

There is no cause for surprise if, in answer to this question, even though apparently most contradictory, the fundamental doctrine of the Calvinists is cited: even the *absolute sovereignty of God*. For, from this confession, it follows that all authority and power in the earth is not inherent, but imposed; so that by nature there can no claim to authority be entered either by prince or people. God Almighty himself alone is sovereign. In comparison with himself, He esteems every creature as nothing, whether born in the royal palace or in the beggar's hut. Authority of one creature over another arises, first of all, from the fact that God confers it, not to abandon it himself, but to allow it to be used for his honor. He is sovereign, and he confers his authority upon whom he wills,—at one time to kings and princes, at another to nobles and patricians, and sometimes to the whole nation at once. American democracy is as useful an instrument for the manifestation of his sovereign glory as Russian despotism. The question is not whether the people rule, or a king, but whether both, when they rule, do it by virtue of Him.

This passes sentence upon a twofold wrong. First, upon the sovereignty of the people in the sense in which Hugo Grotius and Mirabeau proclaimed it. The idea that every man by being born of a woman has a claim to a part of the political authority, and that the state has its rise in the collection of these atomic parts, puts a limit to the sovereignty of God; it locates the source of sovereignty in man as such, and not in the mighty arm of God, and leads to the destruction of all moral authority. In like manner by this confession is condemned the *droit divin* in the sense in which it was pushed by the friends of the Stuarts, and the legitimists in France, and by the Prussian Junkerthum. The words of Charles I. on the gallows to his father confessor: "The people are not entitled to a part in the government; it belongs not to them; a king and his subjects are totally dif-