

# Revolt Against the Kingdom of God

## American Foundations

### Intelligence Report # 8

WHO IS THIS “LADY LIBERTY” pictured above and who were the fabled “Sons of Liberty” who sparked a revolution in her name? These are related questions. To see how they are related requires a thorough scrutiny of the motives behind American Revolution, which was more than a mortal combat fought for independence from Great Britain; the American Revolution was a combat in the name of freedom for the hearts and minds of men. Thus, in the words of John Adams, the “*real revolution*” was,

*“...in the minds and hearts of the people, a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations...This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution.”*

[\[1\]](#)

And exactly what sentiments, principles, and opinions was Adams talking about?

*“Those principles and feelings” that could “be traced back for two hundred years and sought in the history of the country from the first plantations in America.”*[\[2\]](#)

More precisely, the Christian ideas of divine sovereignty, divine law, and the moral precepts drawn from the sacred scriptures ([outlined in Intelligence Report #1](#)) that the Pilgrims and other settlers had brought with them to the new world to establish Christian “plantations” (commonwealths) throughout North America; these had to undergo so radical a change that it would require a revolution in the name of

“Liberty”.

Adams was *not* alone in this revolutionary cabal. Thomas Jefferson was just as adamant. The revolution was, more than anything else, a campaign to remove the constricting shackles of Christian dogma imposed by ignorant Protestant ministers and plotting Catholic priests because they were both “hostile to liberty”:

*“In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the Despot abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own....They have perverted the purest religion ever preached to man, into mystery & jargon unintelligible to all mankind & therefore the safer engine for their purposes.”*[\[3\]](#)

*“Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites.”*[\[4\]](#)

The world needed liberation from the tyranny of Christian clergy who had turned men and women throughout the world into “fools” and “hypocrites”, from clerical machinations and subtle “priestcraft” that had sunk the world in a sea of ignorance. Those who were hostile to “liberty” had to be therefore be overcome by those who swore to honor her.

*“The clergy...believe that any portion of power confided to me [as President] will be exerted in opposition to their schemes. And they believe rightly: I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man”.*[\[5\]](#)

James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution”, also harbored

hostility for the clergy, “spiritual tyrants” who “subvert the public liberty”.

*“What influence, in fact, have ecclesiastical establishments had on society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the civil authority; on many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instance have they been the guardians of the liberties of the people. Rulers who wish to subvert the public liberty may have found an established clergy convenient auxiliaries. A just government, instituted to secure and perpetuate it, needs them not.”*[\[6\]](#)

On this topic almost all agreed, however, there was a contest for who was worse, was it the Catholic priests or the Protestant ministers who were the biggest enemies of liberty?

*“The priesthood have, in all ancient nations, nearly monopolized learning. And ever since the Reformation, when or where has existed a Protestant or dissenting sect who would tolerate A FREE INQUIRY (Adams’ own emphasis)? The blackest billingsgate, the most ungentlemanly insolence, the most yahooish brutality, is patiently endured, countenanced, propagated, and applauded.”*[\[7\]](#)

Nonetheless, it was clearly the Catholics who were the biggest threat to freedom, in England and France, the “monster” had suffered a wound from which Adams did not believe she would recover; the wound was “mortal”:

*“Cabalistic Christianity, which is catholic (sic) Christianity, and which has prevailed for 1,500 years, has received a mortal wound, of which the monster must finally die. Yet so strong is his constitution, that he may endure for centuries before he expires.”*[\[8\]](#)

Because the monster had not yet expired, it was clear what the

revolution was about:

*“The question before the human race is, Whether the **God of nature** Shall govern the World by his own laws, or Whether Priests and Kings Shall rule it by fictitious Miracles? Or, in other Words, whether Authority is originally in the People? or whether it has descended for 1800 Years in a Succession of Popes and Bishops, or **brought down from Heaven by the holy Ghost in the form of a Dove**, in a Phyal of holy Oil?”*[\[9\]](#)

Clearly, the god of nature is not the Holy Trinity. Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity established a church (which the key Framers declared war against) and promulgated a new Law, which He also entrusted to His her to guard as the “pillar and support of truth” ([1 Timothy 3:15](#)) and as the light of the world ([Matt. 5: 14-16](#)). Jesus also referred to Himself as the “Light of the world” ([John 8:12](#)). Since He also referred to the church as His Body ([I Corinthians 1:12-27](#); [Romans 12: 4-5](#); [Colossians 1:24](#) and in at least 19 other places); it is clear that Jesus is the head ([Colossians 1:18](#)) and the Church is His Body; head and body are one mystical person: Together God and His Church are both the light of the world because they are one Body. [The Church is also the “city set on the hilltop”](#) to give light to the world and as the pillar of truth, commissioned to teach all nations ([Matt 28:18-20](#)).

Apparently, the “Founding Fathers” were free thinking revolutionaries (as well be shown in the following two Intelligence Reports) who had a problem with the Church’s authority AS LIGHT OF THE WORLD, TEACHER OF NATIONS AND GUARDIAN OF THE LAWS OF GOD. Likewise, SOME Protestants have no problem saying that the Catholic Church is heretical because Catholics call priests “father” when scripture clearly says to “call no one on earth your father” ([Matt 23:9](#)). Yet, most of them have no problem calling men like Jefferson, Madison and Franklin their “Founding Fathers” and

they also seem to neglect the scriptural fact that the Apostle [Paul referred to himself as “father” \(1 Corinthians 4:15\)](#). and that God commands us to honor our “mother” and “father”.

Men such as these unite themselves to the Founding Fathers who set themselves in opposition to the Church as the city on a hilltop and as the light of the world. They received plenty of support for these radical ideas by deferring to the people who were roused by the British tyranny, by severe mercantile trade restrictions and by political oppression (what the Christian people *en banc* failed to see clearly was that the church was thrown into the mix but disguised by the veneer of “nature’s God”). Thus, what we are about to learn below is not surprising: **The “Founding Fathers’” were in the process of founding or establishing a “new order of the ages” in which the Church would be prohibited from public affairs** (not allowed in the court rooms, not allowed in the congress, not allowed in the senate, not allowed in the schools, not allowed in the post office not on public property, not allowed in the centers of political power and law making... not allowed, not allowed, not allowed), **from law making, and any type of political discourse while the Framers set themselves up as the lawgivers**; thereby making themselves and the people, *not God and His Church*, the final source of light and arbiter of truth. Jefferson concurred with Adams’ thoughts; and then furthered them by insisting that the teachings of Jesus, the **“purest system of morals ever preached to mankind”, had been perverted by men like St. Paul the “great Coryphaeus, and first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus”**[\[10\]](#). Afterward, the popes and bishops mutilated and adulterated the scriptures thereby turning them into “impious heresies”:

*” [A] short time elapsed after the death of the great reformer of the Jewish religion (Jesus Christ) before his principles were departed from by those who professed to be his special servants (the apostles), and perverted into an engine for enslaving mankind (the church perverted Jesus’*

*teachings to enslave mankind), and aggrandizing their (mankind's) oppressors in Church and State (priests and kings); that the purest system of morals ever before preached to man, has been adulterated and sophisticated by artificial constructions, into a mere contrivance to filch wealth and power to themselves (priests and kings); that rational men (like Jefferson and other founders) not being able to swallow their impious heresies (the clergy's) , in order to force them down their throats, they (the clergy) raise the hue and cry of infidelity, while themselves are the greatest obstacles to the advancement of the real doctrines of Jesus, and do in fact constitute the real Anti-Christ."* [\[11\]](#)

Jefferson and Adams *et al* would be the final arbiters of truth not the apostles, not their successors, nor the Catholic and Protestant clergy, but the writers of the constitution ratified by the people were setting themselves up as the arbiters of truth in order to set men free from the tyranny of the Christian Church and Her clergy. Adams had drawn up the battle lines between the "God of nature" and the God who had established the Catholic Church, and by inference, her separated brothers, and sisters in the Protestant Churches to teach the nations, to be the pillar of truth and the light to the world. By defending the liberal doctrine that authority originates with the people (it is "*not brought down from heaven by the power of the Holy Ghost*"), Adams fell on the side of nature and popular sovereignty heretically enshrined in the Constitution. Adams and Jefferson denied Jesus' own teaching that all authority comes down from above ([John 19:11](#)) and then they denied the explicit teaching of the Old Testament and of St. Paul, whom they dismissed as they "great Coryphaeus", that all authority comes from the God, not the god of nature but the God of Abraham , Issac, and Jacob, from the Holy Trinity whom scripture acknowledges as the source of all power and authority-no where does scripture say that power or authority comes from the people.

*“LORD, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven, and do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In your hand is power and might, and no one can withstand you”* ([2 Chronicles 20:6](#)).

*“Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed, and those who oppose it will bring judgment upon themselves”* ([Romans 13:1-2](#)).

All power belongs to God as does the right to make laws for the governance of the universe – they all belong to God and come from Him:

*The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “**All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me**”* (Matt 28: 16-18).

After the resurrection, there is no legitimate power except from Jesus. Power from on high can be justly transferred to rulers *through* the people, in which case, the case of an authentic democracy or republic, the people can rightly legitimize the person or persons on whom power is conferred, *but they have no right or authority* to alter the laws of God by contrary laws that exclude both the Holy Trinity and Divine Precepts from public affairs and institute secular law in their place. By referring to the Christian Church, the Bride of Christ, as “Antichrist”, they were also dismissing Her Divine Spouse who established Her, not America or any other nation, as “light of the nations”. According to Adams and Jefferson, Jesus is not a Divine Person—He is not God (see Intelligence Reports [3–5–6](#)). Thus, it is not



surprising that they thought it their sacred duty, the duty of the revolution, to undertake the initial final steps to finish off the wounded “monster”, His Bride, who “must finally die” and whose God-given authority must be ridiculed, publicly stripped, and then, contrary to God’s own decree, transferred to the new secular state that they were establishing—the new state that has, for example, appropriated to itself power over education, marriage, birth, the Sabbath to name a few – these are not things that belong to Caesar [\(Matt 12:17\)](#):

*“And Jesus answering, said to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”*

Some vital “things of God” (marriage and its mystical meaning, Sabbath recognition, dignity of life teachings, education) have been stripped from the Church, just as Christ has been rejected as the cornerstone. Interestingly, these two scripture passages about rejection of the cornerstone and giving to God what belongs to God, occur together in Mark’s Gospel (Chapter 12) and in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 22) in which we find rejection of the Messiah and failure to make a proper distinction between the “things of God” and “things of Caesar” presented together in one passage – rejecting Jesus and rejecting His Church and her authority are connected, as they are in these gospels. No one can be united to Christ unless they are part of his body, the Church. If the distinction between Caesar and his state and God and His Church is not maintained, the state will soon enough reject the proposition that sacred things such as marriage belong to the Church and therefore can be abrogated and reassigned to secular authorities. Below is Mark’s version, if you check Matthews, the theme is repeated, *albeit* in different words:

*‘Have you not read this scripture passage: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes’*



[\(Mark12:10\)](#)?...They sent some Pharisees and Herodians to him to ensnare him in his speech... Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or should we not pay?" Knowing their hypocrisy he said to them, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at."They brought one to him and he said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They replied to him, "Caesar's." So Jesus said to them, "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" [\(Mark 12:17\)](#).

Jesus being rejected as the cornerstone of the New Israel, His Church and Mystical Body, is synonymous with her spiritual legitimacy or authority being rejected and then pilfered by the state – things such as marriage, dignity of life teachings leading to abortion legislation, education, abrogation of God's law, power and authority (sovereignty) – these things do not belong to Caesar! They belong to God and they belong to His Church, which the founders were in the process of rejecting along with Her Cornerstone, Jesus Himself. It is not possible to have one without the other, that is, it is not possible to have Jesus without His Church. They are one person; the Church is the body and Christ is the head of the body [\(Colossians 1:18\)](#) [\(Ephesians 5:29-30\)](#).

Christ is the groom and the Church is His bride [\(2 Corinthians 11:23\)](#) [\(Ephesians 5:27-32\)](#) [\(Rev 19:7\)](#) – in marriage they are made one. To speak of one is to speak of the other. Thus, whatever is done to one is done to the other!

*"Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me"* [\(Luke 10:16\)](#).

*"Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me"* [\(Matt 10:40\)](#).

*'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" ([Matt 25:40](#)).*

But in the minds of men like Franklin, Adams and Jefferson, et al, the Church, the mystical Body of Christ, was "Cabalistic" and therefore clearly the "Antichrist who could, and should, therefore be "rejected" just as they had rejected the divinity of Christ and reduced Him to a "great teacher of morality". It seems that in calling the Church "Antichrist, they were unaware that they were fulfilling scripture ([Matt 10:25](#)). Whatever happens to Christ happens ton His Church and whatever happens to the Church happens to Christ; they are simply inseparable as man and wife are inseparable ([Matt 19:5](#)) ([Mark 10:8](#)). Men such as the Founders who rejected Christ's Church cannot have Christ as they claimed. No, in rejecting the Church they rejected Christ too. The bottom line is: Men such as these did not know God!

*"Remember the word I spoke to you,\_\* 'No slave is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me" (John 15: 20-21).*

Given what we have learned in this series of Intelligence Reports, it is becoming quite clear where the cabal lies and who the "Antichrist" is likely to be.

**GO TO NEXT PART TWO: LADY LIBERTY**

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ENDNOTES

[\[1\]](#) Letter to H. Niles (1818).

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Thomas Jefferson (March 17, 1814) Letter to Horatio G. Spafford,

[4] Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia:  
<https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/christian-god-three-headed-monsterquotation>

[5] Letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush, September 23, 1800

[6] James Madison (1785) "*A Memorial and Remonstrance*".

[7] John Adams, Letter to John Taylo

[8] John Adams, (*July 16, 1814*) *Letter to Thomas Jefferson.*

[9] John Adams, (*June 20, 1815*) *Letter to Thomas Jefferson*

[10] Thomas Jefferson (*April 13, 1820*) *Letter to William Short*

[11] Thomas Jefferson (1810) *Letter to Samuel Kercheval*

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## WHAT ARE THE GREATEST BOOKS?

**KOLBE'S GREATEST BOOKS** are an Accumulated Treasury of Human Wisdom. As such, they are indispensable components of liberal education because liberal education—unlike training and schooling—culminates in wisdom.

They are called "Greatest" because of the formative impact they have had as a tour de force of Christian civilization, because they masterfully deal with the greatest questions the human mind is capable of examining, and because they help readers acquire truth, which is the one attainment of the human mind that sets a person free (John 8:32) or "liberates". This is why the Greatest Books are key

components of “liberal” arts education; liberal education is education intended for free men and women or for those who desire to be free to develop all their human potential.

Because human beings are endowed with an intellect and will made to the image and likeness of God, they possess the potential to become increasingly Godlike. This is a trinitarian mystery manifest in man’s highest intellectual faculties: intellectual apprehension, understanding (also known as reason), and the ability to love (which is an intellectual appetite that involves the body but originates in, and proceeds from, the mind).

When human beings properly exercise and develop these faculties the result is ongoing growth in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom leading to ongoing sanctification in a spirit of unitive love. This is a uniquely human process referred to by Western mystics as “divinization” (in the East it is referred to as “theosis”) resulting in spiritual growth and phenomenal creative expression in the arts, sciences, and humanities. The Greatest Books are an indispensable collection of many such authors (some further developed than others) whose wisdom graces the various arts and sciences in the Judeo-Christian and classical natural law tradition.

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**BLACK – PHILOSOPHY**

**PURPLE – THEOLOGY**

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In Dickens and Dostoevsky human nature combats pride, ambition, greed, and envy; in John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila human nature seeks highest perfection; in King Alfred the Great's Law Books the Old Law revealed to Moses is united to the New Law revealed by Jesus; in La Maitre and Einstein man struggles to understand the cosmos; in Augustine and Shakespeare man endeavors to understand himself, while Aquinas and Dante explore virtue, sin, grace, redemption, and final judgment.

When most current novels and best sellers are no longer remembered, the *Greatest Books* (which have stood, and continue to stand, the test of time) will still be cherished and read by millions as they have been for over two thousand years.



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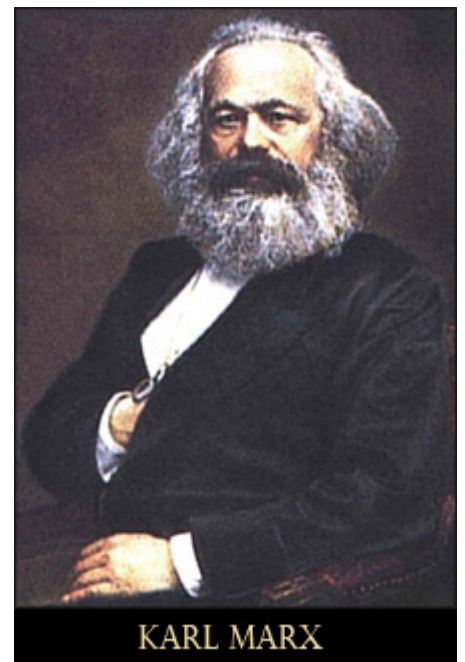
# THE GREATEST BOOKS ARE NOT THE GREAT BOOKS

KOLBE'S GREATEST BOOKS are often confused with BRITANNICA'S GREAT BOOKS. The two are alike in that they are compilations of outstanding written contributions to the advancement of civilization. The only question is: What civilization are they advancing? Kolbe's Greatest Books are all part of the Judaeo-Christian, Greco-Roman natural law tradition. Britannica's *Great Books of the Western World*, edited by Robert Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler, are often antithetical to this tradition.

Greatest Books: Politics – Law – Social Theory

Greatest Books: Theology

Britannica's Great Books include thinkers such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Hegel, Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Jean Jacques Rousseau; these men are atheists, deists, agnostics, anti-Christians, and revolutionaries. The *Great Books* collection also includes an additional series of 102 "*Recommended Readings*" that embrace thinkers antithetical to Christian civilization such as Ivan Pavlov, the father of classical conditioning, Sir James Frazier who endeavored to reduce Christianity to a human construct and the Son of God to a myth.



KARL MARX

They also include Herbert Spencer, a social evolutionist and cultural determinist, the agnostic Thomas Huxley, and others such as the François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire) and the deist Thomas Paine who waged ceaseless war against Christianity. According to Paine, the Christian

system of faith is “derogatory” and “repugnant””.



“Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is no more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason, and more contradictory to itself than this thing called Christianity. “.

Voltaire signed his letters *Écrasez l'infâme!* – “crush the wretch” by whom he meant the Catholic Church. He made her destruction the center of all his efforts. According to Voltaire, enlightened statesmen and philosophers should focus all their efforts on destroying the church’s “infamous missionaries”; they should be willing to “risk all things, even to be burned in order to destroy it. Let us crush the wretch! Crush the wretch! *Écrasez l'infâme!*”

In short, the “*Great Books of Western Civilization*” are not the “*Greatest Books of Christian Civilization*”– the Great Books are often arrayed against Christian Civilization. Is it a good thing to introduce young underdeveloped minds to advanced thinkers such as Hegel and Freud before they have developed critical intellectual skills as well as knowledge and understanding of their own intellectual-cultural tradition? We can do to better than this.



Nonetheless, for the very reason that the Great Books are often antithetical to ideas expressed in the Greatest Books, they help students develop dialectical thinking skills, analytical judgment, and substantive evaluation, which are essential to intellectual formation.



Consequently, The Great Books form a part of Kolbe's series **to be respectfully approached *after* students have had a solid formation in their own tradition** including studies of history, theology, social science, philosophy, and literature from a perspective of faith and reason, *fides et ratio*.

Parents and professors need not cower to those who claim that education in the Christian tradition, including faith and reason, is tantamount to indoctrination rather than the freedom and emancipation that accompany wisdom toward which liberal education aims:

**Faith is not indoctrination; faith is enlightenment  
that helps keep one from being indoctrinated.**

Intellectual formation that includes faith and reason is the highest guarantor of freedom. When faith and reason are coupled with higher dialectical studies, including many of the authors of the *Great Books*, the mind is sharpened, fine tuned, and intellectually challenged thereby leading to the work of further expansion. As a result of dialectical studies, the mind is continually exercised leading to increased insight, to new discoveries and the joy of finding creative

solutions to antithetical challenges coming from many different directions. These challenges tend to sharpen the intellect, enhance focus and increase mental acuity thereby preparing students for life in the “real world”, a world wherein the wisdom contained in the *Greatest Books* necessarily dialogues with contrary and often inimical ideas.”

In authentic education, *reason* is regent (in a spirit of charity). Aquinas defines law as a dictate of reason; law cannot validly be a force of the will as some ideologues would have it; nor does faulty or undemonstrated reason have the force of law. Law is a rule of reason it is not an undemonstrated dictate of the will (minority or majority). If an idea is to be accepted, it must have the force of right reason (*rex ratio*) behind it: Human beings have minds that must be developed and respected. Demagoguery is an affront to human dignity.

Britannica’s *Great Books of the Western World*, although graced with sagacity and wisdom, are unfortunately laced with deceit and chicanery. Such books are properly introduced to students *after* they have explored, become conversant with, and demonstrated sufficient mastery, of their own broader Christian tradition, which includes Judaism, the pagan natural law tradition that begins in classical antiquity, and the writings of Christian savants, scholars, scientists and statesmen that are available in Kolbe’s *Greatest Books of Christian Civilization*.

Without *The Greatest Books*, *The Great Books* often become a stumbling block rather than a blessing.



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# Self Interest and the Oracle of Reason – Part 2

## Intelligence Report American Foundations #5

**ALTHOUGH PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS OF ANCIENT ROME** such as Epicurus made the mistake of either deemphasizing or dismissing metaphysics from their philosophy, they were unable to dismiss the Christian faith because it had not yet been revealed to them or to anyone. The American Founders such as Thomas Jefferson (an Epicurean by his own admission) and Benjamin Franklin ( a professed deist) do not have the same excuse. Like other leading lights among the Framers, they rejected both Aristotelian metaphysics and the Christian faith while living in a Protestant society among a deeply Christian people – they knew about Christ and about philosophy; yet in place of Christianity and metaphysics, they set up a deficient “Oracle of Reason” by which they derived a false understanding of human nature and therefore of self-interest and the pursuit of happiness as discussed in the previous Intelligence Report #4.

Thus, when Thomas Jefferson campaigned for president, various Protestant ministers joined hands to campaign against him. William Linn, a Dutch Reformed pastor and John Mitchell Mason, a Presbyterian minister began the Anti-Jefferson onslaught. Linn was sure that “the election of any man avowing the principles of Mr. Jefferson” would “*destroy religion, introduce immorality, and loosen all the bonds of society.*”[\[1\]](#)

Linn also “accused Jefferson of the heinous crimes of *not* believing in divine revelation and of a design to destroy religion and “introduce immorality’” and likened him to a

“true infidel”. According to Pastor Linn,

*“An infidel like Jefferson could not, should not, be elected.”* [\[2\]](#)

Rev. Mason voiced similar concerns:

*“By giving your support to Mr. Jefferson, you are about to strip infidelity of its ignominy” and to engage in a “crime never to be forgiven.”*

Jefferson, he reasoned, was an “open enemy to their religion, their Redeemer, and their hope.” He was a secularist who desired “to see a government administered without any religious principle among either rulers or ruled.” Consequently, Mason argued that voting for Jefferson “would be mischief to themselves and sin against God.” [\[3\]](#)

Unlike Jefferson and Franklin, Classical and Christian philosophers of human nature exercised great care and undertook extensive effort to demonstrate the spiritual dimensions of the human soul. They opened the door to the transcendental dimensions of human existence and the acceptance of revealed truths that lead to increased understanding, wisdom, and love, which are necessary for the authentic “pursuit of happiness.” Aristotle rightly understood *happiness* to be a contemplative attainment of the spiritual soul that was dependent on growth in wisdom shared among a community of friends united in virtue and love. Christian philosophers, enlightened by the mysteries of faith, further built upon the metaphysics of Aristotle and thereafter understood that happiness exceeded the *spiritual* and *intellectual contemplation* of God to include ultimate integral *union with* God and with all of His children as members of the mystical Body of Christ, the ultimate mystery of human existence.

Love, the crown of wisdom, is the adamant bond that makes authentic community possible—human happiness is the result of shared friendship, that spiritual bond of *wisdom* and love that makes men one. *Aristotle and Cicero sang the praises of friendship*, the bond of unity among men that brought rejoicing and pleasure because such friends united in wisdom and *filial* love *truly* cared for each other and were achieving penultimate human union, the glory of a Greek city state. Christian friendship is also a cause of rejoicing, an even greater cause and magnificent achievement, the Divine bond between God and men also the supernatural bond of wisdom and of divine love (a love that far exceeds filial love), that unites men and women in friendship known as the “Communion of Saints”, the mystical Body of Christ – the ultimate union and glory of man, not Athens, but the New Jerusalem, the City of God.

Both pagan philosophers such as Aristotle and Cicero and Christian philosophers such as Augustine and Aquinas understood that the pursuit of happiness requires wisdom and love and a community of friends necessary to actualize and consummate our ontological spiritual potentials and the supreme requirements of our individual and communal human nature, *albeit* the later to an infinitely greater extent as consummate supernatural unity perfected as the mystical Body of Christ filled with the glory of God.

Aristotle understood the bond of friendship to be something greater than the bond of justice, something more akin to the bond of love. He makes this issue the high point of his “*Ethics*” as does Cicero – even Epicurus speaks eloquently about friendship. The difference is that Aristotle makes happiness a spiritual pleasure of the soul dependent on the acquisition of wisdom necessary for the contemplation of God undertaken within a community of friends united by intellectual and moral virtue; whereas Epicurus makes happiness a physical pleasure of the lower sentient soul and

physical body (he denies the existence of a spiritual soul) shared by a community of friends pursuing pleasure heightened by the absence of pain. Epicurus thus remained a materialist, while Aristotle and Cicero soared towards heaven on the wings of metaphysics. According to Cicero, Epicurus, and those who follow him,

*"...did not perceive that as a horse is born for galloping, and an ox for ploughing, and a dog for hunting, so man is also born for two objects, As Aristotle says, namely, for understanding, and for acting as if he were a kind of mortal god."* [\[4\]](#)


After a chapter on justice, Aristotle devotes two chapters to friendship, which he claims is the authentic bond among human beings. True friends, that is friends united by wisdom and love, as Cicero understood, seek the good of each other expecting nothing in return.

*"And what is loving, from which the verb (amo) the very name of friendship (amicitia) is derived, but wishing a certain person to enjoy the greatest possible good fortune, even if none of it accrues to oneself?"* [\[5\]](#)

Such friends, according to Aristotle, do not need justice; friends already treat each other with kindness and respect. But justice, as something lesser, needs friends. Even strangers can treat each other with justice, but justice does not make strangers friends, although it helps. Once they become friends, justice is no longer required by force of law; it is reciprocal among those who love each other:

*"Friendship seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice; for unanimity seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel faction as their worst enemy; and when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are*

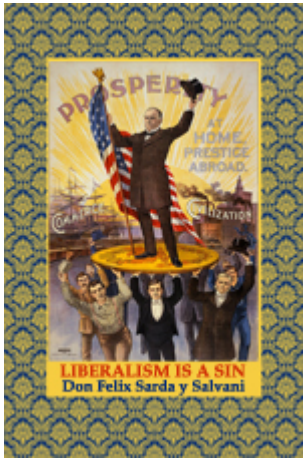
*just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality” (Aristotle, The Ethics, Chapter Eight).*

In short, a transcendental conceptualization of the self and the pursuit of happiness (as Aristotle proposed) necessarily includes the good of others. It includes the good of others because happiness is rooted in human nature, a nature whose  actualization requires growth in wisdom and love, which, ontologically speaking, require the existence of others. Love cannot be consummated in solitary acts. Solitary love of self (or of others for the good of oneself – the first cousin to self-interest), results in utilitarian relationships whereby human beings become objects necessary for one’s own benefit. Authentic love is rooted in the intellectual and *communal dimensions* of human nature, a nature consummated and perfected in love of God, of self and of neighbor. (The book “Trinitarian Humanism” provides a full and detailed understanding of the ontological roots of love in human nature made to the Trinitarian image of God). Solipsistic self love is unnatural; it is a form a narcissism – a psychological form of neurosis dressed up in the language of philosophy as “enlightened self-interest”, which is an integral dimension of the culture of death, a culture of narcissistic self-love and therefore of no love at all.

Those who love only themselves end up (in the long run) hating everyone else, even to the extreme extent of unrestricted cannibalism fueled by psychopathic self-love. According to famed German psychoanalyst Karl Abraham whom Freud called his “best pupil”:

*“Melancholia qualified as narcissistic psychoneurosis par excellence: a state where a ‘pure culture of the death instinct’ supports a superego at war with the ego. ‘Complete and unrestricted cannibalism’ is fueled by ‘unrestricted narcissism’” (1924 quoted by Vincent, 2011, p. 488).*





In short, “Liberalism is a Sin”. This helps us to understand why liberal philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and other “contract theorists” of the “Age of Reason” envisioned social life as a jungle ruled by finely dressed beasts. Liberal self-interest knows nothing of love because the patriarchs and generals of liberalism, men such as Hobbes, Jefferson and Franklin *et al* knew nothing of the spiritual dimensions of the human soul; either by recourse to Christian philosophy, to speculative reason, or to the mysteries of revelation, which were despised by the chic clique of classical liberals.[\[6\]](#) Lacking a proper concept of human nature and thus of the bond of love, liberalism promotes self-interest and the pursuit of happiness, which, they reduce to worldly success, refined sentient pleasures and peace of mind; not the peace that flows from wisdom and virtue, but the kind of ersatz peace that flows from cunningly committing a crime and getting away with it.

Those who espouse liberalism must therefore learn to protect themselves from the self-seeking pleasures of others, even enlightened others. The best self-interested liberals can hope for is a “common” or broad grasp of justice, that is, justice broadly valued by many. Even if such an unlikely scenario were to become a broad social reality, it would nonetheless be insufficient for unity. Justice is a necessary moral and political good; however, it is insufficient for establishing social bonds of friendship. Both Cicero and Aristotle ranked justice below authentic friendship, well below wisdom that is crowned with love that unite men and women into a *community of friends*. Cicero articulated the activity of this community of philosophers (the lovers of wisdom), by using the pronoun, “we”:

*“Since... nature has implanted in man a desire of ascertaining the truth, which is most easily visible when, being free from*

*all cares, we wish to know what is taking place, even in the heavens; led on from these beginnings we love everything that is true, that is to say, that is faithful, simple, consistent, and we hate what is vain, false and deceitful, such as fraud, perjury, cunning and injustice."*[\[7\]](#)

On the other hand, a community of self-seeking individuals intent on pursuing happiness, understood as pleasure and sentient peace of mind, can harm each other. The more reasonable and brilliant they are, the more they can convince themselves of their own righteousness, and the more they can devise plans to satisfy their pursuits. For, as stated previously,

*"...man, when perfected, is the best of animals...and he is equipped at birth with arms, meant to be used by intelligence and virtue, which he may use for the worst ends. Wherefore, if he have not virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony. (Politics, Book I).*

Friendship based on virtue, the type admired by Aristotle, Cicero, and Christ, was also admired by America's founders, but the latter misconceived virtue and thought that such a form of friendship was too lofty and difficult a goal for general attainment. Virtue as conceived by Madison et al was akin to virtue as conceived by Epicurus; it was not the brand espoused by Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas or Augustine. Cicero, speaking about Epicurus and the liberal political thinkers who followed in his train, had this to say:

*There is nothing shameful such men would not do for the sake of pleasure, "if only they could pass undetected."*[\[8\]](#)

Their virtue therefore becomes an ersatz show, a show good for business and necessary to acquire and hold on to political

office.

Because authentic virtue was in short supply among the economic and political aristocracy, whom Jefferson referred to as the “pseudo-aristocracy” (Letter to John Adams, Oct. 28, 1813<sup>0</sup>), it is not surprising that men like James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, held a liberal anthropology (definition of human nature) of depravity whereby he believed that all human beings, men, women, and children were too depraved to be the object of a social-political project of general reformation. The Framers, thinking it too difficult to undertake the laborious and perhaps impossible task of making that mass of the populace virtuous, opted for something much less – they designed a Constitution with a built in system of checks and balances. Then they punted on the questions dealing with intellectual and moral virtue, thereby hoping to control political immorality by the legal and structural impediments they had built into the Constitution, discussed further below. Because corrupt men are too eager to get more than their fair share of advantages and fall short of performing difficult tasks for the common good, they cannot live in peace and concord. Such men must constantly keep an eye on each other in order to protect themselves.

*“But bad men cannot be unanimous except to a small extent, any more than they can be friends, since they aim at getting more than their share of advantages, while in labour and public service they fall short of their share; and each man wishing for advantage to himself criticizes his neighbour and stands in his way; for if people do not watch it carefully the common weal is soon destroyed. The result is that they are in a state of faction, putting compulsion on each other but unwilling themselves to do what is just (unless compelled).”* [\[9\]](#)

Thus, in a liberal society that makes self-interest understood as pursuit pleasure and peace of mind the norm, political

power becomes very important, as does growth in sophistication employed by those who wield the most power. Underdeveloped people cannot control their passions and act like animals. Sophisticated and “enlightened” people learn to control their passions in order to get much more out of life – this is the crux of enlightened self-interest.

Because common sense and self-interest are not vigorous enough to guarantee virtuous action, liberal societies are continually threatened by outbreaks of irresponsible egoism and in constant need of regulations and safeguards. Yet, liberals strangely seek to reduce regulations and safeguards and demand an ever-increasing arena in which to exercise their economic, political, and moral liberty. They advocate *limited* government, *unlimited* use and acquisition of private property, *unregulated* markets and *unprotected* workers. Then they act surprised when the combination of self-interest and deregulation result in human abuse such as that engendered by the modern captains of organized crime or by the captains of the 18th and 19th century Industrial Revolution. To rectify abuse, once it has become unbearable, liberals have historically promoted either (1) a leviathan state (Reform Liberalism of the Franklin D. Roosevelt “New Deal” type), or (2) increased deregulation and argued for more limited government (Neoliberalism of the libertarian type). Neither one of these solutions is good enough to meet the exigencies of the situation. One of the chief reasons we find ourselves in our current economic, political, and moral imbroglio is the insufficiency of the system of checks and balances implemented by the Framers to mitigate the problems caused by self interest.

By seeking to curb moral problems by the implementation of a constitutional system of checks and balances (and by subsequent implementation of an educational philosophy rooted in a deficient understanding of human nature, followed by the establishing of a public school system on the recommendations

of philosophers, such as John Dewey *et al*, men who disdained both Classical Philosophy and the Christian faith), the Founders failed to include the one ingredient most essential for building a virtuous republic, *viz.*, they failed to undertake public educational initiatives in cooperation with the Christian churches. That is, with churches that hold the transcendental dimensions of human development in high regard and therefore provide intellectual, moral, and spiritual education rooted in an understanding of the human soul. This type of education is necessary for growth in authentic virtue and the maximization of intellectual and moral goodness of the type advocated by Ancient and Medieval political philosophers such as Cicero, Aristotle, and Aquinas *et al*.

According to James Q. Wilson, author of the best selling political science textbook *"American Government"*, these men (Socrates, Aristotle, Aquinas *et al*) "believed that the first task of any government was to cultivate virtue among the governed."

*"But to James Madison, and the other architects of the Constitution, the deliberate cultivation of virtue would require a government too strong and thus too dangerous to liberty...Self-interest, freely pursued within reasonable limits, was a more practical and durable solution to the problem of government than any effort to improve the virtue of the citizenry. He wanted, he said, to make republican government possible 'even in the absence of political virtue.'"*

The learned Wilson informs us that,

*"Madison argued that the very self-interest that leads people toward factionalism and tyranny, might, if properly harnessed by appropriate constitutional arrangements, provide a source of unity and guarantee of liberty. This harnessing was to be accomplished by dividing the offices of the new government*

*among many people and giving to the holder of each office the 'necessary means and personal motives to resist encroachment of the others.' In this way, 'ambition must be made to counteract ambition' so that the private interests of every individual may be sentinel over the public rights.'"*

*"'If men were angels', all this would be unnecessary. But Madison and the other delegates pragmatically insisted in taking human nature pretty much as it was, and therefore adopted 'this policy of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives.' The separation of powers would work not in spite of the imperfections of human nature, but because of them" (Chapter Two, p. 32, 2012).*

*In other words, rather than establishing a government, and an accompanying educational system to promote intellectual virtue and human moral betterment, the "Architects of the Constitution" accepted self-love as a given that could work in everyone's favor "if properly harnessed by appropriate constitutional arrangements".*

They decided that self-interest could be turned to everyone's advantage by the separation of powers and by endowing each branch of government with a roughly equivalent portion of power necessary to check the ambitions of the others. Thus, the Framers endeavored to establish a political system in which liberal self-interest, rather than *proper* education and moral formation, would serve as a *"source of unity and guarantee of liberty"*.

Because the Framers misunderstood human nature and the relationship of intellectual-moral virtue to the spiritual operations and powers of the human soul (and because they had privatized religion, and generally disdained metaphysics),

they misunderstood the cultivation of virtue necessary for ongoing human development necessary to achieve happiness. Consequently, they talked much about virtue without knowing what it is. For example, Benjamin Franklin hailed virtue as if it were some type of utilitarian good beneficial for procuring social benefits and sentient pleasures . To his credit, Franklin nobly conducted a daily examination of conscience to foster personal growth in virtue. Unfortunately, because he forsook Christianity (by his own testimony became a “deist”)[10] and misunderstood metaphysics, he mistook the ethical maxim *“In medio stat virtus”* (*virtue is in the mean or all things in moderation*) as a green light for satisfying his passions, *albeit* with sophistication and moderation according to (practical) “reason” as predicated of Epicurus by Cicero. Franklin thought he was being virtuous when he wrote:

*“Rarely use venery (sexual desire) but for health or offspring; Never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another’s peace or reputation” (Article 11 in Ben Franklin’s Autobiography[11])*

Human nature was so poorly understood by this school of liberals that leaders among them, such as Baron de Montesquieu, made “patriotism” the font and root of all virtues. Thus, he argued in his *Spirit of the Laws* (IV, chapter 5), that...

*“Virtue may be defined as the love of the laws of our country. As such love (love of a nation’s laws) requires a constant preference of public to private interest; it (love of a nation’s laws or patriotism) is the source of all private virtue.”*

Jefferson imbibed this idea penned by Montesquieu and wrote it into his personal memoirs:

*“Now a government is like everything else: to preserve it we*



*must love it... Everything, therefore, depends on establishing this love in a republic; and to inspire it ought to be the principal business of (secular public) education”.*

There is a considerable difference between

- (1) Conceiving virtue as excellency in the development and use of human intellectual and moral powers necessary for the actualization of human potential (intellectual, moral, and spiritual) inherent in human nature and affirmed by the Christian religion and
- (2) Conceiving virtue as self-interest in service of patriotism and the imbibing of liberal national values through the agency of a secularized school system alienated from the full truth about man and further alienated from Christian religion (or any religion) by a constitutional wall of separation, which, due to a lack of Christian religion in the public forum, helped transform patriotism into a type of civic religion[\[12\]](#).

The Framers misunderstood human nature and therefore misunderstood the nature of virtue necessary for the actualization of human potential. They despised metaphysics and therefore neglected the study of philosophical psychology necessary to grasp the spiritual nature and powers of the human soul – metaphysics was as detested by many of the Framers as it had been by Martin Luther.[\[13\]](#) [\(For detail see p. 6 of Intellectual Report #3, “Liberalism and the Challenge of Faith and Reason”\).](#)

*“The metaphysical insanities of Athanasius, of Loyola, and of Calvin (Protestants and Catholics), are, to my understanding, mere relapses into polytheism, differing from paganism only by being more unintelligible.” (Thomas Jefferson, letter to Rev. Jared Sparks, November 4, 1820)*

Moreover, and most poignantly, the Framers privatized religion, thereby leaving virtue to be formed in the public schools from the futile seeds of patriotism, utility, and pragmatism increasingly devoid of any metaphysical or Christian meaning. Because the framers privatized Christianity and despised epistemology and metaphysics, which provide an objective basis for morality rooted in human nature (body and soul), they set the nation afloat on a sea of relativity leading to eventual intellectual and moral errors worse than the ones that emanated from the pen of Benjamin Franklin.

To correct those errors, the Framers led by James Madison, the "Father of the United States Constitution", built the idea of self-interest into the Constitution – **the system of checks and balances was crafted to take advantage of self-interest in the political arena much as the imperceptible and arguably non-existing "invisible hand" was to take care of moral problems in the economic arena.** Moral economic, social, and political problems in America were thus to be solved by a nonexistent invisible hand, by a very real wall of separation that kept Christianity out of the public forum, by a specious constitutional system of checks and balances, and by a secularized school system that attempts to solve every problem from a shallow practical perspective by throwing money at it.

Social, political and moral challenges were *not* to be corrected by reasonable devices derived from an ontological understanding of the moral, spiritual and intellectual potentials inherent in human nature (and a subsequent political, social, economic and educational program built upon this understanding), and certainly not by divine grace operating in the public arena, but by a limited understanding of the human person based upon practical common sense and the pursuit of happiness understood as pleasure attained by enlightened self-interest. The latter was to be curtailed by a structural impediment of checks and balances and a secular civic religion facilitated by secularized public

schools that are supposed to be the bulwark against debauchery, which they quite possibly do more to promote than to contain. Madison deemed ontological education for Classical and Christian “moral virtue” (*vis a vis* patriotic “civic virtue”) to be a difficult ancient and scholastic metaphysical exercise doomed to failure or one better left to the [increasingly liberalized churches](#). This solution is a little nonsensical – everyone must go to school but going to church is voluntary.

Jefferson agreed with Madison: the constitutional system of checks and balances was a brilliant idea he thought, but a brilliant idea that needed to be supplemented by the institution of a public school system, which was to be the vehicle providing the education necessary to enable them to participate in government by wisely exercising the right to vote and by transmitting the spirit of patriotism founded on a liberal understanding of man. Although, to his credit, Jefferson *did* envision the input of the various Christian denominations in his plan for the University of Virginia, he left it up to the churches to support their ministers employed at the university. Moreover, it was not a plan that “caught on”, nor could the courts bring themselves to viewing it as anything else than an “establishment of religion” in violation of the first amendment.

*Given such a constitutional scheme of things, secular civic virtue slowly replaced Classical and Christian moral virtue as the guiding light shining on the practical path that Americans were to trod.*

When Framers, such as Jefferson, did promote virtue education, it was extracted from the moral teachings of Jesus Christ, whom Jefferson greatly admired. But, due to poor philosophy and a non-existent faith, Jefferson separated the moral teachings of Christ agreeable to practical reason from the mysteries of the faith, the incarnation, virgin birth,

resurrection and other “insane writings” not attainable by reason, he attributed to the “unlearned apostles” and therefore estimated their worth as little more than a “pile of dung” ([See Intelligence Report #3 “Liberalism and the Challenge of Faith and Reason”](#)). In so doing, Jefferson severed morality and civic virtue from classical philosophy, metaphysics, the spiritual dimensions of human existence and most importantly from sacramental grace, which he despised. Jefferson referred to the Holy Trinity as a “three headed monster” a magical phantasm that had to be eliminated from the minds of men.

Jefferson, in a letter to James Smith (1822) stated that the Holy Trinity (Father and Son) are a:

*“Hocus-pocus phantasm of a God like another Cerberus, with one body and three heads.”*

He further stated that

*“The Athanasian paradox that one is three, and three but one, is so incomprehensible to the human mind, that no candid man can say he has any idea of it, and how can he believe what presents no idea? He who thinks he does, only deceives himself. He proves, also, that man, once surrendering his reason, has no remaining guard against absurdities the most monstrous, and like a ship without rudder, is the sport of every wind. With such person, gullibility which they call faith, takes the helm from the hand of reason, and the mind becomes a wreck”.*

Instead of supporting morality on the firm bedrock Christ and His Church and the adamant pillars of divine grace, agape love and supernatural wisdom, Jefferson propped up morality on the sands of liberalism and the insufficient pillars of practical reason, civic religion and mandatory public education. So situated, Christian virtue soon morphed into a

desacralized civic code rooted in the national ethos whereby civic religion and Christianity intersect and slowly become indistinguishable. When this happens healthy patriotism becomes intransigent nationalism; church and state are increasingly indistinguishable. Democracy, free markets, liberty, private property and other national values, ideas, sentiments and beliefs inherit a sacred quality and are thought to originate from heaven and thus worth dying for.

Unlike the unchanging Mosaic Code, the national ethos severed from its Christian heritage, is an ever-changing and constantly *devolving* cultural accouterment subject to the caprice of nine politically appointed justices and ever-changing statutory law supported by an educational mission to transmit to every man, woman, and child whatever secular liberal values America's Founders and their successors would have them believe: Popular sovereignty; *laissez-faire* economics, and *laissez-faire* morality; privatization of religion, liberty to pursue illicit as well as licit "private" pleasures (as long as no one is hurt), nearly uninhibited free speech, press and assembly resulting in civic-virtues such as excessive tolerance that binds the majority while the national Christian ethos is devoured by an intolerant minority.

These secular civic values, and others, were all introduced into the American curriculum and slowly worked, by the courts, into a civic ethos that increasingly brings into doubt the idea that the American Constitution was the work of Christian men or that America was established as a nation of God's chosen people: Roosevelt's "Arsenal for Democracy", Jefferson's "Empire of Liberty", Reagan "Shining City upon a Hill" and Winthrop's "Light of the World". These latter two are highly irreverent statements. Most people are aware that these were declarations pronounced by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:14) in reference to his Church whose sacred teaching and foundation are quite distinct (historically, philosophically, and theologically) from the liberal foundation crafted by the

inner circle of our nation's Framers.

## A NOTE ON EDUCATION

The celebrated American Constructional shibboleth that demands the separation of church and state might have worked better if education, which became a public affair, had remained a private affair entrusted to the church and family, as it was from the beginning. This was not the case. At about the same time that America was undergoing the nationalization of its private school system, Napoleon Bonaparte was spreading the new world order across Europe. He understood well the importance of education for molding the national character:

*"Of all our institutions public education is the most important. Everything depends on it, the present and the future....Above all we must secure unity: we must be able to cast a whole generation in the same mould."* [\[14\]](#)

Like Bonaparte, Thomas Jefferson firmly believed that education was the ultimate ingredient and structural necessity for forming and transforming an entire nation in the quintessential mold of liberalism. Thus, the move for public education gained increasing momentum after the 1788 ratification of the Constitution so that **by 1821, the first public school was open in Boston and by 1870, every state had tax supported public schools**. Although the full secularization inherent in the Constitution would not take hold of the nation's public schools until after 1900, it was inevitable.

Because the "Founders" established a secular educational system fostered by an artificial barrier constructed between church and state, Christian values, though initially profuse and everywhere evident in the new public schools (due to the Christian nature of the culture in which the new system of government was placed), became less and less a concern of public education. The cultivation of "moral virtue" was

replaced with an appealing but limited notion of “civic virtue” (patriotism, and a sense of duty to democracy and an increasingly unfamiliar set of American ideals and values) whose diffusion was entrusted to the public schools. Funded by public dollars and under the influence of state owned teacher training colleges, public schools became the new champions of democracy and of the democratic ethos advanced by the Founders. A short time thereafter, renowned American educational leaders, such as John Dewey, a man who understood the connection between democracy and education took over the helm:

*“Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife”, [\[15\]](#) .*

Dewey was as passionate about education as the Founders were, but because of the door they had opened to a new order of humanity by means of disdain for metaphysics, the privatization of religion, distorted notions of self-interest and the reduction of morality to “civic virtue”, Dewey was able, over time, to further distance the curriculum from its classical moorings in the “*liberal arts*” to something more modern and “progressive”. As the Father of “Progressive Education”, Dewey birthed “hands on” student centered education that promoted democratic citizenship skills and successfully promoted a shift away from intellectual skill development (the liberal arts) toward practical and utilitarian skill development and “general education”. In short, public education became less and less a liberal intellectual vehicle for living a good life by growth in knowledge, understanding, wisdom and moral goodness to become more and more a utilitarian vehicle for furthering democratic reform, social utility, and practicality. Although the idea of “virtue” was maintained in name, it was transformed in substance, according to the form articulated by the Framers such as the Epicurean Tom Jefferson and the Deist, Ben Franklin. Dewey just took it a step further.



Due to the increased secularization of American education, virtue was increasingly understood as utilitarian excellence and the ability to achieve practical results strengthened by a democratic character marked by increased tolerance, nihilism, skepticism, and an ever increasing acceptance of moral relativity as evidenced by Dewey's disdain for philosophy and Christian religion.

*"There is no god and there is no soul. Hence, there is no need for the props of traditional (Christian) religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable truth is dead and buried. There is no room for fixed law or permanent moral absolutes".*[\[16\]](#)

Thus, the ideals and liberal values of the new secular government were slowly but inevitably incorporated in the curricula of newly created public schools until the privatized religious and moral sphere became more and more congruent with the secular version of morality introduced in the public sphere.

The "experiment" undertaken by the Framers in 1787 bore its penultimate fruit in 1933, when John Dewey and a group of leading American intellectuals signed the "*Humanist Manifesto*", which brought the slowly developing secular program into plain view; listed below are its more salient points:

1. Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.
2. Man is a part of nature and that has emerged as the result of a continuous process.
3. The traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.[\[17\]](#)
4. The nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values.

5. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power of its achievement.

Thus, in summary, according to Dewey,

*The behavioral sciences are providing new “natural explanations of phenomena so extraordinary that once their supernatural origin was, so to say, the natural explanation.”*

*“Geological discoveries ...have displaced Creation myths which once bulked large.”*

*The social sciences have provided a “radically different version of the historic events and personages upon which Christian religions have built.” and*

*Biology has “revolutionized conceptions of soul and mind which once occupied a central place in religious beliefs and ideas.” [\[18\]](#)*

Documenting progress on all these fronts, Dewey affirmed the success of the American experiment initiated by the Framers. Consequently, as early as 1908, Dewey concluded that the civic religion of America was replacing the Christian religion:

*“Our schools ... are performing an infinitely significant religious work. They are promoting the social unity out of which in the end genuine religious unity must grow. ...dogmatic beliefs (articles of Christian faith)...we see disappearing... It is the part of men to... work for the transformation of all practical instrumentalities of education till they are in harmony with these (above) ideas.” [\[19\]](#)*

Like Abraham Lincoln before him, John Dewey was prepared to swear by the blood of the revolution, the revolution that

ushered in a “New Order of the Ages” (novus ordo seclorum), an order that brought with it the birth of a new civic or “political religion”. Not only was Dewey willing to swear upon its blood, he was also willing to sacrifice upon its altars rather than bow in humble worship at the Altar of Christ.

*“Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution,...so to the support of the Constitution and Laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor;—let every man remember that to violate the law, is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the character of his own, and his children’s liberty. Let reverence for the laws, be breathed by every American mother, to the lisping babe, that prattles on her lap—let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in Primers, spelling books, and in Almanacs;—let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay, of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars”. [\[20\]](#)*

That a Christian nation (that is a nation initially comprised of Protestant and Catholic citizens), can remove any mention of an omnipotent and omnipresent God from its governing documents and favor irreligious liberal principles over divinely revealed ones and not devolve into a secular regime is a preposterous supposition held only by those still duped by an increasingly non-convincing performance.

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## ENDNOTES

[\[1\]](#) William Linn, (1800) *Serious Considerations on the Election of a President* pg. 24.

[2] Samuel K. Padover, (1952) *Jefferson* (pgs. 116-117).

[3] John M. Mason, (1800) *The Voice of Warning to Christians*, pg. 35.

[4] Marcus Tullius Cicero, Book Two *Treatise "On The Chief Good And Evil"* (*Treatise de Finibus*).

[5] *ibid*

[6] It might speak of friendship, but at the very best such friendships are rooted in the pleasures of the body and seek a peace of mind intent on practical matters and scientific subjects, which though good and worthy pursuits are nonetheless something significantly less than Aristotle's idea of friendship rooted in spiritual intellectual and moral virtue culminating in love of God and joy shared *among friends committed to spiritual growth*, something unknown too liberalism. Liberal friendship, moreover, tends to quickly devolve into lesser forms of self-satisfaction, pleasure and utility, which can hardly be avoided by "philosophers" that make a god out of practical reason and pleasure. Pleasure, even accompanied by calculated control (a false type of temperance), is a physical pursuit that becomes increasingly difficult to satisfy.

[7] Marcus Tullius Cicero, Book Two *Treatise "On The Chief Good And Evil"* (*Treatise de Finibus*).

[8] Marcus Tullius Cicero, Book Two *Treatise "On The Chief Good And Evil"* (*Treatise de Finibus*).

[9] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book IX, Chapter 6.

[10] To be a Christian, a person must first accept Jesus Christ as true God and true man. This was something that Franklin could not quite bring himself to do. Franklin wrote in his autobiography: "Some books against Deism fell into my hands...It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite

contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations; in short, *I soon became a thorough Deist.*"

Moreover, Franklin, like Thomas Jefferson, made himself the final arbiter of moral truths written in the bible; in short, he set himself over the church and decided which of the Christian morals and religious beliefs he would accept and which he would reject: "As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire,

- I think his system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see; *but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes,*
- and *I have...some doubts as to his divinity...* I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequences, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and more observed."

([Letter to Ezra Stiles](#), 9 March 1790, found in John Bigelow, *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, pages 185-86 (New York: Putnam's, 1904)

[\[11\]](#)

<http://www.archive.org/stream/theautobiography00148gut/bfaut11.txt>

[\[12\]](#) The tendency to identify and uphold the time honored traditions, hallowed beliefs, values, and ideas of one's homeland as sacred beacons of light emanating from heaven for the good of humanity enshrined internally on heart and externally on family hearth to be recalled and honored at every national holiday and moment of social intensification and cultural renewal to the point where identity and reverence for country becomes roughly equivalent to or synchronized with reverence and love for God.

[13] According to Luther, “**Reason is the Devil’s greatest whore**; by nature and manner of being she is a noxious whore; she is a prostitute, the Devil’s appointed whore; whore eaten by scab and leprosy who ought to be trodden under foot and destroyed, she and her wisdom ... Throw dung in her face to make her ugly. She is and she ought to be drowned in baptism... She would deserve, the wretch, to be banished to the filthiest place in the house, to the closets.” (Martin Luther, Erlangen v. 16, pgs. 142-148)

[14] Molé, Mathieu Louis, Count, The Life and Memoirs of Count Molé. Edited by Marquis de Noailles. Vol 2 London, 1923, 61.

[15] *The Need of an Industrial Education in an Industrial Democracy* (1916)

[16] The Spiritual Perils of Modern Secular Education, Program VC1464, a video tape from Living his Life Abundantly.

[17] Because they misunderstand Christian philosophy, men such as these are still penning mistakes about the body and soul – there is no “dualism, man is an integral composite being consisting of body and soul. Nonetheless, their meaning is clear: the spiritual dimension of the human soul must somehow be forged into a unity with the physical body (an accomplishment already attained by Catholic philosophers) such that something more like the Epicurean idea of physical body occupied by less physical soul must be imagined.

[18] John Dewey, *A Common Faith*, Yale University Press, 1934, pg 84.

[19] John Dewey (1908) *The Hibbert Journal*, Dennis L. Cuddy, Ph.D. *Chronology of Education*, pg. 11.

[20] Abraham Lincoln, July 27, (1838) *The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions*: Address Before the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois.  
<http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.ht>

# Self Interest and the Oracle of Reason- Part 1

Intelligence Report  
American Foundations #4

*"The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason."*

Benjamin Franklin

**THOMAS JEFFERSON and BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** *et al* graced the *Declaration of Independence* with an elegant and perennial philosophical truth that all men are endowed by their Creator with an "unalienable right" to "pursue happiness". Unfortunately, Jefferson and Franklin imbibed their philosophy, and thus their ideas about "happiness", from the streams of Roman Epicureanism[\[1\]](#) and classical Liberalism that flooded the waters of the Potomac, rather than from the current of Thomism that graced the waters of the Seine as it cascaded along the Sorbonne[\[2\]](#). That is, they drew their ideas about human nature and happiness from pagan rather than Christian sources.

The otherwise rich waters of Virginia's 18th century Potomac River were contaminated by noxious liberal elements such as Deism, Epicureanism, anti-Trinitarianism, secularism, materialism, and *enlightened* self-interest. Most Americans have been taught the benign and positive attributes of the latter. On the surface, enlightened self-interest certainly sounds plausible, especially when its adherents are convinced

that they must regularly deal with *unenlightened*, unformed, and underdeveloped men and women who seek pleasure from a motive of solipsistic self-interest ("what's in it for me" in disregard of "you"). Consequently, in the tradition of Jefferson and Franklin, *enlightened* self-interest has become an American hallmark. The following words could be attached as a goal placquered to a "Mission Statement" and hung in the front lobby of American schools: "In accordance with our civic mission to promote liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the common good, faculty, staff, administrators and students will be taught to value the existence of others and to act with *apparent* justice, charity and benevolence towards all." Not authentic justice, charity and benevolence, but the "apparent" brand, which enlightened men and women realize is the quintessential ingredient that must be added to the mix if they are to successfully advance their own interests. Anyone who fails to calculate the good of others while calculating his own, must resign himself to the likelihood that his own desire for future pleasure will likely be frustrated if everyone that deals with him ends up a loser. Thus, the more sophisticated a person becomes, the more benign their selfishness becomes, at least that is the way it is presented.

Even though enlightened self-interest is lauded for calculating the "good" of others, self-interest (as vaunted in the liberal tradition) remains, in the last analysis, a philosophical toxin. It remains a toxin because the rewards shared with others are usually less than the rewards a man feigning virtue assigns to himself, and the burdens assigned to others more. It is not a toxin simply because people tend to assign more good things to themselves and more burdens to others; it is a toxin precisely because *it fails to apprehend both what the "self" is and what the "good" is, and because it further fails to comprehend how the "good" is rooted in human nature (body and soul)*. As indicated in Intelligence Report #3, "*Liberalism and the Challenge of Faith and Reason*", representatives of 18th century liberalism, such as Jefferson



and Franklin, despised metaphysics and speculative thinking from which knowledge of the human soul is derived:

*“The metaphysical insanities of Athanasius, of Loyola, and of Calvin, are, to my understanding, mere relapses into polytheism, differing from paganism only by being more unintelligible”.*[\[3\]](#)

*“To talk of immaterial existences, is to talk of nothings. To say that the human soul, angels, God are immaterial is to say, they are nothings, or that there is no God, no angels, no soul. I cannot reason otherwise: ... I believe I am supported in my creed of materialism by Locke.”* [\[4\]](#)

Thus, to men like Jefferson and Epicurus, his philosophical master, who profess “materialism” there might be a soul, *but it is not spiritual*. Because liberalism fails to study and account for the existence of a spiritual soul, it does not, and cannot, know what the authentic *human* good is; it does not even know what a human being is. As a result, even though liberals like Thomas Jefferson *et al* mentioned happiness in the Declaration of Independence, they are unable to correctly diagnose what *human* happiness is or how it is to be obtained. When the *spiritual potentials* of the human soul are left unconsidered (either by faith or reason) and thus unactualized, the human good is robbed of its transcendental dimension and therefore misunderstood. With metaphysics and the spiritual soul excluded, the pursuit of happiness is necessarily limited to that of the human body guided by the “practical intellect” enlightened by mere “common sense”. Common sense is a necessary guide for many things, but it is an *insufficient* guide for *authentic* integral human development and a *deficient* intellectual tool for understanding the spiritual nature of the human soul and for attaining wisdom and corollary moral virtues of the soul requisite to the

“pursuit of (*human*) happiness”.

This realization was first iterated by Aristotle:

*“By human virtue we mean not that of the body but that of the soul; and happiness also we call an activity of soul. But if this is so, clearly the student of politics must know somehow the facts about the soul” (Ethics, Book I, Chapter XIII).*

But, it is precisely the “facts about the soul” that are lacking in liberal political philosophy. **Because liberalism fails to adequately account for the human soul, its conception of “enlightened self-interest” is rooted in a misconception about human nature.** It is also rooted in aberrant self-love, which is, as John Adams, among the first rank of America’s founders, tells us the “spring” or cause “of self-deceit”, deceit such as convincing oneself that taking the interests of another into account in order to satisfy one’s own pursuit of pleasure, is somehow a virtuous (rather than a utilitarian) act that leads to happiness – it might lead to physical “*pleasure*” as Jefferson and the Epicurus understood it, but human “*happiness*” is another matter; happiness involves the spiritual soul.

John Adams provides perhaps the most accurate account of self-deceit, which he rooted in self-love, the source of the “greatest vices and calamities” effecting mankind.

*“There is nothing in the science of human nature, more curious, or that deserves a critical attention from every order of men, so much, as that principle, which moral writers have distinguished by the name of self-deceit. This principle is the spurious (illegitimate) offspring of self-love; and is perhaps the source of far the greatest, and worst part of the vices and calamities among mankind”.* [\[5\]](#)

Self-love is not only a “calamity” and “vice”, improperly

understood, it is also a cause for “lamentation”. It is a cause of lamentation because human beings are endowed with *innate potential* to acquire the intellectual virtue of wisdom and to act with the moral (and theological) virtue of love for the good of themselves and that of others without expectation of a “payback”. This potential, however, must be nurtured by proper intellectual education and moral formation; it is not instinctual or the result of simple *common sense*. Wisdom and love are difficult to attain. With these virtues, human beings are properly equipped to pursue happiness and the authentic actualization of their spiritual potentials. Without them, human beings are reduced to little more than brute animals in pursuit of sentient pleasures, which they mistake for happiness. Because liberals misunderstood happiness, their pursuit of it results in misery – their own ontological misery as well as the ontological, social, or economic misery of most everyone else who suffers the misfortune of living in a society governed by such a principle, a principle that negates solidarity and improperly understands human nature and cannot therefore act to perfect it.

*“For man, when perfected, is the best of animals... he is equipped at birth with arms, meant to be used by intelligence and virtue, which he may use for the worst ends. Wherefore, if he have not virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony. (Politics, Book I).*

Political philosophy, properly understood, revolves around the ontological idea of the human person (body and soul) and the corollary idea of virtue necessary to pursue human happiness. Many politicians, and men and women in general, talk about virtue; unfortunately, many do not have it because through the fault of a faulty educational system, they do not know what it is or how to obtain it. Consequently, they have not yet risen victorious in their struggle with concupiscence and the “pride of life” and therefore are reduced to the unenviable specter

of feigning wisdom and love; in such a world, it is more about appearances than reality. Politicians are not taught to be actually be virtuous; rather they are taught that they must avoid “the *appearance* of impropriety” or run the risk of not getting elected. Unfortunately, even a nation of Christians (such as 18th century colonial America) living in a liberal regime that talks about “God” can be seduced by excellent political performances veiled in theological and philosophical rhetoric that “sounds good” but is deceptive.

Surprisingly, liberalism promotes freedom to pursue human happiness, yet does *nothing* to advance *intellectual understanding* of the spiritual dimensions of human nature necessary to *correctly* pursue *human* happiness, and it does *next to nothing* to prepare people morally for responsible use of freedom, which is its beacon. Liberalism promotes liberty guided by “common sense”[\[6\]](#) aided by the lower sentient powers of memory, imagination, associative practical thinking, and by the physical passions associated with the body, which, Epicurus assures us, are involved in every act undertaken to pursue pleasure. Love, however, is not a physical passion of the body; it is an intellectual appetite of the rational soul “spirited” from the human will, which is activated by *understanding*. Knowledge and understanding *precede* loving – a person must be known before he or she can be more fully and properly loved. There is no love in the sentient passions, but there is pleasure, which untamed and undirected turns into lust. Lust does not require understanding; it is activated by mere sensation. Happiness requires wisdom and love, which are intellectual and spiritual virtues of the human soul. Consequently, the pleasures of the body (and even of the lower sentient mind) are not synonymous with happiness and *its* attendant pleasures. Happiness is experienced in the soul. But, because human beings are composite body-soul beings, the happiness experienced in the soul overflows as pleasure into the body. Although there is an integral back and forth relationship between the two, the connection between spiritual

happiness of the soul and physical pleasure of the body does not work in converse; happiness requires wisdom and love, sentient pleasure does not. Wisdom and love have their attendant physical pleasures. Physical pleasure however does not result in wisdom and love, which reside in the soul.

*“But a person does not always grasp or feel this love, because it does not reside with tenderness in the senses, but resides in the soul with properties of strength and of greater courage and daring than before, though at times it overflows into the senses, imparting a gentle, tender feeling” (Saint John of the Cross).*[\[7\]](#)

Thus, Epicureans, like Jefferson, who spend a lifetime pursuing *pleasures of the body and practical intellect*, miss out on the *happiness of a soul crowned with wisdom and love*. They misunderstand human nature and cultivate the practical intellect (common sense), which can make a man “crafty” (I do not say prudent – authentic prudence requires speculative wisdom) but cannot make a man “wise”. Wisdom is dependent upon apprehension of the spiritual soul and by faith in the Word of God, which were rejected by men like Jefferson and Franklin. Thus, their “wisdom” is turned to naught.

*“One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).*

Nonetheless, enlightened self-interest is far better than mere (unenlightened) self-interest. What enlightened self-interest has going in its favor is the *true claim* that it does not *blindly* pursue the passions like an animal does. Because it is guided by common sense of the practical intellect, **it is able to consider the consequences before it acts to attain pleasure or decides to boldly abstain from it**. Many men, men such as Epicurus, Jefferson, Franklin, *et al* often boldly abstain from pleasure because commonsense counsels otherwise. Practical reason thus has its paragons of virtue. Blessed Cardinal John

Henry Newman chose Julian the Apostate to paint the elegant and even noble caricature of classical philosophical virtue so in vogue with America's Framers. Julian was...

*"...all but the pattern-man of philosophical virtue... His simplicity of manners, his frugality, his austerity of life, his singular disdain of sensual pleasure, his military heroism, his application to business, his literary diligence, his modesty, his clemency, his accomplishments, as I view them, go to make him one of the most eminent specimens of pagan virtue which the world has ever seen.*

Newman, appreciated the liberal and generous character of Classical Roman philosophy and pagan virtue, but in the end evaluated it negatively as a "gentleman's religion" rooted in limited knowledge and understanding that produced *apparent* but not real virtue. Such men have the *appearance* of virtue; it is a merely apparent display because it falls short of authentic wisdom graced by love and therefore ends in pride, which earned such men the scorn of Newman's eloquent pen:

*"Rather a philosopher's, a gentleman's religion, is of a liberal and generous character; it is based upon honour; vice is evil, because it is unworthy, despicable, and odious. This was the quarrel of the ancient heathen with Christianity, that, (Christianity) instead of simply fixing the mind on the fair and the pleasant, it intermingled other ideas with them of a sad and painful nature; that it spoke of tears before joy, a cross before a crown; that it laid the foundation of heroism in penance; that it made the soul tremble with the news of Purgatory and Hell; that it insisted on views and a worship of the Deity, which to their minds was nothing else than mean, servile, and cowardly. The notion of an All-perfect, Ever-present God, in whose sight we are less than atoms, and who, while He deigns to visit us, can punish as well as bless, was abhorrent to them; they made their own minds their sanctuary, their own ideas their oracle."*[\[8\]](#)

Newman was quite sure that this display of self-confidence and flawless etiquette, although becoming, was nothing more than the “shadow of the future Anti-Christ”, a false show of “philosophical virtue”.

*He, in whom every Catholic sees the shadow of the future Anti-Christ, was all but the pattern-man of philosophical virtue. Weak points in his character he had, it is true, even in a merely poetical standard; but, take him all in all, and I cannot but recognize in him a specious beauty and nobleness of moral deportment, which combines in it the rude greatness of Fabricius or Regulus with the accomplishments of Pliny or Antoninus*[\[9\]](#)

Saint Peter displayed some of this false human wisdom before he was sharply rebuked by the Wisdom of God;

*“Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”* (Matthew 16:23).

As if to say, you have mistakenly made mere emotion and human reason your oracle. Thus, we are able to understand why philosophers more skilled than Jefferson, philosophers such as Marcus Tullius Cicero, rejected Epicurus as a false teacher and as a “hedonist” in spite of eloquent arguments paraded in his defense by Epicurus’ followers. Although Epicurus at first sight appears to be a proponent of doctrines that end in hedonism, his followers were, and are, quick to point out that those who believe such silly things about him are unschooled and little understand the *true* meaning of Epicurus’ profound teachings. Such devoted disciples, either in ignorance themselves, or with a subtlety equal to that of their master, set about assuring those in darkness that their master’s doctrines are vehicles of light. Then they proceed to deceptively make them sound attractive and consummately virtuous[\[10\]](#).



Cicero, however, was not a novice—he demonstrated his excellent understanding of Epicurus’ doctrines, adroitly saw through them all, and then proceeded to take them apart, gently exposing them for what they were.[\[11\]](#) Because he had recourse to the metaphysics of Aristotle and understood that happiness was an attainment of the *spiritual soul* requiring virtue (intellectual and moral), he exposed Epicurus as a novice, as one who had failed to master metaphysics and other Aristotelian insights that require extensive labor. This is the philosophical bottom-line underlined by Cicero:

*“Yet the case is simply this, that to me the supreme good seems to be in the soul, to him in the body; to me in virtue; to him in the body; to me in virtue, to him in pleasure” (Tusculan Disputations).*

Thus, Epicurus lacking any philosophical understanding of human nature, beyond that of the physical body and lower sentient intellect and sentient soul, had little reason to stay his passions when they erupted, causing Cicero to refer to him as a “voluptuary”:

*“I do not ask of you that you should define pain by the same terms by which Epicurus, a voluptuary, as you know, designates pleasure” (Tusculan Disputations).*

Epicurus, to be sure, wrote about moderating the passions; he even wrote well about the cardinal virtues, but he mistakenly had them all serve the end of pleasure rather than of happiness. Thus, gluttony was moderated by the virtue of temperance; however, temperance for Epicurus was not a virtue in service of wisdom, and of other persons, flowing from a motive of filial love (friendship) as Cicero and Aristotle understood it. Rather, temperance was intended to preserve the pleasure of satiety and to avoid the discomfiture of psychological distress or imagined medical maladies attributed to being overweight, which cause pain and thus are

antithetical to pleasure. An Epicurean therefore learned to be moderate in eating or to use the vomitorium. I, with Cicero, suspect the latter was more prominent:

*“For I should be sorry to picture to myself, as you are in the habit of doing (said Cicero to Torquatus, a disciple of Epicurus), men so debauched as to vomit over the table and be carried away from banquets, and then the next day, while still suffering from indigestion, gorge themselves again”.[\[12\]](#)*

Temperance is a virtue associated with “moderation”. Unfortunately, moderation is oftentimes misapplied by philosophers who misunderstand human nature and the ethical pursuit of happiness. For example, the classical philosophical maxim *“In medio stat virtus”*[\[13\]](#) counseling moderation, is intended for *morally licit* actions, not for illicit ones such as adultery and covetousness. It is not a virtue to “screw” and “steal” with moderation. Thus, “philosophers” like Epicurus, and Benjamin Franklin after him, who argued for, or who permitted screwing and intoxication in “moderation” as if moderation were a moral panacea are, in Cicero’s words, hard to “endure”.

*“It is as much as I can do to endure, a philosopher speaking of the necessity of setting bounds to the desires (inordinate passions). Is it possible to set bounds to the desires? I say that they must be banished, eradicated by the roots. For what man is there in whom appetites dwell, who can deny that he may with propriety be called appetitive? If so, he will be avaricious, though to a limited extent; and an adulterer, but only in moderation; and he will be luxurious in the same manner. Now what sort of a philosophy is that which does not bring with it the destruction of depravity, but is content with a moderate degree of vice” (Cicero speaking of Epicureanism)?[\[14\]](#)*

Moderating inordinate passions is not enough, inordinate passions need to be mastered. Because political philosophers like Thomas Jefferson (who followed in the footsteps of Epicurus) and his companion, Benjamin Franklin, because such eminent American statesmen rejected (1) Classical Aristotelian and Christian Thomistic metaphysics and more poignantly, (2) the rescuing grace inherent in the divinity of Christ, they misunderstood human nature, the powers and potentials of the spiritual soul, and the role of contemplation and selfless charity necessary for the proper pursuit of happiness, they made a deficient and false religion out of practical reason. They failed to master the inordinate passions and therefore did not disapprove of morally illicit actions if they were “moderated” by practical considerations accompanied by the quasi ersatz moral virtue of temperance. Although they sang the praises of reason and of virtues such as temperance, unfortunately, at their hands, both reason and moral virtue were disfigured and disgraced.

*“...as you have one dress to wear at home, and another in which you appear in court, are you to disguise your opinions in a similar manner, so as to make a parade with your countenance, while you are keeping the truth hidden within?[\[15\]](#)*

Such, dear reader “... is the final exhibition of the Religion of Reason: in the insensibility of conscience, in the ignorance of the very idea of sin, in the contemplation of (their) own moral consistency, in the simple absence of fear, in the cloudless self-confidence, in the serene self-possession, in the cold self-satisfaction, we recognize the mere (pagan) Philosopher” (Newman, *The Idea of a University*). What are men who, like Franklin and Jefferson *et al*, reject Christ, but pagans?

## **Conclusion**

Because liberal political philosophers and politicians

associate happiness with physical pleasure, sentient knowledge, and peace of mind, and because the spiritual soul as understood by both Classical and Christian philosophy and as revealed in sacred scripture remains unaccounted for liberal philosophers, the liberalism of the nation's Framers was, and is, an insufficient political philosophy for the purpose of founding a Christian nation or for the purpose of building or rebuilding one.

Liberal self interest, moreover, is tainted with self love and self-deceit because those who consider themselves wise apart from speculative wisdom of the human soul and/or apart from the revealed truth about God, the revealed truth that human beings are made in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity, such people remain in darkness while professing themselves to be in the light.

The pagan philosophers of Rome made the mistake of dismissing metaphysics; they could not also make the additional mistake of dismissing the Christian faith because it had not yet been revealed. The American Founders cannot say the same; they rejected both metaphysics and the faith, and in their place set up the deficient "Oracle of Reason".

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## ENDNOTES

[1] "As you say of yourself, I too am an Epicurean. I consider the genuine (not the imputed) doctrines of Epicurus as containing everything rational in moral philosophy which Greece and Rome have left us."

(Thomas Jefferson, letter to William Short):  
<http://www.godlessgeeks.com/LINKS/Quotes.htm#jefferson>

[2] The *University of Paris*, where Aquinas taught.

[3] Letter of Thomas Jefferson to Jared Sparks, Nov. 4th 1820.

[4] Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Adams, August 15, 1820:

<http://www.godlessgeeks.com/LINKS/Quotes.htm#jefferson>

[5] Boston Gazette, August 29, 1763.  
<https://www.masshist.org/publications/apde2/view?id=ADMS-06-01-02-0045-0007>

[6] The term is being used in the vernacular, not the Thomistic sense.

[7] Saint John of the Cross, *"The Ascent of Mt. Carmel"*, Chapter 24.

[8] Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman, *"The Idea of a University"*, (Discourse Eight).

[9] *Ibid*

[10] See Book One of Cicero's *Treatise "On The Chief Good And Evil"* (*Treatise de Finibus*).

[11] See Book Two of Cicero's *Treatise "On The Chief Good And Evil"* (*Treatise de Finibus*).

[12] Book One of Cicero's *Treatise "On The Chief Good And Evil"* (*Treatise de Finibus*).

[13] Virtue is in the middle of the road

[14] Marcus Tullius Cicero: *Second Book "Of The Treatise On The Chief Good And Evil"* (*Treatise de Finibus*).

[15] *ibid*