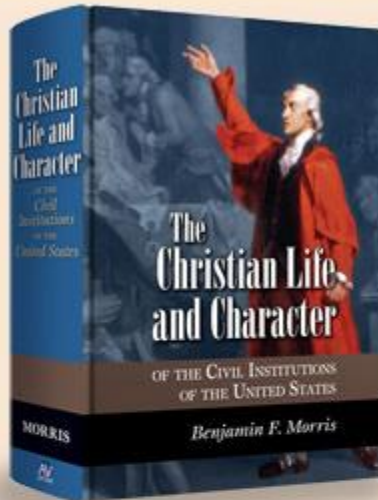


The Christian Life And Character Of The Civil Institutions Of The United States

By: Benjamin F. Morris



Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States

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**"The Book the ACLU Does Not Want
You to Read! I Promise. I saw it
happen!"** –Gary DeMar, President of
American Vision

I was debating an ACLU attorney at
Christmas on an NPR station. I pulled
out a Xerox copy of *The Christian Life
and Character of the Civil Institutions of
the United States* and said to her: "Until

you answer this book, the ACLU can't make a case against America's
Christian founding." She was shocked when she saw it. She asked
where I had gotten it. The only thing that gave her relief was the fact
that the book was not in print. But now it is."

"Be afraid ACLU. Be very afraid. Morris packs *The Christian Life and
Character* with page after page of original source material making the
case that America was founded as a Christian nation. The evidence is
unanswerable and irrefutable. This 1000-page book will astound you
and send enemies of Christianity into shock. Keep in mind that it was
published in 1864 and has been out of print for more than a century.
It has been newly typeset using a very readable font and added
subheads. A new Foreword written by my long-time friend Dr. Archie
Jones describes the background of the book and provides a brief
biography of the author." –Gary DeMar

(Hardback, 1060 pages)

Read that carefully. Read the whole THOUSAND pages if you need
to. This information is found at:

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I made it really small so that hopefully it would be clickable. Here it is at full size:

<https://www.americanvision.org/store/pc-810-12-christian-life-and-character-of-the-civil-institutions-of-the-united-states.aspx>

This book was published in 1864. That is over 143 years ago, long before the Politically Correct among us had the ability to try to rewrite history.

The real purpose of the “Establishment Clause” found in the First Amendment, was not to separate church from state. It was designed solely to say that no CHRISTIAN denomination of the church would be favored by the government above any other CHRISTIAN denomination.

This book is over 1,000 pages long. I am going to attempt to show you just a little of what it says. The evidence is incontrovertible that the vast majority of the Framers of the Constitution were Christian. Not only that, they firmly believed that this country had to depend on God for its very survival.

And note that this was not just any God. They frequently reference “Our Lord” and “Jesus” in their writings.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will give assertions and then give quotes that back it up. This may get a bit lengthy. If you want to know less, skim it. If you want to know more, get the book.

You may be wondering why this is important, especially given the problems you will face in upcoming chapters. If you are, you will find that the solution to many of our problems come back to a restoration of the values that made this country great.

No one is attempting to force any of this on you. However, if we don't all take action, we will soon be in a position where we either die or accept a totally perverted set of values (or maybe lack of values). Our enemies give us no choice. As the motto goes, we have to

Live Free Or Die!

America Was Settled Predominately By Christians

Columbus came as a religious man, an admiral of Christ, to find the continent, not for its material treasures, but because it held souls which he wished to bring as a trophy to the feet of Christ. – Irving

The embarkation of the Pilgrims for Holland, is deeply interesting from its circumstances, and also as a mark of the character of the times, independently of its connection with names now incorporated with the history of empires. Theirs was not the flight of guilt, but virtue. It was an humble and peaceable religion flying from causeless oppression. It was conscience attempting to escape from the arbitrary rule of the Stuarts. It was Robinson and Brewster leading off their little band from their native soil, at first to find a shelter on the shores of a neighboring continent, but ultimately to come hither, and, having surmounted all difficulties and braved a thousand dangers, to find here a place of refuge and rest. Thanks be to God that this spot was honored as the asylum of religious liberty! May its standard, reared here, remain forever! May it rise as high as heaven, till its banner shall fan the air of both continents, and wave as a glorious ensign of peace and prosperity to the nations! - Webster

Our fathers had that religious sentiment, that trust in Providence, that determination to do right, and to seek, through every degree of toil and suffering, the honor of God, and the preservation of their liberties, which we shall do well to cherish, to imitate, to equal, to the utmost of our ability. – Webster

This was the birth of constitutional liberty. In the cabin of the Mayflower humanity recovered its rights, and instituted governments on the basis of equal rights, for the general good. As the Pilgrims landed, their institutions were already perfected. Democratic liberty and independent Christian worship at once existed in America. – Bancroft

The compact of the Puritans is a full demonstration that the nature of civil governments, abstracted from the political institutions of their native country, had been an object of their serious meditation. – John Quincy Adams

This compact was the first in the world entered into by freemen, preserving the liberties of each, and guaranteeing to all equal privileges and rights. It was the germ of the first true republic on earth. The great idea, so novel, so startling to the world, so directly opposed to the divine right of kings and prelates, under whose sway the world had so long groaned in bondage—the great idea of such a republic, as founded in the nature and inalienable rights of man, the Pilgrims derived from the gospel scheme of a Christian church. For this stupendous discovery, which is now so simple that we wonder it could ever have been overlooked, we are wholly indebted to the diligent search which the Puritans made into the great principles of the rights of conscience, and into the true scriptural model of a Christian church. – Hall [Puritan Historian]

Our ancestors established their system of government on morality and religious sentiment. Moral habits, they believed, cannot be safely trusted on any other foundation than religious principles, nor any government be secure which is not supported by moral habits. Living under the heavenly light of revelation, they hoped to find all the social dispositions, all the duties which men owe to each other and to society, enforced and performed. Whatever makes good men makes good citizens. Our fathers came here to enjoy their religion free and unmolested; and, at the end of two centuries, there is nothing of which we can express a more deep and earnest conviction than of the inestimable importance of that religion to man, in regard to this life, and that which is to come. Let us not forget the religious character of our origin. Our fathers were brought hither by their high veneration of the Christian religion. They journeyed by its light and labored in its hope. They sought to incorporate it with the elements of their society, and to diffuse its influences through all their institutions—civil, political, social, and educational. Let us cherish their sentiments, and extend their influence still more and more, until the full conviction that that is the happiest society which partakes in the highest degree of the mild and peaceful spirit of Christianity. – Webster

The settlement of New England purely for the purposes of religion and the propagation of civil and religious liberty, is an event which has no parallel in the history of modern ages. The piety, self-denial, suffering, patience, perseverance, and magnanimity of the first settlers of the country are without a rival. The happy and extensive consequences of the settlements which they made, and of the sentiments which they were careful to propagate to their posterity, to the Church, and to the world, admit of no description. They are still increasing, spreading wider and wider, and appear more and more important. – Trumbull

The civil liberties of New England are part of the inheritance of their fathers; and shall we give that inheritance away? Is it objected that we shall be exposed to great suffering? Better suffer than sin. It is better to trust the God of our fathers than to put confidence in princes. If we suffer because we dare not comply with the wills of men, against the will of God, we suffer in a good cause, and shall be accounted martyrs in the next generation and at the great day. – Bancroft

The Founding Fathers Wanted A Separation Of School And State

The civil liberties of New England are part of the inheritance of their fathers; and shall we give that inheritance away? Is it objected that we shall be exposed to great suffering? Better suffer than sin. It is better to trust the God of our fathers than to put confidence in princes. If we suffer because we dare not comply with the wills of men, against the will of God, we suffer in a good cause, and shall be accounted martyrs in the next generation and at the great day – Rev. John Wise

The ends for which our fathers chiefly erected a college were that scholars might there be educated for the service of Christ and his churches, in the work of the ministry, and that the youth might be seasoned in their tender years with such principles as brought their blessed progenitors into this wilderness. There is no one thing of greater concernment to these churches, in present and after times, than the prosperity of that society. We cannot subsist without a college. – Cotton Mather

The rector or president shall also cause the Scriptures daily, except on the Sabbath mornings and evenings, to be read by the students at the times of prayer in the school; and upon the Sabbath he shall either expound practical theology, or cause the non-graduating students to repeat sermons; so that, through the blessing of God, it may be conducive to their establishment in the principles of the Christian Protestant religion. – Harvard College rules of government (1636)

Whereas our wise and pious ancestors, so early as the year 1636, laid the foundation of Harvard College, in which university many persons of great eminence have, by the blessing of God, been initiated into those arts and sciences which qualified them for public employment, both in Church and State; and whereas the encouragement of arts and sciences, and all good literature, *tends to the honor of God, the advantage of the Christian religion*, and the great benefit of this and the other United States of America, it is declared, that the President and Fellows of Harvard College,... - Constitution of Massachusetts (1780)

Yale has given to our churches one thousand six hundred and sixty-one ministers, of whom seven hundred and forty-one are still living. In the State of Connecticut, down to 1842, out of nine hundred and forty-seven ministers, only thirty-three were not graduates. Princeton was started in 1741, one of the fruits of the great revival, and by the New Side of that day. Dartmouth was a missionary school from its inception in 1769; and its catalogue gives the names of more than seven hundred ministers, a quarter-part of all its graduates. And almost all of our later colleges are the fruit of Christian beneficence, and their foundations have been laid with the prayers of our churches; and He who heareth prayer has breathed upon them his divine blessing, and through their influence sanctified our youth for the service of Christ and his Church. They have aspired to realize that ideal of education which Milton had in vision when he said, 'The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection. – Cotton Mather

In these measures especially in the laws establishing common schools, lies the secret of the success and character of New England. Every child, as it was born into the world, was lifted from the earth by the genius of the country, and in the statutes of the land received, as its birthright, a pledge of the public care for its morals and its mind. – Bancroft

Art. 1. The school shall begin at 8 o'clock and go outt att 11; shall begin again att 1 o'clock and ende att 4. The bell shall bee rung beefore the school begins.

Art. 2. When school opens, one of the children shall reade the morning prayer as it stands in the catechism, and close with the prayer before dinner; and inn the afternoon the same. The evening school shall begin with the Lord's prayer and close by singing a psalm.

Art. 3. Hee shall instruct the children inn the common prayers and the questions and answers off the catechism on Wednesdays and Saturdays, too enable them too say them better on Sunday inn the church.

Art. 4. Hee shall bee bound too keep his school nine months in succession, from September too June, one year with another, and shall always bee present himself.

Art. 5. Hee shall bee choirister off the church; ring the bell three tymes before service, and reade a chapter off the Bible inn the church between the second and third ringinge off the bell; after the third ringinge he shall reade the ten commandments and the twelve articles off ffaith and then sett the psalm. In the afternoone after the third ringinge off the bell hee shall reade a short chapter or one off the psalms off David as the congregacione are assemblinge; afterwards he shall again sett the psalm.

Art. 6. When the minister shall preach at Broockland or Utrecht he shall be bounde to reade twice before the congregacione from the booke used for the purpose. Hee shall heare the children recite the questions and answers off the catechism on Sunday and instruct them.

Art. 7. Hee shall provide a basin off water for the baptism, ffor which hee shall receive twelve stuyvers in wampum ffor every baptism from parents or sponsors. Hee shall furnish bread and wine ffor communion att the charge off the church. Hee shall also serve as messenger ffor the consistories.

Art. 8. Hee shall give the funerale invitations and toll the bell; and ffor which hee shall receive for persons off fifteen years off age and upwards twelve guilders; and ffor persons under fifteen, eight guilders; and if hee shall cross the river to New York hee shall have four guilders more.

– Articles of a New York school

Christianity Was Central In The Colonization Of The Several States

Whereas the glory of Almighty God and the good of mankind is the reason and end of government, and, therefore, government in itself is a venerable ordinance of God, and forasmuch as it is principally desired and intended by the proprietary and governor, and the freemen of Pennsylvania and territories thereunto belonging, to make and establish such laws as shall best preserve true Christian and civil liberty, in opposition to all unchristian, licentious, and unjust practices, whereby God may have his due, Caesar his due, and the people their due, from tyranny and oppression. – First Legislation of Pennsylvania

To the end that looseness, irreligion, and atheism may not creep in under the pretence of conscience in this province, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That, according to the good example of the primitive Christians, and for the ease of the creation, every *first* day of the week, called the Lord's day, people shall abstain from their common toil and labor, that, whether masters, parents, children, or servants, they may better dispose themselves to read the Scriptures of truth at home or to frequent such meetings of religious worship abroad, as may best suit their respective persuasions. – William Penn

...that it shall be necessary for all such as inhabit within the precincts of Virginia to determine to live together in the fear and true worship of Almighty God, Christian peace, and civil quietness; -- Virginia Charter (1609)

Since the natives of the place, who will be concerned in our plantations, are utterly strangers to Christianity, whose idolatry, ignorance, or mistake gives us no right to expel or treat them ill, and those who remove from other parts to plant there will undoubtedly be of different opinions concerning matters of religion, the liberty whereof they will expect to have allowed them, and it will not be reasonable on this account to keep them out; that civil peace may be maintained amidst the diversity of opinions, and our agreement and compact with all men may be duly and faithfully observed; the violation whereof, upon what pretence soever, cannot be, without great offence to Almighty God, and great scandal to the true religion which we profess; and also that Jews, heathens, and other dissenters from the purity of the Christian religion may not be scared and kept at a distance from it, but, by having opportunity of acquainting themselves with the truth and reasonableness of its doctrines and the peaceableness and inoffensiveness of its professors, may by good usage and persuasion, and all those convincing methods of gentleness and meekness suitable to the rules and designs of the gospel, be won over to embrace and unfeignedly to receive the truth: therefore any seven or more persons, agreeing in *any religion*, shall constitute a *Church or profession*, to which they shall give some name, to distinguish it from others. – The Fundamental Constitution of Carolina

13th. You are instructed to assent and consent to the establishment of the Christian religion, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be the religion of the state, to the utter exclusion forever of all and every other (falsely so called) religion, whether pagan or papal; and that a full and free and peaceable enjoyment thereof be secured to all and every constituent member of the state, as their individual right as freemen, without the imposition of rites and ceremonies, whether claiming civil or ecclesiastical power for their source; and that a confession and profession of the religion so established shall be necessary in qualifying any person for public trust in the state.

“14th. You are also to oppose the establishment of any mode of worship to be supported to the oppression of the rights of conscience, and at the destruction of private judgment. – North Carolina instructions to delegates in 1775

It is certain," said he, "that civil dominion was but the second motive, religion the primary one, with our ancestors in coming hither and settling this land. It was not so much their design to establish religion for the benefit of the state, as civil government for the benefit of religion, and as subservient and even necessary towards the peaceable and unmolested exercise of religion—of that religion for which they fled to these ends of the earth. They designed, in thus laying the foundations of a new state, to make it a model for the glorious kingdom of Christ. – President Stiles, Yale College

The Framers' Words Clearly Established Christianity

He had no doubt that that God who, in former ages, had hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he might show his power and glory in the redemption of his chosen people, for similar purposes had permitted the flagrant outrages which had occurred throughout the continent. It was for them now to determine whether they were worthy of divine interference—whether they would accept the high boon now held out to them by Heaven;—that, if they would, though it might lead them through a sea of blood, they were to remember that the same God whose power divided the Red Sea for the deliverance of Israel still reigned in all his glory, unchanged and unchangeable was still the enemy of the oppressor and the friend of the oppressed that he would cover them from their enemies by a pillar of cloud by day, and guide them through the night by a pillar of fire. – Patrick Henry

I have the most animating confidence that the present noble struggle for liberty will terminate gloriously for America. And let us play the men for our God, and for the cities of our God: while we are using the means in our power, let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the Universe, who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. And, having secured the approbation of our hearts by a faithful and unwearied discharge of our duty to our country, let us joyfully leave our concerns in the hands of Him who raiseth up and putteth down the empires and kingdoms of the earth as he pleaseth, and, with cheerful submission to his sovereign will, devoutly say, *'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet we will rejoice in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our salvation.'* – John Hancock

The Christian religion as I understand it, is the brightness of the glory and the express portrait of the character of the eternal, self-existent, independent, benevolent, all-powerful, and all-merciful Creator, Preserver and Father of the universe, the first good, the first perfect, and the first fair. It will last as long as the world. Neither savage nor civilized man, without a revelation, could have discovered or invented it." "Religion and virtue are the only foundations, not only of republicanism and of all free governments, but of social felicity under all governments and in all the combinations of human society. Science, liberty, and religion are the choicest blessings of humanity: without their joint influence no society can be great, flourishing, or happy. – John Adams

He is the best friend to American liberty who is the most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy to God, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country. It is your duty in this important and critical season to exert yourselves, every one in his proper sphere, to stem the tide of prevailing vice, to promote the knowledge of God, the reverence of his name and worship, and obedience to his laws. Your duty to God, to your country, to your families, and to yourselves, is the same. True religion is nothing else but an inward temper and outward conduct suited to your state and circumstances in Providence at any time. And as peace with God and conformity to him add to the sweetness of created comforts while we possess them, so in times of difficulty and trial it is the man of piety and inward principle that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier. God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable, and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both. – John Witherspoon

You desire to know something of my religion. Here is my creed. I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render him is in doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion. As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals, and his religion, as he left them to us, is the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see. I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes; and I have, with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubt as to his divinity, though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I soon will have an opportunity of knowing the truth, with less trouble.

I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and observed, especially as I do not perceive that the Supreme takes it amiss, by distinguishing the believers in his government of the world with any peculiar marks of his displeasure. I shall only add, respecting myself, that, having experienced the goodness of that Being in conducting me prosperously through a long life, I have no doubt of its continuance in the next, though without the smallest conceit of meriting such goodness. My sentiments on this subject you will see in the copy of an old letter enclosed, which I wrote in answer to one from an old religionist (Whitefield) whom I had relieved in a paralytic case by electricity, and who, being afraid I should grow proud upon it, sent me his serious though rather impertinent caution. With great and sincere esteem and affection, I am, &c., Benjamin Franklin. – Benjamin Franklin

I shall need the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land, and planted them in a Country flowing with all the necessaries and Comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with his providence, and our riper years with his wisdom and power; and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications that he will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their counsels, and prosper their measures, that whatsoever they do shall result in your good and shall secure to you the friendship and approbation of all nations. – Thomas Jefferson

I believe that religion is the only solid basis of morals, and that morals are the only possible support of free governments. – Governor Morris

Before I state my arguments in favor of teaching children to read by means of the Bible, I shall assume the five following propositions—

“I. That Christianity is the only true and perfect religion, and that in proportion as mankind adopt its principles and obey its precepts, they will be wise and happy.

“II. That a better knowledge of this religion is to be acquired by reading the Bible than in any other way.

“III. That the Bible contains more knowledge necessary to man in his present state than any other book in the world.

“IV. That knowledge is most durable, and religious instruction most useful, when imparted in early life.

“V. That the Bible, when not read in schools, is seldom read in any subsequent period of life.

“My arguments in favor of the use of the Bible as a schoolbook are founded, first, in the constitution of the human mind. The memory is the first faculty which opens in the minds of children. Of how much consequence, then, must it be to impress it with the great truths of Christianity before it is preoccupied with less interesting subjects! There is also a peculiar aptitude in the minds of children for religious knowledge. I have constantly found them, in the first six or seven years of their lives, more inquisitive upon religious subjects than upon any others; and an ingenious instructor of youth has informed me that he has found young children more capable of receiving just ideas upon the most difficult tenets of religion than upon the most simple branches of human knowledge. – Benjamin Rush

Grateful to Almighty God for the blessings which, through Jesus Christ our Lord, he has conferred on my beloved country in her emancipation, and in permitting me, under circumstances of mercy, to live to the age of eighty-nine years, and to survive the fiftieth year of American Independence, adopted by Congress on the 4th of July, 1776, which I originally subscribed on the 2d day of August of the same year, and of which I am now the last surviving signer, I do hereby recommend to the present and future generations the principles of that important document as the best inheritance their ancestors could bequeath to them, and pray that the civil and religious liberties they have secured to my country may be perpetuated to remotest posterity and extended to the whole family of man. – Charles Carroll

Rouse, then, brave citizens! Do your duty like men, and be persuaded that Divine Providence will not let this Western World be involved in the horrors of slavery. Consider that from the earliest ages of the world religious liberty and reason have been bending their course towards the setting sun. The holy gospels are yet to be preached to these western regions; and we have the highest reason to believe that the Almighty will not suffer slavery and the gospel to go hand in hand. It cannot, it will not be. – John Jay

We have all been encouraged to feel the guardianship and guidance of that almighty Being whose power regulates the destinies of nations, whose blessings have been so conspicuously displayed to this rising republic, and to whom we are bound to address our devout gratitude for the past, as well as our fervent supplications and best hopes for the future. – James Madison

When we view the great blessings with which our country has been favored, those which we now enjoy, and the means which we possess of handing them down unimpaired to our latest posterity, our attention is irresistibly drawn to the source from whence they flow. Let us, then, unite in offering our most grateful acknowledgment for these blessings to the Divine Author of all good. With a firm reliance on the protection of Almighty God, I shall forthwith commence the duties of the high trust to which you have called me. – James Monroe

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to defend these rights government was instituted. ... We, therefore, the Representatives in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Ruler of the World for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; and for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. -- Declaration of Independence

We appeal to that God who searcheth the hearts of men for the rectitude of our intentions, and in his holy presence declare, as we are not moved by any light or hasty suggestions of anger or revenge, so through every possible change of fortune we will adhere to this our determination. – Congress (1778)

Appealing to the Being who searches thoroughly the heart, we solemnly profess that our councils have been influenced by no other motives than a dread of impending destruction. We doubt not the purity of our intention and the integrity of our conduct will justify us at that grand tribunal before which all mankind must submit to judgment. Appealing to Heaven for the justice of our cause, we determine to die or be free. – Petition to the king (1774)

The Founding Fathers Were Against Slavery

Many reasons concur in persuading us to abolish domestic slavery in our country. It is inconsistent with the safety of the liberties of the United States.

Freedom and slavery cannot long exist together. An unlimited power over the time, labor, and posterity of our fellow-creatures necessarily unfits men for discharging the public and private duties of citizens of a republic.

It is inconsistent with sound policy, in exposing the states which permit it to all those evils which insurrections and the most resentful war have introduced into one of the richest islands in the West Indies.

It is unfriendly to the present exertions of the inhabitants of Europe in favor of liberty. What people will advocate freedom with a zeal proportioned to its blessings, while they view the purest republic in the world tolerating in its bosom a body of slaves?

In vain has the tyranny of kings been rejected while we permit in our country a domestic despotism which involves in its nature most of the vices and miseries that we have endeavored to avoid.

“It is degrading to our rank as men in the scale of being. Let us use our reason and social affections for the purposes for which they were given, or cease to boast a pre-eminence over animals that are unpolluted with our crimes. But higher motives to justice and humanity towards our fellow creatures remain yet to be mentioned.

Domestic slavery is repugnant to the principles of Christianity. It prostrates every benevolent and just principle of action in the human heart. It is rebellion against the authority of a common Father. It is a practical denial of the extent and efficacy of the death of a common Saviour. It is a usurpation of the prerogatives of the great Sovereign of the universe, who has solemnly claimed an exclusive property in the souls of men.

But, if this view of the enormity of domestic slavery should not affect us, there is one consideration more, which ought to alarm and impress us, especially at the present juncture.

It is a violation of a divine precept of universal justice, which has in no case escaped with impunity. – Dr. Rush

There is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, so far as my suffrages will go, shall not be wanting. – George Washington

We must wait with patience the workings of an overruling Providence, and hope that that is preparing the deliverance of these [slaves] our suffering brethren. When the measure of their tears shall be full, when their tears shall involve heaven itself in darkness, doubtless a God of justice will awaken to their distress, and, by diffusing light and liberty among their oppressors, or at length by his exterminating thunder, manifest his attention to things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of blind fatality.

I am very sensible of the honor you propose to me, of becoming a member of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade. You know that nobody wishes more ardently to see an abolition, not only of the trade, but of the condition of the slave; and certainly nobody will be more willing to encounter every sacrifice for that object. –

Thomas Jefferson

I never would have drawn my sword in the cause of America, if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery. – Lafayette

An excellent law might be made out of the Pennsylvania one for the gradual abolition of slavery. Till America comes into this measure, her prayers to Heaven will be impious. This is a strong expression, but it is just. I believe God governs the world, and I believe it to be a maxim in his as in our court, that those who ask for equity should grant it. – John Jay

We have found that this evil has preyed upon the very vitals of the Union, and has been prejudicial to all the States in which it has existed. – James Monroe

You know, my dear son, I abhor slavery. I was born in a country where slavery had been established by British kings and Parliaments, as well as by the laws of that country, ages before my existence. I found the Christian religion and slavery growing together under the same authority and cultivation. I nevertheless disliked it. In former days there was no combating the prejudices of men supported by interest. The day, I hope, is approaching when, from principles of gratitude, as well as justice, every man will strive to be foremost in showing his readiness to comply with the Golden Rule. – Henry Laurens (Twice President of the Continental Congress)

Slavery is detested; we feel its fatal effects; we deplore it with all the pity of humanity. It would rejoice my very soul to know that every one of my fellow-beings was emancipated. I believe the time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil. – Patrick Henry

I object to the word slave appearing in a Constitution which I trust is to be the charter of freedom to unborn millions; nor would I willingly perpetuate the memory of the fact that slavery ever existed in our country. It is a great evil, and, under the providence of God, I look forward to some scheme of emancipation which shall free us from it. Do not, therefore, let us appear as if we regarded it perpetual, by using in our free Constitution an odious word opposed to every sentiment of liberty. – James Madison (Father of the Constitution)

Your memorialists, particularly engaged in attending to the distresses arising from slavery, believe it to be their indispensable duty to present this subject to your notice. They have observed with real satisfaction that many important and salutary powers are vested in you, for promoting the welfare and securing the blessings of liberty to the people of the United States; and as they conceive that these blessings ought cheerfully to be administered, without distinction or color, to all descriptions of people, so they indulge themselves in the pleasing expectation that nothing which can be done for the relief of the unhappy objects of their care will be omitted or delayed.

From a persuasion that equal liberty was originally the portion of, and is still the birthright of, all men, and influenced by the strong ties of humanity and the principles of their institutions, your memorialists conceive themselves bound to use all justifiable endeavors to loosen the bonds of slavery and promote a general enjoyment of the blessings of freedom. Under these impressions, they earnestly entreat your attention to the subject of *slavery*; that you will be pleased to countenance the restoration to liberty of those unhappy men who alone, in this land of freedom, are degraded into perpetual bondage, and who, amid the general joy of surrounding freemen, are groaning in servile subjection; that you will devise means of removing this inconsistency of character from the American people; that you will promote mercy and justice towards this distressed race; and that you will step to the very verge of the power vested in you for discouraging every species of traffic in the persons of our fellow-men. Benjamin Franklin, *President*. [Of the Pennsylvania Society] Philadelphia, Feb. 3, 1790.

The Federal Government Fully Promoted Christianity

Thursday, September 11, 1777—The committee to whom the memorial of Dr. Allison and others was referred, report, That they have conferred fully with the printers, &c., in this city, and are of opinion that the proper types for printing the Bible are not to be had in this country, and that the paper cannot be procured, but with such difficulties, and subject to such casualties, as render any dependence on it altogether improper; that to import types for the purpose of setting up an entire edition of the Bible, and to strike off 30,000 copies, with paper, binding, &c., will cost £10,272, 10, which must be advanced by Congress, to be reimbursed by the sale of the books; that, in the opinion of the committee, considerable difficulties will attend the procuring the types and paper; that, afterwards, the risk of importing them will considerably enhance the cost, and that the calculations are subject to such uncertainty in the present state of affairs, that Congress cannot much rely on them; that the use of the Bible is so universal, and its importance so great, that your committee refer the above to the consideration of Congress, and if Congress shall not think it expedient to order the importation of types and paper, the committee recommend that Congress will order the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere, into the different ports of the States of the Union. Whereupon it was moved, That the Committee of Commerce be directed to import 20,000 copies of the Bible.

On this motion New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Georgia, voted in the affirmative; New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, voted in the negative. So it was resolved in the affirmative. – Report to Congress

The Bible in Congress.

A joint note was received in May last from the two chaplains of Congress, suggesting that our Board present a copy of the pulpit Bible for use in public worship at the Capitol. The suggestion was cheerfully complied with, and the following response received, showing, with a thousand other incidents, that, while we have no state-established religion, we are correctly styled a Christian nation – Washington

The Bible and the First Congress.

The above article, coming from the officers of the present Congress, leads us to subjoin a brief account of the doings of the first Congress in regard to the same divine book, as given in Rev. Dr. Strickland's History of the American Bible Society— As early as the beginning of the last century, laws existed in some of the colonies requiring every family to be furnished with a Bible. This supply continued to be kept up by individual exertion until the meeting of the first Congress in 1777, one year after the Declaration of Independence. In the early formation of our government, those who looked upon the experiment with jealous eyes anticipated a speedy dissolution, from the fact that it made no provision for the establishment of religion. Although the legislative power of our country is prohibited from making laws prescribing and enforcing the observance of any particular faith or form of worship, yet it is equally powerless in prohibiting the free exercise thereof; while at the same time it extends its protecting ægis over the rights of conscience. The Government has never been unmindful of the great interests of religion, but has from the beginning adhered to and carried out the language of Washington, that religion and morality are indispensable supports of political existence and prosperity.

The Congress of 1777 answered a memorial on the subject of Bible-distribution in this country, by appointing a committee to advise as to the printing an edition of thirty thousand Bibles. The population of the country then was only about three millions, and all the Bibles in the entire world at that period did not exceed four millions. Thus it will be seen that its circulation in this and all other countries at that time was exceedingly limited.

The report of the committee appointed by Congress forms one of the brightest epochs in the history of our republic, and sheds a clear and steady light over every subsequent eventful period. The public recognition of God in that act was of infinitely greater importance in giving stability to the times, securing the permanency of our institutions, than all the imposing and formidable array of legal enactments ever made for the establishment of religion.

The committee, finding it difficult to procure the necessary material, such as paper and types, recommended Congress, 'the use of the Bible being so universal, and its importance so great,' to direct the Committee on Commerce to import, at the expense of Congress, twenty thousand English Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere, into the different ports of the States of the Union. The report was adopted, and the importation ordered.

In 1781, when, from the existence of the war, no English Bible could be imported, and no opinion could be formed how long the obstruction might continue, the subject of printing the Bible was again presented to Congress, and it was on motion referred to a committee of three.

"The committee, after giving the subject a careful investigation, recommended to Congress an edition printed by Robert Aitken, of Philadelphia; whereupon it was "*Resolved*, That the United States, in Congress assembled, highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interests of religion; and, being satisfied of the care and accuracy of the execution of the work, recommend this edition to the inhabitants of the United States.'

The State Governments Fully Supported Christianity

That as the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, *essentially depend upon piety, religion, and morality*, and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community *but by the institutions of the public worship of God, and of public instruction in piety, religion, and morality*: therefore, to promote their happiness and to secure the good order and preservation of their government, the people of this commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require, and *the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require*, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic, or religious societies, *to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship, and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality*, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily; and the people of this commonwealth have also a right to, and do, invest their legislature with authority *to enjoin upon all their subjects an attendance upon the instructions of the public teachers aforesaid at stated times and seasons*, if there be any on whose instructions they can conscientiously attend.”

And that “because a frequent recurrence to the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and a constant adherence to those of *piety, justice, moderation, temperance, industry, and frugality*, are *absolutely necessary* to preserve the advantage of liberty and to maintain a free government, the people ought consequently *to have a particular regard to all those principles in the choice of their officers and representatives; and they have a right to require of their lawgiver, and magistrates an exact and constant observance of them* in the formation and execution of all laws necessary for the good of the commonwealth.” And that every person “chosen governor, lieutenant-governor, senator, or representative, and accepting the trust, *shall subscribe a solemn profession* that he believes in the Christian Religion, and has a firm persuasion of its truth. – Constitution of Massachusetts

That all persons and religious societies who acknowledge that there is one God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, and that God is to be publicly worshipped, shall be tolerated. The Christian Protestant religion shall be deemed, and is hereby constituted and declared to be, the established religion of the State. That all denominations of Christian Protestants in this State, demeaning themselves peaceably and faithfully, shall enjoy equal religious and civil privileges. To accomplish this desirable purpose without injury to the religious property of those societies of Christians which are by law already incorporated for the purpose of religious worship, and to put it fully into the power of every other society of Christian Protestants, either already formed or hereafter to be formed, to obtain the like incorporation, it is hereby constituted, appointed, and declared that the respective societies of the Church of England, that are already formed in this State for the purpose of religious worship, shall continue incorporate and hold the religious property now in their possession. And that whenever fifteen or more male persons not under twenty-one years of age, professing the Christian Protestant religion, and agreeing to unite themselves in a society for the purposes of religious worship, they shall (on complying with the terms hereinafter mentioned) be and be constituted a Church, and be esteemed and regarded in law as of the established religion of the State, and on a petition to the legislature shall be entitled to be incorporated and to enjoy equal privileges. That every society of Christians so formed shall give themselves a name or denomination, by which they shall be called and known in law, and all that associate with them for the purpose of worship shall be esteemed as belonging to the society so called; but that previous to the establishment and incorporation of the respective societies of every denomination as aforesaid, and in order to entitle them thereto, each society so petitioning shall have agreed to and subscribed in a book the five following articles—without which no agreement or union of men upon pretence of religion shall entitle them to be incorporated and esteemed as a church of the established religion of the State. (See Locke's Const., Arts. 97—100).

I. That there is one Eternal God, a future state of rewards and punishments.

II. That God is to be publicly worshipped.

III. That the Christian religion is the true religion.

IV. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are of divine inspiration, and are the rule of faith and practice.

V. That it is lawful, and the duty of every man being thereunto called by those that govern, to bear witness to truth.

That every inhabitant of this State, when called to make an appeal to God as a witness to truth, shall be permitted to do it in that way which is most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience. And that the people of this State may forever enjoy the right of electing their own pastors or clergy, and, at the same time, that the State may have sufficient security for the due discharge of the pastoral office by those who shall be admitted to be clergymen, no person shall officiate as minister of any established church who shall not have been chosen by a majority of the society to which he shall minister, or by persons appointed by the said majority to choose and procure a minister for them, nor until the minister so chosen and appointed shall have made and subscribed the following declaration, over and above the aforesaid five articles, *viz.*—

That he is determined, by God's grace, out of the holy scriptures, to instruct the people committed to his charge, and to teach nothing (as required of necessity to eternal salvation) but that which he shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved from the Scriptures; that he will use both public and private admonitions, as well to the sick as to the whole within his cure, as need shall require and occasion shall be given; and that he will be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same; that he will be diligent to frame and fashion his own self and his family according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make both himself and them, as much as in him lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ; that he will maintain and set forward, as much as he can, quietness, peace, and love among all the people, and especially among those who are or shall be committed to his charge.

No person shall disturb or molest any religious assembly, nor shall use any reproachful, railing, or abusive language against any Church, that being the certain way of disturbing the peace, and of hindering the conversion of any to the truth, by engaging them in quarrels and animosities, to the hatred of the professors, and that profession which otherwise they might be brought to assent to. No person whatsoever shall speak any thing in their religious assembly irreverently or seditiously of the government of the State. No person shall by law be obliged to pay towards the maintenance and support of a religious worship that he does not freely join in or has not voluntarily engaged to support; but the churches, chapels, parsonages, glebes, and all other property now belonging to any societies of the Church of England, or any other religious societies, shall remain and be secured to them forever. They should choose by ballot from among themselves, or from the people at large, a governor and commander-in-chief, a lieutenant-governor, and privy council, *all of the Protestant religion*; that no person should be eligible to a seat in the Senate *unless he be of the Protestant religion*; that no person should be eligible to sit in the House of Representatives *unless he be of the Protestant religion*. – Constitution of South Carolina

Its free government could be preserved but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, benevolence, frugality, and virtue, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles and the manner of discharging it. Religion is the duty we owe our Creator, and can be directed only by reason, not by force and violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of it according to the dictates of conscience; and it is the mutual duty of all to practise Christian forbearance, love and charity towards each other. – Virginia Declaration of Rights

I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the universe, the Rewarder of the good, and the Punisher of the wicked; and I acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be given by inspiration. – Constitution of Pennsylvania

That no person who should deny the being of a God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of either the Old or New Testaments, or who should hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, should be capable of holding any office or place of trust in the civil government of this State. – Constitution of North Carolina

That every citizen who should be chosen a member of either house of the Legislature, or appointed to any other office, should be required to subscribe to the following declaration—“ I do profess faith in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God and blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be given by divine inspiration. – Constitution of Delaware

That as it is the duty of every man to worship God in such manner as he thinks most acceptable to him, all persons professing the Christian religion are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty.

...

That no other qualification ought to be required on admission to any office of trust or profit than such oath of support and fidelity to this State, and such oath of office, as shall be directed by this Constitution or the Legislature of this State, *and a declaration of belief in the Christian religion.* – Constitution of Maryland

That there shall be no establishment of any one religious sect in this province in preference to another, and that no Protestant inhabitant of this colony shall be denied the enjoyment of any civil right on account of his religious principles; but that all persons professing a belief in the faith of any Protestant sect, and who should demean himself peaceably under the government, should be capable of being elected unto any office of profit or trust, or of being a member of either branch of the Legislature. – Constitution of New Jersey

That morality and piety, rightly grounded on evangelical principles, would give the best and greatest security to government, and would lay in the hearts of men the strongest obligation to due subjection; and that the knowledge of these was most likely to be propagated by the institution of the public worship of the Deity and instruction in morality and religion. – Constitution of New Hampshire

... all the members of the Legislature shall be of the Protestant religion. – Constitution of Georgia

Every sect or denomination of Christians ought to observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day, and keep up some sort of religious worship, which to them shall seem most agreeable to the revealed will of God. – Constitution of Vermont

It being the duty of all men to worship the Supreme Being, the great Creator and Preserver of the Universe, and their right to render that worship in the mode most consistent with the dictates of their consciences, no person shall, by law, be compelled to join or support, nor be classed with or associated to, any congregation, church, or religious association. But every person now belonging to such congregation, church, or religious association shall remain a member thereof, until he shall have separated himself therefrom, in the manner hereinafter provided. And each and every society or denomination of Christians in this State shall have and enjoy the same and equal powers, rights, and privileges, and shall have power and authority to support and maintain the ministers or teachers of their respective denominations, and to build and repair houses for public worship, by a tax on the members of any such society only, to be laid by a major vote of the legal voters assembled at any society meeting, warned and held according to law, or in any other manner. – Constitution of Connecticut

The object of the colonists is to pursue, with peace and loyal minds, their sober, serious, and religious intentions of godly edifying themselves and one another in the holy Christian faith and worship, together with the gaining over and conversion of the poor ignorant Indian natives to the sincere profession and obedience of the same faith and worship. – Charter of Rhode Island

The Constitution Is A Christian Document

Mr. President—The slow progress we have made, after four or five weeks' close attendance and continual reasoning with each other—our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing as many nays as yeas—is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of human understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running about in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for models of government, and examined the different forms of those republics which, having been formed with the seeds of their own dissolution, now no longer exist. And we have viewed modern states all round Europe, but find none of their constitutions suitable to our circumstances.

In this situation of this assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understanding? In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need his assistance?

I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—*that God governs in the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that *'Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it.'* I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel. We shall be divided by our little, partial, local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves become a reproach and by-word down to future ages. And, what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate circumstance, despair of establishing governments by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest. I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service. – Benjamin Franklin's address to the Constitutional Convention

I am not to be understood to infer that our General Convention was divinely inspired when it formed the new Federal Constitution; yet I must own that I have so much faith in the general government of the world by Providence, that I can hardly conceive a transaction of so much importance to the welfare of millions now in existence, and to exist in the posterity of a great nation, should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenced, guided, and governed by that omnipotent and beneficent Ruler in whom all inferior spirits live, and move, and have their being.”
This Constitution, freighted with such rich blessings, and tested by eighty-three years' trial, met at its formation with great opposition.

Dr. Franklin wrote a paper comparing the conduct of the ancient Jews with that of the opponents of the Constitution of the United States, in which he says that “A zealous advocate for the proposed Federal Constitution, in a certain public assembly, said that the repugnance of a great part of mankind to good government was such, that he believed that if an angel from heaven was to bring down a Constitution from there for our use, it would nevertheless meet with violent opposition. He was reprov'd for the supposed extravagance of the sentiment.

Probably it might not have immediately occurred to him that the experiment had been tried, and that the event was recorded in the most faithful of all histories, the Holy Bible; otherwise he might, as it seems to me, have supported his opinion by that unexceptionable authority.

“On the whole, it appears that the Israelites were a people jealous of their newly-acquired liberty, which jealousy was in itself no fault; but when they suffered it to be worked upon by artful men pretending public good, with nothing really in view but private interest, they were led to oppose the establishment of the new Constitution, whereby they brought upon themselves much inconvenience and misfortune. From all which we may gather that popular opposition to a public measure is no proof of its impropriety, even though the opposition be excited and headed by men of distinction. – Benjamin Franklin after the Constitution was written

It has been made an objection to the Constitution, by some, that it makes no mention of religion, contains no recognition of the existence and providence of God—as though his authority were slighted or disregarded. But such is not the reason of the omission. The convention which framed the Constitution comprised some of the wisest and best men of the nation—men *who were firmly persuaded not only of the divine origin of the Christian religion, but also of its importance to the temporal and eternal welfare of men.* The people, too, of this country were generally impressed with religious feelings, and felt and acknowledged the superintendence of God, who had protected them through the perils of war and blessed their exertions to obtain civil and religious freedom. But there were reasons why the introduction of religion into the Constitution would have been unseasonable, if not improper.

In the first place, it was intended exclusively for civil purposes, and religion could not be regularly mentioned, because it made no part of the agreement between the parties. They were about to surrender a portion of their civil rights for the security of the remainder; but each retained his religious freedom, entire and untouched, as a matter between himself and his God, with which government could not interfere. But, even if this reason had not existed, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to use any expression on the subject which would have given general satisfaction. The difference between the various sects of Christians is such, that, while all have much in common, there are many points of variance: so that in an instrument where all are entitled to equal consideration it would be difficult to use terms in which all could cordially join.

Besides, the whole Constitution was a compromise, and it was foreseen that it would meet with great opposition before it would be finally adopted. It was, therefore, important to restrict its provisions to things absolutely necessary, so as to give as little room as possible to cavil. Moreover, it was impossible to introduce into it even an expression of gratitude to the Almighty for the formation of the present government; for, when the Constitution was framed and submitted to the people, it was entirely uncertain whether it would ever be ratified, and the government might, therefore, never be established.

The prohibition of any religious test for office was wise, because its admission would lead to hypocrisy and corruption. The purity of religion is best preserved by keeping it separate from government; and the surest means of giving to it its proper influence in society is the dissemination of correct principles through education. The experience of this country has proved that religion may flourish in all its vigor and purity without the aid of a national establishment; and the religious feeling of the community is the best guarantee for the religious administration of the government. – Judge Bayard on the Constitution

The Constitution itself affirms its Christian character and purpose. The seventh article declares it to be framed and adopted “by the unanimous consent of the States, the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord 1787, and of the Independence of the United States of America the twelfth.” The date of the Constitution is twofold: first it is dated from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then from the birth of our independence. Any argument which might be supposed to prove that the authority of Christianity is not recognized by the people of the United States, in the first mode, would equally prove that the independence of the United States is not recognized by them in the second mode. The fact is, that the advent of Christ and the independence of the country are the two events in which, of all others, we are most interested—the former in common with all mankind, the latter as the birth of our nation. This twofold mode, therefore, of dating so solemn an instrument, was singularly appropriate and becoming.

A second fact is the harmony of the purposes for which the Constitution was established with the purposes and results of Christianity as affecting nations and the temporal interests of men. The preamble states this political and moral harmony in these words—

We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessing; of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

These fundamental objects of the Constitution are in perfect harmony with the revealed objects of the Christian religion. Union, justice, peace, the general welfare, and the blessings of civil and religious liberty, are the objects of Christianity, and are always secured under its practical and beneficent reign. “Our National Constitution is fitted to quicken the growth of a real manhood, to discipline the virtuous citizen for an ampler reward in heaven than he would reach if he were not trained to think for himself, to govern himself, to develop his own powers, to worship his Maker according to his own conscience.”

A third fact indicating the Christian character of the Constitution is, that in no less than four places it requires an oath.

“No person can hold an executive or judicial office under it, or derived from any State, who does not take an oath to support it.” An oath is defined to be “a solemn appeal to the Supreme Being for the truth of what is said, by a person who believes in the existence of a Supreme Being, and in a future state of rewards and punishments, according to that form which will bind his conscience most.” Can it with propriety be said that a government which forbids the exercise of the slightest of its functions by any one who cannot make and has not made such an appeal to a supreme Being, in whom he believes, does not recognize the authority of God? It includes other sovereignties, and provides that even there no man shall be intrusted with any power that concerns the whole people, who fails to furnish this testimony of his religious character. – Benjamin Morris

American Government Continued To Acknowledge God

Mr. Boudinot said he could not think of letting the session pass without offering an opportunity to all the citizens of the United States of joining with one voice in returning to Almighty God their sincere thanks for the many blessings he had poured down upon them. With this view he would move the following resolution—

Resolved, That a joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President of the United States, to request that he recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a constitution of government for their safety and happiness.

Mr. Sherman justified the practice of thanksgiving on any signal event, not only as a laudable one in itself, but as warranted by precedents in Holy Writ: for instance, the solemn thanksgiving and rejoicing which took place in the time of Solomon after the building of the temple was a case in point. This example he thought worthy of imitation on the present occasion. -- Journals of Congress

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor; and whereas both Houses of Congress, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"—

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the twenty-sixth day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we then may all unite unto him our sincere and humble thanks for his kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of his providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted;

for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge, and, in general, for all the great and various favors which he has been pleased to confer upon us.

And, also, that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or in private stations, to perform our several relative duties properly and punctually; to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us) and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science, among them and us; and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine. – Proclamation By George Washington

Whereas, The people of these United States, from their earliest history to the present time, have been led by the hand of a kind Providence, and are indebted for the countless blessings of the past and present, and dependent for continued prosperity in the future upon Almighty God; and whereas the great vital and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it eminently becomes the representatives of a people so highly favored to acknowledge in the most public manner their reverence for God: therefore,

1. *Resolved*, That the daily sessions of this body be opened with prayer.

2. *Resolved*, That the ministers of the gospel in this city are hereby requested to attend and alternately perform this solemn duty. – House Of Representatives, 34th Congress

American Justice Was Founded Upon Christianity

1. That in the administration of justice I am intrusted for God, the king, and the country; and, therefore, 2. That it be upright. 3. Deliberate. 4. Resolutely. That I rest not upon my own understanding or strength, but implore and rest upon the direction and strength of God. – Matthew Hale

The court said that, even if Christianity was not part of the law of the land, it is the popular religion of the country, an insult on which would be indictable as directly tending to disturb the public peace. Christianity, general Christianity, is, and always has been, a part of the common law of Pennsylvania; not Christianity founded on particular religious tenets; not Christianity with an established Church, and tithes, and spiritual courts; but Christianity with liberty of conscience to all men. The first legislative act in the colony was the recognition of the Christian religion, and the establishment of liberty of conscience. It is called “the Great Law,” and is as follows—
“Whereas the glory of Almighty God and the good of mankind is the reason and end of government, and therefore government itself is a venerable ordinance of God, and forasmuch as it is principally devised and intended by the Proprietary and Governor and freemen of Pennsylvania and territories thereunto belonging, to make and establish such laws as shall best preserve true Christian and civil liberty, in opposition to all unchristian, licentious, and unjust practices, whereby God may have his due, Caesar his due, and the people their due; *Resolved*, therefore, that all persons living in this Province, who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and Eternal God to be the Creator, upholder, and ruler of the world, and who hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall in no wise be molested .

...

Thus this wise legislature framed this great body of laws for a Christian country and a Christian people. Infidelity was then rare, and no infidels were among the first colonists. They fled from religious intolerance to a country where all were allowed to worship according to their own understanding. Every one had the right of adopting for himself whatever opinion appeared to be the most rational concerning all matters of religious belief; thus securing by law this inestimable freedom of conscience, one of the highest privileges and greatest interests of the human race. Thus is the Christianity of the common law incorporated into the great law of Pennsylvania; and thus is it irrefragably proved that the laws and institutions of this State are built on the foundation of reverence for Christianity. On this the Constitution of the United States has made no alteration, nor in the great body of the laws, which was an incorporation of the common-law doctrine of Christianity, as suited to the condition of the colony, and without which no free government can long exist. Under the Constitution penalties against cursing and swearing have been enacted. If Christianity was abolished, all false oaths, all tests by oath in common form by the book, would cease to be indictable as perjury. The indictment must state the oath to be on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God. – Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

The authorities show that blasphemy against God, and contumelious reproaches and profane ridicule of Christ or the Holy Scriptures, which are equally treated as blasphemy, are offences punishable at common law, whether uttered by words or writings. The consequences may be less extensively pernicious in the one case than in the other; but in both instances the reviling is still an offence, because it tends to corrupt the morals of the people and to destroy good order. Such offences have always been considered independent of any religious establishment or the right of the Church. There is nothing in our manners and institutions which has prevented the application or the necessity of this point of common law. We stand equally in need now as formerly of all that moral discipline and of those principles of virtue which help to bind society together.

The people of this State, in common with the people of this country, profess the general doctrines of Christianity as the rule of their faith and practice; and to scandalize the Author of these doctrines is not only in a religious point of view extremely impious, but even in respect to the obligations due to society is a gross violation of decency and good order. Nothing could be more offensive to the virtuous part of the community, or more injurious to the tender morals of the young, than to declare such profanity lawful. It would go to confound all distinction between things sacred and profane; for, to use the words of one of the greatest oracles of human wisdom, “profane scoffing doth by little and little deface the reverence of religion,” and who adds, in another place, “two principal causes have I ever known of atheism—curious controversies and profane scoffing.” The very idea of jurisprudence, with the ancient lawgivers and philosophers, embraced the religion of the country.

Though the Constitution has discarded religious establishments, it does not forbid judicial cognizance of those offences against religion and morality which have no reference to any such establishment or to any particular form of government, but are punishable, because they strike at the root of moral obligation and weaken the security of the social ties. The legislative exposition of the Constitution is conformable to this view of it, Christianity in its enlarged sense, as a religion revealed and taught in the Bible, is not unknown to our law. *The Statute for preventing immorality* (*Laws*, Vol. I. p. 224) consecrates the first day of the week as holy time, and considers the violation of it immoral. *The Act concerning Oaths* (*Laws*, Vol. I. p. 405) recognizes the common law mode of administering an oath, “by laying the hand on and kissing the Gospels.” Surely, then, we are bound to conclude that wicked and malicious words, writings, and actions which go to vilify those Gospels continue, as at common law, to be an offence against the public peace and safety. They are inconsistent with the reverence due to the administration of an oath, and, among other evil consequences, they tend to lessen in the public mind its religious sanction.

This decision was concurred in by all the associate judges on the bench with Chief-Justice Kent. – Supreme Court of New York