Carefully Worded Is Our First Amendment

The First Amendment to our own Constitution tried correcting the wording of such a right. It not only enshrined the “freedom of religion” of each person, but also prescribed Congress from *making any law* to “abridge” the freedom of religion. The Calvinist loophole in the Netherlands’ Constitution was closed by our very wise founding fathers. Of course, they preserved state rights, but most states preserved the freedom of religion, following the lead of the founders in this respect in each state. Thus, our First Amendment took away the argument of the Dutch Calvinist legal scholars who found a way to ignore the implied prohibition on making laws establishing religion in Article 13 of the Utrecht constitution.

38. See Joris van Eijnatten, *Liberty and Concord in the United Provinces: Religious Toleration and the Republic in the Eighteenth Century Netherlands* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2002) at 255.

Yet, what the Calvinists did in the Netherlands can happen in any country that lets its laws degrade into the support of religion. The law that favors one faith or groups of faith naturally saps the energy of the others, and thus undermines those of different faiths or those of no faith.