



*Exploring the  
Sources of  
World Civilization*  
**1650 to the Present**  
Second Edition

**Karl Bahm • Mary Beth Farrell  
R. Geoffrey Jensen • Orazio Ciccarelli**

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# *PART ONE*

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## *ABSOLUTISM AND CONSTITUTIONALISM*

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## **J. B. Bossuet: Politics Drawn from the Very Words Of Holy Scripture\***

*During Louis XIV's reign, Jacques Benigne Bossuet (1627-1704) was not only a bishop but the tutor to the Dauphin. He was also a popular preacher and writer. In the following excerpts from Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture, Bossuet justifies the theory of divine right.*

### **BOOK II**

#### **Proposition 8**

Monarchical government is the best.

If it is the most natural, it is consequently the most durable and from that it follows also the strongest.

It is also the most opposed to divisiveness, which is the worst evil of states, and the most certain cause of their ruin. . . . "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."

We have seen that Our Lord in this sentence has followed the natural progress of government and seems to have wished to show to realms and to cities the same means of uniting themselves that nature has established in families.

Thus, it is natural that when families wish to unite to form a body of State, they will almost automatically coalesce into the government that is proper to them.

When states are formed there is the impulse to union and there is never more union than under a single leader. Also there is never greater strength because everything works in harmony. . . .

### **BOOK III**

Where we begin to explain the nature and properties of royal authority .

#### **Article I**

There are four characters of qualities essential to royal authority: First, royal authority is sacred; second, it is paternal; third, it is absolute; fourth, it is ruled by reason. . . .

#### **Article II**

Royal authority is sacred.

#### **Proposition 1**

God established kings as his ministers and rules people by them.

We have already seen that all power comes from God. "The prince," St. Paul adds, "is the minister of God to

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\*From J.B. Bossuet, "Book III", *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of the Holy Scripture* (1870), vol. 1. Translated by L. Pearce Williams.

thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Thus princes act as ministers of God, and as his lieutenants on earth. It is by them that he exercises his rule.

Thus we have seen that the royal throne is not the throne of a man but the throne of God himself. . . .

He thus governs all peoples and gives to them all their kings; even though he governs Israel in a more particular and more explicit way. . . .

## **Proposition 2**

The person of the king is sacred.

It thus appears that the person of kings is sacred and that to make an attempt on their lives is a sacrilege.

God has had them anointed by his prophets with a sacred unction as he has his pontiffs and his altars anointed.

But without the external application of this unction, they are sacred by their office, as being the representatives of the divine majesty, deputed by his providence to the execution of his designs. . . .

The title of Christ is given to kings; and they are everywhere called christs, or the anointed of the Lord.

## **Article III**

Royal authority is paternal and its proper character is goodness.

After what has been said, this truth has no need of proof.

We have seen that kings take the place of God, who is the true father of the human species. We have also seen that the first idea of power which exists among men is that of the paternal power; and that kings are modeled on fathers.

Everybody is also in accord, that the obedience which is owed to the public power can be found in the ten commandments only in the precept which obliges him to honor his parents.

Thus it follows from this that the name of kings is a name for father and that goodness is the most natural character of kings. . . .

## **Proposition 3**

The prince must provide for the needs of the people.

It is a royal right to provide for the needs of the people. He who undertakes it at the expense of the prince undertakes royalty; this is why it has been established. The obligation to care for the people is the foundation of all the rights that to have recourse to its prince. . . .



## The Duke of Saint-Simon: Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court\*

*One of the most famous primary sources for the reign of Louis XIV (r 1643-1715) are the memoirs of Louis, Duke of Saint-Simon. The Duke, who lived at Versailles for thirty years, was never an important figure at court. Saint-Simon hated the king for denying him preferment while elevating "the vile bourgeoisie." He was, however, an astute observer of the Sun King and his nobles. Although scholars now doubt the reliability of some of the Duke's accounts, his memoirs provide a fascinating insider's view of life at Versailles. The following excerpts discuss Louis XIV's handling of the nobility.*

[Louis] early showed a disinclination for Paris. . . . The troubles that had taken place there during his minority made him regard the place as dangerous; he wished, too, to render himself venerable by hiding himself from the eyes of the multitude. . . .

The frequent fetes, the private promenades at Versailles, the journeys, were means on which the young king seized in order to distinguish or mortify the courtiers and thus render them more assiduous in pleasing him. He felt that of real favours he had not enough to bestow; in order to keep up the spirit of devotion, he therefore unceasingly invented all sorts of ideal ones, little preferences and petty distinctions, which answered his purpose as well.

He was exceedingly jealous of the attention paid him. Not only did he notice the presence of the most distinguished courtiers, but those of inferior degree also. He looked to the right and to the left, not only upon rising but upon going to bed, at his meals, in passing through his apartments, or his gardens of Versailles, where alone the courtiers were allowed to follow him; he saw and noticed everybody; not one escaped him, not even those who hoped to remain unnoticed. He marked well all absentees from the Court, found out the reason of their absence, and never lost an opportunity of acting towards them as the occasion might seem to justify. With some of the courtiers (most distinguished), it was a demerit not to make the Court their ordinary abode; with others 'twas a fault to come but rarely; for those who never or scarcely ever came it was certain disgrace. When their names were in any way mentioned, "I do not know them," the King would reply haughtily. Those who presented themselves but seldom were thus characterized: "They are people I never see;" these decrees were irrevocable. He could not bear people who liked Paris.

Louis XIV took great pains to be well informed of all that passed everywhere; in the public places, in the private houses, in society and familiar intercourse. His spies and tell-tales were infinite. . . .

The most cruel means by which the King was informed of what was passing--for many years before anybody knew it--was that of opening letters. The promptitude and dexterity with which they were opened passes understanding. . . . A word of contempt against the King or the government, a joke, a detached phrase, was enough. It is incredible how many people, justly or unjustly, were more or less ruined, always without resource, without trial, and without knowing why. The secret was impenetrable; for nothing ever cost the King less than profound silence. . . .

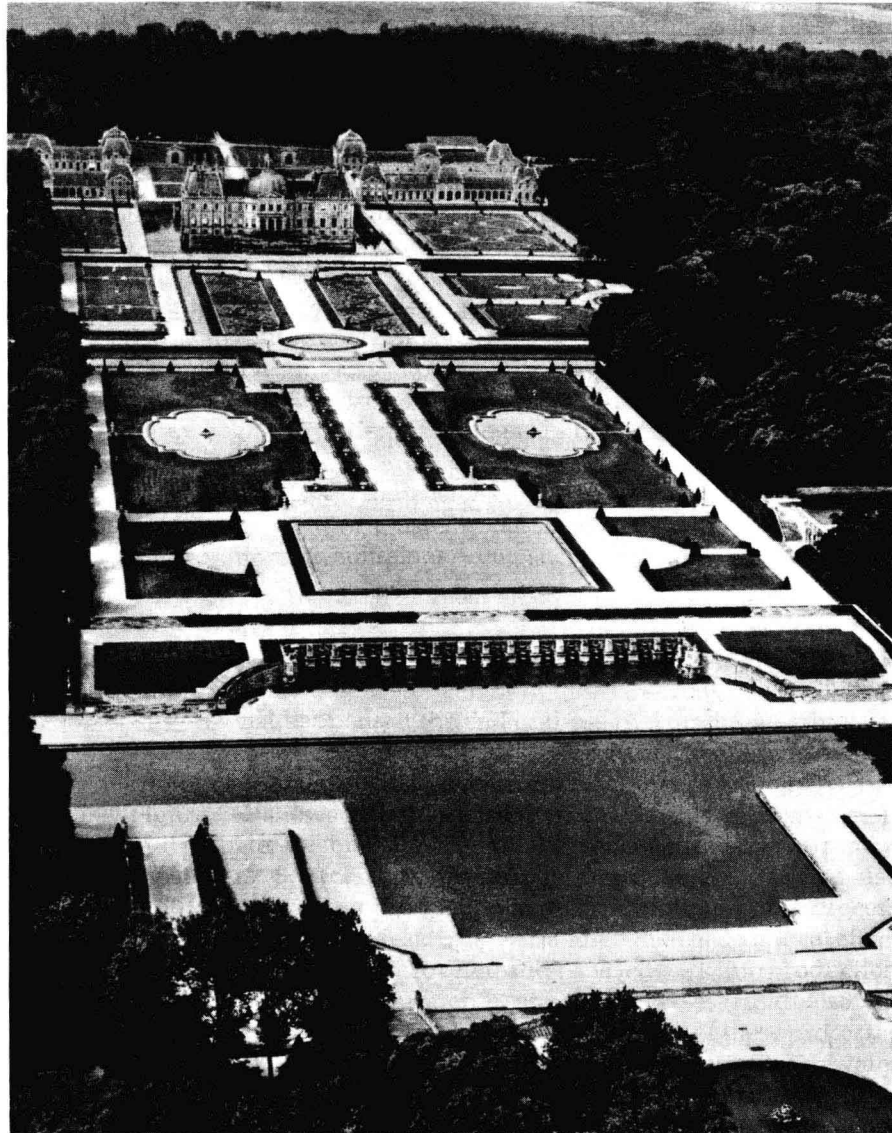
He liked splendour, magnificence, and profusion in everything: you pleased him if you shone through the brilliancy of your houses, your clothes, your table, your equipages. Thus a taste for extravagance and luxury was disseminated through all classes of society; causing infinite harm, and leading to general confusion of rank and to ruin. . . .

[H]e liked to subjugate nature by art and treasure. He built at Versailles. . . without any general design, the beautiful and the ugly, the vast and the mean, all jumbled together. His own apartments and those of the Queen, are inconvenient to the last degree, dull, close, stinking. The gardens astonish by their magnificence, but cause regret by their bad taste. . . I might never finish upon the monstrous defects of a palace so immense and to immensely dear. . .

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\*From *The Duke of Saint Simon, Memoirs of Louis XIV and His Court and of the Regency*, Volume II. New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1910, pp. 892-894, 898-899.

## An Aerial View of Versailles\*



Alain Perceval

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\*From the French Government Tourist Office

## Peter the Great's Blueprint for Russia: Decrees, 1701- 1714\*

*Peter the Great (r. 1682 to 1725) built on the traditional absolutism of old Russia in order to increase his power and his nation's military might. He forced his nobles to serve the state, bound the peasantry even more closely to the land, and instituted conscription for life in his armed forces. On the other hand, he introduced many Western ideas and customs in an attempt to pull his nation and people into the European mainstream. Much of the populace hated Peter for his efforts to transform Russia; many of his reforms were rescinded after his death. The following selection consists of the Tsar's decrees, which range from orders on shaving to the compulsory education of the nobility.*

### 1. Decree on Western Dress (1701)

Western dress shall be worn by all the boyars, members of our councils and of our court . . . gentry of Moscow, secretaries . . . provincial gentry, gosti, government officials, strel'tsy, members of the guilds purveying for our household, citizens of Moscow of all ranks, and residents of provincial cities . . . excepting the clergy and peasant tillers of the soil. The upper dress shall be of French or Saxon cut, and the lower dress . . .—[including] waistcoat, trousers, boots, shoes, and hats—shall be of the German type. They shall also ride German saddles. Likewise the womenfolk of all ranks, including the priests', deacons', and church attendants' wives, the wives of the dragoons, the soldiers, and the strel'tsy, and their children, shall wear Western dresses, hats, jackets, and underwear—undervests and petticoats—and shoes. From now on no one of the above-mentioned is to wear Russian dress or Circassian coats, sheepskin coats, or Russian peasant coats, trousers, boots, and shoes. It is also forbidden to ride Russian saddles, and the craftsmen shall not manufacture them or sell them at the marketplaces.

### 2. Decree on The Invitation of Foreigners (1702)

It is sufficiently known in all the lands which the Almighty has placed under our rule, that since our accession to the throne all our efforts and intentions have tended to govern this realm in such a way that all of our subjects should, through our care for the general good, become more and more prosperous. For this end we have always tried to maintain internal order, to defend the State against invasion, and in every possible way to improve and to extend trade. With this purpose we have been compelled to make some necessary and salutary changes in the administration, in order that our subjects might more easily gain a knowledge of matters of which they were before ignorant, and become more skillful in their commercial relations. We have therefore given orders, made dispositions, and founded institutions indispensable for increasing our trade with foreigners, and shall do the same in [the] future. Nevertheless we fear that matters are not in such a good condition as we desire, and that our subjects cannot in perfect quietness enjoy the fruits of our labors, and we have therefore considered still other means to protect our frontier from the invasion of the enemy, and to preserve the rights and privileges of our State, and the general peace of all Christians, as is incumbent on a Christian monarch to do. To attain these worthy aims, we have endeavored to improve our military forces, which are the protection of our State, so that our troops may consist of well-drilled men, maintained in perfect order and discipline. In order to obtain greater improvement in this respect, and to encourage foreigners, who are able to assist us in this way, as well as artists and artisans profitable to the State, to come in numbers to our country, we have issued this manifesto, and have ordered printed

\*From *A Sourcebook for Russian History*, by George Vernadsky, p. 347. Copyright © 1972 Yale University Press. Reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

sent throughout Europe. And as in our residence of Moscow, the free exercise of religion of all other sects, although not agreeing with our church, is already allowed, so shall this be hereby confirmed anew in such manner that we, by the power granted to us by the Almighty, shall exercise no compulsion over the consciences of men, and shall gladly allow every Christian to care for his own salvation at his own risk.

### **3. Decree on Shaving (1705)**

A decree to be published in Moscow and in all the provincial cities: Henceforth, in accordance with this, His Majesty's decree, all court attendants . . . provincial service men, government officials of all ranks, military men, all the gosti, members of the wholesale merchants' guild, and members of the guilds purveying for our household must shave their beards and moustaches. But, if it happens that some of them do not wish to shave their beards and moustaches, let a yearly tax be collected from such persons; from court attendants.... provincial service men, military men, and government officials of all ranks— 60 rubles per person; from the gosti and members of the wholesale merchants' guild of the first class—100 rubles per person; from members of the wholesale merchants' guild of the middle and the lower class (and) . . . from (other) merchants and townsfolk—60 rubles per person from townsfolk (of the lower rank), boyars' servants, stagecoachmen, waggoners, church attendants (with the exception of priests and deacons), and from Moscow residents of all ranks—30 rubles per person. Special badges shall be issued to them from the Administrator of Land Affairs of Public Order . . . which they must wear. . . . As for the peasants, let a toll of two half-copecks per beard be collected at the town gates each time they enter or leave a town; and do not let the peasants pass the town gates, into or out of town, without paying this toll.

### **4. Decree on Compulsory Education of the Russian Nobility ( 1714)**

Send to every administrative district some persons from mathematical schools to teach the children of the nobility except those of freeholders and government clerks—mathematics and geometry; as a penalty for evasion establish a rule that no one will be allowed to marry unless he learns these subjects. Inform all prelates to issue no marriage certificates to those who are ordered to go to schools. . . .

The Great Sovereign has decreed; in all administrative districts children between the ages of ten and fifteen of the nobility, of government clerks, and of lesser of finials, except those of freeholders, must be taught mathematics and some geometry. Toward that end, students should be sent from mathematical schools as teachers, several into each administrative district to prelates and to renowned monasteries to establish schools. During their instruction these teachers should be given food and financial remuneration . . . from district revenues set aside for that purpose by personal orders of His Imperial Majesty. No fees should be collected from students. When they have mastered the material, they should then be given certificates written in their own handwriting. When the students are released they pay one ruble each for their training. Without these certificates they should not be allowed to marry nor receive marriage certificates.

### **5. An Instruction to Russian Students Abroad Studying Navigation (1714)**

1. Learn how to draw plans and charts and how to use the compass and other naval indicators.
2. Learn how to navigate a vessel in battle as well as in a simple maneuver, and learn how to use all appropriate tools and instruments: namely, sails, ropes, and oars, and the like matters, on row boats and other vessels.
3. Discover as much as possible how to put ships to sea during a naval battle. Those who cannot succeed in this effort must diligently ascertain what action should be taken by the vessels that do and those that do not put to sea during such a situation [naval battle]. Obtain from foreign naval officers written statements, bearing their signatures and seals, of how adequately you are prepared for naval duties.
4. If, upon his return, anyone wishes to receive from the Tsar greater favors for himself, he should learn, in addition to the above enumerated instructions, how to construct those vessels aboard which he would like to demonstrate his skills.
5. Upon his return to Moscow, every foreign-trained Russian should bring with him at his own expense, for which he will later be reimbursed, at least two experienced masters of naval science. They the returnees will be

assigned soldiers, one soldier per returnee, to teach them what they have learned abroad. And if they do not wish to accept soldiers they may teach their acquaintances or their own people. The treasury will pay for transportation and maintenance of soldiers. And if anyone other than soldiers learns the art of navigation the treasury will pay 100 rubles for the maintenance of every such individual.

## A Secret Letter: Monarchial Authority in Prussia\*

*Frederick William (r. 1640-1688), Prussia's "Great Elector," laid the foundation for absolute monarchy in Prussia by imposing new taxes, modernizing his army, and recruiting the nobility into the state's bureaucracy. Later Prussian rulers continued the tradition of maintaining a formidable army, efficient tax collection, and an efficient and honest bureaucracy. This 1667 letter to his son and heir sets forth the Great Elector's philosophy of absolutism.*

It is necessary that you conduct yourself as a good father to your people, that you love your subjects regardless of their religious convictions, and that you try to promote their welfare at all times. Work to stimulate trade everywhere, and keep in mind the population increase of the Mark of Brandenburg. Take advantage of the advice of the clergy and nobility as much as you can; listen to them and be gracious to them all, as befits one of your position; recognize ability where you find it, so that you will increase the love and affection of your subjects toward you. But, it is essential that you always be moderate in your attitudes, in order not to endanger your position and lose respect. With those of your own station in life, be careful never to give way in matters of precedence and in all to which you are entitled; on the contrary, hold fast to the eminence of your superior position. Remember that one can lose one's superior position if one allows too great pomposity and too great a show upon the part of members of the court.

Be keenly interested in the administration of justice throughout your land. See to it that justice is maintained for the poor as well as for the rich without discrimination of any kind. See to it that lawsuits are carried out without delay, without procrastination, for in doing this, you will solidify your own position. . . .

Seek to maintain friendly relations with the princes and the nobility of the Empire. Correspond with them frequently and maintain your friendship with them. Be certain not to give them cause for ill-will; try not to arouse emotions of jealousy or enmity, but be sure that you are always in a strong position to maintain your weight in disputes that may arise. . . .

It is wise to have alliances, if necessary, but it is better to rely on your own strength. You are in a weak position if you do not have the means and do not possess the confidence of the people. These are the things, God be praised, which have made me powerful since the time I began to have them. I only regret that, in the beginning of my reign, I forsook these policies and followed the advice of others against my will.

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\*From *Documents of German History*, Louis L. Snyder, ed., pp. 94-95. Copyright © 1958 by Rutgers, The State University. Reprinted by permission of Rutgers University Press



## King James I: True Law of Free Monarchies\*

*James I, the Scottish cousin of Elizabeth I, became the first Stuart ruler of England in 1603 and remained so until 1625. Previously, James had served for thirty-five years as King of Scotland but was unfamiliar with English political traditions. Although he somehow managed to get along with Parliament, James always insisted that he ruled by divine right. This excerpt from his book, True Law of Free Monarchies, sets forth his ideas on kingship and the law.*

THE KINGS THEREAFTER in Scotland were before any estates or ranks of men within the same, before any Parliaments were holden or laws made; and by them was the land distributed (which at the first was wholly theirs), states erected and decerned [*decreed—Ed.*], and forms of government devised and established. And it follows of necessity that the Kings were the authors and makers of the laws and not the laws of the Kings. . . . And according to these fundamental laws already alleged, we daily see that in the Parliament (which is nothing else but the head court of the King and his vassals) the laws are but craved by his subjects, and only made by him at their rogation and with their advice. For albeit the King made daily statutes and ordinances, enjoining such pains thereto as he thinks meet, without any advice of Parliament or Estates, yet it lies in the power of no Parliament to make any kind of law or statute without his sceptre be to it for giving it the force of a law. . . . And as ye see it manifest that the King is overlord of the whole land, so is he master over every person that inhabiteth the same, having power over the life and death of every one of them. For although a just prince will not take the life of any of his subjects without a clear law, yet the same laws whereby he taketh them are made by himself or his predecessors, and so the power flows always from himself; as by daily experience we see good and just princes will from time to time make new laws and statutes, adjoining the penalties to the breakers thereof, which before the law was made had been no crime to the subject to have committed. Not that I deny the old definition of a King and of a law which makes the King to be a speaking law and the law a dumb King; for certainly a King that governs not by his law can neither be countable to God for his administration nor have a happy and established reign. For albeit it be true, that I have at length proved, that the King is above the law as both the author and giver of strength thereto, yet a good King will not only delight to rule his subjects by the law, but even will conform himself in his own actions thereunto; always keeping that ground, at the health of the commonwealth be his chief law.

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\*From *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I, 1602-1625*, J.R. Tanner, ed., p. 187. Copyright © 1930 by Cambridge University Press, New York. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

## The Petition of Right, 1628\*

*Charles I succeeded James I and ruled England from 1625 to 1649. By 1628, Charles I was at war with both Spain and France and desperately needed funds from Parliament to wage this war. After imposing taxes without Parliamentary consent and infringing on other traditional English rights, the King became increasingly unpopular. Parliamentary leaders presented Charles with the Petition of Right to call attention to royal abuses of power and to advise the king that even a monarch must obey the law. The document has been called "England's most important constitutional document since Magna Carta." Nevertheless, in 1629, Charles dissolved the Parliament and ruled without it for eleven years.*

Humbly show unto our Sovereign Lord the King, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in Parliament assembled, that whereas it is declared and enacted by a statute made in the time of the reign of King Edward the First, commonly called *Statutum de Tallagio non concedendo*, that no tallage or aid shall be laid or levied by the King or his heirs in this realm, without the goodwill and assent of the Archbishops, Bishops, Earls, Barons, Knights, Burgesses, and other the freemen of the commonalty of this realm: and by authority of Parliament holden in the five and twentieth year of the reign of King Edward the Third, it is declared and enacted, that from thenceforth no person shall be compelled to make any loans to the King against his will, because such loans were against reason and the franchise of the land; and by other laws of this realm it is provided, that none should be charged by any charge or imposition, called a Benevolence, or by such like charge, by which the statutes before-mentioned, and other the good laws and statutes of this realm, your subjects have inherited this freedom, that they should not be compelled to contribute to any tax, tallage, aid, or other like charge, not set by common consent in Parliament.

Yet nevertheless, of late divers commissions directed to sundry Commissioners in several counties with instructions have issued, by means whereof your people have been in divers places assembled, and required to lend certain sums of money unto your Majesty, and many of them upon their refusal so to do, have had an oath administered unto them, not warrantable by the laws or statutes of this realm, and have been constrained to become bound to make appearance and give attendance before your Privy Council, and in other places, and others of them have been therefore imprisoned, confined, and sundry other ways molested and disquieted. . . .

And where also by the statute called, "The Great Charter of the Liberties of England," it is declared and enacted, that no freeman may be taken or imprisoned or be disseised of his freeholds or liberties, or his free customs, or be outlawed or exiled; or in any manner destroyed, but by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.

They do therefore humbly pray you Most Excellent Majesty, that no man hereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such like charge, without common consent by Act of Parliament; and that none be called to make answer, or take such oath, or to give attendance, or be confined, or otherwise molested or disquieted concerning the same, or for refusal thereof; and that no freeman, in any such manner as is before-mentioned, be imprisoned or detained. . . .

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\*From *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution (1899)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, S.R. Gardiner, ed., pp. 66-69. Copyright © 1899 by Oxford University Press, Oxford, England. By permission of Oxford University Press.

## King Charles, His Speech on the Scaffold\*

*At the end of the English Civil War, Parliament appointed a court to call Charles I "to account for that blood he had shed and the mischief he had done." Found guilty of being "a Tyrant, Traitor, and Murderer, and publick Enemy to the Commonwealth," the Stuart king was beheaded on January 30, 1649. Many Englishmen admired the king's calm dignity at the hour of his death; some began to consider him a martyr rather than a tyrant. The following eyewitness account describes the speech Charles I made while standing on the scaffold immediately before his execution.*

About ten in the morning the King was brought from St. James's, walking on foot through the park, with a regiment of foot, part before and part behind him, with colours flying, drums beating. . . .

The scaffold was hung round with black and the floor covered with black and the Ax and block laid in the middle of the scaffold. There were divers companies of foot, and troops of horse placed on the one side of the scaffold towards King's Street and on the other side towards Charing Cross, and the multitudes of people that came to be spectators, very great.

The King being come upon the scaffold, look'd very earnestly upon the block and ask'd Col. Hacker if there were no higher. And then spake thus, directing his speech chiefly to Col. Tomlinson.

**King:** I shall be very little heard of anybody here. I shall therefore speak a word unto you here. Indeed I could hold my peace very well, if I did not think that holding my peace would make some men think I did submit to the guilt as well as to the punishment. But I think it is my duty to God first and to my country for to clear myself both as an honest man and a good King, and a good Christian. I shall begin first with my innocence. In troth I think it not very needful for me to insist long upon this, for all the world knows that I never did begin a war with the two Houses of Parliament. And I call God to witness, to whom I must shortly make an account, that I never did intend for to encroach upon their privileges. They began upon me, it is the Militia they began upon, they confest that the Militia was mine, but they thought fit for to have it from me. . . . Yet for all this, God forbid that I should be so ill a Christian as not to say God's judgments are just upon me. Many times he does pay justice by an unjust sentence. . . . I will only say this that an unjust sentence that I suffered for to take effect, is punished now by an unjust sentence upon me.

For the people . . . truly I desire their liberty and freedom much as anybody whomsoever. But I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consists in having of government; those laws by which their life and their goods may most be their own. It is not for having share in government, Sir, that is nothing pertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clean different things, and therefore until they do that, I mean, that you do put the people in that liberty as I say, certainly they will never enjoy themselves.

Sirs. It is for this now that I am come here. If I would have given way divers to an arbitrary way for to have all laws changed according to the power of the sword I needed not to have come here. And, therefore, I tell you, and I pray God it be not laid to your charge, that I am the martyr of the people. . . .

I have delivered my conscience. I pray God that you do take those courses that are best for the good of the Kingdom and your own salvations. . . .

[M]y conscience in religion I think is very well knowne to all the world: and therefore, I declare before you all that I die a Christian, according to the professions of the Church of England, as I found it left me by my father. . . .

Then turning to Colonel Hacker, he said "Take care that they do not put me to pain. And Sir, this, and it

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\*From *Trial of Charles I*, J.G. Muddiman, ed., pp. 260-265. Edinburgh: William Hodge and Co., 1928.