
Pro Rege

Volume 50 | Number 1

Article 6

September 2021

Unbelief and Revolution and Challenging the Spirit of Modernity (book review)

Keith C. Sewell

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sewell, Keith C. (2021) "Unbelief and Revolution and Challenging the Spirit of Modernity (book review)," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 50: No. 1, 43 - 48.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol50/iss1/6

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

Unbelief and Revolution and Challenging the Spirit of Modernity (book review)

Erratum

On page 43, de Lespinasse should be Ms de Lespinaase

mandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” was immediately verifiable and therefore often publicly disciplined, the only commandment on which the church, the real authority in old-line Dutch Reformed communities, lowered the righteous boom so openly. There were no scarlet letters, but many church people my age or older can remember a time when some winsome pregnant young woman stood up front in the pews to take a score of public licks for love.

And so it is here in *Bells of Helmus*. The heart of a plot structure that rotates between protagonist characters is a sweet little Dutch maiden in pigtailed named Jeannie, who, in all innocence (seriously!), gets herself pregnant by the doctor’s wonderful son. Trust me, there’s not a word about how that almost immaculate conception was accomplished; one of the unanswered questions of the story is how on earth the deed got done. We’re simply to know it did. The story suddenly makes clear that Jeannie is pregnant, and that, in her time, she delivers a darling little boy, out of town of course, but not out of mind.

She’s in Oregon when the precious bundle arrives, where she’s being cared for by Helmus’s only medical doctor, who got up and left because he simply could not handle the insistent militancy of those church bells ringing from both sides of Main Street and what those bells symbolized. What drives him batty and eventually out of town for good is the overbearing religiosity of the people, demonstrated in a spirituality that grows like poison hemlock out of their own manifest boorishness. Besides, it’s his own son who got poor and beautiful Jeannie in the family way.

There are untold prototypes in the novel, especially if you know the real story of Ms. de Lespinaase’s grandfather-in-law, Orange City’s first doctor, a cultured gentleman among other pioneers, a man who practiced his brand of humanism via a creed that he’d

say had only one commandment—to love people, a creed that makes the thorny Dutch Reformed pietists roll their eyes. Cobie Muyskens de Lespinasse is not moving far afield from her own family’s stories.

Strangely enough, quite startlingly in fact, *Bells of Helmus* is a religious novel, suggesting that Cobie de Lespinasse was somehow herself as incapable of escaping her own religious tradition as the whipping she gives Orange City’s mega-religious folks in the novel might suggest. The good humanist doctor has his own come-to-Jesus moment late in the novel and thus gives up his secularism in exchange for a level of spirituality he would have disparaged earlier in his Orange City sojourn.

It’s a bizarre novel meant to carry fiery arrows into the fort Orange City once may have wanted to be, standing steadfast against worldliness. But *Bells of Helmus* also insists on rewriting the old creeds.

If the novel weren’t so much about some of us, I’d say, “Don’t waste your time.” But it’s bigger than its obvious and sometimes glaring limitations. Today, almost 90 years later, it offers more to consider than its author ever intended, both about her and about us.

I don’t think anyone will write an opera based on the *Bells of Helmus* for next year’s Tulip Festival Night Show. I’m quite sure it wouldn’t go up.

Bells of Helmus conveys a jaundiced view of what it once meant to be Dutch Reformed or Dutch Calvinist out in the hinterland, but while I can imagine Ms. de Lespinasse had her own good reasons to carpet-bomb her hometown, this particular 73-year-old reader can’t help but believe she’s not all wrong about how things were or may have been.

A wonderful thing about novels—about books—is that sometimes they teach you far more than their authors may have ever intended. So ’tis with *The Bells of Helmus*.

Guillaume Groen Van Prinsterer, *Unbelief and Revolution* translated by Harry Van Dyke. Bellingham WA: Lexham Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-68359228-0, xxxix+267 pp.; also Harry Van Dyke, *Challenging the Spirit of Modernity: A Study of Groen van Prinsterer’s Unbelief and Revolution*. Bellingham WA: Lexham Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-68359320-1, xxii+345 pp. By Keith C. Sewell, Emeritus Professor of History, Dordt University.

These volumes represent new editions of a single volume first published in 1989.¹ The first is Harry Van Dyke’s translation into English of Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer’s (hereafter Groen) *Ongeloof en Revolutie* (1847, 1868). This republication of *Unbelief and Revolution* (UR) is a welcome contribution to Christian literature in English. Harry Van Dyke is a Fellow of the Dooyeweerd Centre for Christian

Philosophy and Professor Emeritus of History at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario.

When this book was first published, Groen was already known in the Netherlands for the early volumes in the *Archives ou Correspondance inédite de la Maison de l’Orange-Nassau* (1835-61) series. Groen’s thinking was deeply historical. That said, *Unbelief and Revolution* is not only of historical interest because

its central message continues to be deeply relevant to the crucial questions that continue to confront the West. First delivered as lectures in 1845-6, *Unbelief and Revolution* was published in 1847. The timing was remarkable, as violent revolutionary movements again afflicted much of Europe the following year.²

The whole work is also an argument based on a biblically directed understanding of the human condition and the course of human history. In the initial lecture Groen makes clear that he does not identify “revolution” simply with changes in governments or constitutions. He is not so much concerned with the details of the French Revolution, as with its *religious* roots and consequences. Moreover, he is clear that those who seek to merely moderate change driven by revolutionary unbelief are doomed to failure.

Groen insisted that “The Revolution doctrine is unbelief applied to politics” (*UR*, 4), and that the prime requirement is for Christian believers to understand *in depth* the spiritual character and historical significance of the forces that now confront them. Moreover, he stressed that revolutionary developments in history arise from the formulation and advocacy of revolutionary ideas. In the face of such challenges, he called upon Christians to not shrink from their responsibilities but to be salt and light, however oppressive the cultural atmosphere (*UR*, 1-10)—wise counsel, also for our times.

In the second and third lectures, Groen emphasizes how the Revolution flew in the face of past experience, not least as its proponents exhibited a superficial attitude towards the past itself. That said, he does not consider himself to be without allies. For example, he speaks highly of the testimony of the lawyer, poet, and historian Willem Bilderdijk (1756-1831). He also draws on the work of Friedrich von Gentz (1764-1832), the writer on international relations (*UR*, 15-18). Groen also takes note of the writings of Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802-61), the German legal and constitutional scholar (*UR*, 70-1). He makes clear that he does not wholly concur with any of these authors. He reserves his highest praise for Edmund Burke (1729-97), the Anglo-Irish politician and author (*UR*, 15).

Groen builds his case step by step. In the following two lectures he considers the pre-revolutionary Christian past. He is clear that the centuries before 1789 were far from flawless (*UR*, 44), but insists that the Revolution itself was not attributable to the shortcomings of the *ancient régime* (*UR*, 32-3). Nevertheless, the old order did recognise that governance was of divine institution, it resisted assertions that might was right, and it was suspicious of centralization (*UR*, 20-3, 39-40). He was appreciative of the

“mixed monarchy” (Crown, Lords, and Commons) of Great Britain, and the moderation of the 1688 “Glorious Revolution” (*UR*, 42-3).³ He asserted that the Dutch “restoration” of 1814-15 did not represent a genuine return to a non-revolutionary outlook (*UR*, 34).

In the fifth lecture, Groen addresses in greater depth the question of the abuses that preceded the Revolution. He concurred with Burke’s assessment that pre-revolutionary France was not beyond orderly reformation. As it was, the revolution was not initiated by the most oppressed, but by the privileged for their own purposes. It was not launched to bring about improvements, but to achieve a complete overthrow of all existing institutions, resulting in a full political and social transformation (*UR*, 45-50, 53).

Thereafter, Groen transitions in his Sixth lecture to a discussion headed “The Perversion of Constitutional Law.” Here we encounter some intriguing questions, and we should keep in view the reality that words such as “sovereignty,” “rights,” “liberty,” and “liberal” have, over the centuries, acquired a wide semantic range. Indeed, this applies also to the term “revolution” itself—which might mean a restoration or a revolutionary overthrow.⁴ Groen’s concern was that the Calvinistic Reformation itself, in the place it awarded to church members in the appointment of office-bearers and in the ways its second generation called for liberty in the face of persecution, may have unwittingly set a course towards Revolution. Theodore Beza (1519-1605), François Hotman (1524-90), and Philippe du Plessis Mornay (1549-1623) eloquently pleaded for toleration in the face of cruel persecution. Groen certainly had his doubts about these developments (*UR*, 66-69). That said, these writers did not embrace any notion of human autonomy, as did the revolutionaries of 1789. Moreover, while the literature on these writers is important, the reader needs to be constantly on the alert for the possibility that latter-day liberally-minded historians might retrospectively impute the revolutionary principles of the 1780s to an earlier period.⁵

Predictably, Groen then turns to consider the Protestant Reformation. Did the Reformation in some way open the door to the revolution of 1789? This contention has found a place in Catholic historiography.⁶ In reply, Groen observes that the Reformation called for freedom from tradition only where tradition contradicted Scripture. At the same time, “liberty,” including “freedom of religion,” was not the first objective of the Reformation. Indeed, the first reformers were deeply submissive to the dynastic rulers of the day (*UR*, 72-75). After the Reformation, as dead orthodoxy came to prevail, protestant leaders

often displayed hostility towards the spiritual vitality of early evangelicalism (UR, 79-80).

Here Groen makes two assertions. Firstly, the only, effective response to revolutionary ideologies is the Christian gospel. This is where the centrality of the reformed emphasis on preaching the Word of God is evident:

The preaching of the gospel is the lever whereby world history is made to serve the execution of God's counsel (UR, 81).

These words merit the sustained reflection of all who preach the Word of God, and all who reflect on the meaning of human history. Secondly, and alongside this insight, Groen issues a sobering warning—especially to those Protestants who have forsaken the faith of the Reformation and turned their backs on the truth that they previously received. Citing Matthew 12: 43-45 (“the last state . . . is worse than the first . . . even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation”), he points to the deep perils of Protestant apostasy (UR, 82). When a culture deliberately turns its back on gospel light, the consequences can be very dark. As we might expect, Groen concluded that the Revolution is *not* to be laid at the feet of the Reformation (UR, 199-200).

In the eighth and ninth lectures, Groen argues that the eighteenth century desired the fruits of a Christian culture while abandoning the foundational doctrines of the faith. It asserted the autonomy of man and rejected the sovereignty of God. This philosophy emerged gradually, with deism functioning as a kind of half-way-house in the process (UR, 85-87, 93). In politics, authority became confused with absolutism and liberty with lawlessness. He observed that the advocates of revolutionary “freedom” were often themselves highly intolerant, and that the promotion of popular sovereignty led on to state tyranny (UR, 94, 107). For Groen the spirit of unbelief became ever more apparent in the writings of the enlightenment philosophers (UR, 89-91). Groen pays particular attention to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), whose influence was extensive (UR, 98-103).⁷

In his tenth lecture, Groen develops these themes further. The ideologies of Revolution always collide with reality; they fail to deliver because in truth they cannot meet the deepest needs of mankind. These can only be fulfilled in the gospel; but in its fervent assertions of human autonomy, the revolutionary temperament seeks to banish God, but only and inevitably ends up inventing and worshipping substitute gods. These fail, and the resulting disappointment, or disenchantment, drives men to extremes of even

more radical revolution or counter-revolution (UR, 109-111). Groen contended that the Revolution gave rise to despotic forms of rule in order to contain the anarchy that it had itself generated. It was subject to its own inner contradictions. It promised “liberty, equality, and fraternity,” but it moved to an inversion of its own purported ideals—a despotism (or dictatorship) that acknowledged no limits (UR, 114-129). The only remedy is a return to belief in the sovereignty of God in public life (UR, 130-1).

In lectures eleven to fourteen, attention turns to the actual course of events in the pre-Revolution, the Revolution itself, the “Reign of Terror,” the Napoleonic era, and beyond (UR, 135-41). The notion of human autonomy, a key driver of the revolutionary impulse, fermented for a long time prior to the 1789 eruption, and once the revolutionary process was underway, the “tide of revolution went further than anyone had intended at the outset” (UR, 173-5). The revolution undermined existing legal structures and gave rise to a political culture much given to mob violence and the *coup d'état* (UR, 171).

The revolutionaries were typically blind to the consequences of their own dogmas. As the revolutionary momentum increased, and as each party strove for dominance, they were in turn overwhelmed by the revolutionary momentum that they sought to direct. The result was “the reign of terror” (1793-4), which for Groen was the most instructive of all episodes (UR, 175), and of whom Maximillian Robespierre (1758-94) was the foremost exemplar (UR, 181-6). Groen regarded Robespierre as exemplifying in his life the teaching and outlook of Rousseau (UR, 194-7). At this time, as in our own, language itself was distorted by revolutionary fervour: the terror was imposed in the name of “safety” (UR, 175-8). And when it comes to the Committee for Public Safety,⁸ Groen insists that even when most horrifying, their conduct was the natural consequence of their conviction, the faithful application of the Revolution ideas, and by that standard, a commendable utilization of revolutionary power (UR, 186).

In short, the Revolution could always find ways of justifying its application of revolutionary ideas using barbaric methods. Human rights were not extended to the opponents of the Revolution itself, even as the revolutionaries could be “inhuman for love of humanity” (UR, 187-9, also 220).

In his discussion of the period 1794-1845 in the fourteenth lecture, Groen states that although the terror ended, the Revolution resumed its course. The resulting instability produced a succession of constitutions, which provided a *façade* behind which brute force could prevail (UR, 201-5). The result

was the military dictatorship of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821). Yet even the Napoleonic era (*UR*, 206-10) did not see the end of revolutionary policies in Europe. The Revolution continued even under the forms of the monarchies restored after the devastation wrought by Napoleon (*UR*, 212).

In his concluding fifteenth lecture, Groen expands upon this theme. The powers of continental Europe made the error of resisting the Revolution in a revolutionary manner. The one possible exception was England and the “shrewd men” who governed her (*UR*, 223-4). He held the British Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) in high regard (*UR*, 15, 224-5 n. 2).⁹ Groen feared that in post-1814, the Netherlands had become a kind of “revolutionary autocracy” (*UR*, 237). He spoke out against the way in which education was controlled by this state (*UR*, 229, 241).

At the same time, Groen was encouraged by the partial recovery of Catholicism and Evangelical Christianity (*UR*, 230-2). He is clear that the Christian principle is strong enough to confront the revolutionary surge, and it is the calling of all Christians to uphold that principle (*UR*, 242-7). In a passage that seems powerfully pertinent today, Groen asserted that

It may be that without encountering any noteworthy opposition in the Evangelical religion, the radical principle will for a season gain a complete victory. It may be that without any dangerous tensions or conflicts we are heading for a reformation of faith and morals of greater scope than in the age of the Reformation. It may be—and this seems most probable—that we are living in a *lull before the storm*: that the fermentation of all kinds of ideas and the menacing posture of warring principles portend the coming of a contest between light and darkness whose equal has not been seen before in world history, either in scope or intensity (*UR*, 232-3).

Given the spiritual condition of the contemporary West, Groen’s arguments continue to be relevant for all Christians seeking to understand and grapple with the spirit of our age.

And what of Groen’s interpretation of the French Revolution? Has it stood the test of time? Certainly, Groen was greatly indebted to Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).¹⁰ Burke had grasped the centrality of religion for human life and already in 1789 understood the Revolution as a religious event. Burke influenced many historians, such as Herbert Butterfield (1900-79), who wrote

about the Revolution in strongly anti-revolutionary terms.¹¹ Moreover, there have always been thinkers ready to offer a critical estimation of the Revolution, for example Eric Vögelin (1901-85)¹² and Jacob Talmon (1916-80).¹³

The truth is that the Revolution brought forth an array of rival ideological standpoints, and that these have in turn shaped the historiography of the Revolution itself—and ideologies always exhibit their particular reductionism and therefore deceptively oversimplify the complexities that the historian confronts. Marxian accounts tended to reduce matters to the socio-economic, and therefore could not penetrate to the heart of things. In the 1930s and 1940s many historians were influenced by the Marxian standpoint. Georges Lefebvre (1874-1959) offered the most influential Marxian interpretation of the French Revolution at this time.¹⁴

However, perceptions shifted, and by the 1960s the English historian Alfred Cobban (1901-68) subjected the Marxian interpretation to withering criticism.¹⁵ In France, François Furet (1927-97) led the assault on the Marxian interpretation even more decisively.¹⁶ Indeed, there are significant affinities between the standpoint of Furet and the much earlier *L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution* by Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59).¹⁷ By the 1980s, the historiographical consensus had settled towards the kind of post-revisionist synthesis exhibited in the work of William Doyle.¹⁸ At the bicentenary many historians were ambivalent—embracing liberalism, but wary of the follies and repelled by the excesses of the revolution.¹⁹

In 1969 Richard Cobb (1917-96) wrote that “despite all the minute analysis of short-term and long-term causes. . . there still remains a *zone d’ombre* of impenetrable mystery” about the French Revolution.²⁰ The truth is that the repudiation of Christianity lay at the heart of it all (*UR*, 94), a point that is hard to discern for those who view religion as optional or peripheral to human life. Groen penetrated to the heart of the Revolution because he first held to biblical views concerning the centrality of religion and the human condition. Moreover, Groen did not rest with what we might call a “mere conservatism.” He is supremely important because he transcended the limits of a purely conservative outlook, thanks to a body of insight rooted in the teachings of the Calvinistic Reformation and that was both “Christian historical” and “Anti-revolutionary.”²¹

The second book considered here is *Challenging the Spirit of Modernity: A Study of Groen van Prinsterer’s Unbelief and Revolution (CSM)*. This volume is a valuable handbook to *UR*, providing the reader with contextualising information that bridges the gap between

Groen's time and our own. Groen's life and work are comprehensively described (*CSM*, 1-100). An overview of *Unbelief and Revolution* is provided (*CSM*, 183-96); the sources, style and audience of the lectures are comprehensively discussed (*CSM*, 128-182); and the editions of 1847 and 1868 are compared (*CSM*, 197-239). It is possible that at some points, contemporary readers of *UR* will find themselves responding to Groen with a "yes, but." While Groen gets to the heart of the Revolution, he does not always do so in a way that would necessarily line up with the disciplinary techniques and procedures of present-day historians. In a valuable section, Van Dyke responds to a range of questions, including Groen's monarchism (*CSM*, 253-61), and a range of methodological and philosophical questions (*CSM*, 261-318).

These volumes deserve a wide readership. They are both stimulating and suggestive. For me the following points emerge: *Firstly*, while all historians are wary of counter-factual speculation, such alternative "what might have been" scenarios do serve to heighten our awareness of the crucial nature of what actually did happen.²² For example, the fact that France as a nation did *not* embrace the Calvinistic reformation must be considered as decisive for French, and all European history. The France that eventually fell into revolutionary courses was the France that had already repudiated the Reformation. The negative consequences were immense.²³

Secondly, Groen (*UR*, 49, 135, 233) and Van Dyke (129, 302-3) both mention the 1780s Patriot movement in the Netherlands. These Dutch Patriots of protestant background strongly influenced the revolutionaries of Paris.²⁴ Sometimes the enemies of the gospel are closer to hand than its faithful servants realize. Moreover, we should not forget Rousseau's close connection with Geneva.²⁵ We need a discerning English-language treatment of the revolutionary movement in the Netherlands of the 1780s, written from an authentically anti-revolutionary standpoint.

Finally, as Van Dyke states, it was Burke who "caused the scales to fall from Groen's eyes." Groen quotes Burke at the crucial points in his argument (*CSM*, 152-4, cf. *UR*, 15, 42-3, 49, 88, 94, 134, 165). It is pertinent that Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) declared, "Edmund Burke was an Anti-revolutionary through and through," and proclaimed, "We Dutch Calvinists want to be like Burke."²⁶ Burke was not a hardened conservative—he was in fact a Whig. His long-term influence helped preserve Great Britain from revolution and in the longer run turned an empire into a commonwealth. He deserves to receive much more attention from Christian historians and Christians generally.

Meanwhile, these volumes are strongly recommended for their historical and contemporary relevance.

Endnotes

1. *Groen Van Prinsterer's Lectures on Unbelief and Revolution* by Harry Van Dyke. Jordan Station (Ontario: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1989).
2. For many decades Anglophone discussion of these remarkable episodes centred on Louis B. Namier, "1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals," which first appeared in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* for 1944 and was repeatedly republished by Oxford University Press thereafter. See also *The Revolutions of 1848-49*, edited by Frank Eych, in the "Evidence and Commentary" series (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972).
3. See esp. W. A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford University Press, 1988), and Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godley Revolution*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996).
4. See for example, Vernon F. Snow, "The Concept of Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England," *Historical Journal* 5/2 (1962), 167-174.
5. J. W. Allen, *Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, London: Methuen, 1928, 306-31; Julian H. Franklin (translator and editor), *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century: Three Treatises by Hotman, Beza, and Mornay*. New York: Pegasus, 1969, and Donald R. Kelley, *François Hotman: A Revolutionary's Ordeal*, (Princeton University Press, 1973), esp. 101-25, 172-3.
6. See, for example, Christopher Dawson, *The Dividing of Christendom* New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965 and *The Gods of Revolution* (New York University, 1972). See also Bradley J. Birzer, *Sanctifying the World: The Augustinian Life and Mind of Christopher Dawson* (Front Royal VA: Christendom Press, 2007), 129-130 and 176-185.
7. Rousseau is placed in context by Maurice Cranston's (1920-93) three-volume biography *The Early Life, The Noble Savage, and The Solitary Self* (University of Chicago Press, 1983, 1991 and 1997 respectively). The portrayal is sympathetic, and some reviewers regarded Cranston as too uncritical towards his subject. Rousseau was widely influential before and during the Revolution. See Durand Echeverria, "The Prerevolutionary Influence of Rousseau's *Contrat Social*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33/4 (1972), 542-560.

8. The classic account of the “Committee of Public Safety” in English remains R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled* (Princeton University Press, 1941). For Palmer’s mature estimate of the Revolution, see his “Popular Democracy and the French Revolution,” *French Historical Studies* 1/4 (1960), 445-69, esp. 464-9.
9. For a sympathetic and comprehensive biography, see William Hague, *William Pitt the Younger*, New York: Knopf, 2005, in this context esp. 228-315, 365-88, 470-75.
10. “Reflections on the Revolution in France” in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, Volume VIII, edited by L. G. Mitchell and William B. Todd (Oxford University Press, 1989), 53-293.
11. Herbert Butterfield, *Napoleon*, London: Duckworth, 1939, 13-18, and *The Englishman and His History* (Cambridge University Press, 1944), 98-117.
12. Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, Duke University Press, 1975, and Bernard Zylstra, “Voegelin on Unbelief and Revolution,” in *Antirevolutionäre Staatkunde* 46 (1976), 155-65.
13. Jacob L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy and Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1952 and 1960 respectively).
14. Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 1947); *The French Revolution*, 2 volumes (Columbia University Press, 1962), and *Napoleon*, 2 volumes, (Columbia University Press, 1969).
15. Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1964). See also his papers “Political versus Social Interpretations of the French Revolution,” and “The French Revolution: Orthodox and Unorthodox Interpretations,” in *Aspects of the French Revolution* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), 264-87.
16. François Furet and Denis Richet, *The French Revolution*, New York: Macmillan, 1970, and Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), *Marx and the French Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 1988), and *The French Revolution, 1770-1814*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
17. Alexis de Tocqueville, *L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (1856). The best English translation is *The Old Regime and the Revolution* translated by Alan Kahan (University of Chicago Press, 1998).
18. William Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1980); third edition, 1999, esp. 5-41.
19. See, for example, Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 857-860.
20. Richard C. Cobb, *A Second Identity: Essays on France and French History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), 274.
21. See the discussion offered by H. Evan Runner, *Scriptural Religion and Political Task* (Toronto: Wedge, 1974), 63-4, 76-6, 83-4, and esp. 89-92.
22. For some examples see *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* edited by Niall Ferguson (London: Macmillan Picador, 1997).
23. See the important study by Dale Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791* (Yale University Press, 1996), esp. 2, 15-16, 22-28, 303-5, 367, 369-375.
24. R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: The Challenge* (Princeton University Press, 1959), 324-340, and *The Age of Democratic Revolution: The Struggle*, 1964, 177-204. See also Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators* (New York: Knopf, 1977), and Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 1096-1121. The connection between the Dutch Patriots and the French revolutionaries is discussed by Munro Price, in “The Dutch affair and the fall of the *Ancien Régime*, 1784-1787,” *Historical Journal* 38/4 (1995), 875-906 and Jeremy D. Popkin, “Dutch patriots, French journalists and Declaration of Rights: the *Leidse Ontwerp* of 1785 and its diffusion in France,” *Historical Journal* 38/2 (1995), 553-565.
25. R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: The Challenge* (Princeton University Press, 1959), 112-139, 358-361, and *The Age of Democratic Revolution: The Struggle* (Princeton University Press, 1964), 395-421. Also, Helena Rosenblatt, *Rousseau and Geneva* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. 10-18, 34-37, 135-41, 203-4, and 258-64.
26. Abraham Kuyper, “Calvinism: Source and Stronghold of our Constitutional Liberties,” in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, edited by James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 314, 315.