

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

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

Benjamin F. Morris

*The publication of this book was made possible by gifts from
Nicene Covenant Church,
sponsors of Grace Community Schools
and Grace Community Day Cares,
and their founding pastor,
Rev. Ellsworth E. McIntyre.*

AMERICAN VISION, POWDER SPRINGS, GA



**THE MISSION OF AMERICAN VISION, INC. IS TO PUBLISH AND DISTRIBUTE
MATERIALS THAT LEAD INDIVIDUALS TOWARD:**

—
A personal faith in the one true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
—

A lifestyle of practical discipleship
—

A worldview that is consistent with the Bible
—

An ability to apply the Bible to all of life

Copyright ©2007 American Vision, Inc. All rights reserved.

Published May 2007

Second Edition.

Second Printing August 2007.

Third Printing September 2007.

Fourth Printing February 2008.

Fifth Printing March 2008.

Sixth Printing April 2008.

Printed in The United States of America

No part of this new edition may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations in critical reviews and articles.

Cover design by Luis Lovelace

American Vision, Inc.

3150 Florence Road, Suite 2

Powder Springs, Georgia 30127-5385

www.AmericanVision.org

1-800-628-9460

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Morris, B.F., author.

Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United State / 2nd. ed.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-10: 0-915815-70-2 Hardbound

Table of Contents

Foreword	7
Preface	17
Introduction	23
1. Sources of Proof to Establish the Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States	39
2. The Hand of God in the Settlement of the American Continent	55
3. Puritan Settlement—Its Christian Motives and Scenes	61
4. Civil Government Instituted in the Mayflower on a Christian Basis	71
5. Christian Colonization of the New England Colonies	83
6. Christian Systems of Education in the New England Colonies	95
7. Christian Colonization of Pennsylvania—New York—New Jersey—Delaware	107
8. Christian Colonization of Virginia—Maryland—South Carolina—North Carolina—Georgia	119
9. Statesmen of the Revolution—Their Views of Christianity and Its Relations to Civil Society and Government	139
10. Christian Legislation of the Continental Congress	241

11. State Constitutions During the Revolution— Christian Doctrines Incorporated in them as Fundamental Law	267
12. The Federal Constitution a Christian Instrument	293
13. Christian Scenes in the First Congress Under the Constitution	323
14. The Christian Acts and Scenes of the Army of the Revolution	333
15. Government Chaplains	367
16. Christian Ministers of the Revolution	405
17. Christian Women of the Revolution	475
18. Christian Churches of the Revolution— Congressional Churches	515
19. Christian Churches of the Revolution—The Baptist Churches—Methodist Episcopal Church	553
20. Christian Churches of the Revolution—The Reformed Dutch Church and Other Churches— German Lutheran Church—Universalist Convention	571
21. Christian Character of Washington	599
22. Fast and Thanksgiving Days	651
23. Thanksgiving Days Appointed by the Senate	701
24. Christian Scenes in the Capitol of the Republic	769
25. Christianity of American Courts, and Christian Character of Eminent American Judges	797
26. The Christian Element in the Civil War of the United States	841

Foreword

Archie P. Jones, Ph.D.

Rev. Benjamin F. Morris' *magnum opus*, the *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States*, could not be more pertinent to present day American life. The little-known information that it contains is just as true today as it was in 1864 and is far more needed than it was in the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, American Christians have long neglected the heritage that God has given us through our Christian forefathers, so the vast majority of American Christians are ignorant of the Christian character of our civil government institutions. Furthermore, there has been a long-standing effort of anti-Christian scholars and propagandists to de-Christianize American civil government, law, and life. Largely because of their ignorance, many Christians have been misled by the disinformation generated by anti-Christian writers who have obscured or denied the Christian nature of our heritage of civil government and law. That heritage was not perfect but it was superior to the heritage of any other people on earth, and both Christians and non-Christians benefited immeasurably from our God-given heritage of Christian influence upon civil government and law in America. Hence, the interesting information presented by Rev. Morris is must reading for Christians and non-Christians alike.

Morris' great work is a magnificent contribution to our understanding of the Christian—or dominantly Christian—history of these United States of America. The evidence which he presents makes it unmistakably clear that early American citizens and statesmen knew what Romans 13 and the Bible as a whole make so clear: that civil government is not neutral among religions and philosophies of men but instead is a ministry of the sovereign God who created and rules His universe and world, and works out His eternal plan and holy will in history. Our forefathers in the faith did not retreat from involvement in society and politics. They did not turn civil government, the making, enforcement, and adjudication of laws, over to Satan and those who serve him. They did not surrender the ministry

of civil government to those who are in rebellion against God. Instead, they sought to base civil government and law upon the truth. They understood that God is the Lord of history who rules the lives of nations by His divine providence, and that He is in authority over our nation as well over all others. They knew that our nation's civil government and law must be based upon God's laws and principles of justice if we are to enjoy His blessings upon our land and people. They comprehended that all men are sinners, and that man's sinful nature has particularly destructive consequences when it is allowed to vent itself through the power of civil government. They understood that true religion (Christianity), virtue, and liberty are inseparably united, and that liberty cannot long be preserved in the absence of virtue among the people and their representatives.¹ As the record compiled and presented by B.F. Morris makes clear, they designed and conducted our civil governments accordingly.

The evidence so painstakingly assembled and beautifully presented by Morris is absolutely essential to the preservation of justice and liberty in these United States. The facts presented in this work should be known by all Christians everywhere, by all American Christians, and by all freedom-loving Americans regardless of their religious persuasion, for God's word applies to all men and nations. As M. Stanton Evans has pointed out in his important work,

¹The knowledge that liberty depends upon virtue and virtue depends upon Christianity was no new thing to early Americans. See, for example, Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society and Politics in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and Marvin Olasky, *Fighting for Liberty and Virtue: Political and Cultural Wars in Eighteenth-Century America—The American Experience, Book I* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1995). This knowledge was basic to the Constitution, for such knowledge was widespread. The many quotations compiled in William J. Federer, *America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations* (Coppell, Texas: Fame Publications, Inc., 1994) provide an inkling of this; Ellis Sandoz, *A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion and the American Founding* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), and Ellis Sandoz, ed., *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1750-1805* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991) provide, respectively, a comprehensive analysis and much neglected primary source evidence of our early citizens' and statesmen's awareness of the dependence of continued liberty upon true religion (Christianity), the foundation of moral virtue.

The Theme Is Freedom, it was Christianity—not paganism, “religious neutrality,” or secularism—which produced freedom and justice in the West and in America.² The facts which are so ably presented by Rev. Morris massively document these truths. Moreover, such information glorifies God, for it is His plan and Divine Providence which made Christianity predominant in early America and brought manifold blessings to the people of this land.

That these facts have been obscured by secularists and neglected by Bible-believing Christians is a disaster of the first magnitude. It is a disaster which has worked its mischief quietly, subtly, and gradually. Yet it has had manifold effects, for it has robbed the American people of the godly vision of reality, civil government, and law which our forefathers possessed. Where there is no godly vision, no understanding of the nature of God and of His dealings with men, the people perish. They perish because, neglecting God and His whole counsel, they think and act in obedience to false views of the nature of reality, of God, men, and things. Following false views, the people are as the blind being led by the blind. They violate God’s laws and principles, so God judges them. They fall into the “ditches” of history: as the Bible makes clear in Deuteronomy 28 and elsewhere, God brings all kinds of disasters upon them and their land, calamities which are the consequences of their own sinful actions. This is what has occurred in our history,³ and this is the fundamental reason why American society is so troubled, American education is in a state of crisis, Americans have lost so much liberty, and justice is so perverted in our land today.

Benjamin F. Morris began compiling this great work in about 1853. He undertook this labor of love because by that time there were already forces in America which were seeking to deny the Christian origins and foundation, and to destroy the dominantly Christian nature of our Constitution and laws.

By that time Unitarianism had become a powerful force in the North and had spawned the virulent religious movement known

²M. Stanton Evans, *The Theme Is Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1994).

³C. Gregg Singer, *A Theological Interpretation of American History* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1982).

as Transcendentalism. Unitarianism exalted the unaided reason of man above the authority of the Scriptures, denied the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, renounced the reality of Original Sin, rejected the Trinity—the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit—and waged war upon Biblical orthodoxy. Transcendentalism stretched Unitarianism’s belief that man is naturally good into the notion that man is, or can become, God. Both denied the applicability of God’s law as revealed in Scripture to man and society. Unitarians and Transcendentalists sought to use a combination of state-controlled education and civil government coercion to “reform” man and society along man-centered lines. Unitarians and socialists launched the drive to establish “public schools” in New England in the late 1830s and were influential in extending “free public education” across the states of the North into the Midwest before the “Civil War.” They slyly worked to gradually remove the formerly dominant Christian content from education and to use government-controlled education to establish their own religious, ethical and political principles. Through the control of education they sought to change the views, values, politics and laws of the people of the United States.⁴ Transcendentalists used the lecture circuit, the pulpit, and the pen to spread their perfectionistic and politically radical doctrines. Unitarians and Transcendentalists backed the abolitionist crusade which was a main cause of the War Between the States—the “Civil War” which did so much to destroy constitutional government and the rule of Christian laws in our Christian republic.⁵ They financed and lauded the abolitionist terrorist John Brown, whose murderous designs and actions were a major cause of the sectional hostilities which produced the war.⁶

⁴See Samuel L. Blumenfeld, *Is Public Education Necessary?* (Boise, Idaho: The Paradigm Company, [1981] 1985).

⁵It should be noted, however, that some great Unitarian jurists and legal scholars were conservatives who affirmed that American law is basically Christian because American law was based on the English Common Law, which was fundamentally Christian in its nature and principles. See Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965), 194, 195 and *passim*.

⁶See Otto Scott, *The Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement* (New York: Times Books, 1979).

Added to this was the influence of many people engaged in manufacturing, commerce, and agriculture who were primarily interested in material gain. Many who were engaged in commerce and manufacturing sought to use civil government as a means of enriching themselves at the expense of others: sought to engage in legalized theft. This was true of both businessmen and their employees, for many employees, like their employers, voted primarily upon the basis of their own economic self-interest—at the expense of the economic interests of those in other occupations and in other regions of the nation. Such avarice was and is incompatible with the law of God and with the principles and spirit of the Constitution. It was also basic to the desire to increase the tariff and to use the money derived from this tax on imports to benefit Northern manufacturers. The misuse and increase of the tariff was a basic, though neglected cause of the War Between the States.⁷ Much Southern support of slavery (which is usually pictured as being the cause of the war) was a result of the economic self-interest of slave owners.

The pre-“Civil War” years also saw a rise of rationalism, the view that man is not fallen in every area of his being and that man’s reason is self-sufficient and does not need to base its reasoning upon God’s revealed word in Scripture. Rationalism had been present, yet by no means dominant, before the War for Independence, yet it grew with the rise of Unitarianism in the early nineteenth century. As had been the case in Europe, rationalism spawned schemes for the radical transformation of society, civil government, and law. Rationalism was basic to socialism and other plans and movements for the “reform” of man and society which were so prominent in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

The decades from the 1820s to the 1850s also saw some attempts by rationalists, atheists and other unbelievers to have American courts declare that our laws are not fundamentally Christian. These pre-“Civil War” attempts were all resoundingly defeated, as the great mass of American lawyers and judges—so well-schooled in Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, the principal textbook of early American lawyers and gentlemen, and in the

⁷See Robert L. Dabney, *Essays: Secular* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle Press, [1897] 1979), 4:87–107.

Common Law—brought their knowledge of the law and of our history to bear crushingly upon the rationalists' arguments. Rationalists and unbelievers were defeated both in debate and in pre-"Civil War" court decisions.⁸

While these antagonistic modes of thought were developing, many Bible-believing Christians, under the influence of pietism and other theologies, were abandoning the traditional Christian view of the scope of the Bible's authority and of the Christian's proper concern in favor of much narrower views of the Bible's relevance. Pietism rightly stressed the importance of the individual's relationship to God but wrongly reduced the scope of the Christian's concern to his or her personal life, family life, and the affairs of the church as an ecclesiastical organization. Antinomianism (opposition to the law of God) denied that Biblical law, revealed in the Old Testament, is applicable to society and civil government. Revivalism tended to focus so much on the manipulation of people's emotions to produce professions of faith in Christ that it neglected the older emphasis on the covenant between a Christian society and our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ Widespread belief in the myth of neutrality, the idea that God is neutral in most areas of thought and life and is only particular about "religious" things, led many to abandon Christian education for "public education" and to forsake the application of all of Scripture to all areas of life. In the "public schools" Christians first accepted a watered-down, lowest-common-denominator Christianity which neglected the whole counsel of God revealed in the Bible. Then they acquiesced in the gradual de-Christianization of the textbooks. The result of these things was a Christian retreat from Biblically-principled educational, social, and political involvement. This in turn created a vacuum which non-Christian bodies of thought were eager to fill.

Such developments were "signs of the times" for Rev. Morris and other discerning Christians, and Morris, like the sons of Issachar,

⁸Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America*, 99-214.

⁹Perry Miller, "From the Covenant to the Revival," 90-120, in his *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). Yet, as Miller himself notes in *The Life of the Mind in America*, early nineteenth-century American revivals continued to have a strong impact on society and law.

knew the times and understood what God's people ought to do. He knew that where there is no godly vision the people perish. He understood that Americans were losing a knowledge of the great work of God in the founding of America, a knowledge of the intimate connections between Christianity and our civil government, law, and liberty. He sought to give Christians and Americans a true vision of the hand of the Lord in our history and of the crucial, foundational place of Christianity in our civil government and public life. This great old work is the product of Morris's application of his knowledge, through a decade of study and hard work, to his times, for the good of the people of the nation, for the cause of Christ, for the future, for Christian liberty and justice, and for the glory of God.

A chief shortcoming of this great old work is its lack of footnotes or endnotes. The author quoted or paraphrased from works which were well known and readily available in his time (and listed most of them directly before the Table of Contents), works from which his information could have been more or less easily verified by his readers. Those works are not readily available now, having long since gone out of print and passed out of general circulation. Thus, although *Christian Life and Character* is an invaluable source of information, it lacks the scholarly apparatus which enables the researcher to check the author's sources easily. Many of these out-of-print historical sources can be found on the internet.

Despite this and other shortcomings, the *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* is a great and useful work. It provides a treasure trove of information about the Christian foundations and essence of our history, civil government, and constitutional order. It provides long-obscured facts about the role of Christian faith in our governmental system which not only Christians but also all Americans need to know.

Reverend Benjamin Franklin Morris (1810–1867) was the son of the Honorable Thomas Morris, a pioneer opponent of slavery who was United States Senator from Ohio. Morris had three daughters and two sons. One of the sons, George W. Morris, became Assistant Librarian of the Congressional Library in Washington, D.C.

A minister of the Congregational Church, Morris pastored churches in Rising Sun, Indiana, Lebanon, Ohio, and other places.

After his health began to fail, he retired from the ministry. He and his family moved to Washington, D.C. There he worked as a clerk in one of the departments of the Federal Government and was very active in working for the establishment of a Congregational Church in the city.

It was during the time he was in Washington, D.C. that Morris undertook the labor of writing *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States*. He spent a decade absorbed in this project, working on it during his spare time. He followed this by compiling a book of accounts of events connected with the assassination and burial of President Abraham Lincoln.

Morris's deep concern about the loss of our Christian heritage in civil government and the threat of the de-Christianization of our nation's civil government, law, and public life led him to write the *Christian Life and Character* and was evident in his introduction to the book. The combination of failing health, full-time work for the Federal Government, active promotion of the establishment of a church, and the labor of study and writing these two books greatly weakened him. The very existence of the War Between the States—he would have called it the Civil War—and the subsequent assassination of Lincoln distressed him.

The things which led Morris to compile and write the *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* have had a much more extensive development since 1864. Late nineteenth century and twentieth century American thought, following the main currents of modern thought, became more man-centered, intellectually and morally relativistic, more openly rebellious against God and His law-word. American educational thought and practice followed suit, and became “progressively” more secularist, relativistic, manipulative, and anti-Christian. American political and legal thought and practice became increasingly more secularist, socialistic, and antinomian. In short, Americans rebelled against God and His holy word.

While this was occurring, American Christians continued to retreat from Bible-based involvement in social action, education, intellectual pursuits, the shaping of culture, and political thought and action. Many in the old “main-line” Protestant denominations

abandoned belief in the full inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible in favor of faith in science, belief in the unscientific, false claims of evolutionism, and credence in various bodies of modern man-centered thought. Many followed baptized versions of modern pagan social and political thinking and programs. On the other hand, many who believed the truth of the Bible retreated from social and political involvement because those who had abandoned belief in the truth of the Bible were involved in politics. Meanwhile, many Bible-believing Christians became so convinced that the return of Jesus Christ was so close at hand that they forgot—or abandoned—the Biblical duty to occupy until He comes (Luke 19:13). Forsaking Bible-based educational thought and action, they allowed their children to be miseducated in “public schools” and secularist colleges (including nominally Christian institutions). Forsaking Bible-based social, cultural, and political action, they increased the size of the vacuum which their parents had created.

Consequently, the foundation of a godly nation was not maintained: indeed, it was permitted to be well-nigh destroyed. So the Constitution and its Christian principles were increasingly ignored in practice. Hence, the size and scope of civil government was increased; power was centralized in the national government; and the rule of law was abandoned in favor of the arbitrary rule of men.

Thus, presidents, congresses, and federal courts have made multitudes of decisions which have undermined not only the Constitution’s principles but also Christian morality, the family, the social fabric, law and order, the safety of the individual and his property, economic freedom, liberty, and even domestic tranquility.

Now that Christians have begun to recover the knowledge that God and His word require us to be involved in all areas of life—including politics—for His glory and the good of our fellow men, it is time for Christians to recover our Christian forefathers’ Biblical vision of the world and of life. It is time for Christians to grasp the vision of civil government under God which motivated the great majority of our early American citizens and statesmen. Christians must improve upon that vision and upon the practices of our forefathers. They must be equipped for the battles that such a restoration will involve. But they cannot do so if they remain ignorant of the

truth about our heritage in civil government. The *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* is a powerful weapon which must be used in the battle to recover upon our godly heritage, and an important tool which should be used to improve upon that heritage. It should be read and enjoyed, studied and used by all Americans, and particularly by all American Christians.

Preface

THIS volume is committed to the American people, in the firm assurance that the invaluable facts which it records will be grateful to every patriotic and pious heart. In it, as from the richest mines, has been brought out the pure gold of our history. Its treasures have been gathered and placed in this casket for the instruction and benefit of the present and future. We have a noble historic life; for our ancestors were the worthies of the world. We have a noble nation, full of the evidences of the moulding presence of Christian truth, and of the power and goodness of Divine wisdom in rearing up a Christian republic for all time. That this was the spirit and aim of the early founders of our institutions, the facts in this volume fully testify.

The field through which the reader will walk, in this work, must give wider expansion to his political views, quicken the pulses of his loyalty, add to his conscious dignity as an American citizen, strengthen his confidence in our future, and impart a higher tone to his piety.

The single object of the compiler was to link, in a connected form, the golden chain of our Christian history, and to reveal the basis on which our institutions stand.

The documents and facts are authentic, and have been collected, with laborious diligence, from standard historical works and from the political and Christian annals of the nation. The volume is the voice of the best and wisest men of the republic. It must, therefore, have weight with the American people, and be a political and Christian thesaurus and text-book to the scholar, the teacher, the patriot, the politician, the statesman, the jurist, the legislator, the divine, and, in a word, to all classes of American citizens.

The work is not speculative or theoretical, but a series of facts to unfold and establish the Christian life and character of the civil institutions of the United States, in the light of which every American citizen can trace to its source the true glory of the nation, and learn to appreciate its institutions and to venerate and imitate the great and good men who founded them.

It has been a delightful task of patriotism and piety to the compiler to prepare the volume, and to lay it as a grateful offering upon the common altar of his country and of Christianity.

The work has been the labor of years, performed in various States of the Union, and in the capital of the nation, within sight of the tomb of Washington, during the most eventful year of the Rebellion; and its last pages were prepared for the press in Philadelphia, where so many of the sacred scenes of the Revolution transpired. The volume, therefore, has in its preparation a national feature, and the reader will be impressed with the importance and appositeness of the facts to the present time.

It is also the ardent hope of the compiler that the facts and principles recorded in this volume, and in which, in our early struggle, all denominations of Christians uttered with such harmony their convictions that the only sure and stable basis of our civil institutions was in the Christian religion, may contribute to strengthen the union of patriotism and piety in all parts of the country, to save the nation from the perils of a wicked rebellion, and be the brightest hope of the future.

Care has been taken to give each author credit for his thoughts and language, though in a few instances it may have been overlooked. It was neither the desire nor the design of the compiler to elaborate his own views—though they are found in the volume—but to give those of the great leading minds of the republic, both past and present.

His grateful acknowledgments are tendered to the Librarians of the Young Men's Mercantile Library Association, and of the Mechanics' Institute Libraries of Cincinnati; of the State Library of Ohio; of the Historical and Astor Libraries of New York; of the Mercantile Library and Library Association of Philadelphia; of the Libraries of Congress, and of the Interior Department; to the Chief Clerk in the Department of State, for access to the manuscript papers of Washington; to Peter Force, of Washington City, for frequent examinations of his large and invaluable collection of books and periodicals illustrative of the early history of our country; and to the Honorable Thomas Corwin, of Ohio, for numerous visits to his valuable library. His thanks are due also to the late Honorable Samuel W. Parker,

of Indiana, for the frequent use of his large political and historical library, and to the late Judge John McLean, of Ohio, who imparted to the compiler valuable suggestions in reference to the preparation of the work.

The Introduction to the work is written by Rev. Byron Sunderland, D.D., Pastor for the last twelve years of the First Presbyterian Church of Washington City, and Chaplain to the Senate of the United States in the Thirty-Seventh Congress. Its high Christian tone and sentiment, its finished literary excellence, and the important truths it so forcibly enunciates will render it well worthy the attention of the reader.

The volume is committed to the blessing of God and to the judgment and favor of the American people, in humble trust that it may aid in preserving and perpetuating to future generations the Union of the States, the integrity of the best government ever instituted by the wisdom of men, and the nationality of the American Republic.

Principal Authorities Consulted

Archives of American Annals by Peter Force

Journals of Congress and Official Records, Colonial and State
Constitutions and Papers

History of the United States by George Bancroft

Han's History of the Puritans

Grahame's Colonial History of America

Webster's Works

Burke's Works

Annals of the American Pulpit by W. B. Sprague

Pulpit of the Revolution by John Wingate Thornton

Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution by J. T. Headley

Dr. Beecher's Works

Power of the Pulpit by Gardiner Spring

Character of the American Government (Anonymous)

Rev. Jasper Adams' Sermon, with Notes, on the Relation of
Christianity to the Civil Government of the United States

Principles and Acts of the American Revolution by H. Niles

Grimké's *Writings and Orations*

Chaplains of the American Government by L. D. Johnson

Nash's *Morality of the State*

Life and Times of Washington by John Frederick Schroeder D.D.

Writings of Washington by Jared Sparks

Recollections of Washington by George Washington Parke Custis

Religious Opinions and Character of Washington by B. C. McGuire

Presbyterian Review, New England Review, Bibliotheca Sacra, Rebellion Record by Frank Moore, and a large number of periodicals of the time of the Revolution and at the formation of the Constitution of the United States.

The Chapter on the “Christian Element in the Civil War” was compiled from the official acts and papers of the ecclesiastical denominations of benevolent organizations and of the national and State Governments.

The Bible

Commentaries on the Constitution by Joseph Story

Bayard's *Commentaries on the Constitution*

Rawle on the Constitution

Gardner's *Institutes of International Law*

Griswold's *Republican Court, or American Society in the Days of Washington*

Mrs. Ellett's *American Women*

Histories of the Various Colonies and States

Bough's *Thanksgiving Proclamations*

Lossing's *Field-Book of the Revolution*

Sanderson's *Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence*

Introduction

THE story of Christianity in America is one of the most astonishing chapters in the annals of the world. The events of Providence in reserving and preparing the country of these United States to be the theater of its development and triumph, constitute one of the most remarkable passages of modern history.

This is a Christian nation, first in name, and secondly because of the many and mighty elements of a pure Christianity which have given it character and shaped its destiny from the beginning. It is pre-eminently the land of the Bible, of the Christian Church, and of the Christian Sabbath. It is the land of great and extensive and oft-repeated revivals of a spiritual religion—the land of a free conscience and of free speech—the land of noble charities and of manifold and earnest efforts for the elevation and welfare of the human race. The chief security and glory of the United States of America has been, is now, and will be forever, the prevalence and domination of the Christian Faith.

The materialist may find in other aspects of our country many grounds of complacency. Compared with other nations, we have had a wonderful career. The marvels of the republic stand thick along the line of our advancement. Whether we consider the colonial period, or that of the Revolution, or those of subsequent times, our growth in numbers, in territory, in wealth and power, has been almost unparalleled. The spirit of our Government and its institutions is singularly adapted to secure the general peace and happiness of human society. Our example has long been an object of jealousy and fear to the oppressors of man. Our country has thrown open an asylum to the unfortunate from every quarter of the globe. All the kindreds of the earth have been welcome to repose beneath the shadow of our Tree, which in less than a single century has spread its branches across the continent. And if our civil polity has not realized all the possible blessings of a free government, the reason lies less in the genius of the economy than in the acknowledged imperfections of human nature itself. In addition to these things, Providence has signally favored the nation in its geographical position,

the fertility of its soil, the plenty of its seasons, and the salubrity of its climate. The vigor of the people has found ample scope in utilizing the physical resources of the country, by all the industries and arts of agriculture, manufacture, and commerce; while in conducting the educational and intellectual interests of society, no modern nation in the same space of time has contributed more to the great elements of that higher civilization towards which the world is everywhere slowly but surely tending. These are sources of just satisfaction to every friend and lover of his country. But they are, meanwhile, considerations which fall far below those great moral and spiritual principles in the absence of which no state on earth can perpetuate its existence.

The true theory of national life and prosperity is clearly unfolded in the revealed word of God. The secret of all stability and enduring greatness in human governments, as with individual men, is to be found alone in the quickening power of the Christian Faith. This only, imbuing and pervading the mind and heart of human society, can organize and preserve to the body politic its highest and most untroubled fortunes. Fallibility and corruption inhere indeed in the materials of every commonwealth,—the result of which is a liability to continual change. Growth succeeded by decay, and decay forcing another growth, is the philosophy of national vicissitude, as it is also the great fact of the physical creation. “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh,” and therefore the permanence of empire must rest in the *ideas* of a people. If then there be in such ideas no great enduring principle of spiritual life, there can be no perpetuity of national existence. If there be no grand, sublime, and imperishable *thought*, filling the soul of a people with its fire and fashioning their progress after its pattern, there can be no sense in which they may escape the inevitable mutations of the world, or avoid the fate of so many that have gone before them.

The most powerful empires of the past have perished because they were wanting in a principle strong enough and spiritual enough to resist the self-destructive energies of human nature. The pagan world could not furnish such a principle. It was in neither their philosophy nor their religion. It is not in the power of man unaided to discover and apply such a principle. Nothing short of divine wis-

dom and power can actualize among the nations that principle of spiritual life which not only originates but preserves the substance of social and civil welfare. Christianity is the divine method of imparting this principle to men and nations, and the only method revealed from Heaven for regulating our present state, and, after this, conferring upon us the lasting awards of a glorious immortality. The doctrines of Christianity form a system of perfect and saving truth, its duties comprise the sum of all genuine beneficence, while its ascendancy over the human soul is effectually secured by the regeneration of no less than the infinite Spirit of God.

The dispensation of this Spirit has been distinctly and constantly affirmed in our country, and the people have been instructed to expect "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," not more in the early and latter rains of heaven than in the silent but reformatory processes of our moral and religious condition. The Author of human nature is that same God who must re-supply its wasting energy, and diffuse in human society the life and light of truth, by turning men from the way of transgression unto "the wisdom of the just." According to this belief there is a direct and immediate connection between the human soul and the Divine Spirit; and wherever the sacred influence falls, there human beings are sure to "walk in newness of life," supporting and stimulating all that is precious and invaluable in the temporal and eternal well-being of mankind. This doctrine, which lies equally removed from the superstition of ignorance and from the levity of unbelief, has been more thoroughly explained and more widely disseminated among the people of America than anywhere else on the face of the earth. And it is due to the influence of evangelical religion among all classes of society, more than to all other considerations together, that our prosperity has been so great and our progress so unexampled. "Ye are the light of the world. Ye are the salt of the earth." This is the description of men whose views and conduct are the result of the inspiration of Jesus Christ. All time attests its truth. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people," and must, if persisted in, pave the way to their final destruction. This divine maxim has been exemplified in all the old seats of human population, and is borne onward in the spirit of prophetic admonition from age to age. The

voice of history is lifted in repeated accents of solemn warning, and rolls in thunder-blasts its own great lesson upon the ear of nations.

But while, without doubt, there has been, and is now, the presence of an evangelical power in this republic, that has left its impress and its influence upon our institutions and our society, and has reared so many sacred monuments for the gratitude and the admiration of mankind, it cannot and ought not to be denied that the nation as it stands to-day is far below that moral and religious condition which constitutes the essential safety, prosperity, and honor of any people. It is sadly true that a very large proportion of the population are strangers to the genuine spirit of the Christian religion, and almost, if not altogether, unacquainted even with the history of its facts and the extent of its influence in the land of our inheritance. The standing complaint of human degeneracy remains against us. Causes have been operating—and of late years with fearful rapidity and strength—to produce a state of moral obliquity and practical atheism among us, appalling in magnitude and of alarming consequence. It has become of late quite customary to sneer at the Puritanism of our fathers, and to speak with contempt of the severity of their manners and the bigotry of their faith. This impious treatment, by the present corruptors of society, of a generation of men whose lofty principles and illustrious virtues they seem utterly unable to comprehend, is well adapted not only to arouse the deepest indignation, but also to excite the most lively concern. There are two quarters from which these evil influences chiefly proceed. A class of men without conscience, and reckless of all moral restraint, have gained ascendancy in public favor, and assume from their prominent position to mould and direct the public sentiment of the nation. Their general influence upon the public morals has been like the wind of the desert,—poisonous, withering, and destructive. Another and very large class of men moving in the lower walks of life form a significant element of our American population, whose hard and vicious instincts, gratified without compunction and paraded everywhere in the most offensive manner, would seem to render them well-nigh incapable of reformation. Apparently insensible to all the nobler sentiments of public morality and virtue, and ever ready to perform their congenial part in the general demoralization,

they demand that all the higher classes shall pander to their depraved appetites, as the price of their patronage and support. In this reciprocal play of the baser passions the common principles of morality are daily sacrificed, and the strong and the weak join hands in carrying down the nation to the very verge of ruin. No man can observe the conditions of society in our country, and the obvious impulses of human conduct, without feeling that the perils against which the fathers warned us, and which have been so faithfully and constantly pointed out by the ministers of religion, have, notwithstanding, increased at a fearful rate, without seeing that the most alarming departures from the standard of individual rectitude and social integrity have occurred among us within the century that is past.

And, while every period has exhibited the signs of public degeneracy, none in our history presents more fearful proofs of the impiety and obduracy of great masses of the people. We have abandoned, in a great measure, the faith and practice of our ancestors, in putting aside from their lawful supremacy the Christian ordinances and doctrines. The natural result is, that we have corrupted our ways in all the circles of society and in all the pursuits of life. We have become as a field rank with the growth of all the vices and heaped with the pollution of mighty crimes. The rigid training of former times through family government, discipline, and instruction has been greatly relaxed, if not in many cases wholly neglected. Indeed, there are multitudes of parents in the land who from physical and moral causes are totally unfit to have the care of the children to whom they have given birth: so that a generation of human beings is growing up in one of the most favored regions of the globe, whose preparation for the responsibilities of their age and mission has been sadly at fault, and whose precocity in levity, mischief, and insubordination already equals the vitiating examples that are set before them. The education of the nation is going forward with rapid strides, but it is in a lamentable degree under the auspices of immorality and irreligion, alike in the high and the low places of the community. The unblushing venality and brazen wickedness of a large portion of the conductors of the public press and of the public men of the country have strongly tended to demoralize the nation, to undermine the foundations and destroy the influence of

Christian discipline, and to turn the mind and heart of many to infidelity and licentiousness. The same baleful spirit has moved upon the fountains of human learning and science, and so secularized the philosophy of the times as to have set the high faculty of human reason at variance with the sacred majesty of religion, and to have plunged thousands upon thousands of our young men into a sea of splendid sophistry and subtlety and all the ruinous speculation of a proud but vain imagination. Meanwhile, from the hearts of multitudes the dignity of honest labor and the dictates of a sober and frugal economy have died out, on the one hand increasing pauperism and crime and lending to misfortune the aggravation of human improvidence, and on the other fostering habits of false show, and thus increasing the temptation to deception, fraud, peculation, and all the dishonesties of the most high-pampered extravagance and excess. Moreover, the wanton neglect or abuse of our providential blessings, and the unconscious apostasy from every sentiment of purity and virtue, have served greatly to defile and degrade the mind of a large portion of the community, and fill the centers of population with a low and vulgar herd, who throng the open temples of obscenity and infamy. Thus the materials are prepared for human guilt and wretchedness, whose catalogue of crimes and woes exhausts the power of language to express them. Beyond all this, political controversy and partisan strife for the reins and spoils of power, conducted without principle, and reeking with abuse, have taken so fierce a form as often to have driven the best men from the arena and left the worst upon the field. The selfish and profligate stand forward to control the nominations and elections to office, and afterwards gamble with its duties and obligations without shame and without remorse. Nor is this all. Our wrongs to the Indian and the African, continued from the beginning, have brutalized the temper, darkened the understanding, and perverted the judgment of the nation in regard to the plainest principles of common humanity and justice. The tide of emigration from the Old World has borne to our shores a large element of the foreign-born, who speedily become imbued with our native and inexorable prejudice in this respect. Thus, while we claim to be a free government, we have cherished institutions in our midst which are a mockery of the name of liberty

and have become our standing shame and curse in the sight of the whole world. Involved in a criminality so grave, we have not failed to exhibit its usual concomitants,—arrogance and self-conceit. Our vast facilities of production, trade, and transportation have filled us with high notions of our superiority, and at the same time degraded us to dispositions of covetousness and cruelty. And from the long period of our tranquility we have come at length to a pitch of wickedness that has culminated in one of the most gigantic and desolating civil wars the world has ever seen. Our unparalleled liberty has degenerated into dissolute indulgence; we have been so long without the burdens of government as to have almost forgotten the price of our birthright and to have cast away the only safeguards of its continuance; we have proved ourselves unworthy of our inheritance, in our contempt of that virtue which alone affords protection to society, in our blind disregard of the Christian foundations on which alone the great interests of a nation can permanently rest. Thus, at last, a majority of the people have grown wholly unmindful of the authority and prerogative of God, and of the duties we owe to him and to his creatures. The true life and soul of Christianity has been to a great degree emasculated, and the very titles of Jehovah and the tokens of his awful majesty in the earth have become to multitudes among us as idle and unmeaning as the Grecian myths, used, indeed, to furbish a paragraph with classic elegance or round a period with sonorous emphasis, but completely divested of those great, grand, solemn, and glorious thoughts which never can dwell with vulgarity, profanation, and irreverence.

Now, if, under such conditions, Christianity should resume her sway and bring the masses of the nation back to the pure and simple virtues and to the stern and heroic spirit which marked the age of our Revolutionary fathers, it will prove to be a moral miracle equal to her first triumphs in apostolic days. Yet to this object all good men should devote their energies and their prayers. In the firm conviction that virtue must finally be supreme, and that a wise and beneficent Providence has designed this continent to be the theater of the yet more glorious conquests of Christianity, it is the mission and the duty of all friends of evangelical truth to combine in the attempt to hold and appropriate this country, with its resources, monuments,

and institutions, for an empire devoted to the spread of God's kingdom in the earth, and the universal reign of Jesus Christ.

And it is high time that we had begun to see our duty and to feel our obligation. God's great "judgments are already in the land:" shall not its inhabitants begin "to learn righteousness"? The associated moral and spiritual power of a Christian people ought now to be making itself felt in every part of the land and in all that concerns the existence and welfare of the country. It is the settled conviction of many of the most intelligent and purest minds that the time has come when the Christian people of America should take into their own hands the work of reclaiming the government and wielding its power more decisively for the glory of God and the highest good of human nature, and that for this purpose the true and the good should sternly separate themselves from all connection with the openly vicious and corrupt, and from all countenance and support of those whose life and example will not bear the scrutiny of common decency and morality. And if in a representative government like ours there must be political divisions, and a conflict of the suffrages of the people, let there be a Christian party,—a party that will not sustain by their sympathy or their votes men who are known to be in sentiment and life, by precept and example, unchristian and untrue to the great principles of the Christian faith; for the highest treason of which mankind are capable is treason against the authority and law of the Divine government itself; and the most deadly enemies to human government are they who, with a great pretense of Loyalty, are nevertheless daily insulting the majesty of Him who has power to destroy nations at his will.

The fountain of political turbulence and corruption undoubtedly lies in the primary assemblies of the people, as conducted upon the principle of *party caucus*, which for a long period has amounted to little else than a system of chicanery and venality too humiliating to describe. This kind of imposition upon the free action of American citizenship has been carried to such an extent as well-nigh to neutralize the title of suffrage itself, and make of the boasted ballot-box a mockery of American privilege. For the *caucus*, then, let the Church be substituted—not any one sect or denomination of Christians, but the whole Church catholic—not with a view to exciting

mutual jealousies and creating hostile prejudices, but standing on the platform of Christian character supposed to be exemplified in the sincere adherents of every Christian Church. Let the weight of every vote tell what is the conviction, the intelligent, sober, and matured judgment, of the Christian mind of this nation as to the value to our country of personal integrity and upright manhood. If it were well established that such would be the policy of the truly Christian portion of the people in all the Christian churches of the country, the very fact would carry with it a moral influence which even the most brazen and unscrupulous politician could not altogether despise or resist. And in connection with this position it must be seen that our Christian duty requires us also to set our faces as a flint against the current of social and moral degradation which flows in the popular fashions, tastes, customs, and amusements of the day—in the factitious and dishonest principles of business life—in the whole circle of immoral and dangerous practices and pursuits which ensnare the multitude and draw them on to ruin. We must be more diligent and faithful with the early years of childhood. Christian parents must resume the discipline and religious training over their sons and daughters which prevailed in the earlier and purer days of the republic. And all the departments of government must be filled with men who will administer their power for the suppression of whatever is deleterious in its influence, and for the encouragement of whatever is of a beneficent and elevating tendency. The Church of Christ must purge itself of worthless members, who now, through the laxity of discipline, continue a scandal and a reproach, cambering its progress and dragging down its sacred name into the dust. All the educational and eleemosynary institutions and organizations of the times should be pervaded by the ruling spirit of the Christian faith, and quickened and animated by the living principle of evangelical purity and power. In the liberal professions and in all the stations of political prominence from which decidedly Christian men have been pushed aside partly through their own timidity and partly by the audacity of bold and scheming demagogues, there must be made an earnest and persevering effort to establish the tried and faithful representatives of a higher morality and a more stainless character. In all these respects the evils of our delinquency

have been multiplying from year to year. Christian men have been unwilling or afraid to unite upon the distinctive principles of a common Christianity, and have shrunk from the sacrifice, scarcely ready to suffer whatever of temporary defeat, expense, or reproach it might cost, and tamely submitting to be overruled by the boldness, the assiduity and energy of the evil-minded who assume to control and dictate the public policy and manners of the nation. In this way we have been swiftly sinking into the grossest perversions of ethical truth and the obligations of duty. We have confounded almost every distinction in morals; "we have put good for evil, and evil for good; we have called bitter sweet, and darkness light." In the unrestrained freedom of our experience, with no bonds and no restrictions of government or law that we could feel sensibly resting upon us, and permitted alike under divine and human authority to live in our lusts and to develop in monstrous proportions the sentiment of individual importance, we have come to exhibit little real regard for magistrates of our own choosing, and scarcely less disrespect for the very existence and form of civil government itself. Our very thoughts have been dissolved in the infatuation of personal sovereignty, until oaths and compacts, written charters and constitutions confirmed by the highest sanctions possible to man, are ruthlessly violated, rebellion is inaugurated, and we are brought to the very door of anarchy itself. It could not be otherwise with a people who have in the name of liberty struck at the vital interests of one whole race of men, and through these have aimed an impious blow at the prerogatives of God himself.

And now the day of vindication and of vengeance has burst upon us. The storm which uncovers the social and moral heart of the nation reveals the melancholy fact of a widespread demoralization amid the deepest corruption and the grossest profligacy of great multitudes of the people. Rebellion in favor of perpetuating a system of human bondage is held by many to be the crowning glory of men. Sedition, treachery, perjury, violence, and blood are counted as deeds of fame to immortalize their authors and abettors. Meanwhile, there are not wanting those who, utterly unprincipled, in the guise of pretended friendship, are gloating over the scene, and, like the fabled harpies of Tartarus, are plucking their

gorge from the miseries of the nation, already reeling in the agonies of a mortal conflict. This is the spectacle which America presents to the world at the present moment. And were it not relieved by some brighter hues of Christian hope, by the spirit of an earnest and patriotic ardor, by the stupendous and heroic sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of men and women who freely lay all they possess on the altar of their country, and, finally, by the consciousness of the rectitude of our cause, our firm reliance on providential direction, and the assurance of the glorious purposes of God to be accomplished through this dreary and dreadful passage of the nation's history, it would be indeed the darkest and the saddest chapter yet recorded in the book of time.

Of what avail, then, is it for the enemies of a spiritual religion to attempt to delude us with the vain pretense that the true progress of mankind implies the rejection of the Bible as the divinely inspired word of God, and the denial of its authority in the affairs of men, and that in the onward march of civilization the dogmas of the Christian Church have become obsolete—that the human mind has outgrown its restrictions, and can no longer be controlled by its discipline or instructed by its counsels? And of what avail is it, by mocking at the sober habits and simple virtues of a purer age, to prepare society for the frightful scenes of its own dissolution? Here still are the great and solemn realities of life, here are the giant evils with which men have to grapple, and which, in despite of all the levities and impieties of an epicurean philosophy, cannot be treated as idle dreams, the vagrant fancies of a distempered mind. And in the effort to ignore both the mischiefs and the remedy of our subverted moral condition by the scoffing infidelity and the specious skepticism of our times, the nation with all its treasure has already been brought to the verge of destruction.

Every intelligent man knows it; every honest man confesses it. And yet the signals of evil omen are not removed. The spirit that humbles a nation before the God of heaven and supplies the conditions of the Divine interposition for our salvation has been strangely wanting to the people; while men are everywhere found among us who leave no means unused to bring the religion of our fathers into contempt, and to cut the nation loose from all her moorings

in the ancient faith of martyrs and apostles. The men that do this, whether in the refuse that reeks from the daily press, or in the more pretentious eloquence of the forum, or in the more elaborate and finished chapters of the periodical, or in the more prurient and high-wrought pages of fiction that curse and corrupt the literature of the day, are the deadly enemies of the human soul not only in its relations to the present life, but also in its aspirations for the life to come. They are likewise the malignant and felonious torch-bearers of infidelity, setting the temple of our American greatness on fire, giving our heritage to the flames, and lighting a mighty people into the abyss of self-destruction.

Whoever, therefore, contributes his labor to raise a barrier against so vast and deplorable a calamity to ourselves and the world, whoever lifts his voice like a trumpet in admonition and warning of the danger, and especially whoever can succeed in recalling the mind of the nation to the Christian annals of the republic, in bringing back to the freshly opened fountains of the early inspiration the weary and exhausted body of the people, that they may once more be refreshed and strengthened, once more commune with the great principles, sentiments, achievements, and characters of former times, and be imbued with a sense of the value and importance of their recognition and imitation, will have rendered a noble service, and may justly be regarded as a public benefactor. For the facts of our past history, inspired by the faith of the Christian religion, authenticated and supported as they are by unquestionable proofs, comprise a body of evidence which no well-regulated mind can resist as to the divinity of the Christian religion itself and the reality of a superintending Providence over all the affairs of men. At the same time, they serve to acquaint us with the very purest and loftiest sentiments of the most illustrious men of America in every generation, and with an unbroken chain of testimony in regard to the influence of Christianity upon our national destiny from the beginning until now. And all this appears in connection with the history of most tragic and trying time; and is put forth in terms of thrilling eloquence, of stirring pathos, and of startling energy, kindling the soul to the sublimest fervor of grand and heroic enthusiasm. We shall find in this story of well-attested occurrences

and events all the elements that can move the human heart to its profoundest depths, wise and steady counsels of the great and good men that adorned the secular professions and pursuits—the ringing trumpet-voice of the Christian ministry ever calling the host to the march or the conflict—the beauty and tenderness of woman, roused, amid the sweetness and charms of her gentler nature, as by some supernatural impulse, to all the high and lofty aims of truth and liberty, and imparting everywhere to the breast of manhood a portion of her own unspeakable endurance and devotion—the sublime unity of the Christian faith, in which were joined Catholic and Protestant, Churchman and Dissenter, clergyman and layman, the members of all parties and the parties of all creeds, as if animated by one spirit and glowing with one thought—the great idea of civil and religious liberty for all the tribes of men. Surely in these great outlines of essential unity there is enough to gratify and inspirit our generation upon the review of the records of those who have preceded us. It only needs to collect these scattered materials into one volume of available size and proportions to furnish to the American people one of the richest and most useful manuals of political and Christian information ever published in any country.

Such an attempt is made in the present volume, so far as is known the only work of the kind ever prepared for popular use and general circulation. The author and compiler, the Rev. B. F. Morris, a Protestant clergyman, for many years a successful pastor and preacher of the gospel in the great Valley of the West, and during the last year a pastor in Washington City, having mingled largely with all classes of the people and become extensively acquainted with many of the leading minds and most prominent and distinguished men of the nation both living and dead, and being peculiarly qualified also by extensive travel and observation throughout our country, and apparently moved to it by a natural aptitude for such a work and an earnest desire to serve the cause of Christianity and civil liberty, some ten years since conceived the idea of collecting from the national archives, and the various other sources of information in the country, the important and deeply interesting materials relating to Christianity in our history which are presented in this volume. In accomplishing this work he has not sought to express at length

any opinions or speculations of his own, except so far as to give order, arrangement, and connection to the rich and copious materials thus brought together. Nor has it been his design, as the title of the work might possibly suggest, to give a complete account of the Christian Church in this country, or even a compendium of American ecclesiastical or theological history (which would properly be a distinct work in itself, and is held in reserve for some powerful pen of future times), but rather to show how the spirit of Christianity has entered into the foundations and elements of our national existence, and how it has affected our civil and political history and given shape and structure to our institutions—to exhibit the relations it has borne to the state and the impulse it has given to the actors in the great drama of American colonization and independence, the support it affords to the civil institutions of the American people, and its general influence upon their fortunes and their destiny. The conspicuity and moral grandeur of these great lessons are most powerfully and abundantly illustrated. No man can ponder them as presented here without discovering that they furnish an effectual antidote to the skeptical tendencies and moral laxities of the age, and without breathing an earnest prayer that all the people may become familiar with these great memorials of the past, these solemn and sublime tributes of a mighty nation to the one inspiring principle of their prosperity and greatness, and may learn to cherish it with increasing vigilance and care as the only solid foundation of their present peace or their future hope.

In undertaking a work of this magnitude years ago, how little could the author have anticipated that the period assigned in Providence for the consummation of his labor should be one in which the errors, follies, and sins of the nation have culminated in the awful storm that now desolates the land, and at a time when it may be hoped that the American people, chastened and sobered through so bitter an experience, will be more disposed to avail themselves of the opportunity to review the sacred monuments of the past, to mark their departures from the ways of wisdom, and to return to the only path of safety and of honor! Had the author been gifted with a foreknowledge of the events of the past few years, he could scarcely have set himself to perform a task more fitting to the exigency of the

time or better adapted to promote the reformation which the present judgments of God must produce as the only alternative of our sure and swift destruction. No analysis of the book is here required. It will speak for itself in thunder-tones. As the common manual of the people, it should be in the hands of every individual in all our borders, and, if diligently perused and faithfully improved, who can tell but, under the blessing of God, it may become the morning star of the mightiest day of national regeneration the world has yet beheld.

Byron SUNDERLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 14, 1863

1

Sources of Proof to Establish the Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States

Civil Institutions of the United States

The history and genius of the civil institutions of the United States must ever be a subject of profound thought and interest to the American citizen. Their establishment and progress to completed forms of government, and their influence and fruits upon thirty millions of people and on the nations of the earth, constitute a new era in the science of civil government and the progress of human liberty, and commend them to the reverent study of the statesman, the patriot, the Christian, and the citizen.

The institutions of the North American republic had their birth and baptism from the free inspirations and genius of the Christian religion. This fact has given to the state its political power and moral glory, and shed new light on the benign nature and adaptation of the Christian system to secure the highest political prosperity to a nation.

“Christianity is the principal and all-pervading element, the deepest and most solid foundation, of all our civil institutions. It is

the religion of the people—the national religion; but we have neither an established church nor an established religion. An established *church* implies a connection between church and state, and the possession of *civil* and *political* as well as of ecclesiastical and spiritual power by the former. Neither exist in this country; for the people have wisely judged that religion, as a general rule, is safer in their hands than in those of rulers. In the United States there is no toleration; for all enjoy equality in religious freedom, not as a *privilege* granted, but as a *right* secured by the fundamental law of our social compact. Liberty of conscience and freedom of worship are not chartered immunities, but rights and duties founded on the *constitutional* republication of reason and revelation.”

The theory and faith of the founders of the civil and political institutions of the United States practically carried out these statements. They had no state church or state religion, but they constituted the Christian religion the underlying foundation and the girding and guiding element of their systems of civil, political, and social institutions. This proposition will be confirmed by the following summary of historic facts, which have an extended record in the various chapters of this volume.

Object of the Founders of the Republic

First. The Christian inspirations and purpose of the founders and fathers of the republic.

It was a popular legend of the ancients, which gave to their laws, literature, and religion a sacred solemnity and power, that the founders of empires received immediate inspiration from the gods, and that their systems of government came from the responses of the deities who presided in their temples of religion. This myth, in a Christian sense, was a grand and glorious fact with the wise and skillful workmen who, under God, created and completed the civil institutions of the United States.

No claim to special inspiration from heaven is set up for the fathers of our republic. It would, however, be a violence to historic truth not to affirm and admit that they were under the special and constant guidance of an overruling Providence. The Bible, as the

divine charter of their political rights, as well as of their hopes of immortality, they reverently studied, and on it laid the corner-stone of all their compacts and institutions. The Mosaic system of political jurisprudence, which “contains more consummate wisdom and common sense than all the legislators and political writers of the ancient nations,” the founders of the American republic thoroughly understood, and incorporated its free spirit and democratic principles into their organic institutions.

Secondly. The Christian men who formed our civil institutions were trained and prepared for their work in scenes of conflict in which the truest ideas of liberty and religion were developed.

Great ideas, and the forward movements of the ages, have received their inspiration and impetus from civil and religious agitations and revolutions. This fact has its historic analogy in the conflicts that preceded the planting of a Christian republic on the North American continent. “The whole of the sixteenth century was a period of active preparation for future times; and all that is great in modern science may be said to have received its foundation in the agitations that grew out of that period of the world. It forms one of the grandest and richest eras in human history.” Whilst it was an age replete with the most splendid triumphs in science and literature, it was pre-eminent, also, for its elaboration and vindication of the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty.

The persecutions of the Puritans in England for non-conformity, and the religious agitations and conflicts in Germany by Luther, in Geneva by Calvin, and in Scotland by Knox, were the preparatory ordeals for qualifying Christian men for the work of establishing the civil institutions on the American continent. “God sifted,” in these conflicts, “a whole nation, that he might send choice grain over into this wilderness;” and the blood and persecution of martyrs became the seed of both the church and the state.

It was in these schools of fiery trial that the founders of the American republic were educated and prepared for their grand Christian mission, and in which their faith and characters became strong and earnest with Christian truth. They were trained in stormy times, in order to prepare them to elaborate and establish the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty and of just systems of civil government.

Brewster, and Winthrop, and Roger Williams, and Penn, and George Calvert, and Oglethorpe, and Otis, and Adams, and Jefferson, and Washington, with their illustrious co-laborers, could trace their true political parentage to Pym, and Hampden, and Wickliffe, and Milton, and Cromwell, and to the ages in which they vindicated the principles of liberty, and sealed, many of them, their faith by martyrdom.

Thirdly. Thus inspired and prepared, the Christian men of Puritan times and of the Revolution presented and developed the true symbol of civil government.

Symbols of Civil Governments

A nation, in the embodied form and spirit of its institutions, is the symbol of some one leading idea. This rules its civil administration, directs its social crystallization, and forms its political, martial, and moral character.

The Hebrew commonwealth was the symbol of a theocratic government. Its rituals of religion and liberty maintained the form and diffused the spirit of freedom and of a true republican government. Its nationality, growing out of peculiar and local causes, after ages of historic grandeur, passed away. It was the first and the last type of a national theocratic republic.

The Roman empire, in its colossal unity and form, was the symbol of law, of the stately grandeur of a strong government, of the reign of military rule and conquest. Its fabled origin, and the mythical communion of its founder (NUMA) with the divinities, gave a rigid religious cast to its civil and military institutions and transactions. The science of Roman jurisprudence educated the citizens of the empire in the cardinal virtues of loyalty and patriotism. Religion is a Roman word, signifying obligation to the government. A Roman citizen could no more be disloyal to his country than to the gods. This conviction gave to the government a religious character, and made it invincible in war and strong in governmental authority and influence. Cicero, in one of his addresses, refers to the religious element of the Roman empire in these words—"However much we may be disposed to exalt our advantages, it is, nevertheless, certain that we have been surpassed in population by the Spaniards,

in physical force by the Gauls, in shrewdness and cunning by Carthage, in the fine arts by Greece, and in mere native talents by some of our Italian fellow-countrymen; but in the single point of attention to religion we have excelled all other nations, and it is to the favorable influence of this circumstance upon the character of the people that I account for our success in acquiring the political and military ascendancy we now enjoy throughout the world."

This pervading religious element produced, also, the loftiest martial enthusiasm in the Roman citizen. "The attachment of the Roman soldier," says Gibbon, "was inspired by the united influence of religion and honor." In union with these civil and martial virtues in Roman citizens, the symbol of their government resulted in producing and blending some of the milder virtues of social and domestic life. Female character was formed on the most finished models of pagan excellence; chastity was a golden virtue; and to educate sons for statesmen or soldiers was the highest ambition of the most illustrious ladies of Rome.

The symbol of the Greek republic was the ideal and the actual of Beauty. "The Greek," says a writer, "saw the world almost only on the side of beauty. His name for it was *Kosmos*, divine order and harmony." This idea, in the mind of the Greek, was developed in artistic creations, and in the ornamental more than the useful. The fine arts—literature, painting, statuary, music, poetry, and oratory—were the natural and genial results of the Grecian symbol. It gave to the Greek religion and government the same ideal features, making the first a realm peopled with gods, and the second a system of but little political force or permanency. The Greek democracies were subject to sudden changes, and were wrecked amid the wild and tumultuous waves of liberty. "It was said of the popular assemblies of Athens that if every Athenian were a Socrates, still every Athenian assembly would be a mob." The political and civil institutions of the Greeks accomplished less, perhaps, for liberty and the rights of man than any other ancient republic.

The symbol of the British empire, from its earliest history till the present, was national aggrandizement and selfishness, originating in the feudal system. The landed estates became invested in a few, who grew into an aristocracy of wealth, of social caste, and of

political power. The people were reduced to vassals, and had but few political rights and privileges. This aristocracy of wealth and of social position converted the government into a system of political selfishness and of national aggrandizement, at the expense, often, of international justice, honor, and right. Commerce, and territorial expansion, and the perpetuity of its nobility with all their hereditary privileges, have ever been the leading purposes of the British government. The prestige and unlimited power of this symbol of the empire of Great Britain have realized the words of Webster, who, alluding to the gigantic nationality of the empire, said that she "had dotted the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beats, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circle the earth daily with one continued and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

The symbol of the French empire is glory. This has ever been the star of destiny that has ruled the nation and converted its institutions into a mission of martial glory. The great evil of this symbol of the French empire was, that it displaced the moral basis on which every nation must permanently rest. Atheism, practical and theoretical, has ruled the French empire, and its fatal power has more than once threatened the very life of the nation. "Open the annals of the French nation," said Lamartine, "and listen to the last words of the political actors of the drama of our liberty. One would think that God was eclipsed from the soul—that his name was unknown in the language. The republic of these men without a God has been quickly stranded. The liberty won by so much heroism and so much genius has not found in France a conscience to shelter it, a God to avenge it, a people to defend it against the atheism which is called glory. All ended in a soldier. An atheistic republic cannot be heroic."

The founders of the Christian republic of North America adopted the symbol of civil and religious liberty as the great idea and end of all their civil institutions. They had the most glorious conceptions of the genius of the Christian religion, not only as a system of spiritual doctrines, but as designed and adapted to create and carry on the best and freest forms of civil government. They held to the faith that civil government was an ordination of God, and that its administration ought to harmonize with the law and will of

God as revealed in the Bible. This great object was kept before the minds of the founders and fathers of the republic, and their *beau-idéal* of civil government was that which was found in the Christian religion. As the fruits of this symbol, or leading idea and purpose, contrast the Christian republic of North America with the fruits of ancient and modern nations.

“What is the spirit,” says Grimké, “of the civil and political institutions of America? Is it not free, magnanimous, and wise, frank and courteous, generous and just; in a degree far surpassing that of ancient Greece? Who would suffer, much less institute, a comparison between our national government and the council of Amphictyon, or between our State systems and the compound of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy to be found in the Grecian States? As fountains of noble thoughts and high aspirations after public power, duty, and happiness, far above the triumphs of antiquity, who does not look with a virtuous pride, with grateful exultation, on the Senate of the United States, on the Chamber of National Representatives, and on the Supreme Court of the United States? If the system of the Grecian excelled that of other ancient states in its fitness to develop intellectual and moral freedom and power, who will not acknowledge, in the civil and political institutions of our country, a far superior capacity for the same ends? What is there in the constitution or administration of the Greek governments that can fill the soul of a freeman with such a sense of his own dignity, power, and duty as our written constitutions, the jury system, and the laws of evidence, the scheme of representation, the responsibility of rulers, and the independence of the judiciary? And what, in the most glorious age of Greece, was comparable to the genius and past fruits of our government and country—so August, magnanimous, and benevolent in the eyes of the world—and to the prospect before us, not of selfishness, ambition, and violence, at home or abroad, but of harmony, virtue, wisdom, culture, at home; abroad, of duty, of usefulness, and love to all the nations of the earth?”

Christian Constitutions and State Papers

Fourthly, the Christian religion has a clear and full recognition in the civil constitutions and state papers of the fathers of the republic.

Official records express the faith and theory of those who form and administer the civil institutions of a nation. The fathers and founders of the American republic, being Christian men and designing to form a Christian republic, would be expected to imbue their state papers and their civil constitutions with the spirit and sentiments of the Christian religion. This fact is historic in the civil institutions of the country, and gives to its official documents a Christian feature and influence which belong only to American constitutions and American political annals. During the Revolution, the States assumed their separate sovereignties and formed State constitutions. These civil charters, as this work will show, were full and explicit in their incorporation of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, and their constitutions prohibited men from holding office who did not publicly assent to their faith in the being of a God, the divinity of the Bible, and in the distinctive evangelical truths of Christianity.

The state papers of the Continental Congress were also full of the spirit and sentiments of the Christian system. Under the great seal of state, official documents were sent out to the nation and the world which affirmed the "merits and mediation of Jesus Christ to obtain forgiveness and pardon for sins," and prayed "that pure and undefiled religion may be universally diffused;" "that vice and irreligion may be banished, and virtue and piety established by grace;" "that the nation may be made a holy nation, and that the religion of our divine Redeemer, with all its benign influences, may cover the earth as the waters do the sea;" "that God would grant to his Church the plentiful effusions of divine grace, and pour out his Holy Spirit upon all ministers of the gospel;" "that he would establish the independence of these United States upon the basis of religion and virtue," and "diffuse and establish habits of sobriety, order, morality, and piety;" that he would "take under his guardianship all schools and seminaries of learning, and make them nurseries of virtue and piety, and cause pure religion and virtue to flourish," and that he would "fill the world with his glory." All their bills of rights, and remonstrances against the usurpations of the British government, glowed with the fervid and impassioned sentiments of liberty and religion, and their high Christian tone and diction form a rich part of the Christian political literature of the republic.

Fifthly, the popular utterances of the Christian men who formed our civil institutions declare the Christian religion to be the symbol of the republic.

Puritan divines and lawgivers, and the statesmen and patriots of the Revolution, unite their testimony on this point. They affirmed, in every form, the indissoluble union of religion and liberty. They uttered no such political atheism as “liberty first and religion afterwards;” but, maintaining the divine origin of both, they constituted their indissoluble union in the system of civil government which they formed. In the pulpit, before popular assemblies, in the forums of public justice, before the tribunes of the people, in the halls of legislation, in the public press—in tracts, essays, books, printed sermons and orations—did the men of Puritan and Revolutionary times utter their great thoughts, and declare the union of liberty and religion. A divine enthusiasm glowed in all their popular utterances, that swept with electric energy through the public mind and conscience, and which prepared the people for liberty, independence, and a Christian nationality. This historic fact will be conclusively established in the present volume.

The Revolution Inspired by Religion

Sixthly, the revolution for liberty, independence, and constitutional government had its source in religion, and was the cause of its energy and final victory.

History, as it records the events of ages, and the progress of nations to higher conditions of freedom and prosperity through revolutions, declares that “religion has been the companion of liberty in all her conflicts and in all her battles.” The American Revolution adds another grand illustration of this great historic truth. That splendid victory for liberty and constitutional governments was not won by numbers, nor military genius, nor by armies and navies, nor by any combination of human means, but only through liberty intensified and made heroic through religion. This was the breath of its life, and carried it sublimely on till victory crowned our arms and our banners waved over a free republic. It was the inspirations of religion that girded our heroes for war, that guided our statesmen

in civil councils, that fired and filled the hearts of the people with hope and courage, and gave to all the scenes of that grand conflict a Christian beauty, power, and glory.

Its influence flowed from every source. The cradle-songs of childhood; the home scenes of prayer and piety; the common and academic schools of the country; the Christian colleges of the republic; the literature of the age; the songs of patriotism and religion; the eloquence of the forum and the pulpit; the councils of civil cabinets and the military camps; public men and private citizens of all classes, became the medium of diffusing the religious spirit and power of the Revolution. This fact induced Washington to say, "I am sure that there never was a people who had more reason to acknowledge a divine interposition in their affairs than those of the United States; and I should be pained to believe that they have forgotten that agency which was so often manifested during the Revolution, or that they failed to consider the omnipotence of that God who is alone able to protect them. He must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations."

Christian Annals of the Republic

Seventhly, the Christian annals of the republic declare that religion was the ruling influence and moral power of the republic.

The historic grandeur and moral significance of the civil and political annals of the American nation consist in their Christian spirit and declarations. The inspirations and ideas of civil and religious liberty which they embody; the fundamental and inalienable rights of human nature which they announce and defend; the eternal laws of civil and political science which they affirm; the basis of just and orderly organic governments, and the civil structures which have risen and rest upon it, and which the annals of the republic present and unfold; the Christian nationality which they historically declare, and which they have contributed to form; the spirit and language in which the annals of the nation are written, and which permeate the state papers of the republic from the Puritan to the Revolutionary era, and in some good degree from the era of the Revolution to the present

time; the philosophy and language of American history and American literature, whether poetic, scientific, educational, political, or religious—all these constitute the facts and moral glory of the annals of the nation, and unite in recording and presenting them in a Christian form and spirit. Divest American annals of this their grandest and most important feature, and their value and glory would vanish.

The reverent and careful student of the annals of the American republic will find them imbued with the “benign, masculine, thoughtful spirit of the Christian religion.” This feature gives them an interest, influence, and importance, a political and moral pre-eminence, over the annals of every other nation, whether ancient or modern.

Eighthly, Christian monuments and altars of religion and liberty.

Nations which are rich in historic grandeur have numerous memorials whose inspirations and influences aid in the diffusion of a healthy public sentiment and in the formation of a true nationality. They educate the people to admire and imitate the heroic virtues of the men and scenes of moral or martial glory which the memorials are designed to commemorate and perpetuate. The custom is coeval with time, and has a divine sanction. The annals of the Hebrew commonwealth record the consecration of numerous altars, places, and temples to religion and liberty. These were the symbols of their faith, and from them flowed beneficent and copious influences to form the intense religious nationality of that remarkable people, and to mould all their institutions. It was a divine injunction, as well as a work of piety and patriotism, for the Hebrew people to “walk about Zion, and go round about; tell the towers thereof; mark well her bulwarks; consider her palaces;” that they might tell it to future generations that “this God was our God.”

The annals of American piety and patriotism have many similar memorials. A republic, the outgrowth of the Christian religion, whose history glows with the manifest presence and providences of God, and whose freedom is baptized with the sufferings and blood of martyred patriots and saints, would hallow many memorials of historic associations and grandeur. The American republic is rich in the monuments of piety and patriotism, and their influences and associations have had, and continue to have, the highest historic value and instruction for every American citizen, and are fraught

with some of the noblest and purest lessons of religion and liberty. Their genial and inspiring power has been diffusive and beneficent in infusing fresher love for our civil institutions, and deepening and strengthening that intense enthusiasm for our freedom and free institutions which is characteristic of every loyal American. American history, in the Christian and patriotic scenes, achievements, and men which it records, is peculiarly grand and rich in this element and influence of our national sentiment and power. The altars of religion, the monuments of nature and art, the scenes of martial and moral glory, the halls of constitutional freedom, and the temples of legislation and organized civil governments, around all of which cluster memorable associations and glowing inspirations, are eminently worthy of record, and should be reverently studied by every patriot and Christian.

Christian Faith of the Men Who Formed Our Civil Institutions

Ninthly, the Christian faith and character, personal and political, of most of the men who originated and constructed our civil institutions, affirm the presiding genius and power of the Christian religion.

Sacred history, and the institutions which it unfolds, have their life and glory from the good and great men whom the providence and Spirit of God raised up and qualified for their varied and important missions. "In nothing does the superiority of the Bible over all other books appear more manifest than in its graphic and inimitable delineations of human character. From first to last it opens to our view, besides poets and orators, a magnificent succession of living characters—kings and statesmen, heroes and patriarchs, prophets and apostles," who constituted the glory of the age and nation in which they acted, and whose character and influence are a rich part of the political and moral wealth of the world.

The American republic, like the Hebrew commonwealth, has its chief glory from the good and great men who have adorned its civic and Christian history, and were the active agents in building up the organic forms of the social and political life of the republic. The Puritans, and the men of colonial history, were stalwart, noble Christian men. The men antecedent to and actors in the eventful drama

of the Revolution were, most of them, men whose minds were illuminated by divine influences, and whose characters and lives bore the superscription and the image of Christ. All were not public professors of the Christian religion, but almost all acknowledged its divinity and necessity to the existence, welfare, and stability of the state. Their Christian faith and characters not only constitute the enduring glory of our republic, but are also the sources of the Christian features of our civil institutions.

The true and lasting fame of the American nation—its political and moral glory—consists in the eminent and illustrious characters which have, in each successive age of the republic, adorned the state and directed its political destinies. Trained in a Christian school and formed under Christian influences, and deriving their ideas of civil and religious liberty from the Bible, their practical faith led them to adopt it as the rule of life and to consult it as the source of their civil and political views and principles, as well as of their religious belief and hopes. The monument of these men of Puritan and Revolutionary times is in the great Christian ideas and truths they elaborated and incorporated into the civil institutions of the nation, and in the Christian virtues, public and private, which they bore as the fruits of their Christian faith.

The leaders of our Revolution were men of whom the simple truth is the highest praise. They were singularly sagacious, sober, thoughtful, wise. Lord Chatham spoke only the truth when he said to Franklin of the men who composed the first Colonial Congress, “The Congress is the most honorable assembly of statesmen since those of the ancient Greeks and Romans in the most virtuous times. They were most of them profound scholars, and studied the history of mankind that they might know men. They were so familiar with the lives and thoughts of the wisest and best minds of the past, that a classic aroma hangs about their writings and their speeches; and they were profoundly convinced of what statesmen know and mere politicians never perceive—that ideas are the life of a people—that the conscience, not the pocket, is the real citadel of a nation.”

“Events,” says a living American divine, “march in the train and keep step to the music of that divine LOGOS which was, and is, and is to come. In order to act the right part in them, and in order to understand them when they do come to pass, our intelligence must

be in vital sympathy with that of their invisible Author and Arbiter. The divine purpose which is forcing its way into existence, and preparing for itself a local habitation and a name, must be reproduced in our own consciousness and embodied in our own life. This is the only way for men to become coworkers with the Most High in executing his sovereign behests.

“This is the ancient method by which from age to age mighty nations, and all the elect spirits of the race, have comprehended their heaven-appointed missions, fulfilled their tasks, and rendered themselves illustrious in human annals. This is the secret of that sacred enthusiasm which transformed Eastern shepherds and nomads of the desert into venerable patriarchs, seers, warriors, and kings, which changed fishermen into apostles and evangelists, and which is able still to bless the world with heroes, saints, and martyrs.

“It is the prevalence of some divine idea in the soul, actuating the whole being and illuminating the path of life. Let a man grasp, in honest conviction, a real thought of God, and spend his days in striving to realize it, and he is on the highway to glory, honor, and immortality. Let a whole people grasp, in honest conviction, some sacred cause, some principle of immortal justice, and consecrate themselves to the work of vindicating that cause and enthroning that principle, and we have the grandest spectacle ever witnessed on earth.”

The grandeur of such a spectacle was seen in the faith and purpose of the fathers and founders of the American republic. These men, as well as the people, did grasp a great and “real thought of God,” and devoted themselves to its glorious realization; and the result was the vindication of eternal right and justice, and the creation and establishment of civil institutions in conformity to the principles and teachings of the Christian religion. It is in the light of this great historic fact that the faith and labors of the Puritans and the men of the Revolution are to be read and studied.

Duty of American Citizens to Study the Christian Origin and Genius of Their Civil Institutions

This summary of the Christian facts and principles which belong to the history, formation, and progress of the civil institutions of the American republic impresses the patriotic and pious duty of giving

diligent attention and study to the annals of our nation and the origin and genius of our institutions.

The ancient republics regarded it as a high political necessity and duty to educate their citizens into the history and spirit of their peculiar institutions. "The young men of the Roman empire," says Gibbon, "were so devoted to the study of the genius and structure of Roman law and government, that the celebrated Institutes of Justinian were addressed to the youth of his dominion who had devoted themselves to the science of Roman jurisprudence, and they had assurances from the reigning emperor that their skill and ability would in time be rewarded by an adequate share in the government of the republic."

"The Greek citizen," says Grimké, "was subjected, from the cradle to the grave, to the *full, undivided*, never-varying influence of the *peculiar* institutions of his own country. The spirit of those institutions was forever living and moving around him—was constantly acting upon him at home and abroad, in the family, at the school, in the temple, on national occasions. That spirit was unceasingly speaking to his eye and ear; it was his very breath of life; his soul was its habitation, till the battle-field or the sea, banishment, the dungeon, or the hemlock, stripped him equally of his country and his life."

If these duties were so faithfully discharged by the people of the ancient republics, how much higher and more important that the American people should know the history and nature of the civil institutions of their Christian republic, and live under their constant and full power, and thus be qualified to discharge with fidelity and conscientiousness all the duties of an American citizen!

"Be assured," says Grimké (changing a word of the passage), "if the American citizen rightly comprehends the genius of Christianity, the spirit of our institutions, the character of the age in which he lives, he must be deeply imbued with the benign, masculine, thoughtful spirit of religion. Let me commend to the profound study of every American citizen the institutions of their country, and the noble illustrations of them to be found in the writings of our historians and statesmen, judges, orators, scholars, and divines. Let me commend to their reverence, gratitude, and imitation the character of Washington, the noblest personification of patriotic duty, dignity, and usefulness that men ever have seen. Let me commend to them to

enter with a deep seriousness, yet with a glowing enthusiasm, into the spirit of their institutions and of the age in which they live.”

Nothing would have a happier influence on the public men and politics of our day, nothing raise, expand, and purify them, nothing would so exalt their conceptions and aims, or give them higher significance or greater weight, than a thorough and candid study of the Christian faith, characters, and actions of the great and good men who founded our civil institutions and watched over their history and development.

This duty, if faithfully discharged, would unfold the divine source of our civilization and system of civil government, give a higher appreciation of the inheritance received from our fathers, and a firmer purpose to preserve and transmit them, unimpaired, in their original purity and glory, to future ages and generations.

This study would impress the fact stated by Sir William Jones, a great English jurist, who said, with great truth and beauty, that “we live in the midst of blessings till we are utterly insensible of their greatness and of the source from whence they flow. We speak of our civilization, our arts, our freedom, our laws, and forget entirely how large a share is due to Christianity. Blot Christianity out of the pages of man’s history, and what would his laws have been? what his civilization? Christianity is mixed up with our very being and our daily life; there is not a familiar object around us which does not wear a different aspect because the life of Christian love is on it—not a law which does not owe its gentleness to Christianity—not a custom which cannot be traced, in all its holy, healthful parts, to the gospel.”

2

The Hand of God in the Settlement of the American Continent

God in History

GOD in human history is the key that solves the problem of human destiny and sheds a true and satisfactory light on the pathway and progress of nations. "In history," says D'Aubigné, "God should be acknowledged and proclaimed. The history of the world should be set as the annals of the government of the Sovereign of the universe. God is ever present on that vast theatre where successive generations of men and nations struggle. The history of the world, instead of presenting a confused chaos, appears as a majestic temple, in which the invisible hand of God himself is at work, and which rises to his glory above the rock of humanity.

"Shall we not recognize the hand of God in those grand manifestations, those great men, those mighty nations which arise and start as it were from the dust of the earth, and communicate a new form and destiny to the human race? Shall we not acknowledge him in those great heroes who spring from society at appointed epochs—who display a strength and an activity beyond the ordinary limits of humanity, and around whom, as around a superior and mysterious power, nations and individuals gladly gather? And do not those great revolutions which hurl kings from their thrones and

precipitate whole nations to the dust—do they not all declare aloud a God in history? Who, if not God? What a startling fact, that men brought up amid the elevated ideas of Christianity regard as mere superstition that divine intervention in human affairs which the very heathen have universally admitted !”

Views of Divine Providence by Various Authors

That great scholar and Christian philosopher of Germany, the Chevalier Bunsen, says, in his “Philosophy of Human History,” “The noblest nations have ever believed in an immutable moral order of the world, constituted by divine wisdom and regulating the destinies of mankind. The truly philosophical historian must believe that there is an eternal order in the government of the world, to which all might and power are to become and do become subservient; that truth, justice, wisdom, and moderation are sure to triumph; and that when the contrary appears to be the case, the fault lies in our mistaking the middle for the end. There must be a solution for every complication, as certainly as a dissonance cannot form the conclusion of a musical composition. In other words,” says Bunsen, “the philosopher who will understand and interpret history must believe that God, not *accident*, governs the world.”

“The principles that govern human affairs,” says Bancroft, “extending like a path of light from century to century, become the highest demonstration of the superintending providence of God. Universal history does but seek to relate the sum of all God’s works of providence. The wheels of providence are not turned about by blind chance, but they are full of eyes round about, and they are all guided by the Spirit of God.” “Providence is the light of history, and the soul of the world. God is in history, and all history has a unity because God is in it.”

Settlement of the American Continent

No era in human history is more signally and sublimely marked with the manifest providence and presence of God than that of the discovery and Christian colonization of the North American continent.

Discovered by Columbus

In 1492, Columbus hailed the opening of the New World with a song of praise, and by a solemn act of prayer consecrated it to God. In 1498, six years later, Cabot, an English navigator, discovered Newfoundland, and sailed along the coasts of the American continent. Columbus and Cabot were both Roman Catholics, and made their discoveries under the auspices of Ferdinand of Spain and Henry VIII of England, who were Roman Catholic sovereigns. It was more than a hundred years subsequent that any serious attempts were made to colonize the countries discovered by the Spanish and English navigators.

First Era of Colonization

“The intervening century,” says a writer, “was in many respects the most important period of the world; certainly the most important in modern times. More marked and decided changes, affecting science, religion, and liberty, occurred in that period than had occurred in centuries before; and all these changes were just such as to determine the Christian character of this country.

Preparatory Means of the 16th Century

“Meantime, God held this vast land in reserve, as the great field on which the experiment was to be made in favor of civil and religious liberty. He suffered not the foot of Spaniard, or Portuguese, or Frenchman, or Englishman, to come upon it, until the changes had been wrought in Europe which would make it certain that it would always be a land of religious freedom. The changes then wrought, the advances then made, related to science and the arts, to religion, to the principles of liberty. The whole of the sixteenth century was a period of active preparation for future times, and all that is great in modern science and art may be said to have received its foundation in the agitations that grew out of that period of the world. The twelve decades, from 1480 to 1600, form one of the grandest and richest eras in the history of humanity. It was in that period that the

foundation of our liberty was laid—in that period that it became sure that this would be a land of civil and religious freedom. England during all that time was a great laboratory in which these principles were brought out; and from the views which prevailed at the time of Henry VII., and which had prevailed for ages, it required one whole century to advance the world to that position which was maintained by Pym and Hampden and Milton, and was seen in the principles of Winthrop, and Robinson, and Brewster, of George Calvert, of Roger Williams, and of William Penn. Scarcely any thing has occurred in history which is more remarkable or which has been more certainly indicative of the designs of Providence.”

Religious Acts and Character of Columbus

“Columbus came,” says Irving, “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.”

His Formal Consecration of the Continent to Christ

“A deep religious feeling mingled with his meditations and gave them at times a tinge of superstition, but it was of a sublime and lofty kind. He looked upon himself as being in the hand of Heaven, chosen from among men for the accomplishment of its high purpose; he read, as he supposed, his contemplated discoveries foretold in the mystic revelations of the prophets. The ends of the earth were to be brought together, and all nations and tongues and languages united under the banner of the Redeemer. This was to be the triumphant consummation of his enterprise, bringing the unknown regions of the earth into communion with Christian Europe—carrying the light of the true faith into benighted and pagan lands, and gathering their countless nations under the holy dominion of the Church. One of his principal objects was undoubtedly the propagation of the Christian faith. Columbus now considered himself about to effect this great work—to spread the light of revelation to the

very ends of the earth, and thus to be the instrument of accomplishing one of the sublime predictions of Holy Writ.

“Whenever he made any great discovery, he celebrated it by solemn thanks to God. The voice of prayer and melody of praise rose from his ship when they first beheld the New World, and his first act on landing was to prostrate himself upon the earth and return thanksgiving. All his great enterprises were undertaken in the name of the Holy Trinity, and he partook of the communion before his embarkation. His conduct was characterized by the grandeur of his views and the magnanimity of his spirit. Instead of scouring the newly-found countries, like a grasping adventurer, eager only for immediate gain, as was too general with contemporaneous discoverers, he sought to ascertain their soil and productions, their rivers and harbors: he was desirous of colonizing and cultivating them, conciliating and civilizing the natives, introducing the useful arts, subjecting every thing to the control of law, order, and religion, and thus of founding regular and prosperous empires.” In his will Columbus enjoins on his son Diego, or whoever might inherit after him, “to spare no pains in having and maintaining in the island of Hispaniola four good professors of theology, to the end and aim of their studying and laboring to convert to our holy faith the inhabitants of the Indias; and, in proportion as by God’s will the revenue of the estate shall increase, in the same degree shall the number of teachers and devout persons increase, who are to strive to make Christians of the natives.”

Webster’s View of Columbus

“The great epitaph,” said Webster, “commemorative of the character and the worth, the discoveries and the glory, of Columbus, was that he had *given a new world to the crowns of Castile and Aragon*. This is a great mistake. It does not come up to all the great merits of Columbus. He gave the territory of the Southern hemisphere to the crowns of Castile and Aragon; but, as a place for the plantation of colonies, as a place for the habitation of men, a place to which laws and religion, and manners and science, were to be transferred, as a place where the creatures of God should multiply and fill the

earth under friendly skies and with religious hearts, he gave it to the whole world, he gave it to universal man! From this seminal principle, and from a handful, a hundred saints, blessed of God and ever honored of men, landed on the shores of Plymouth and elsewhere along the coast, united with the settlement of Jamestown, has sprung this great people.”