

A Nation Built on God? Christian Pilgrims versus Masonic Founders

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Intelligence Report American Foundations #1

CONSTITUTION DAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1787 was an auspicious day on which the people of the United States celebrated the ratification of their constitution and inauguration of their new government. Strangely, the laws by which the new Christian nation would govern itself were *not* drawn from Christian inspiration, nor was the church involved, to any significant degree, in the debates leading to ratification of the United States Constitution.

"Where a hundred years before (before ratification of the constitution) every case, whether civil, political or criminal, was decided by a reference to the Old or New Testament ... in "The Federalist" the Bible and Christianity, as well as the clergy, are passed over as having no bearing upon the political issues being discussed."[\[1\]](#)

The American idea that constitutional law, rather than divine law is the supreme law of the land, and that other ideas such as the separation of church and state (condemned as a "pernicious error" by Saint Pope Pius X, [Vehementer Nos](#)); popular sovereignty (versus sovereignty of God)[\[2\]](#); the subordination of the church in educational affairs (versus the primacy of the spiritual over the temporal); and the constitutional approval of worship of false gods (approved by

the first amendment) **were not drawn from the bible**. They were all drawn from the revered writings of Ancient pagan philosophers and European philosophers of the Enlightenment.

The United States Constitution is *not* a compilation of Christian principles of law and governance; neither Jesus Christ nor the idea of a “Christian nation”, are mentioned anywhere in the Constitution. **According to the first amendment, the national government cannot advance Christian ideas** (such as the existence and primacy of the Holy Trinity, the divine commandments to have no other gods and to keep the Sabbath holy and the command to honor your parents); **yet Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments. (John 14:15)”**.

Neither the name of Jesus nor the idea of Holy Trinity can be found anywhere in the nation’s supreme governing document, even the amorphous, syncretic, and eclectic idea of “Nature’s God[3]” proclaimed in the [*Declaration of Independence*](#) is absent. God is absent, and more importantly, Christ is absent. **Most importantly and contrary to Christian doctrine and sacred scripture**, which teach that all law and authority come from God (Ephesians 1:21-22; Matthew 28:18; John 19:11), **the Preamble to the US Constitution informs us that power and authority are derived from the will of the people**, as if truth in moral and political matters could be determined by majority consensus. By the time we advance to Article Six, we are informed that the Constitution is the *supreme law of the land*. Clearly, Jesus is no longer honored as the lawgiver as He had been in the eyes of the original colonial founders, whose ideas, sentiments, and political ideas are proclaimed in the original legal charters that bear His name.

Subsequent to the ratification of the new federal constitution, one by one, fledgling state governments, following the lead of the Washington crowd, removed the name of Jesus Christ (found in 9 of the 13 original colonial charters) from their newly fashioned state constitutions. And then, over the course of the next century, they would further

remove state constitutional requirements that an office holder be a “Christian” from their respective constitutions in acquiescence to the United States Constitution’s mandate against “religious tests” for office:

“Senators and Representatives...and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States” ([Article VI](#)).

Therefore, the religious test provision of this article and any other anti-Christian provisions contained in, or purported to be implicit in any other article (for example, the highly questionable and ambiguous right to privacy purportedly implicit in the ninth, third, first and fourth [amendments\[4\]](#)), would be slowly “incorporated” into the state constitutions, as decided by the United States Supreme Court, over the course of years by recourse to the [14th amendment](#) (Due Process, Equal Protection, and Privileges and Immunities Clauses) and to the “Supremacy Clause”, Article VI:

“This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.”

By the dawn of the 18th century (before the United States Constitution ever existed), 8 of the 13 original colonies had instituted [some form of monetary-state-support for Christian religion](#) in their *Founding Charters* (Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, Maryland,

South Carolina, and North Carolina). The other five (Pennsylvania, Georgia, New Jersey, Delaware, Rhode Island) did not offer monetary-support, but were Christian by *Charter*.

Some of the more notable *Charters* were:

The [Connecticut Charter](#) (1662), which clearly favored the Christian faith: Residents were required to have “the knowledge and obedience of the onely true God and Saviour of mankind, and the Christian faith.”

The [Charter of Delaware](#) (1701), which required belief in Jesus Christ to serve in public office: “All Persons who also profess to believe in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, shall be capable...to serve this Government in any Capacity, both legislatively and executively.”

Likewise, King Charles II in issuing the [Charter of Rhode Island](#) (1663) recognized the Christian intentions of its founders: “They, pursueing, with peaceable and loyall minces, their sober, serious and religious intentions, of ...edifieing themselves, and one another, in the holie Christian faith and worship.”

The [Charter of Massachusetts Bay](#) (1629) clearly explains the intention to establish a Christian “Plantation”: Whereby our said People...may be soe religiously, peaceable, and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderlie Conversation, maie wynn and incite the Natives of Country, to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth, which in our Royall Intention... is the principall Ende of this Plantation.

At the dawn of the Revolution and in the aftermath of the 18th century, the following *State Constitutions* contained a specifically Christian religious requirement for citizenship or to hold office:

[Constitution of Delaware](#) (1776) Oath of Office:

"I _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, One God, blessed for evermore."

[Constitution of North Carolina](#) (1776):

"No person, who shall deny the being of God or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testaments ..., shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State."

[Constitution of Maryland](#) (1776) Article XXXIII:

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

[Constitution of New Jersey](#) (1776):

"All persons, professing a belief in the faith of *any Protestant sect*, who shall demean themselves peaceably under the government, as hereby established, shall be capable of being elected into any office of profit or trust..."

[Constitution of Pennsylvania](#) (1776) Oath for Representatives:

"I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked. And I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration."

[Constitution of Georgia](#) (1777) Article VI:

"Representatives shall be chosen out of the residents in each county, who shall have resided at least twelve months in this State...and they shall be of the Protestant religion."

[Constitution of Vermont](#) (1777) Frame of Government, Section 9:

“And each member [of the legislature],...shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz.:

‘I do believe in one god, the Creator and Governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked. And I do acknowledge the scriptures of the old and new testament to be given by divine inspiration, and own and profess the Protestant religion.’”

[Constitution of South Carolina](#) (1778) Article XXXVIII:

“God is publicly to be worshipped. That the Christian religion is the true religion. That the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are of divine inspiration, and are the rule of faith and practice”.

[Constitution of Massachusetts](#) (1780) Chapter VI “Article I”:

Any person chosen governor, lieutenant-governor, councillor, senator, or representative, shall, before he proceed to execute the duties of his place or office, make and subscribe the following declaration:

“I, A.B., do declare that I believe the Christian religion, and have a firm persuasion of its truth.”

“The people of this commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require, and the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic, or religious societies, to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the *public worship of God*, and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily. (Article III)

[Constitution of New Hampshire](#) (1792) Section XIV required all legislators to be Protestant (Christian).

“Every member of the house of representatives shall be chosen by ballot, and for two years at least next preceding his election shall have been an inhabitant of this State, shall have an estate within the district which he may be chosen to represent, of the value of one hundred pounds, one-half of which to be a freehold, whereof he is seized in his own right; shall be at the time of his election an inhabitant of the town, parish, or place he may be chosen to represent; shall be of the Protestant religion, and shall cease to represent such town, parish, or place immediately on his ceasing to be qualified as aforesaid.

Section XXIX made the same religious rule applicable to all senators and Section XLII required the governor to be Christian.

Article VI guaranteed all Christians equal protection of the law:

“Every denomination of Christians demeaning themselves quietly, and as good subjects of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the law: and no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another, shall ever be established by law.

After the Founding Fathers crafted the supreme governing document, the United States Constitution, things began to change rather quickly. George Mason, a member of the Virginia delegation that met in Philadelphia for the Constitutional Convention, smelled a rat; he was one of three delegates who refused to sign the finished document. Instead, he became an anti-federalist *and fought* ratification of the Constitution. According to Mason, the plan was

“...totally subversive of every principle which has hitherto governed us. This power is calculated to annihilate totally the state governments.”

It appears that Mason's fears were realized. In the aftermath of the United States Constitution, the specifically Christian characteristics of these colonial charters and state constitutions were either removed or slowly amended to reflect the more eclectic and amorphous "god", which of course can be any "god" pagan, Christian, Hindu, Islamic etc. By 1818 Connecticut, along with all the other Christian states, was holding on by a string. Its governing elite had managed to remove religious tests for office and were in the process of completely ending state support for Christian churches. This complex maneuver was accomplished by adroitly recognizing *all* denominations and permitting each to levy a tax to support its own projects (by such *apparent* support, the state was reducing the sting):

"And each and every society or denomination of christians (sic) in this state, shall have and enjoy the same and equal powers, rights and privileges; and shall have power and authority to support and maintain the ministers or teachers of their respective denominations, and to build and repair houses for public worship, by a tax on the members of any such society only, to be laid by a major vote of the legal voters assembled at any society meeting, warned and held according to law, or in any other manner."[\[5\]](#)

By ignoring Jesus Christ and secularizing religion, the Framers treated Christ with an arrogant air of indifference as if He had never founded a kingdom or as if the one He had founded had somehow become irrelevant. In the process, they opened the doors to future full scale apostasy. If they had established a Christian government, as many ultra-nationalist Christians proclaim, they should have founded it on Him as the cornerstone and provided the nation with a Christian document and with Christian laws rooted in the revealed divine law, specifically the Decalogue and the Gospels as the basis for constitutional and statutory law.

Pope Pius XI recognized this social and political verity in his encyclical, [*Quas Primas*](#) (1925) He quotes the Prophet Daniel:

"The kingdom that the God of heaven shall found, 'shall never be destroyed, and shall stand forever.'"

Then after the resurrection,

"...when giving to his Apostles the mission of teaching and baptizing all nations he took the opportunity to call himself king, conforming the title publicly, and solemnly proclaiming that all power was given to him in heaven *and on earth*."

Pope Pius reminds us moreover that,

"It is a dogma of faith that Jesus Christ was given to man, not only as our Redeemer, but also as a law-giver, to whom obedience is due."

"Manifold evils in the world were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law out of their lives; that these had no place either in private affairs or in politics...As long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Savior, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations."

Unfortunately, by lobbying for the acceptance of the *first amendment*, which permits the free exercise of almost *any* religion and prohibits state support of, or public avowal of the Christian faith as the foundation of its institutions and laws (as it had been for the states), the federal government rejected the ceremonial requirements of the Decalogue and in so doing violated the first three commandments[\[6\]](#) and in effect had "thrust Jesus and his holy law out of their lives." A nation that violates even one of the commandments can hardly be called a Christian nation – yet before the ink was dry on the first amendment, we had already violated about a third of

them.

The **Sixth Article of the US Constitution** contains the provision most at odds with the contention that the American Government is the result of Christian inspiration. **According to this article, it is the Constitution rather than the law of God, which is to be accepted, ratified, and affirmed as the “supreme law” of the land.** If America were a Christian nation it would not permit laws contrary to the law of God and would have instituted a government under the kingship of Christ ([as Church and State leaders of Poland recently did](#)). But, the Framers, contrary to the colonial founders, had an aversion to kings and a reluctance to build a new nation on Christian principles. According to McGuffey’s 1800 reader (used in almost every colonial school in America), wherever they settled, **America’s original founders established governments that were:**

“Theocratical insomuch that it would be difficult to say where there was any civil authority among them distinct from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Whenever a few of them settled a town, they immediately gathered themselves into a church; and their elders were magistrates, and their code of laws was the Pentateuch... God was their King; and they regarded him as truly and literally.”

They wanted to build the kingdom of God based upon the laws of God. John Cotton, the first minister of Boston insisted that

“...the government might be considered as a theocracy, wherein the Lord was judge, lawgiver and king; that the laws which He gave Israel might be adopted...” [\[7\]](#)

Consequently, Cotton was asked to frame a set of laws using the laws of Moses as his model.

But according to the new constitution,

“No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States: and no person holding any office of profit or trust under them, shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state” (Article 1, Section 9).

Thus, from the very beginning, the Kingship of Christ is ruled out, because **according to thinkers such as Thomas Jefferson, “The Christian God is a being of terrific character – cruel, vindictive, capricious, and unjust”** (Jefferson to William Short, August 4, 1820, in [L&B, 15:260](#). [Transcription](#) available at Founders Online.) And again, “The day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as his father in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter” (<https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/jeffersons-religious-beliefs>).

Jefferson’s writing buddy, John Adams, in a letter to Jefferson regarding the Holy Trinity stated,

“Tom, had you and I been 40 days with Moses and beheld the great God, and even if God himself had tried to tell us that three was one...and one equals three, you and I would never have believed it. We would never fall victim to such lies.”

And Thomas Paine:

“I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church” (Age of Reason).

According to James Madison, the Father of the Constitution”:

"The civil government functions with great success...by the total separation of the Church from the State."[\[8\]](#)

Pope Pius XI did not think so:

"If...the rulers of nations wish to preserve their authority, to promote and increase the prosperity of their countries, they will not neglect the public duty of reverence and obedience to the rule of Christ...With Jesus Christ...excluded from political life, with authority derived not from God but from man, the very basis of that authority has been taken away...The result is that human society is tottering to its fall, because it is no longer secure on a solid foundation."

Clearly, the US Constitution is a "man-made" law crafted by men who such as Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, etc. free thinkers who had replaced Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity with a "strange god" of the Enlightenment manifest in such diverse beliefs as Socinianism, Unitarianism, Deism and Gnosticism all of which are antithetical to the Holy Trinity and to the Divinity of Jesus as the only begotten Son of God consubstantial with the Father or by men who had maintained a belief in Christ but relegated Him to the private sphere where His impact on law would be minimized. The "God" in whom the majority of these men trusted, is not Jesus Christ or, if it is, He is not considered the giver of revealed divine laws that are above every law, even constitutional law. Consequently, Jesus is left out of the document; they did not think enough of divine law to find a way to work it into the Constitution because they were concerned about offending non-Christians who made up less than one percent of the population, but not concerned enough about offending the Holy Trinity.

"Christ, who has been cast out of public life, despised, neglected and ignored, will most severely avenge these insults; for his kingly dignity demands that the State should

take account of the commandments of God and of Christian principles, both in the making of laws and in the administration of justice, and also in providing for the young a sound and moral education” (Pope Pius XI, Quas Primas).

The secularization of America began with the secularizing of its federal government, and the rejection of divine law as the basis for all subsequent statutory laws and ordinances. As the influence of the federal government increased, so too did its inherent secular ideas, that is, ideas often times antithetical to divine and natural law, laws which, with the ratification of the Constitution, increasingly became things of America's Christian past

ENDNOTES

* PAINTING: *“The Embarkation of the Pilgrims”* (Robert Walter Weir)

[1] Thomas Cumming Hall, *The Religious Background of American Culture* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Co, 1930) pp. 184-85, quoted in Gary DeMar, *America's Christian History: The Untold Story* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, Inc., 1993/2008) pp. 83-84:
<http://www.missiontoisrael.org/biblelaw-constitutionalism-pt3.php#endnote35>

[2] There is no power but from God and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God” (Romans 13).

[3] God? What God. Is this the Trinity, Allah, a Gnostic deity, the Hindu Trimurti, Jehovah? The term is too amorphous to connote any specific deity, yet it stands for them all or any one you want to believe it stands for.

[\[4\]](#) Fourth Amendment: “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

In his dissenting opinion Justice Brandeis (Olmstead v US, 1928) stated that: “The makers of our Constitution understood the need to secure conditions favorable to the pursuit of happiness, and the protections guaranteed by this are much broader in scope, and include the *right to life* and an *inviolable personality* – the *right to be left alone* – the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men. The principle underlying the Fourth and Fifth Amendments is protection against invasions of the sanctities of a man’s home and privacies of life. This is recognition of the significance of man’s spiritual nature, his feelings, and his intellect.”

Unfortunately, in the case of abortion, the place to be searched is a woman’s body and the person to be seized and killed is a defenseless baby who has taken up temporary residence therein. Of course, if a woman consents, no warrant to search and kill is necessary.

The Supreme Court (1920), found a right to privacy implicit in the 14th amendment to prohibit states from interfering with the parental right to privacy regarding the education of their children (Meyer v Nebraska).

Then, in 1969 the court used the right to privacy to defend possession and viewing of pornography in the privacy of one’s home (Stanley v Georgia) More recently, in 1972 (Roe v Wade) the court extended the right to include defense of parental choice to kill their children.

The womb is the home of a child who is a human person

protected from violation of her right to privacy and her inviolate right to life. If anyone should be secure in life and limb and whose house should be protected by a right to privacy, it is an infant. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v Wade*, that a developing human baby is not a “person” and therefore not blessed with a constitutional right to privacy, because the 14th amendment (through which the Bill of Rights is applied to the states), applies only to “persons”.

[\[5\]](#)

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/Content/constitutions/1818Constitution.htm>

[\[6\]](#)

The third commandment corresponds to the 4th commandment in most Protestant listings.

[\[7\]](#)

<http://www.missiontoisrael.org/biblelaw-constitutionalism-pt3.php>

[\[8\]](#)

From “A Memorial and Remonstrance,” addressed to the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1785.

Liberalism: Robbing the House of God in the Name of God

[New Era World News](#)

Intelligence Report

American Foundations #6

WHAT IS LIBERALISM? Previous *Intelligence Reports* have examined the philosophical roots of liberalism and its impact

on American political foundations. The intent of this report is to provide a brief overview and summary with additional information to complement and round out our study before moving to finalize this series with a report on "Neoliberalism".

Liberalism is a broad social, economic, political, and moral paradigm conceived as a radical social movement fermented in the minds of 18th century *avant-garde* political philosophers. Birthed in the French salons (pictured above), English ale houses, and Masonic lodges of Europe, Liberalism revolutionized human thinking about man and society, about economics and politics, and about church and state relations in opposition to one thousand years of Christian social-thinking, which it aimed at curtailing and gradually eliminating. Because the Protestant Reformation had enabled English monarchs to gain ascendancy over, and then control of, the church, it helped prepare the way for the conception and birth of liberalism in Great Britain from which it found its way to the continent where it gave way to revolution.

Once Henry VIII (1534) issued the "[Act of Royal Supremacy](#)" [1], the English Crown moved to violently oppress dissenters followed by seizure of Church property and the torturous derogation of English common law that had protected the property rights of peasants for centuries. It was not long until the social function of private property insisted upon by the Church gave way to new liberal ideas about private property antithetical to the Gospels, to long-standing Catholic tradition and to the very nature of man made in the image of God. The liberal has their own ideas about property and about God, but before they could advance their ideas, the monarchs had to first solidify rule over both the temporal and spiritual realms. Subsequently, it was the state, with input from *appointed* clerics, that determined both what was dogmatic and what heretical, what was orthodox and what heterodox. In short, the state unleashed a cultural and religious

kulturkampf against the Catholic faith in order to solidify its dominance over the political and economic affairs of the temporal order and over what it is that people must believe in the order of salvation as well.[\[2\]](#)



The omniscient Reformation and post-Reformation state not only ransacked the Church, it also undertook a series of attacks on Christian common law[\[3\]](#) and private property stripping it from the convents and monasteries and placing it in the hands of acquiescing

Protestant and Catholic land owners. Property rights were redefined by new *statutory decrees* in disregard of Catholic *common law* that had for centuries protected the property claims of peasants (they could not be alienated from the land). It was just a matter of time until the new class of acquiescent landlord's disregarded the *ancient communal aspects of private ownership* and thereafter forced helpless peasants off of their newly enclosed "private property" thereby initiating new forms of pauperism, propertyless wage labor and social disruption that has fluctuated, but remained constant, ever since.

The absolutist state also extended its reach into commerce and interfered in the economy with the aim of shielding national commercial interests from competition by implementing a series of political acts resulting in broad scale regulation and the imposition of tariffs and trade restrictions known as "*Mercantilism*". Mercantilism was intended to assure a positive trade balance but, due to the restrictions required to obtain such a balance, it led to



international economic conflict among competing nations and the impetus for colonialism instead. The **emergence of mercantilism** (political interference in the economy to the detriment of global peace) and **absolutism** (total control of the state and political inference in religion to the detriment of moral disorder and civil peace) along with the rise of a new class of **property-less paupers, Protestant Lords and soon to be liberal landowners**, resulted in economic distress exacerbated by growing religious intolerance, which in turn led to social unrest that, taken together, fueled the flames of revolution that gave birth to a new world order, otherwise known as the “New Order of the Ages” (*Novus ordo seclorum*) the goal of French “philosophes” and their American counterparts.



The “New Order of the Ages” ushered in a prolonged period of social change whereby (1) the economic sphere was to be liberated from political control (mercantilism) resulting in *free trade* (2) private property was redefined and protected as an absolute and inviolable

individual right^[4] severed from previous common law requirements that gave ownership a communal dimension intended to protect the peasants who lived on the estates, (3) the churches, at least in America, were to be liberated from state dominance and privatized resulting in the gradual secularization of the public forum, and (4) the state was to be limited in its powers and subject to secular *constitutional law* deriving its authority from the people (popular sovereignty) rather than from the divine law rooted in God’s sovereignty as was the ancient common law of Christendom

The birth of secular constitutional law represented a radical break from the long established common law tradition of England. According to Dr. Michael P. Foley,

*"The Christian pedigree of common law was clearly recognized by jurisprudence theorists like Sir William Blackstone, whose Commentaries on the Law of England was to exert an enormous influence on British and early American law. Indeed, in 1829 Joseph Story (American Supreme Court Justice, 1811-1845) could write, **"There never has been a period in which the Common Law did not recognize Christianity as lying at its foundations."** (On a side note, the shift to a pure secularism that eventually did occur in the United States seems to be the result of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who ridiculed the law's relation to the divine and instituted a positivist approach based on judiciary opinion. The planks for Holmes's rejection, however, had been laid a century earlier by Thomas Jefferson, who vigorously (but wrongly) denied that Christianity is or "ever was a part of the common law.")* [\[5\]](#)

If the absolutist state could become omni-competent and control the church thereby resulting in religious persecution, exacerbated by the institutionalization of mercantilism, and the un-mooring of law from its Christian common law roots resulting in property abuse and pauperism, if the absolutist state could do these things, if it could grow so autocratic and oppressive, it could also be used by revolutionary "*Philosophes*" and radicalized "*Sons of Liberty*" as a valid excuse used to justify and to craft cunning arguments for the abolition of monarchy and for the removal of religion from the public forum thereby secularizing the state in the name of "freedom". **The whole thing was close enough in time to be associated with Medieval Catholicism on which all the abuses were blamed rather than on the break with Catholicism that gave rise to the abuses.** In other words, mercantilism was presented as a Medieval idea as was absolutism, when **in fact both mercantilism and absolutism were products of the Protestant Reformation, a rejection of Medieval solidarism.**

This helps the reader to understand Karl Marx's insistence

that **communism necessitated not one but two revolutions.**

First, the Catholic Aristocracy and Clergy had to be undone by a "*Bourgeois Revolution*" led by the *nouveau riche* middle class of Protestant merchants and financiers, which would open the way to liberalism also known as classical capitalism (at least the economic dimension). The revolutions in England and esp. France were thus bourgeois revolutions designed to eradicate the Catholic aristocracy; they were to be followed by a further "Proletariat Revolution" which would bring down the new class of Protestant capitalists. The latter however was a future event. During the interregnum liberal democracy and liberal capitalism were to become ascendant due to the cunning work of liberal *philosophes* scattered in Masonic lodges throughout Europe. It was a crafty solution whereby absolutism and mercantilism were blamed on Medieval culture despite the glaring facts of history for those adroit to master that subject. The attack on Medieval culture along with new ideas about economic, political, and individual freedoms, otherworldly known as liberalism, were all parts of a broad social program for a "New Order of the Ages", which helps us to understand Jefferson's specious assertion whereby he unsuccessfully denies the Christian origins of the common law.

Liberalism was therefore, an 18th century cry for liberty in response to the oppressive 16-17th century absolutist state, but it was more than this. **In the guise of attacking the manifest and objectionable tenets of absolutism and mercantilism, liberalism was, and is, more than anything else, a desire to be free of the economic, moral, and political restraints associated with Christendom,** a desire to be unburdened from the "shackles" of Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy that provided the basis for an objective and universal moral order derived from reason. More importantly, liberalism represented a desire, on the part of a small cabal of *Philosophes*, deists, epicureans, theosophists and other anti-Christian humanists, to be "liberated" from Christian principles such as chastity and divine love, obedience and

priestly authority and from such burdensome inhibitions as a spiritual check on morality and the just exercise of political authority. In short, liberalism seeks to be free of any revealed principles that inhibit freedom to do what one wants rather than what one should. Liberalism seeks to disconnect itself from any philosophical or theological restraint and to be governed by philosophical schools that derive their morality from the practical intellect severed from faith and speculative reason as discussed in previous Intelligence Reports [5](#) and [6](#). In America, the cause of liberal freedom was unwittingly facilitated, as it had been in England, by Protestant Reformers who so hated philosophy and reason and so exaggerated sacred scripture and the role of “faith alone” (unaided by reason, which Luther called the “Devil’s greatest whore”), that faith became objectionable to “reasonable” men who seized the opportunity to promote a new “Age of Reason”. For Luther, reason philosophy and speculative reason – not practical reason – (those unschooled in philosophy fail to make this distinction) were sex toys of the devil:

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)

Given this early Protestant attitude toward reason, it is not surprising that men such as Thomas Paine, a liberal propagandist and a “Son of Liberty, who honored reason as a god thought such objections to be not only puerile but “torturous”.

“But there are times when men have serious thoughts, and it

is at such times, when they begin to think, that they begin to doubt the truth of the Christian religion; and well they may, for it is too fanciful and too full of conjecture, inconsistency, improbability and irrationality, to afford consolation to the thoughtful man. His reason revolts against his creed. He sees that none of its articles are proved, or can be proved."

"He may believe that Jesus was crucified, because many others were crucified, but who is to prove he was crucified for the sins of the world? This article has no evidence, not even in the New Testament; and if it had, where is the proof that the New Testament, in relating things neither probable nor provable, is to be believed as true?"

"When an article in a creed does not admit of proof nor of probability, the salvo is to call it revelation; but this is only putting one difficulty in the place of another, for it is as impossible to prove a thing to be revelation as it is to prove that Mary was gotten with child by the Holy Ghost."

"Here it is that the religion of Deism is superior to the Christian Religion. It is free from all those invented and torturing articles that shock our reason or injure our humanity, and with which the Christian religion abounds. Its creed is pure, and sublimely simple. It believes in God, and there it rests" (Thomas Paine).[\[6\]](#)

The Christian faith is clear about the purpose of life and about sin. It protects freedom to pursue all that is beautiful, all that is noble and all that is true, it protects freedom of conscience and the right to live by and to publicly

express the tenets of one's faith. In short, it claims that freedom is given to know, to love, and to be united with the highest good which is the Holy Trinity. It does not place limits on religion, such as expressing one's faith in public schools and universities (while simultaneously protecting the rights of deviant minorities to express theirs) as liberalism does. Instead, it places limits on the illicit use of freedom that rebels against restraint; it places limits on the explosion of the lower sentient passions that if left unchecked result in compulsive neurosis, chemical dependency, and other maladies that enslave in the name of freedom, such as liberalism.

The best way to promote liberalism then was to stealthily restrain Christianity and its corollary, the proper use of reason, *rex ratio*. This was accomplished not by *fair* intellectual debate with the scholastics *et al*, but by rebelling against absolutist tyranny (a tyranny that had nothing to do with Catholicism, in fact, it was itself a rebellion against Catholicism – Henry VIII) in the name of freedom under the sway of practical reason (common-sense only, common sense disconnected from ontology and metaphysics which are the domain of the speculative intellect). Practical reason un-moored from the moral precepts derived by the speculative intellect could be employed in any number of ways to support the ever-growing craze for “freedom”. To be sure, liberalism has its own moral guidelines, but these guidelines are rooted in a faulty understanding of human nature and of the human intellect. From the liberal perspective, the human mind is *unable* to obtain knowledge of spiritual nature of the human soul; therefore, the human soul does not exist:

“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 [John] Locke.”[\[7\]](#)

Basic adherents of liberalism reject classical metaphysics and Christian spirituality; *however, the more adept theosophical branches of liberalism do accept the immorality of the soul and Gnostic forms of mysticism* (that is another topic for is another time). Since liberals do not derive their knowledge of the soul from metaphysics, they must derive their knowledge of the soul from heretical schools of philosophy or from some faith perspective, any faith perspective, Hindu, American Indian, Sufi, Jewish mysticism, from any faith, even from certain Christian sects. Some liberals, like Thomas Jefferson, following in the line of Epicurus, were professed materialists who believed in the existence of the soul but reduced it to some type of material existence, something akin to what New Agers refer to as “ether”, a rarefied and ethereal type of matter that, like helium, is so light and bereft of density as to be almost celestial.

Although many founders possessed metaphysical insight, it was derived from some faith perspective or from some philosophical system such as neo-Platonism. Nonetheless, as far as Aristotle and Christian scholastic philosophy go, most founders rejected this type of metaphysics as unreasonable. However, the leading lights among them (Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Paine *et al*) did accept the branch of moral philosophy known as ethics. **Like the Roman philosophers before them, the American founders preferred applied or practical thinking.** Since the study of ethics is reasonable and capable of being grasped (in part) by the “practical intellect” it was widely accepted. The problem is that applied thinking infers that some intellectual, concept is being applied, like a theory or some speculative truths discovered by the higher rational mind. Since the Framers, in general, denied the possibility of grasping higher spiritual truths through the operation of the higher intellect (metaphysics), their ethical applications were based on nothing but unsupported beliefs, tenets held on the authority of long rejected philosophical mystery cults, or on common sense operations that seemed to indicate that human

beings are self-interested and therefore depraved animals.

Most leading American founders were ready to accept either esoteric knowledge or knowledge derived from common sense or both. Since the former (esoteric) is not well documented, except by inference, it is best to focus on the latter, *viz.*, common sense of the practical intellect. Since the practical intellect rejects metaphysics derived from reason, it chooses to focus on practical reality as sensed in the world around it, common sense. Anything that cannot be grasped by the practical intellect is rejected as unreasonable; if it cannot be empirically verified it must therefore be rejected. Therefore, articles of belief, such as the mysteries of the Christian faith, were rejected as unreasonable. As a result, belief in such things as the resurrection, incarnation, the Holy Trinity, and the way of the cross, were booted out of the broad public domain and into the constrained private domain where they could do little harm but much good.

Belief in such silly things as the Holy Trinity and the parables of Jesus can do much good because they carry with them a reasonable moral code that, according to the tenets of liberalism, wise men adopt from their study of (secular) philosophy disconnected from both Catholicism and Protestantism, but appearing in the guise of both . Everyone else, that is those who do not have the intellectual wherewithal to derive wisdom from the study of pagan philosophy, either lack a moral code and are therefore a danger to society, or are left to garner their morality from the Christian faith or some other faith perspective graced with a moral code. Since morality is necessary for communal existence, liberals like Jefferson *et al* considered it better for the masses to derive a moral code from a faith perspective than to not have none at all. Morality is the bottom line. For a classical liberal, the impartation of a moral code is the sole purpose and essence of religion, all the rest such as the parables, miracles, the resurrection from the dead *etc.* are

fairy tales and fables for uneducated, ignorant, and foolish people who are in need of moral guidance but unable to use their minds to acquire it; so they are forced to get their morals from faith.

“The Christian god is a three headed monster; cruel vengeful and capricious... One only needs to look at the caliber of people who say they serve him. They are always of two classes: fools and hypocrites” (Thomas Jefferson).

“As I understand the Christian religion, it was, and is, a revelation. But how has it happened that millions of fables, tales, legends, have been blended with both Jewish and Christian revelation that have made them the most bloody religion that ever existed” (John Adams). [\[8\]](#)

Liberals elevate reason above faith, and thus have faith in nothing but that which is reasonable:

“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 persons, gullibility, which they call faith, takes the helm from the hand of reason and the mind becomes a wreck” (Thomas Jefferson). [\[9\]](#)

The Christian faith is not reasonable and therefore assigned a place among the foolish and the gullible. According to Voltaire, one of the grand patriarchs of Anti-Christian liberalism

“The Bible. That is what fools have written, what imbeciles commend, what rogues teach and young children are made to learn by heart” [*](#)

According to Framers like Jefferson, faith is for the intellectually immature, the church is full of impostors, chief among them being the apostles and St. Paul who added the stories, fables, and myths to sacred scripture in order to dupe the ignorant:

“Among the sayings and discourses imputed to [Jesus] by His biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same Being. I separate, therefore, the gold from the dross; restore to Him the former, and leave the latter to the stupidity of some, and roguery of others of His disciples. Of this band of dupes and impostors, Paul was the great . . . corruptor of the doctrines of Jesus” (Thomas Jefferson).

In assigning the Christian faith and the wisdom of the cross a place among gullible and the foolish (and assigning the place of wisdom to those who use their reason to reject faith and then to proceed in pursuit of happiness according to the light of their own intellect) such men convict themselves of the very foolishness that they despise.

“For the word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject...Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ...For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1: 18-24).

Since liberalism rejects the Christian faith and metaphysics, liberal moral guidelines are *not* derived from revelation or from speculative reason by means of a metaphysical analysis of human nature (body and soul) followed by further analysis of virtue culminating in wisdom and love. Liberal moral guidelines are acquired solely by *practical* reason from (1) pagan-philosophy (esoteric or materialistic) (2) an observation and analysis of everyday human conduct (under the sway of passions), what political scientists, beginning with Machiavelli, refer to as *realpolitik*, and from (3) a misunderstood principle of "*self-interest*". They misunderstand self interest because they misunderstand the "self". Knowledge of the self, of the human person is derived from metaphysics, which liberals, *philosophes*, materialists and even Gnostics (when more fully understood) despise – Gnostics speak a lot about metaphysics, but their idea of what it is is rooted in pagan cosmology far removed from the thought of Aquinas and Aristotle.

Summary

In its desire to be free of economic, moral, and political restraints, liberalism favors (a) limited government, (b) unregulated free trade, (c) economic life unburdened by Christian moral principles, (d) the privatization of religion, and (e) the resultant secularization of public and communal life, under the direction of secular human law alienated from divine law. Liberalism can thus be summed up in one code word: "*liberty*", which is part of larger slogan; "*liberty, equality, and fraternity*", the 18th century revolutionary banner of the French *avant garde* for a New Order of the Ages instituted by secular revolutions in France, America and throughout the world.

Classical liberalism is therefore more than an economic theory; it is a comprehensive Antichristian theory for secular political, economic, and social or moral upheaval euphemistically referred to as "development". It stands on

three economic, political, and moral pillars that form one cohesive political ideology.

Economic liberalism promotes unrestricted use of private property, unregulated *free* markets, and free trade. Economic liberalism was aided by its being juxtaposed to the nostrum known as mercantilism.

Political liberalism favors limited government that protects individual rights, guarantees freedom to pursue one's interests (*without adequately defining what self-interest is*), exaggerates and incompletely, and thus falsely, defines the concept of private property[\[10\]](#), and introduces democratic forms of mixed government without duly considering the Christian origins of law or properly educating citizens for the exercise of political power. Political liberalism was facilitated by being juxtaposed to the anti-Catholic nostrum known as absolutism.

Moral Liberalism favors laws derived from practical reason divorced from faith and speculative reason. By avoiding speculative reason, moral liberalism avoids that branch of philosophy that gives us knowledge of the human soul, which is necessary to derive knowledge of human spiritual potentials. Liberalism is thus rooted in a limited definition of human nature that reduces self-interest to a pleasure pain calculus of the practical intellect aided by limited observations of corrupt human behavior. Liberalism is therefore unable to correctly talk about human moral ends because it does not know what a human being is. Because it lacks a metaphysical foundation, liberalism is adverse to the spiritual development inherent in human nature, to theology and to revelation, which are welcomed by the student of classical metaphysics.

Liberalism thus was a war waged against Christianity under the banner of freedom from economic, political tyranny that had nothing to do with Christianity. It was on these two coattails of anti-mercantilism and anti-absolutism that anti-

Christian moral liberty found its way into the modern world under the guise of reason divorced from faith, that is, the God of Nature prominent in American colonial writings.

In summary, the growth of liberalism was greatly aided by juxtaposing free trade to the economic nostrum of mercantilism, by further juxtaposing democracy, to the political nostrum of absolutism, and by stripping metaphysics from theology thereby leaving a religion of reason.

By juxtaposing “enlightened” liberal ideas about free trade, limited government, and morality rooted in science and “practical reason”, by juxtaposing ideas such as these to objectionable quackery like “absolutism” and “mercantilism”, and by successfully associating these things with medieval “Christian quackery that had to be discarded”, liberalism was able to succeed in its attempts to promote the rejection of medievalism, and along with it the burial of Catholic ideas necessary for moral and spiritual renewal of the social order. It was not Catholicism that caused absolutism and Mercantilism; these were both anti-Catholic social and political movements strenuously opposed by the Church.[\[11\]](#)

In the process of opposing mercantilism and religious and political absolutism, liberals successfully facilitated deregulation of the economy (thereby permitting the widespread growth of immoral financial transactions associated with capitalism) and the objectionable privatization of religion. The latter was facilitated and brought about by the evils of absolutism and the objectionable control of the churches by tyrants, which provided the liberals with a much needed argument justifying religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Interestingly, the tyranny and absolutism that facilitated the separation was blamed on the Catholics, when in reality, the Pilgrims fled England from Protestant tyranny, the same Protestant tyranny that was making martyrs of the Catholics. The end result is a secular political order

steeped in moral relativity, which is detrimental to both Protestants and Catholics alike. They have much more in common with each other than either does with the secular regime that dominates the public forum.

All together, liberalism resulted in the privatization of religion, the secularization of the public forum, an incorrect exaggeration of the right to private property (leading to pauperism and wage labor rather than a flourishing class of yeoman farmers and craftsmen), the separation of ethics (that is, ethics rooted in human nature and open to theology) from economics and politics, and the reduction of morality to self-interest and utility all ratified by the democratic principle of majority rule and a deficient understanding of the natural law, which have brought us to where we are today.

ENDNOTES

[\[1\]](#) Similar trends occurred in France as the Philosophes established absolute rule over the Catholic Church by implementing the “Civil Constitution of the Clergy” (1790). Similarly, in Switzerland, the state exercised authority to enforce the reforms implemented by John Calvin. Although in both cases the rule was exercised by civil officers rather than by kings, the effect was similar.

[\[2\]](#) Martin Luther denied any limitation of political power either by Pope or people, nor can it be said that he showed any sympathy for representative institutions; he upheld the inalienable and divine authority of kings in order to hew down the Upas tree of Rome. There had been elaborated at this time a theory of unlimited jurisdiction of the crown and of non-resistance upon any pretense (*Cambridge Modern History*, Vol III, p. 739).

[\[3\]](#) The Ancient Laws and Institutes of England “. Instituted by King Alfred the Great. Their profound religious spirit

clearly appears from the fact that the "Code of Law" began with the Ten Commandments, followed by many of the Mosaic Precepts, added to which is the express solemn sanction given to them by Christ in the Gospel: "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." After quoting the canons of the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem, Alfred refers to the Divine commandment, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them", and then declares, "From this one doom, a man may remember that he judge every on righteously, he need heed no other doom-book." Paraphrased from Catholic Encyclopedia (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09068a.htm>).

"According to the celebrated former British Statesman and Historian Sir Winston Churchill, the roots of King Alfred's Book of Laws or Dooms came forth from the (long-established) laws of Kent, Mercia and Wessex. All these attempted to blend the Mosaic Code with the Christian principles of Ceito-Brythonic Law and old Germanic customs."

"Churchill adds that the laws of Alfred, continually amplified by his successors, grew into that body of Customary Law which was administered as (the Common Law) by the Shire and the Hundred Courts (as specified in) **Exodus 18:21**. That, under the name of the 'Laws of St. Edward (A.D. 1042) the last Anglo-Saxon Christian King of England – the Norman kings undertook to respect, after their 1066 invasion and conquest of England and hegemony over Britain. Out of that, with much dexterity by feudal lawyers, the common law emerged (which was re-confirmed by Magna Carta 1215). Quoted from: "KING ALFRED THE GREAT AND OUR COMMON LAW" Prof. Dr. F.N. Lee (<http://www.ensignmessage.com/kingalfredthegreat.html>)

[4] So that what happened to the Catholic peasants would not happen to the new landlords.

[5] Dr. Michael P. Foley, *"The Catholic Contribution to Western Law"*

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=11113>

[6] “Of The Religion of Deism Compared With the Christian Religion”

[7] [Thomas Jefferson letter to John Adams, August 15, 1820.](#)

[8] Letter to F.A. Van der Kamp (1816)

[9] Letter to James Smith (1822)

[10] Liberal advocates of private property rightly claim that “private property” is rooted in the natural law. Unfortunately, they have a limited conception of human nature and how exactly natural law is rooted in that nature. (For a detailed study of the communal dimensions of human nature, refer to Chapters 5 through 9 of *“Trinitarian Humanism”*, Marzak, 2015, <http://kolbefoundation.org/>).

[11] Fortunately, good ideas do not go away and the truth cannot remain suppressed forever (1 Timothy 5:25). Catholic social teaching has been called, “the best kept secret of the Catholic Church.” This well guarded secret is now getting a voice and is beginning to spread around the globe.

Absolutism and Divine Right

[New Era World News](#)

American Foundations
Intelligence Report #7

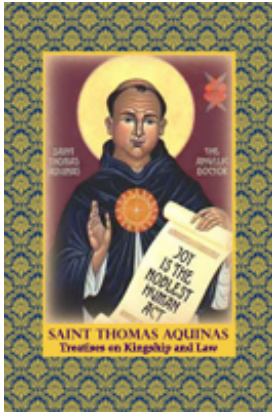
ABSOLUTISM UNDERSTOOD AS the exercise of power and authority over both spiritual and temporal affairs of church and state

had its origins in the Protestant Reformation. It is associated with the Divine Right of Kings (which also has a Protestant etiology), although not quite the same thing. As explained below, **Divine Right has to do with the *origin*** or source of a king's power; whereas **Absolutism has to do with the *extent*** of that power.



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Divine right and absolutism are occasionally combined in one person such as James I, the Protestant King of England, who claimed *absolute rule* over both church and state by *divine right*. His advocacy of divine right was supported by his private theologian, Robert Filmer who wrote, "*Patriarcha*" to refute the *Catholic idea of limited sovereignty* as represented in the works of Saint Robert Bellarmine, esp. Bellarmine's "[*Treatise on Civil Government*](#)" and of Saint Thomas Aquinas "[*De Regiminie Principium*](#)". Catholic kings were limited by a long tradition of (1) divine law, (2) natural law, (3) power of the aristocracy (as witnessed by the "ancient" rights claimed by the Catholic aristocracy in the "[*Magna Carta*](#)", (4) interdict of the church, and by (5) their coronation oaths. Because the Protestant James I (also crowned as James VI of Scotland 1567–1625) claimed to rule by divine right, he also proclaimed himself above the laws and thus rejected most of the above limitations to his power:



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“The state of monarchy is the most supreme thing upon earth, for kings are not only *God’s* lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon *God’s* throne, but even by *God* himself are called gods...Kings are justly called gods, for that they exercise a manner of resemblance of divine power upon earth: for if you will consider the attributes to *God*, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king.”

James continued:

“I conclude then this point, touching the power of kings with this axiom of divinity: that as to dispute what *God* may do is blasphemy... so is it sedition in subjects to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power.” [\[4\]](#)

James believed in divine right *and* absolutism. No earthly power, political or religious, had authority over him; he ruled, so he wrongly thought, both church and state by fiat.

Christian kings, such as James I, who claim to rule by divine right, assert more than a belief that they rule by decree of God; they also claim that regal blood flows in their veins as determined by a sacral lineage reaching back through the generations to King David to whom God made the following eternal covenant:

“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers,

I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” ([2 Samuel 7:12-16](#)).

James claimed to be descended from David and thus to sit on the regal *throne* of the warrior king and Messiah established by God Himself. If the king sits on the throne of David, he rules over a sacral state by divine decree, over all things sacred and secular, spiritual and temporal, and his power has no limits. This is quite an exaggerated claim foreign to more modest Catholic ideas of limited monarchy. **From the Catholic perspective, kings serve at the behest of the church**, the Bride of Christ who places limits on the exercise of their power. Jesus told Peter that He would bind in heaven whatever Peter bound on earth ([Matthew 16:19](#)); this includes kings as well as doctrinal matters. In short, **in a Catholic nation the legitimacy of a king depends on his coronation by the Church, which in turn implies limits on the exercise of regal power.**

The Catholic Church, moreover, *never* assented to any state or monarch having authority over its sacred teachings, its liturgy, prayers, and councils or over religious matters concerning the salvation of souls in its care. The [investiture controversy](#) bears witness to this historical verity. It was 16th-17th century Protestant England and 18th century revolutionary France that subjected the church to the state and made religious dogma a matter of public policy. **Neither absolutism, nor its closely related correlate, divine right, are found in Catholic social theory, in the teaching of any of its councils, or in the writings of its saints and doctors.**

Although there were Catholic kings who claimed divine right and who endeavored to rule both church and state, such as King Louis XIV of France, both ideas are antithetical to Catholic social teaching and rejected by the Church. Although Louis XIV was able to convince the French Episcopate to issue the "Declaration of the Clergy" [\[5\]](#), in an attempt to extend the *[droit de regale](#)* (*rights of the king*) to include appointment of various bishops, abbots, and priors, the Holy See resisted his attempts to trump the pope and to rule over the Church of France by facile appeal to rule by divine right.

There is only one king who rules over the Church by divine right, Christ the King whose blood-line is traced to the lineage of King David ([Matthew 1:1-16](#)). The covenant made with David was fulfilled *forever* in the person of Jesus Christ, the "Son of David" ([Matt 9:27](#); [12:23](#); [15:22](#); [20:30](#); [21:9](#); [21:5](#)). No other monarch, no matter what he might claim, no matter how much court sycophants might bend scripture, and no matter to what extent acquiescing bishops might go to confirm him as head of a state church, **no other monarch rules by divine right except Christ the King**, the Son of David, whose throne will stand forever.

Because that is well understood, the Catholic Church never accepted the idea of divine right or the idea of absolutism that falsely attends it. All Catholic monarchs are confirmed and consecrated by the Church; this is why Saint Joan of Arc went to such trouble to have Charles the Dauphin crowned and anointed with holy oil by the bishops at Reims thus becoming King Charles VII. No Catholic king can claim to rule by divine right unless the church approves, confirms, and anoints him, in which case, the king serves *by right of the church and therefore, in Catholic countries, is subject to and can be disposed by the church*.



The Dauphin, Charles Crowned King of France at Reims: Attended by St. Joan of Arc

After coronation, a Catholic king ***might*** be said to rule by divine right, but this idea of divine right is *not* necessarily tied to any lineage blood claims nor does it permit absolute rule over the church by a Catholic king, or by any king. If any form of absolutism is ever permitted, or more correctly tolerated, it would be a type of absolutism over temporal matters and then subject to all of the checks mentioned above or any others that might be devised.

Although the Catholic Church used terminology" such as "*royal God-given rights*", or "*by the grace of God*", the title by "*divine right*" is an egregious exaggeration. Pagan kings of the Middle East and emperors of Rome were often invested with absolute power and revered as gods. This long accepted practice was mitigated, amended, and then abrogated by the Catholic Church when it formalized the reduction of kingly

power by promulgating the Medieval doctrine of the [Two Swords](#) introduced in the fifth century by [Pope St. Gelasius](#), and expanded in the 14th century by the bull "[Unam Sanctam](#)", written by [Pope Boniface VIII](#), who further instituted the idea of temporal rule entrusted to lay men and women while the clergy retained spiritual rule thereby bringing an end to pagan absolutism. It was not until the Reformation that the idea returned. Because papal and ecclesial authority had been rejected by the Reformers, no other power existed in Protestant nations save that of the state. In this situation, the growth of absolutism was inevitable.[\[6\]](#)

Catholic kings, like Protestant kings, often endeavored to protect the unity of the faith in their respective realms; nonetheless, no Catholic king ever ruled the church, decided its dogma, directed its liturgy etc. as the Protestant kings did in England beginning with absolutists Henry VIII, his daughter Elizabeth, and then the Stuart line (of which all but one, James II[\[7\]](#), were Protestant) who all claimed to rule both church (Anglican Church) and state by divine right. The Catholic Church never accepted or bestowed the title by "*divine right*" on any king. If there were Catholic Kings who mistakenly claimed to rule by "*divine right*", the mistake was theirs not the Church's.

To state that the Catholic Church was an advocate of divine right is to misunderstand her social and political teachings, probably because those making the claim never read these teachings, esp. the teachings closely associated with the idea, such as the Medieval teaching of the "Two Swords" promulgated by Boniface VII in his bull, "*Unam Sanctum*" (1302) and those of Bellarmine and Aquinas indicated above.

The Catholic Church certainly *influenced but never ruled* the state in France or in England, nor was the universal church ever controlled by the state in France or in England. King Louis XIV of France imposed Catholicism, appointed bishops in his realm, and claimed to rule by divine right, but the Church

never recognized his claim to such rule and was engaged in a constant battle with him over the succession of bishops and governance of the church. If he had power over the church, he could have altered her teachings and established new dogma; this was something, for all his apparent arrogance, he never did. For example, in his battle with Jansenism he did *not* rely on his own interpretation of dogma but consistently deferred to the papacy.

In conclusion, the Church was never ruled by the kings of France or England nor did the pope or bishops ever govern the temporal affairs of France or England, which were entrusted to the king or queen. **The governments of 18th century France and of 16-17th century England established their own Protestant and secular national churches and then took control of economic, political, and religious affairs of their respective nations.** Once the Liberal "*Philosophes*" gained power in France, they unleashed a reign of terror against the Catholic Church and aristocracy, invested themselves with authority to establish a new secular religion, and established new national feast days such as the "Festival of Reason"[\[8\]](#) congruent with their newly institutionalized secular religion. Absolutism, in short, was an Anti-catholic secular and Protestant thing.

Conclusion

Divine Right and absolutism are two closely related but different political phenomena. Divine Right has to do with the origins of power by the tracing of blood lines back to King David whose throne was especially anointed by the Father for His Son, the Messiah and King of Kings. Clearly, once this throne was occupied by Jesus, no other king, no matter how magnificent, wise, or self-promoting could *rightly* claim it. Thus, the Catholic Church has never advocated, advance or consecrated the idea of kingly rule by divine right. If some kings claim to rule by divine right, it is a false claim. However, it could be construed as true, if the claimant is

asserting that his power comes from God without any special claims to a royal bloodline going back to David and without any additional claim to rule over the church. All legitimate power comes from God, even presidents and congressmen receive their power from God.

Absolutism is a closely related to divine right because any king claiming to rule by divine right can be presumed to have absolute power. Nonetheless, absolutism, unlike divine right, is not about the origins of power, but the extent of power. Absolute power can extend to the temporal realm *alone*, as in the case when a king has plenipotentiary power over judicial, executive, and legislative affairs and cannot be checked. An absolutism of an even more grandiose species is that exercised by rulers who, like Henry VIII, claimed power over both the temporal and spiritual realms.

Either way, the Catholic Church never assented to either one of these two types of absolutism. Clearly, it could not assent to the latter; it is the pope as Vicar of Christ who rules over the spiritual affairs of the Church. No pope has ever acquiesced on this issue to any temporal leader, not even to the Emperor of Rome, *albeit*, they have worked closely with such leaders at various times in highly nuanced fashions. The former type of absolutism clearly never existed in a Catholic country because Catholic kings receive their authority to rule from the church which retains a spiritual-moral check on their behavior. Many Catholic kings and princes have felt the sting of interdiction or of excommunication thereby relieving their subjects from fealty to the offending lords and monarchs.

ENDNOTES

[1]

<http://kolbefoundation.org/gbookswebsite/studentlibrary/greatestbooks/aaabooks/bellarmino/Framecivilgovch1to4.html>

[2]

<http://www.kolbefoundation.org/gbookswebsite/studentlibrary/greatestbooks/aaabooks/aquinas/regno.html>

[3]

http://www.orbilat.com/Languages/Latin/Texts/06_Medieval_period/Legal_Documents/Magna_Carta.html

[4]

Norton

College:

(<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/ralph/workbook/ralprs20.htm>).

[5] According to the Concordat of Bologna (1516) agreed to between the Vatican and the Kingdom of France, the right to present candidates for abbot, prior, or bishop was conceded to the king. The pope retained the more solemn right to confirm. Louis XIV decided to extend his power over church property and appointments to vacant benefices, and place limits on the authority of the pope in violation of the Concordat. At an Assembly of the Clergy at which this topic was the main agenda item, most of the bishops agreed to the king's demands and the issued the "Declaration of the Clergy" in favor of the king.

Pope Innocent XI (1682) responded by annulling all that the Assembly of Clergy had conceded to the king. His successor, Pope Alexander VIII (1690) issued [*Multiplce Pastoralis Officii*](#) in which he abrogated the entire work of the Assembly and declared the "Declaration" illicit, invalid, and without any force. In response, Louis XIV withdrew his demands and submitted a letter of retraction to Pope Innocent XII (1693).

[6] "The Protestant Reformation further exacerbated the need of kings to justify their authority apart from the pope's blessing, as well as to assert their right to rule the churches in their own realms. The advent of Protestantism also removed the counterbalancing power of the Roman church and returned the royal power to a potential position of absolute power" (New World Encyclopedia:

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Divine_Right_of_Kings)

[7] James was also deposed and forced to abdicate by Parliament and his Protestant son-in-law, William of Orange in a coup known as the Glorious Revolution– he never regained the throne.

[8] The “Festival of Reason” was instituted on 20 Brumaire, Year II (November 10, 1793). Churches throughout France, including the Cathedral of Notre Dame, were profanated and transformed into “Temples of Reason”. The Altar of the Eucharist was desecrated by being turned into an “Altar to Liberty”. A new public liturgy was introduced in praise of the “Goddess Reason” accompanied by festive dancers wearing white Roman dresses and tricolor sashes emblematic of the revolution. This was the beginning of the dechristianization and secularization of France and Continental Europe.

America's Foundations: A Secular Masquerade of Light

[New Era World News](#)

Intelligence Report

American Foundations #2

GREAT EMPIRES ARE CENTURIES in the making, “Rome was not built in a day”. Nor is the turbulent modern world something that was born a few short-decades ago out of the turmoil of the psychedelic “sixties”. The youth revolution was merely the artifact of a still-evolving revolutionary paradigm hatched in the 18th century referred to as “classical liberalism” or just plain “liberalism”. Liberalism is a

broad-scale modern ideology that rests on three pillars of economic, moral, and political liberty. Universities and libraries across the world hold volumes of difficult books, stack an immense array of specialized journals, and house numerous research institutes dedicated to advancing each of these pillars of liberalism.

Only a few specialists are able to grapple with the complex and oftentimes confusing ideas in each separate subject area. Assessing the full scope of liberalism, economic, moral, and political as an integral paradigm is an even more daunting task; all three fit together in a well-reasoned and well-synchronized package. Unfortunately, intellectuals seem to have a penchant for one pillar, usually the economic. Sometimes they venture out and combine the political. Those who specialize in morality tend to be philosophers of varying degrees. Presenting the three in such a way that they seem to have separate, and oftentimes competing, identities adds to confusion that favors the spread of error.

Due to what seems to be broad scale confusion, many students, researchers, and lay men and women (simply trying to be well-informed), fail to synthesize the three and therefore fail to understand the *program* of liberalism. Consequently, more often than not, almost everyone who explores the liberal universe ends up an advocate of some aspect, moral, political, or economic. Then they end up in the strange position of arguing for one tenet of liberalism, let us say economic liberalism (capitalism) while reacting against other aspects of liberalism, let us say moral liberalism (free-choice ending in abortion).

Thus, we have Christian thinkers on both sides of the political spectrum. Liberal Christians prefer moral liberalism (female clergy, homosexuality, contraception etc.) and conservatives favor economic and political liberalism (free markets and limited government). Since moral liberalism tends to stress individual free choice, people on the left tend to relativize objective values under the false pretense of "love" (divorced from wisdom) leading to unsavory conclusions such as right to choose an abortion according to the dictates of an unformed conscience; thus, they tend to be viewed as the "bad guys". Christian

conservatives, on the other hand, claim to hold Judeo-Christian values and advocate democracy and free trade so they appear, at least in their own eyes, as the “good guys”.

Although, liberalism is presented as an economic, political and moral good by many so-called Christian intellectuals, Protestant and Catholic, on both sides of the political spectrum, “left” and right”, the truth is, the entire package of liberalism (economic-moral-political) is rooted in secularism and anti-Trinitarianism and based on the ancient Luciferian idea that the God of Christian revelation is a petty overlord intent on keeping his followers enslaved in their littleness and unaware of their greatness (Genesis 3: 1-1). According to the total *program* of liberalism as espoused by the leading lights of the American Revolution, human beings must be liberated and free to create economic, political, and social, systems according to human standards uninhibited by Christian ideas. In short, men and women must be free to create a new type of society built on secular values as demonstrated below.

HOW DID IT GET THIS WAY?

The Christian Right

Protestants and Catholics on the political “right” tend to support traditional familial and moral values, which they claim are rooted in their Christian faith. When it comes to economic and political questions, they claim unswerving loyalty to the Constitution, to the Founding Fathers and to the “free market”. In short, they advocate private property, capitalism, and limited government based on the rule of law. Although it all sounds good, especially when placed side by side with nefarious and indolent liberal advocates of abortion looking for a handout with which to buy their next joint, upon closer scrutiny, the fabled “Conservative” story begins to fall apart – the truth is that 2/3’s of the so-called “conservative” program (the *economic* and *political*) is rooted in “liberalism” and an equal 2/3’s of the “Liberal” program (the *moral* and *political*) is likewise rooted in liberalism. In short, both Conservatives and liberals are

“liberal”.

Most conservatives are surprised, indeed shocked to find out that the economic and political platforms they fight so hard to conserve are in fact liberal platforms antithetical to the Christian tradition they claim to be protecting. Some have imbibed this liberal economic-political ideology along with strong doses of “God Bless America” for so long that they have failed to distinguish their political, economic, and religious ideas and have consequently become rabid nationalists ignorantly arrayed against the truth or, if exposed to it, either in a state of denial or humbly enlightened. What makes the unenlightened so certain of their “Christian Conservatism” is the radical moral position of their political enemies, the liberals on the left. Because they are so focused on and opposed to each other, they fail to see that they are both caught unaware in a confusing and cunning political game of “*dialectical materialism*” that makes “*progress*” toward Antichristian ends possible. This is a stealthy game first recognized by Engels, formalized by Marx, and then implemented by Lenin and Stalin.

Dialectical Materialism presents *two* alternative paths, each having the appearance of correctness because each contains some strong elements of the truth. However, neither idea is correct but holders of each believe themselves to be correct due to the perceived falsity of the other. Real truth, that is, the total program of truth as spoken by Jesus Christ, who referred to Himself as the “truth” is kept hidden by creating conflict between partially true and opposing ideas. Communist leader Vladimir Lenin realized that a carefully arrayed political conflict between two erroneous ideas makes “progress” toward a greater evil possible; *i.e.*, in Lenin’s case, international communism advanced by promoting conflict between socialism and capitalism and in the unique case of the United States, Anti-Christian secularism advanced by promoting conflict between bourgeois Protestantism on the right or what might be called, “Americanism” and immoral Liberalism on the left. Because they are both incorrect or only partially correct ideas set in opposition, neither can lead to a prosperous Christian future. Partial truths, no matter how well presented, are in fact no

truths at all; rather, they are harbingers of future evils.

"And what I do I will continue to do, in order to end this pretext of those who seek a pretext for being regarded as we are in the mission of which they boast. For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, who masquerade as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light. So it is not strange that his ministers also masquerade as ministers of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds" (2 Corinthians 11: 12-15).

Although "liberals" and "conservatives" disagree on the nature of morality and on the economy, they both agree about democracy, **popular sovereignty**, and **rule by secular law**, which they have been taught to revere in the nation's public schools, and even in the private schools, *albeit* to a lesser extent. Rule by law is the bond that unites them while moral and economic ideas divide them against each other until they morph, in this case, into a secular paradigm that includes them both.

Rule by Law

Americans, along with their British cousins, are fond of making the political claim that "*rule by law*" was a newly discovered idea born out a long tradition beginning with the Magna Carta in 1215 culminating and in the 18th century as a liberating invention emanating from the genius of men like John Locke, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson. The truth is that the highly vaunted "*rule by law*" was in fact nothing new at all. **Three thousand years before Jefferson ever penned ideas about rule by law, Moses (known as the "Lawgiver") provided the Jews with a complex body of laws that reached into every part of their economic, political and religious lives.** Moreover, rule by law was common to the Greeks and to all the nations of Christendom. The former were ruled by the law of reason known as the "natural law" written into numerous Greek constitutions and the latter, like the Jews before them, were ruled by Mosaic Law, which was

amended by Jesus who commanded “*Agape*”[\[1\]](#), the summit of *law* by which the Mosaic Code is to be interpreted and from which all other laws are to be derived.[\[2\]](#)

Thus, what was innovative to the Framers was *not* the *rule of law*. Nonetheless, the Framers were innovative men, very innovative. They gave us *not* rule by law but *rule by secular law* (along with some new ideas about the structures of government). The United States did not give the world its first written constitution, as just stated, both the Jews and Greeks had written constitutions. **What America gave the modern world was its first secular constitution based on human reason and the principle of popular sovereignty.** This shocking American enterprise represented a radical break from the common law traditions regent in the nations of Christendom, which were based on faith and reason respectful of the sovereignty of God. This was indeed a new undertaking, one which prompted John Adams to boast:

“It will never be pretended that any persons employed in that service (the writing of the constitution) had interviews with the gods, or were in any degree under the inspiration of heaven...it will forever be acknowledged that these governments were contrived by the use of reason and the senses (not faith and the bible)...Thirteen governments founded on the natural (versus supernatural) authority of the people alone.”

Thus, Thomas Jefferson referred to the whole thing as an “experiment:

“I am not discouraged by [a] little difficulty; nor have I any doubt that the result of our experiment will be, that men are capable of governing themselves without a master.” [\[3\]](#)

Christian culture and the rule by Judeo-Christian common law had made its way to the new world in the 16th and 17th centuries. In fact, it was rule by English common law, and by laws newly derived from sacred scripture, that distinguished the Pilgrims and Separatists who insisted that they were God’s chosen people, the “*City on a Hill*” set apart to establish His kingdom under His laws, which were the sole

source of light in the New England colonies and throughout all of original colonies. **Rule by law, more specifically, by Christian common law, was simply an ancient artifact.** Indeed, it was a 17th century American artifact before the Framers ever articulated a letter about it. **What was new in the 18th century was the secular idea of “liberty”, which connoted, above all else, liberation from God’s law and ecclesial interference in politics.**

The Founders despised the “Holy Trinity” (known by faith supported by reason); **the Trinity was a God in the process of being replaced by the “God of Nature”** (known by reason alone). The Framers were turning the philosophical clock back to Classical Antiquity, to a time before the Christian era, thereby founding the new nation on ancient pagan foundations, Roman foundations to be exact. Because the Trinity cannot be known by reason unaided by faith, Thomas Jefferson belittled the Trinity calling it a

“Hocus-pocus phantasm of a God like another Cerberus, with one body and three heads” (Thomas Jefferson, Letter to James Smith, 1822).

Jefferson’s writing buddy, John Adams, in a letter to Jefferson regarding the Holy Trinity stated,

“Tom, had you and I been 40 days with Moses and beheld the great God, and even if God himself had tried to tell us that three was one...and one equals three, you and I would never have believed it. We would never fall victim to such lies.”[\[4\]](#)

Men like Adams and Jefferson insisted that reason alone, even if it contradicts revealed truths, must be accepted. Unlike Boethius, Augustine, Aquinas, *et al*, **they were unable to reconcile faith and reason.** Thus, **rather than understanding faith as a gift from God, they saw it is a poison that will destroy the human mind and leave it a “wreck”.**

“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" (ibid).

The Framers were involved in an advanced program of replacing Christian common law rooted in *faith and reason* reaching back to the founding of Christendom with constitutional and statutory law rooted in *reason alone*. Starting with Charles the Great (Charlemagne) and Alfred the Great in the ninth century AD, English, French and German law codes were rooted in Mosaic laws, esp. the ten commandments and in the *precept of divine love* of the Gospels articulated by Jesus Christ. When the Pilgrims and Separatists came to the new world, although not particularly fond of the Catholic faith, they were, nonetheless, establishing colonies steeped in Christian common law that had its origins in the Catholic faith propagated by the Catholic kings who had established Christendom. Hence, like Charles the Great and Alfred the Great before them, the Pilgrims and Separatists set about establishing new governments in the 17th century founded on the divine law revealed to Moses and amended by Jesus Christ.

What was new about the 18th century was the radical ideas of a revolution aimed at severing the modern world from its Christian roots. The real revolution as John Adams afterward explained in a letter to his friend, Hezekiah Niles, was a "radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people." [\[5\]](#)

According to Adams, the Christian political ideas of the people rooted in close to a 1,000 years of Christian *common law* had to be changed from allegiance to the Trinity (the God of revelation) as the source of law to a new allegiance toward a secular constitution rooted in the thoughts of 18th century deists, atheists, Unitarians and Epicureans who had become aspiring revolutionary political leaders taking all who would follow them into a new world order, a "New Order of the Ages",

“Novus Ordo Seclorum”.

Thus, **the real revolution was in Adam’s own words:**

*“...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.” [\[6\]](#)*

And exactly what sentiments and principles were to be altered?

“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.” [\[7\]](#)

More precisely, the Christian ideas of divine law and divine sovereignty that the Pilgrims had brought with them to the new world had to undergo revolutionary change.

Due to economic and political stress leading to intense desires for democratic self-rule, America’s first Christian inhabitants (already well acquainted with religious self-rule and, as a result of the “Great Awakening”, newly acquainted to the need for greater religious equality and further democratic reform in their churches that preceded and accompanied the revolution) were easily motivated to rally against English tyranny that threatened their religious and political independence. **What many failed to realize was that in wresting the power, or what is called the sovereignty, from the British Crown and passing it directly to the people, the Framers had also wrestled God’s sovereignty** ([detailed in the state and colonial charters of the colonists](#)) and replaced it with secular constitutional law, which became the new “supreme law” of the land.

In the process of ratifying the new secular constitution (1789), the Christian descendants of the Pilgrims, Separatists, and other denominations devoted to Christ, settled for the separation of the Christian faith from politics and the privatization of religion, which thereafter became a purely individual and private matter. **God was no**

longer identified as the source of law. As James Monroe, the fifth US president asserted, God is no longer sovereign:

"The people are the highest authority in our system, from whom all our institutions spring and on whom they depend." They themselves "formed it."[\[8\]](#)

Monroe sounds like Aaron being rebuked by Moses for letting the people turn their back on God. Aaron, instead of accepting the blame, places it on the people; *"They themselves asked for an idol."* And Aaron answered Moses:

"Let not my lord be offended: for thou knowest this people, that they are prone to evil. They said to me: Make us gods that may go before us....And I said to them: Which of you hath any gold? and they took and brought it to me: and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out" (Exodus 32:23-24).

When an abused "people", led by a select group of men who doubted the divinity of Jesus Christ and the existence of the Holy Trinity, are given rhetorical praise against an oppressive king, and by the force of this oppression are led to believe that they are the source of law, it is not surprising that God's laws are abandoned, forgotten, and omitted and that a secular constitution that contradicts and nullifies His revealed divine laws "came out" of the fires of revolution. For example, **the supreme first commandment to have no other Gods** (no idols or false gods) before the Trinity **is contradicted by the very first amendment of the Constitution that sanctions worship of any god and prohibits congress from implementing any law that names Jesus Christ as God** or that gives preference to divine law, thereby abrogating such law and replacing it by man made law indifferent to revelation and divided from it by an artificial "wall of separation".

In constructing this wall, the Framers *might have been* protecting religious liberty, but they were also manifesting their preference for reason and laws of their own making. **By abandoning revealed divine law, and replacing it with a law based solely on practical reason,**

they violated the most sacred precept of the divine law,, the first commandment. Due to their use of reason alienated from faith, they crafted an amendment that opened the door to legalized idolatry, the right to honor, adore, and worship any false god that in the opinion of the people is *morally licit* rather than *patiently tolerated* as a right of conscience, which it should be.

“And by this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments. He who saith that he knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar” (1 John 2:3).

After acting like Aaron, they then acted like Peter who thought that his human reason was superior to the wisdom of God. To which Christ responded: *“Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do”* (Mark 8:33).

Because **the Constitution is the product of human reason alone**, it does not contain any evidence that it is a Christian document inspired by revealed law (the mind of God), or that it is to be interpreted according to precepts of the Christian faith. Rather, **it declares that the “people” are the sole authors and arbiters of law:** “We the People of the United States...do ordain, and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”[\[9\]](#)

Since **Article Six informs us that the Constitution is the “supreme Law of the Land”** and that “anything in the Constitution or Laws of any State” that are “contrary” have no standing, **clearly the people are supreme, which is a validation of the well known sentiment of the Enlightenment: “vox populi, vox dei” (“the voice of the people is the voice of God”).**

Here it is of first import to note that **Christian common law had its origins in the eight and ninth centuries when King Alfred the Great (849-899), compiled the “Book of Dooms”[\[10\]](#) or “Judgments” and thereby codified his own laws, and those of his English predecessors, founding them all on the Mosaic Decalogue, various Mosaic precepts, and the *agape* of the Gospels.** Alfred ratified the Code and the unity of Mosaic and Christian law by solemnly citing the Gospel: “Do not think that I

am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." Alfred finished his introduction to the Code by referring to the divine commandment:

"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them", and then declares, "From this one doom, a man may remember that he judge every one righteously, he need heed no other doom-book."

According to the revered English statesman, Sir Winston Churchill,

"The great Alfred was a beacon-light, the bright symbol of Saxon achievement, the hero of the race." ... cherishing religion, learning and art in the midst of adversity and danger; welding together a nation, and seeking always across the feuds and hatreds of the age a peace which would smile upon the land."[\[11\]](#)

Across the Channel from England, Charles the Great (748-814)[\[12\]](#) the first Holy Roman Emperor, had already done the same thing, or something very similar, issuing royal ordinances rooted in both the Mosaic and new laws recorded in scripture to be the common law of his vast realm. It was **Alcuin, the leading scholar in Charlemagne's court, who cautioned Charlemagne against using the phrase *vox populi, vox dei* because it was an irreverent and false idea and contrary to the laws established on the divine law** instituted by Charlemagne:

"And those people should not be listened who keep saying, 'The voice of the people is the voice of God,' for the turbulence of the mob is always close to insanity."[\[13\]](#)

Such ideas as *vox populi vox dei*, popular sovereignty, and rule by secular law were radical developments slowly fructifying in the annals of secular history until ready for birth in the 18th century Age of Reason. The apotheosis of *reason* was, in many ways, a reaction to the extreme *faith alone* position of the Reformers, which often times seemed to the *avant garde* of the 18th century, to be opposed to reason. The Protestant Reformation had paved the way for the "mob" to individually interpret the meaning of the most sublime mysteries of

faith, thereby democratizing religion, which aided the movement toward political democratization, further strengthened by contract theorists such as Jean Jacques Rousseau, who taught that the voice of the people is always correct especially when it has been prepared by education to say what it has been trained to say or to ask for what it has been conditioned to ask for. Since the people were needed to overthrow the Catholic aristocracy, their voice became increasingly important in the affairs of men.

Thus, throughout the colonies, ideas about the *voice of the people*, being the voice that would ratify the Constitution, became equivalent to the *voice of God*. It found its way into print in the works of Thomas Paine and John Trenchard, both radical Whigs who helped prepare the way for the American Revolution and the new Constitution. **Paine and Trenchard both ridiculed the voice of God in scripture and praised the voice of reason and the voice of the people** who would validate reasonable arguments when presented to them. Because Paine, detested the bible, "I detest the Bible as I detest everything cruel", he believed that,

"The Age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system." Consequently, as he argued in "Common Sense "and "The Age of Reason", Christianity had to be replaced by a religion of reason confirmed by popular sovereignty. Thus, in his "Dissertations on Government" (1786), Paine stated: "In republics, such as those established in America, the sovereign power...remains where nature placed it—in the people."

The acclaimed *Trenchard* argued in *Cato's Letters* (Number 60), that

"There is no Government now upon earth which owes its formation or beginning to the immediate revelation of God, or can derive its existence from such revelation."

It is odd that informed thinkers like "Cato" failed to see that the colonial governments all had their beginning in such a revelation, vestiges of which existed at the time he was writing in all of the

founding documents of the original 13 colonies.

For example, the "Original Constitution of the Colony of New Haven, Connecticut (1639) specified that both the origin of law and the system of government were to be drawn from revelation.

"We all agree that the scriptures hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in duties which they are to perform to God and to man, as well in families and commonwealth as in matters of the church... so likewise in all public officers which concern civil order, as choice of magistrates and officers, making and repealing laws, dividing allotments of inheritance, and all things of like nature, we will, all of us, be ordered by the rules which the scripture holds forth... and we agree that such persons may be entrusted with such matters of government as are described in Exodus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 1:13 with Deuteronomy 17:15 and 1 Corinthians 6:1, 6 & 7..."

Connecticut remained a theocracy until 1818, well after the Revolution, and even then, Christianity remained the preferred religion.

But, new ideas were in the air, a sort of *kulturkampf* against American Protestant culture and forms of government derived from Christian revelation. Men who were able to blend tenets of Christianity along with new liberal ideas of the Enlightenment, thereby making the latter more palatable, began to make their appearance in the colonies. **Men such as Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) the "Founding Father of the Scottish Enlightenment", imbibor of Locke, and teacher of Adam Smith and David Hume, joined a long train of others whose ideas were becoming fashionable among the colonial elite. Like Smith, Locke, Hume, et al, Hutcheson was an avid proponent of liberalism.** His works in moral and political philosophy were used as textbooks at Yale, Harvard, and the College of Philadelphia. Three of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were his students. They and a host of others were treated to such anti-Christian ideas as

"Nor has God by any revelation nominated Magistrates, showed the

nature or extent of their powers, or given a plan of civil polity for mankind" (Francis Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy p. 272).

In other words, Leviticus and Deuteronomy were to be ignored; men were now free to create a new government without consulting the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whom the Framers were ready to slowly discard.

Later, Chief Justice John Marshall memorialized these sentiments in the landmark *Marbury v Madison* (1803) case whose brief reads:

"The people have an original right to establish, for their future government, such principles as, in their opinion, shall most conduce to their own happiness is the basis on which the whole American fabric has been erected."

Not God's law, but any "opinion" validated by the people will suffice. Marshall made no bones about it. In the same case he outright ruled that any "law repugnant to the constitution is void".

America may have been a Christian nation committed to the law of God, the Holy Trinity, but its government was going in another direction; it preferred the "God of Nature" or some other God. It is difficult to say which one, if any, since *none* are mentioned in the Constitution, but *all* are protected. **Cornelis de Witt, a 19th century political historian understood what was going on:**

"The men who effected the American revolution were not all of them believers. In different degrees, Jefferson, Franklin, Gouverneur Morris, John Adams, were free-thinkers, but without intolerance or display, without ostentatious irony, quietly, and almost privily; for the masses remained believers. Not to offend them, it was necessary to speak with respect of sacred things; to produce a deep impression upon them, it was requisite to appeal to their religious feelings; and prayers and public fasts continued to be instruments resorted to whenever it was found desirable, whether by agitators or the State, to act powerfully on the minds of the

people.”[\[14\]](#)

By the time that Protestant divines woke up to what was happening, it was already too late. Pastor Timothy Wright, President of Yale Seminary was one of the first to take note (1812):

“The nation has offended Providence. We formed our Constitution without any acknowledgment of God; without any recognition of His mercies to us, as a people, of His government, or even of His existence. The [Constitutional] Convention, by which it was formed, never asked even once, His direction, or His blessings, upon their labours. Thus we commenced our national existence under the present system, without God.”

A short time later in 1863, interpreting the Civil War as divine retribution for failure to found the Constitution on principles of Christian Law, eleven Protestant denominations from the Union States (not the southern Confederacy) joined hands for the purpose of amending the Preamble taking sovereignty out of the hands of the people and placing it back where it belongs, in the hands of God. Pennsylvania attorney, John Alexander drafted the amendments, which read:

“We, the people of the United States recognizing the being and attributes of Almighty God, the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, the law of God as the paramount rule, and Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior and Lord of all, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”[\[15\]](#)

The following year, the National Reform Association submitted a similar amendment:

“We, the people of the United States, humbly acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government,

the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ruler among the nations, his revealed will as the supreme law of the land, in order to constitute a Christian government, and in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the inalienable rights and the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to ourselves, our posterity, and all the people, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."[\[16\]](#)

Some of America's Protestant leaders were waking up to the fact that their forbears had acquiesced to a *New Order of the Ages* introduced on the tails of a secular document, which dethroned the Holy Trinity and placed the power to rule and to make supreme laws in the hands of men, men who claimed ultimate authority to rule in the name of the people.

What the nation needed were God-fearing champions like Gideon who after routing Israel's enemies refused supreme power and declared allegiance to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob instead:

"The Israelites then said to Gideon, "Rule over us—you, your son, and your son's son—for you saved us from the power of Midian." But Gideon answered them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you. The LORD must rule over you." (Judges 8:22-23).

If the Framers had been as gallant in serving the Trinity and in recognizing Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the ultimate and sovereign source of power and authority as Gideon had been, perhaps we would not be experiencing the economic, political and moral malaise, which are the inevitable result of a long train of liberalism rooted in the sovereignty of human reason enshrined in a secular constitution that prefers the rules of men to the rule of God.

ENDNOTES:

[\[1\]](#) Divine Love not merely human love, but the willingness to

die for love of another.

[2] The truth is, that even the Magna Carta, the “poster child” of democracy and rule by law”, was rooted in the common laws of Christendom. The Magna Carta was *not* a progressive innovation; if read carefully, it is clear that the Magna Carta is an assertion of ancient Christian rights long established by Christian common law.

[3] Letter to T. B. Hollis (1787)

[4] Stephen Frederick Uhl, (2009) *Out of God's Closet: This Priest Psychologist Chooses Friendly Atheism*, Golden Gate Publishers.

[5] James Q Wilson, American Government, p. 26:
https://books.google.com/books?id=AjIaCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA26&lpg=PA26&dq=%22James+Q+Wilson%22+american+government++%22the+real+revolution%22&source=bl&ots=D-CCNk_afE&sig=pQTmdPhsSLG_4cnQwLdwWtJcoNE&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwioprbr2frKAhUBVSYKHZQWAGoQ6AEIRTAH#v=onepage&q=%22James%20Q%20Wilson%22%20american%20government%20%20%22the%20real%20revolution%22&f=false

[6] Letter to H. Niles (1818).

[7] *ibid.*

[8] James Monroe, May 4, 1822, *Views of the President of the United States*. <http://presspubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/preambles20.html>

[9] The specious AD argument does not work. Some Christian ideologues who prefer ignorance to truth have scoured the document looking for just one reference to God. Finding none, they resort to the signature date which contains the words “In the year of Our Lord”. And then mockingly proclaim that the “secularists” are obviously wrong, as if this one miniscule thread redeems the entire document from being secular. This is

a ridiculous argument, one worthy of only a footnote. By this logic, Hilary Clinton is a card carrying Christian because she heads or closes her correspondence with the Christian date. Or, conversely, the Portuguese who live before 1700 are *not* Christians because they did not begin using the AD style until the 18th century. Using the in conventional date is *nothing but standard practice*; it is not evidence from which to draw conclusions about such deep seated beliefs as faith in Jesus Christ, and all that He taught. **New Agers even claim that Jesus is Lord** along with a host of other gods and lords. Thomas Jefferson called himself a "Christian" because he believed in the morals taught by Jesus. But he denied His divinity, incarnation, and resurrection; most especially, he denied the Trinity, which disqualifies him from being a Christian no matter how much he might protest: "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist, who denieth the Father, and the Son." (1 John 2:22). AD, moreover, is one of several dating mechanisms used throughout Masonry and Masons are not Christians because they deny the divinity of Christ as Jefferson did. (http://grandlodgeofiowa.org/docs/Masonic_History/AnnoLucis.pdf)

[\[10\]](#)

<http://kolbefoundation.org/gbookswebsite/studentlibrary/greatestbooks/aaabooks/alfredgreat/prefacetalfred.html>

[\[11\]](#) From Winston S Churchill: A history of the English speaking peoples, 1956:

<http://charltonteaching.blogspot.com/2010/10/greatest-englishman-ever-king-alfred.html>

[\[12\]](#)

<http://kolbefoundation.org/gbookswebsite/studentlibrary/greatestbooks/aaaprefacepages/charlamagne/charlamagnepreface.html>

[\[13\]](#) In a letter to Charlemagne (800 AD)

<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Alcuin/article-supplementa>

l-information

[14] Witt, Cornelius Henri De. (2013). pp. 16-7. *Jefferson and the American Democracy, an Historical Study*. London: Forgotten Books. (Original work published 1862): http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook_text/Jefferson_and_the_American_Democracy_an_Historical_Study_1000261173/45

[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_amendment
<http://candst.tripod.com/nra.htm>

[16] <http://candst.tripod.com/nra.htm>

[/restrict]

A Nation of Christians but Not a Christian State

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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 “spirated” 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".

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*