

REPUBLICANISM AND RELIGION: SOME CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS†

*Ellis Sandoz**

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEMPORARY SETTING

Despite the Enlightenment's concerted project of doing away with the Bible as the basis of political and social order in favor of "Reason,"¹ religion today continues to condition politics as an undergirding belief foundation: Men always have God or idols, as Luther long ago said. The present war against terrorism, with its religious dimensions evident to even the most blinkered secularist, underlines the point. Perhaps less evidently, this phenomenon can be seen in the context of a global revival of traditional religiosity, including Christianity, as a major event of the present—following the era of the death and murder of God proclaimed by Hegel and Nietzsche—now called "the revenge of God" by such scholars as Gilles Kepel, Philip Jenkins, and Samuel Huntington.²

Leaving aside the radical Islamists and the contemporary revivals of Christianity and Hinduism for present considerations, the principal intellectual fruit of Enlightenment rationalism's systematic deformation of reality—through occlusion against transcendent divine Being and consequent catastrophic ontological result—has proved to be the ascendancy of various competing political "idealisms" in the form of reductionist ideologies. These are largely comprehensible as forms of intramundane religion and magical operations decked out as "science" that immanentize aspects of the Christian faith. They then generate such familiar belief systems as progressivism, utopianism, positivism, nihilism, and Marxist-Leninist revolutionary activism. Such artifacts of modern and post-modern "egophanic revolt" culminate, for instance, in

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* Hermann Moyses, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Director of the Eric Voegelin Institute for American Renaissance Studies, Louisiana State University.

¹ Robert C. Bartlett, *On the Politics of Faith and Reason: The Project of Enlightenment in Pierre Bayle and Montesquieu*, 63 *J. POL.* 1, 1–28 (2001); see generally ROBERT C. BARTLETT, *THE IDEA OF ENLIGHTENMENT: A POST-MORTEM STUDY* (2001).

² See generally GILLES KEPEL, *THE REVENGE OF GOD: THE RESURGENCE OF ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY, AND JUDAISM IN THE MODERN WORLD* (Alan Braley trans., 1994); PHILIP JENKINS, *THE NEXT CHRISTENDOM: THE COMING OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY* (2002); SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON, *THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE REMAKING OF WORLD ORDER* (1996); SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON, *WHO ARE WE? THE CHALLENGES TO AMERICA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY* 37–58 (2004); KENNETH D. WALD, *RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES* (4th ed. 2003).

the radical humanism that proclaims Autonomous Man as the godmen of this or that description and politically in the totalitarian killers of recent memory.³ Properly they can be understood as manifestations of the recrudescence of superstition, of resurgent apocalypticism, and of the ancient religiosity called Gnosticism that replaces faith with fanatical certitude beyond experience and reason. Eric Voegelin's more intricate analysis⁴ of these phenomena was long preceded by that of acute observers of the French Revolution and its bloodlust disguised as the Religion of Reason, such as Edmund Burke⁵ and Alexis de Tocqueville—who is especially clear on the point: That civilizational upheaval, he found, was a religious movement clothing murderous zealotry and enthusiasm in the ingratiating mantle of instrumental reason and republicanism. Tocqueville wrote that its ideal

was not merely a change in the French social system but nothing short of a regeneration of the whole human race. It created an atmosphere of missionary fervor and . . . assumed all the aspects of a religious revival It would perhaps be truer to say that it developed into a species of religion, if a singularly imperfect one, since it was without a God, without a ritual or promise of a future life. Nevertheless, this strange religion has, like Islam, overrun the whole world with its apostles, militants, and martyrs.⁶

³ For “egophanic revolt,” see 4 ERIC VOEGELIN, *ORDER AND HISTORY: THE ECUMENIC AGE* 260–71 (1974). The *ersatz* religions have been studied in a vast literature since Eric Voegelin first published his *Political Religions* in 1938. See ERIC VOEGELIN, *POLITICAL RELIGIONS* (1938), reprinted in 5 *THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ERIC VOEGELIN: MODERNITY WITHOUT RESTRAINT* (Manfred Henningsen vol. ed., Univ. of Mo. Press 2000). The horrific consequences of such “Utopian politics” in terms of lives taken (“democide”) is authoritatively studied in books by R.J. Rummel, who tabulates that since 1900 “independent of war and other kinds of conflict—governments probably have murdered 119,400,000 people—Marxist governments about 95,200,000 of them. By comparison, the battle-killed in all foreign and domestic wars in this [i.e., the twentieth] century total 35,700,000.” R.J. RUMMEL, *LETHAL POLITICS: SOVIET GENOCIDE AND MASS MURDER SINCE 1917*, at xi (1990); see R.J. RUMMEL, *DEATH BY GOVERNMENT* (3d prt. 1996). A more philosophical recent work that continues the study of “revolutionary gnosticism” in the spirit of Voegelin’s work is LUCIANO PELLICANI, *REVOLUTIONARY APOCALYPSE: IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF TERRORISM* 171–86, 261–75 (2003).

⁴ ERIC VOEGELIN, *THE NEW SCIENCE OF POLITICS* 107–31 (1952); ERIC VOEGELIN, 4 *HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS: RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION*, in 22 *THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ERIC VOEGELIN* (Ellis Sandoz series ed., David L. Morse & William M. Thompson vol. eds., Univ. of Mo. Press 1998); see also BARRY COOPER, *NEW POLITICAL RELIGIONS, OR AN ANALYSIS OF MODERN TERRORISM* 108 (2004); STEFAN ROSSBACH, *THE GNOSTIC WARS: THE COLD WAR IN THE CONTEXT OF A HISTORY OF WESTERN SPIRITUALITY* (1999).

⁵ See 5 EDMUND BURKE, *Three Letters to a Member of Parliament on the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France*, in *THE WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF EDMUND BURKE* (1901) 233, 233–385; 3 EDMUND BURKE, *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, *SELECT WORKS OF EDMUND BURKE* 59, 59–394 (Francis Canavan ed., Liberty Fund 1999).

⁶ ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *THE OLD REGIME AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION* 12–13 (Stuart Gilbert trans., Anchor Books 1955) (1856).

II. RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF WHIG REPUBLICANISM

Since my primary interest here is in the American experience and its unique experiential contexts, I must also leave aside the totalitarian ideologies, even though they loom large in the immediate background. In turning to that subject, then, let us remember Tocqueville's further observation that the men and women who colonized America "brought . . . a Christianity which I can only describe as democratic and republican; . . . there is not a single religious doctrine hostile to democratic and republican institutions." "It was religion that gave birth to . . . America. One must never forget that."⁷

The question to be addressed is this: How can the religious dimension of Anglo-American republicanism best be understood when viewed against the backdrop of radical political movements and doctrines just mentioned? The answer is not simple, and I can attempt only a synoptic sketch. In giving it I am reminded that, if war is too important to be left to the generals, then history is surely too important to be left to the historians—not to mention political scientists, many of whom blithely write as though the Enlightenment dogma of their own complacent persuasion has rightly ruled for the past three hundred years and seldom mention, except disparagingly, religion as having much to do with the rise of modern democratic republicanism. As Perry Miller remarked a generation ago when confronting an attitude he labeled "obtuse secularism" in accounts of American experience, "A [cool] rationalism such as [Jefferson's] might have declared the independence of [Americans in 1776], but it could never have [persuaded] them to fight for it."⁸ There is more to reality and politics, dear Horatio, than your philosophy has dreamt of.

What then? The tangle is dense and the terminology ambiguous at best. Advocates of republicanism in the Anglo-American Whig tradition (to be distinguished firmly from French Jacobinism, which was both atheistic and anti-property) assert liberty and justice in resistance against tyranny and arbitrary government and do so in the name of highest truth. To summarize: In varying degrees they attempt, within limits, to apply Gospel principles to politics: The state was made for man, not men for the state (cf. *Mark 2:27*). The imperfect, flawed, sinful being *Man*, for all his inability, paradoxically yet remains capable with the aid of divine grace of self-government—i.e., of living decent lives as

⁷ ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA* 288–89, 432 (J.P. Mayer ed., George Lawrence trans., Anchor Books 1969) (1858).

⁸ Perry Miller, *From Covenant to Revival*, in 1 *RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE: THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN RELIGION* 322, 342–43 (James Ward Smith & A. Leland Jamison eds., 1961), *quoted in* ELLIS SANDOZ, *A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS: POLITICAL THEORY, RELIGION, AND THE AMERICAN FOUNDING* 111 (2001).

individuals; through understanding and free will, able to respond to grace and to accept the terms of eternal salvation; and capable, with providential guidance, of self-government in both temporal and spiritual affairs, in regimes based on consent and churches organized congregationally. This characteristic attitude has a religious and specifically Protestant Christian root in the conviction that evil in the world must be combated by free men out of the resources of pure conscience, true religion, and reformed institutions of power and authority. The fundamental virtue basic to all others is godliness; and the fundamental source of revealed truth is the Bible—to remember John Milton and the seventeenth-century English experience widely revived in eighteenth-century America during the struggle leading up to independence.⁹ Favored institutional arrangements drew from classical sources, to be sure—from Aristotle’s description of the mixed regime in *Politics* even more than from Polybius—but they drew also from the republic of the Israelites and the rule of seventy Elders (or Sanhedrin or senate) recounted in the Old Testament (*Numbers* 11:17, *Deuteronomy* 16:18).¹⁰ The mixed constitution delineated by Aristotle is extolled by Thomas Aquinas, in whom Lord Acton finds “the earliest exposition of the Whig theory”; and finding it like the ancient “Gothick polity,” it also was favored by Algernon Sidney.¹¹ English republicanism’s brief career followed the Puritan Revolution, civil war, and deposition and execution of Charles I for tyranny when England was declared to be “a Commonwealth or Free-State.” Oliver Cromwell sought to fill the void left by the regicide with new governing institutions. He saw the situation under Charles I as analogous to the Israelites’ bondage in Egypt and himself as a latter-day Moses leading a confused and recalcitrant people through the Red Sea into a promised liberty Christ would show them. The failed experiment ended after little more than a decade with the Stuart Restoration; and English republicanism itself is said to have died on the scaffold with Algernon Sidney and been “buried, in an unmarked grave, by the Settlement of 1689”¹²—only to be resurrected and transformed in America a century afterward. All the old arguments and imagery then were reasserted, and fervid sentiments echoed John

⁹ Martin Dzelzainis, *Milton’s Classical Republicanism*, in *MILTON AND REPUBLICANISM* 1, 21 (David Armitage et al. eds., 1995).

¹⁰ See JAMES HARRINGTON, *THE COMMONWEALTH OF OCEANA* (1656), reprinted in *THE POLITICAL WORKS OF JAMES HARRINGTON* 155, 174–77 (J.G.A. Pocock ed., 1977).

¹¹ Address by Lord Acton, *The History of Freedom in Christianity* (May 28, 1877), in *1 SELECTED WRITINGS OF LORD ACTON: ESSAYS IN THE HISTORY OF LIBERTY* 29, 34 (J. Rufus Fears ed., 1985); ALGERNON SIDNEY, *DISCOURSES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT* 166–70 (Thomas G. West ed., Liberty Fund, Inc. 1996) (1698).

¹² Tony Davies, *Borrowed Language: Milton, Jefferson, Mirabeau*, in *MILTON AND REPUBLICANISM*, *supra* note 9, at 254, 254.

Milton's convictions that the "whole freedom of man consists . . . in spiritual or civil libertie."

[W]ho can be at rest, who can enjoy any thing in this world with contentment, who hath not libertie to serve God and to save his own soul, according to the best light which God hath planted in him to that purpose, by the reading of his reveal'd will [in scripture] and the guidance of his holy spirit?¹³

Tyranny and superstition alike were enemies of the "*the Good Old Cause*" of liberty, rule of law, *salus populi*, government based on consent of the people, freedom of speech, press, and conscience. The political theory of republicanism was explicitly identified with Aristotle's mixed regime as the "free commonwealth" he ultimately preferred as the best practicable form of government, because monarchy was too vulnerable to derailment and perversion into tyranny. Along with the New Testament teachings, the whole classical theory of politics especially as given in Aristotle and Cicero was absorbed into Old Whig discourse. This was no merely *Sectarian* affair, Milton stressed, but eagerly drew from all reliable authorities. In abandoning the Commonwealth and allowing restoration of Charles II, Milton thought the English were like apostate Israelites returning to idolatry in Egypt, reversing the Exodus and again installing Nimrod.¹⁴ Thought and speech were "soaked in the Bible," with Magna Carta and Bible quoted side by side and together with the classics. Thus, it was urged in a fast sermon: "You are a free Parliament, preserve your freedom, our laws and liberties'; 'let not England become a house of bondage, a second Egypt'."¹⁵ Political and religious liberty were seen to be all of a piece, Edmund Burke and John Witherspoon insisted a century later, still invoking the Good Old Cause. The latter went on to say that "[t]here is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage."¹⁶ No impiety prompted Bishop James Madison occasionally to pray the Lord's Prayer using the words "Thy republic come." Nor did he or the other American patriots ignore the prayer's next clause, lying as it did at the heart of their republicanism: "Thy will be done, on earth as it is

¹³ JOHN MILTON, *THE READIE AND EASIE WAY TO ESTABLISH A FREE COMMONWEALTH* (1660), reprinted in *AREOPAGITICA AND OTHER POLITICAL WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON* 415, 439 (Liberty Fund, Inc. 1999).

¹⁴ *Id.* at 435, 439, 444.

¹⁵ William Greenhill as quoted from his 1643 fast sermon, in CHRISTOPHER HILL, *THE ENGLISH BIBLE AND THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY REVOLUTION* 92, 371 (1993).

¹⁶ JOHN WITHERSPOON, *THE DOMINION OF PROVIDENCE OVER THE PASSIONS OF MEN* (1776), reprinted in *POLITICAL SERMONS OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDING ERA, 1730-1805*, at 529, 549 (Ellis Sandoz ed., Liberty Press 1991).

in heaven.” “[P]atriotism without piety is mere grimace[.]” one American preacher quaintly asserted.¹⁷

III. THE BIBLE, POLITICS, AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

That multiple pre-modern sources of political culture were complexly woven into the foundation of the American representative republics as the most eligible form of government (even if we routinely call it *democracy* today) is, of course, beyond dispute—most especially common law constitutionalism and the Greek and Latin classics, among other neglected sources.¹⁸ But the importance of Bible reading and the spiritual grounding nurtured by it can hardly be overrated. From this perspective it is not the institutional *forms* that were decisive (if they ever are), and like many before him James Madison regarded them as “auxiliary precautions” of consequence. Decisive from antiquity onward is dedication to *salus populi* as supreme law (or *bonum publicum*, the universal or common good) and as the end of government and requisite animating spirit of the political community and of any persons vested with authority. These fundamental matters of community and *homonoia* can be glimpsed in *Federalist No. 2* where Publius (John Jay) remarks that

Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people—a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs, and who, by their joint counsels, arms, and efforts, fighting side by side throughout a long and bloody war, have nobly established their general liberty and independence.¹⁹

The supposed hostility between liberal *individualism* and republican communitarianism can be overdrawn and distorted.

At the bottom of republicanism lies a *philosophical anthropology* of the kind I have limned and which must steadily be held in view, one that concretely exists solely in the hearts and minds of individual human beings, the only concrete reality of political existence. That anthropology is basic to the claim of human dignity. To amplify briefly, it is decisively grounded in biblical faith philosophically elaborated as disclosing hegemonic reality, with its appeal to transcendent truth and to eternal Beatitude (blessedness and felicity, happiness) as humankind’s *summum bonum* and ultimate destiny.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have *dominion* . . . over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his

¹⁷ Sermon by Thomas Coombe (1775), *quoted in* Miller, *supra* note 8, at 329.

¹⁸ See JAMES R. STONER, JR., *COMMON-LAW LIBERTY: RETHINKING AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM* (2003).

¹⁹ THE FEDERALIST NO. 2, at 38 (John Jay) (Clinton Rossiter ed., 1961).

own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

(*Genesis* 1:26–27) (emphasis added). The Trinitarian structure of the image reflects that of the godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit theorized by Augustine²⁰ as the *esse, nosse, velle infinitum* of God mirrored in the image's being, wisdom or knowledge, and will or love *finitum* of the creature. The human being is, therefore, the same through *participation*—a likeness reflecting divine Being. But since the creature is divided into mind and body, will and knowledge tend to be in a conflict which—through the mutilation of the Fall—manifests itself in cupidity, lust, avarice, greed, and other sin. Thus, the creature as *imago dei* is a trinity: *it is, it sees, it loves*: God created it (being); it sees, since God illumined it (knowledge); and it chooses or inclines always to love the Good at least in appearance, if (because of human imperfection) not always in reality. We are drawn to seek and to find true Good because “God first loved us” (1 *John* 4:19). In Bonaventure (following Augustine) the Trinitarian structure is analyzed in terms of the faculties of memory, intelligence, will and love (the capacity to choose), which ontologically correlate with eternity, truth, and goodness.²¹ The sinful perversions in the creature are identified as the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 *John* 2:16).

Philosophical anthropology in its several versions supplies the core of political theory, and it opens into the heart of the republican argument as that builds on natural law and consent of the people as foundations of any just regime. This is not merely ancient and medieval lore long since forgotten by moderns. Rather, natural law as theorized by Aquinas was mediated lock, stock, and barrel into English Protestant theory by

²⁰ ST. AUGUSTINE, *CONFESSIONS* bk. XIII, ch. 11., para. 12, at 279–80 (Henry Chadwick trans., Oxford Univ. Press 1991) [hereinafter *CONFESSIONS*]; ST. AUGUSTINE, *CONCERNING THE CITY OF GOD AGAINST THE PAGANS* bk. XI, chs. 26–28, at 459–63 (Henry Bettenson trans., Penguin Books 1984) [hereinafter *CITY OF GOD*]; ST. AUGUSTINE, *ON THE TRINITY* bks. X, XIV, at 40–59, 136–66 (Gareth B. Matthews ed., Stephen McKenna trans., Cambridge Univ. Press 2002); JOHN VON HEYKING, *AUGUSTINE AND POLITICS AS LONGING IN THE WORLD* 187–89 (2001). Mediation of this anthropology into English political thought is from many sources, but Fortescue may especially be mentioned; see the discussion and literature cited in ELLIS SANDOZ, *Sir John Fortescue as Political Philosopher*, in *THE POLITICS OF TRUTH AND OTHER UNTIMELY ESSAYS* 95, 95–103 (1999).

²¹ BONAVENTURE, *THE JOURNEY OF THE MIND TO GOD* 18–22 (Stephen F. Brown ed., Philotheus Boehner trans., Hackett Publ'g Co. 1993). While affirming that even in his deformed nature man's “soul [yet] bears, though almost obliterated, the image of God,” Calvin vaguely distances himself from “that speculation of Augustine, that the soul is the reflection of the Trinity because in it reside the understanding, will, and memory, [is] by no means sound.” Instead he settles on the view “that the human soul consists of two faculties, understanding and will.” 1 JOHN CALVIN, *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION* 183, 190, 194 (John T. McNeill ed., Ford Lewis Battles trans., Westminster Press 1960) (1536) (noting the anthropology of the Reformers).

Richard Hooker's great work entitled *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593). In Hooker's formulation:

God alone excepted, who actually and everlastingly is whatsoever he may be, and which cannot hereafter be that which now he is not; all other things besides are somewhat in possibility, which as yet they are not in act. And for this cause there is in all things an appetite or desire, whereby they incline to something which they may be All which perfections are contained under the general name of *Goodness*. And because there is not in the world anything whereby another may not some way be made the perfecter, therefore all things that are, are good. Again since there can be no goodness desired which proceedeth not from God himself, as from the supreme cause of all things . . . : all things in the world are said in some sort to seek the highest, and to covet more or less the participation of God himself. Yet this doth nowhere so much appear as it doth in man: because there are so many kinds of perfections which man seeketh. The first degree of goodness is that general perfection which all things do seek, in desiring the continuance of their being. All things therefore coveting as much as may be to be like unto God in being ever, that which cannot hereunto attain personally doth seek to continue itself another way, that is by offspring and propagation. The next degree of goodness is that which each thing coveteth by affecting resemblance with God, in the constancy and excellency of those operations which belong unto their kind. The immutability of God they strive unto, . . . by tending unto that which is most exquisite in every particular. Hence have risen a number of axioms in Philosophy showing, how *The works of nature do always aim at that which cannot be bettered*. These two kinds of goodness rehearsed are so nearly united to the things themselves which desire them, that we scarcely perceive the appetite to stir in reaching forth her hand towards them. . . . Concerning perfections in this kind, that by proceeding in the knowledge of truth and by growing in the exercise of virtue, man amongst the creatures of this inferior world, aspireth to the greatest conformity with God, this is not only known unto us, whom he himself hath so instructed, but even they acknowledge, who amongst men are not judged the nearest unto him. With *Plato* what one thing more usual, than to excite men unto the love of wisdom, by showing how much wise men are thereby exalted above [other] men; how knowledge doth raise them up into heaven; how it maketh them, though not Gods, yet as gods, high, admirable and divine?²²

The key to this theory is its root in the manifestly "self-evident" search for the Good beyond all finite goods as that is exhibited in human *inclinations*, as Hooker and before him Thomas Aquinas observed. These are ranked hierarchically toward *summum bonum* or the transcendent

²² RICHARD HOOKER, *OF THE LAWS OF ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY* bk. 1, ch. 5.1–5.3, at 66–67 (Arthur Stephen McGrade ed., Cambridge Univ. Press 1989) (1593) (citations omitted).

Good itself: rising from the creature's persistent desire for self-preservation of one's very being (subsistence itself); next to the desire to procreate and propagate in continuation of one's being and to educate one's children and protect one's family (which is common to all animals); and ultimately including the desire to know the meaning of existence and the truth about the ground of being (God), and to live in political society. The culmination of this meditative and experiential ascent thereby manifests the *differentia specifica* of human Noetic rationality, conscience, synderesis, desire for communion of the creature with the Creator whose image he bears, and the political essence of man showing him to be more than merely gregarious.²³ To greater or lesser degree, this generalized synthesis of biblical revelation and Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy passes through Hooker to Jonathan Edwards in eighteenth-century America, and along the way to such astute English republican writers as John Milton and Algernon Sidney, to form the spiritual and intellectual matrix of their theoretical argumentation and conviction. It is a broadly grounded birthright to be remembered and nurtured.

Finally, in the vocabulary and rhetorical idiom of *natural rights*, this same constellation of theoretical understanding is exhibited in the thinking of the American Founders themselves. This is achieved by turning the analysis of natural law *inclinations* into a reading of *duties* grounding correlative and reciprocal *rights*. For example, if you have a *duty* to preserve your life (the first law of nature in Locke no less than in Aquinas), liberty, and property, you manifestly also have a *right* to do so.²⁴ For the purposes of the present illustrative analysis, John Milton's robust prose may again be quoted to emphasize some of the decisive points:

No man who knows ought, can be so stupid [as] to deny that all men naturally were borne free, being the image and resemblance of God himself, and were by privilege above all the creatures, born to command and not to obey: and that they liv'd so[,] . . . [the] autoritie and power of self-defence and preservation being originally and naturally in every one of them, and unitedly in them all While as

²³ See ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *SUMMA THEOLOGICA* pt. I-II Q. 94, art. 2, reprinted in *THE POLITICAL IDEAS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS* 3, 44–46 (Dino Bigongiari ed., 1953); 2 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *THE DISPUTED QUESTIONS ON TRUTH* 300–37 (Henry Regnery ed., James V. McGlynn trans., Henry Regnery Co. 1952); ARISTOTLE, *POLITICS* 1253a1–17, reprinted in 2 *THE WORKS OF ARISTOTLE* 445, 446 (Benjamin Jowett ed. & trans., Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1952).

²⁴ "If all princes are obliged by the law of nature to preserve the lands, goods, lives and liberties of their subjects, those subjects have by the *law of nature a right* to their liberties . . ." SIDNEY, *supra* note 11, at 406 (emphasis added). See the development of this argument in ELLIS SANDOZ, *American Religion and Higher Law*, in *THE POLITICS OF TRUTH AND OTHER UNTIMELY ESSAYS*, *supra* note 20, at 104, 104–20.

the Magistrate was set above the people, so the Law was set above the Magistrate. . . . A Tyrant whether by wrong or right comming to the Crown, is he who regarding neither Law nor the common good, reigns onely for himself and his faction²⁵

“[T]he law of God does exactly agree with the law of nature” and ordains rule for the common good, i.e., the “preservation of all men’s liberty, peace, and safety”; “if any law or custom be contrary to the law of God or of nature, or, in fine, to reason, it shall not be held a valid law”;

nothing that is contrary to the laws of God and to reason can be accounted a law, any more than a tyrant can be said to be a king, or the servant of the Devil a servant of God. Since therefore the law is right reason [(*recta ratio*)] above all else, then if we are bound to obey a king and a servant of God, by the very same reason and the very same law we ought to resist a tyrant and a servant of the Devil.²⁶

In sum, therefore, the principal *religious* springs of republican politics are: a paradoxical sense of the dignity yet frailty of every human being as potentially *imago dei*; individual and political liberty fostered through a rule of law grounded in “the nature and being of man” as “the gift of God and Nature”;²⁷ government and laws based on consent of the people; and above all resistance to tyranny, whether ecclesiastical or political, in the name of truth, justice, and righteousness. These key elements were directly and essentially fostered by the prevalent (“dissenting,” Edmund Burke called it) Christianity of the late eighteenth century and by a citizenry well-schooled in them by devoted Bible reading, from the pulpit, and through an enormous controversial literature made widely accessible by the printing press.

It is worth lingering a moment over the last point as George Trevelyan memorably makes it:

The effect of the continual domestic study of the book [i.e., Bible] upon the national character, imagination and intelligence for nearly three centuries to come [after William Tyndale’s translation in 1526–1534], was greater than that of any literary movement in our annals, or any religious movement since the coming of St. Augustine. . . . The Bible in English history may be regarded as a “Renaissance” of Hebrew literature far more widespread and more potent than even the Classical Renaissance which . . . provided the mental background of the better educated.²⁸

²⁵ JOHN MILTON, *THE TENURE OF KINGS AND MAGISTRATES* (1648), *reprinted in AREOPAGITICA AND OTHER POLITICAL WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON*, *supra* note 13, at 53, 58–59, 66.

²⁶ JOHN MILTON, *DEFENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND* (1651), *reprinted in AREOPAGITICA AND OTHER POLITICAL WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON*, *supra* note 13, at 99, 201–03, 263, 270.

²⁷ SIDNEY, *supra* note 11, at 510.

²⁸ GEORGE MACAULEY TREVELYAN, *HISTORY OF ENGLAND* 367 (1926). For a detailed account, see generally HILL, *supra* note 15; NORTHROP FRYE, *THE GREAT CODE: THE BIBLE*

The path to that stage of liberty was less than smooth. Indeed, the rise of Whig liberty, the freedom we cherish, was in no small degree bound up with the efforts of early religious reformers, notably John Wyclif and William Tyndale, to make the text of the Bible available in English—an eminently if inadvertently democratizing effort that expanded the much earlier revolutionary principle already proclaimed in the remarkable *York Tractates*, authored by the person identified as the “Anglo-Norman Anonymous” (ca. 1100), as “the priesthood of all [baptized] believers,” with the individual person standing in immediacy to God (1 *Peter* 2:9).

Our author is intent upon eliminating the idea of laity which he relates to *publicani*, from the Church, clearly espousing the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers He who puts on Christ in baptism, assumes His royal sacerdotal nature The Anonymous suggests indeed both the royalty and the priesthood of all believers, reborn in baptism as sons of the heavenly *Rex et Sacerdos*.²⁹

Translation of scripture into English was denounced by the authorities as the work of heretics spreading pearls before swine (*Matthew* 7:6). Possession of such a Bible was a capital crime in Britain after 1401, one punished (as were the translators themselves) by condemnation, excommunication, burning at the stake, and the scattering of their bones.³⁰ The reason in an authoritarian age is not far to seek. As Wyclif wrote in the prologue to his and John Purvey’s translation of the Bible (as it appears in the edition of ca. 1395):

All the books of the New Testament . . . be fully of authority of belief; therefore Christian men and women, old and young, should study fast in the New Testament, for it is of full authority, and open to understanding of simple men, as to points that be most needful to salvation; . . . and each place of holy writ . . . teacheth meekness and charity; and therefore he that keepeth meekness and charity hath the true understanding and perfection of all holy writ, as Augustine proveth in his sermon on the praising of charity. Therefore no simple man of wit be feared unmeasurably to study in the text of holy writ, for why those be words of everlasting life, as Peter said to Christ in the 6th chapter of John; and the Holy Ghost stirred holy men to speak and write the words of holy writ for the comfort and salvation of meek

AND LITERATURE (1982); BRIAN MOYNAHAN, *GOD’S BESTSELLER: WILLIAM TYNDALE, THOMAS MORE, AND THE WRITING OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE—A STORY OF MARTYRDOM AND BETRAYAL* (2002); ADAM NICOLSON, *GOD’S SECRETARIES: THE MAKING OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE* (2003).

²⁹ GEORGE HUNTSTON WILLIAMS, *THE NORMAN ANONYMOUS OF 1100 A.D.: TOWARD THE IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF THE SO-CALLED ANONYMOUS OF YORK* 143, 144 n.476 (Harvard Univ. Press 1951) (citations omitted).

³⁰ “[T]he first execution of a Wycliffite [came under King Henry IV] in 1401, shortly before the passing of *De haeretico comburendo*. The English Bible attributed to Wyclif was prohibited in 1407, and the universal condemnation of Wycliffite doctrine was secured at the Councils of Pisa and Constance.” MICHAEL WILKS, *WYCLIF: POLITICAL IDEAS AND PRACTICE* 252 (Anne Hudson ed., 2000). Wyclif’s remains were exhumed and burned.

Christian men, as Peter in the 2nd epistle in the end, and Paul in the 15th chapter of Romans witness. And no clerk [clergy/cleric] be proud of the very understanding of holy writ, for why very understanding of holy writ without charity, and keeping of God's behests, maketh a man deeper damned/condemned, and James and Jesus Christ witness; and [the] pride and covetousness of clerks is [the] cause of their blindness and heresy, and depriveth them from [the] very understanding of holy writ, and make them go quick into hell, as Augustine saith on the Psalter, on that word, *Descendant in infernum viventes*.³¹

To be emphasized, and evident in the passage just quoted, is the inordinate importance of the conviction of Christian *egalitarianism* in the church society, a verity here daringly uttered in the very teeth of a strongly hierarchical society, church, and monarchy. It is nobly emblemized as *every* member's equal and God-given charismatically indelible participation in the one Body of Christ, whatever their gifts or station, as that is nobly stated in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (12:12). The symbolism had been variously deployed in theorizing civil liberty and political order by such major figures as John of Salisbury (d. 1180) and later on by Sir John Fortescue (d. ca. 1479) in their respective accounts. It found renewed *political* importance in later centuries as devotion to hierarchy waned and egalitarian sentiments flourished. Thus, Moses was a foundling, David a shepherd boy, the Savior incarnate as a simple carpenter, His apostles fishermen, Saint Paul a tent-maker, the meek, poor in spirit, heavy-laden, and peacemakers were blessed of God, and Christ proclaimed Himself present in "the least of these" (*Matthew* 25:40, 45). In Virginia, Madison's and Jefferson's fiery Baptist constituent, the Elder John Leland, ridiculed as arrogant conceit the notion that the ordinary man of common sense is incapable of judging for himself, and he asked:

Did many of the rulers believe in Christ when he was upon earth? Were not the learned clergy (the scribes) his most inveterate enemies? Do not great men differ as much as little men in judgment? . . . Is the [B]ible written (like Caligula's laws) so intricate and high that none but the . . . learned . . . can read it? Is not the vision written so plain that he that runs may read it?³²

³¹ THE HOLY BIBLE, CONTAINING THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, WITH THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS, IN THE EARLIEST ENGLISH VERSIONS MADE FROM THE LATIN VULGATE BY JOHN WYCLIFFE AND HIS FOLLOWERS 2-3 (Josiah Forshall & Frederick Madden Eds., Oxford Univ. Press 1850) (modern-spelling edition of the Middle English translation by John Wyclif, by Terence P. Noble) (on file with author); see WILKS, *supra* note 30, at 85-89 (exploring Wyclif's direct role (if any) in the production of the Wyclif Bible itself).

³² John Leland, *The Rights of Conscience Inalienable* (1791), in POLITICAL SERMONS OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDING ERA, *supra* note 16, at 1079, 1090; see also 1 *Corinthians* 1:18-31. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty . . ." 1 *Corinthians* 1:27 (KJV).

The riddle of spiritual equality's uneasy relationship to politics thereby ultimately tended to dissolve into political populism—for better or worse, and as always feared it would—and powerfully fueled the subsequent rise of democracy in America.

IV. FAITH AND CIVIL THEOLOGY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA: GREAT AWAKENING AND AFTERMATH

Did the alliance of pulpit and republican politics persist throughout the Revolutionary and early national periods in the United States or did devotion wane? This is a factual question debated among students of these periods.³³ While the matter cannot be settled here, I think a diversified and robust religiousness remained a cardinal experiential force, one undiminished throughout the historical periods mentioned. The momentum of revival and spiritual vitality that reshaped America itself beginning with the Great Awakening from the 1730s onward, identified especially with Jonathan Edwards, John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent, Joseph Bellamy, and Isaac and Ezra Stiles (among others), continued in a dynamic of ebb and flow into the later period of the founding, to be renewed shortly thereafter in the Second Great Awakening, which carried well into the nineteenth century.³⁴ As Mark Noll explains:

[O]ne of the reasons the War for Independence succeeded was that Protestants sacralized its aims as from God. . . . [T]he patriots' message was embraced by a religious community whose own religious history prepared it for receiving [republicanism]. . . .

. . . The Christianity that thrived best in the new democratic America had not dropped from the sky but bore the imprint of its own colonial history. . . . [A]n evangelicalism inspired by face-to-face itinerant preaching, that stressed the all-powerful but also egalitarian grace of God as the source of salvation, that taught converts to connect virtue to the exertions of their hearts instead of to mere social conformity—this was a religion already closer to democracy than the

³³ See generally RELIGION AND THE NEW REPUBLIC: FAITH IN THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA (James H. Hutson ed., 2000).

³⁴ Pertinent source material is collected in POLITICAL SERMONS OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDING ERA, *supra* note 16. On the significance of the Great Awakening as marking an "epoch" in history, see 3 HERBERT L. OSGOOD, THE AMERICAN COLONIES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY 409–10 (Peter Smith 1958); see also THE GREAT AWAKENING: DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATING THE CRISIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES xiv–xv (Alan Heimert & Perry Miller eds., 1967) [hereinafter GREAT AWAKENING: DOCUMENTS] ("[T]he Awakening clearly began a new era, not merely of American Protestantism, but in the evolution of the American mind. . . . [It was] a turning point . . . in the history of American civilization."). On the Second Great Awakening, see NATHAN O. HATCH, THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY (1989); see also MARK A. NOLL, AMERICA'S GOD: FROM JONATHAN EDWARDS TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN 161–86 (2002); JON BUTLER, AWASH IN A SEA OF FAITH: CHRISTIANIZING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE (1990).

hierarchical establishmentarian communalism of either clerically ordered Congregationalism or inherited Anglicanism.³⁵

V. EXPERIENTIAL RELIGION AND HUMAN AGENCY:
JOHN WESLEY AND JONATHAN EDWARDS

The epochal effects of the revival and the evangelism that carried it were politically consequential in many ways but especially in two that are of fundamental importance here: (1) experiential formation of the rudiments of an *American* community of shared convictions rooted in faith rising above and beyond colonial and merely British identities; and (2) by what has been termed a *Second Reformation* that conceptually drove home in unique ways the political implications of Christianity as a core element of man's imitation of God as part of his vocation to perfect through faith-grace his life as *imago dei*, the heart of the redemptive process as pursued in the In-Between of historical existence. By these two factors spiritual rebirth came to be gingerly associated with political as well as spiritual and intellectual like-mindedness (*homonoia*).³⁶ The eschatology of salvation was thereby broadened, quite aside from millenarian expectations, to include civic duty along with stewardship in the creature's emulation of, and participation in, God's loving governance of his Creation, as that is reflected and modestly extended through human agency in time and history. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have *dominion* [râdâh] over . . . all the earth" (*Genesis* 1:26) (emphasis added). "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . . Thou madest him to have *dominion* [mâshal] over the works of thy hands; thou has put all *things* under his feet."³⁷ Yet all

³⁵ NOLL, *supra* note 34, at 192. For details on the revival from the 1760s onward, see ANN TAVES, FITS, TRANCES, & VISIONS: EXPERIENCING RELIGION AND EXPLAINING EXPERIENCE FROM WESLEY TO JAMES 76–117 (1999).

³⁶ *Homonoia* is found in Plato (REPUBLIC 545c–d; STATESMAN 311b–c) and in Aristotle (NICOMACHEAN ETHICS 1167a23, 1167b5; POLITICS 1306a10) where it is sometimes translated as *concord*, see e.g. ARISTOTLE, NICOMACHEAN ETHICS 1167a23, 1167b5, at 256–57 (Martin Oswald ed. & trans., Macmillan Publ'g Co. 1986), meaning "being of the same mind," "thinking in harmony," or likeminded; it is "primarily a political concept." *Id.* at 309.

When men live in harmonious existence, in agreement with their true self, and when agreement between them is based on such agreement with themselves, then the relation prevails between them which Aristotle calls *homonoia*—which may be translated as a friendship [*philia*] based on likeness in actualization of the nous.

³ ERIC VOEGELIN, ORDER AND HISTORY: PLATO AND ARISTOTLE 321 (1957); see also *id.* at 357, 364. However, *contra* VOEGELIN, *supra*, at 321 n.2 (and elsewhere), the word *homonoia* seems not to occur in the New Testament, where *likeminded* in the King James Version (*Romans* 15:5 and *Philippians* 2:2, 20) translates *isopsuchos*, and *concord* (*2 Corinthians* 6:15) translates *sumphonesis*. THE NEW STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE OF THE BIBLE (James Strong ed., 1984).

³⁷ *Psalms* 8:4, 6 (KJV) (emphasis added). The King James Version of the Bible was the prevailing translation in eighteenth-century America. "The cadences of the Authorized

that is done serves not man primarily but God: “God’s glory is the ultimate end of the creation of the world.” It is theophany not egophany that is celebrated, God who is glorified, not man, despite his celebrated high nobility among the creatures of the moral world.³⁸ This applies especially to the Elect, anciently to Israel, and then to the Christians who now are newly chosen to glorify God under the New Covenant of Love, implying progressive revelation of the living God as manifested in the providential unfolding of history.

This [glorification of God] is spoken of as the end of the good [i.e., blessed, not reprobate] part of the moral world, or as the end of God’s people in the same manner as the glory of God. Is. 43:21, “This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my *praise*.” I Pet. 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, *that ye should show forth the praises of him*, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”³⁹

Isaac Watts in 1740 wrote of the Trinitarian structure of the image of God in man as first created in terms of his *Moral Image*; his *Natural Image*, which “consisted partly in his spiritual, intelligent and immortal Nature, and the various Faculties thereof; and his *Political Image* (if I may so express it)[, which] consisted in his being made Lord and Governor over all the lower Creation.”⁴⁰ The process of human recovery of this true Image through rebirth as the New Man through the experience of spiritual conversion and subsequent quickening of the “Principle of true religion in the heart, is *created* by God after his Moral Image, wherein he created Man at first, *i.e.* with an holy Temper of Mind and Disposition to the ready Practice of all Righteousness as fast as Occasions and Opportunities arise.”⁴¹ John Wesley—himself politically a royalist who eventually opposed the Revolution and withdrew his missionaries, much to the consternation of American Methodists⁴²—preached on “The

Version [(the King James Version)] informed the writing of the elite and the speech of the humble.” Mark A. Noll, *The Image of the United States as a Biblical Nation, 1776–1865*, in *THE BIBLE IN AMERICA: ESSAYS IN CULTURAL HISTORY* 39, 39 (Nathan O. Hatch & Mark A. Noll eds., 1982).

³⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*, in *TWO DISSERTATIONS* (1765), reprinted in *8 THE WORKS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS: ETHICAL WRITINGS* 405, 491–492 (Paul Ramsey ed., Yale Univ. Press 1989).

³⁹ *Id.* at 496. Compare *Matthew* 21:43 (KJV) (“The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”), with *Matthew* 23:37, and *Romans* 9:30–33.

⁴⁰ ISAAC WATTS, *THE RUIN AND RECOVERY OF MANKIND* 7 (J. Brackstone 2d ed. 1742).

⁴¹ *Id.* at n.7 (glossing *Ephesians* 4:24 and *Colossians* 3:10).

⁴² JOHN WESLEY, *A CALM ADDRESS TO OUR AMERICAN COLONIES* (1775) [hereinafter *WESLEY, CALM ADDRESS*], reprinted in *POLITICAL SERMONS OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDING ERA*, *supra* note 16, at 409; *A CONSTITUTIONAL ANSWER TO THE REV. MR. JOHN WESLEY’S CALM ADDRESS TO THE AMERICAN COLONIES* (1775), reprinted in *POLITICAL SERMONS OF THE*

New Birth” (*John* 3:7, “Ye must be born again.”) more than sixty times from 1740 onward. In the published version of the sermon (1771), which was a “distillate” of the oral presentations, Wesley adopted Watts’s categories as just noticed after asking, “Why must we be born again?” The short answer is so as to restore the Image of God in man defaced by the Fall. Wesley explains that when God created Man,

[We] read, “And God”, the three-one God, “said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.” Not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of his own immortality, a spiritual being endowed with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections; nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having “dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, . . . and over all the earth”; but chiefly in his *moral image*, which, according to the Apostle, is “righteousness and true holiness”. In this image of God was man made. “God is love:” accordingly man at his creation was full of love, which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth: so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator. God is spotless purity: and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot. Otherwise God could not have pronounced *him* as well as all the other works of his hands, “very good”.⁴³

AMERICAN FOUNDING ERA, *supra* note 16, at 421; *see also* JOHN WESLEY, THE LATE WORK OF GOD IN NORTH AMERICA (1778), *in* 3 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY 594, 594–608 (Albert C. Outler ed., Abingdon Press 1986) (basing text on *Ezekiel* 1:16).

⁴³ JOHN WESLEY, THE NEW BIRTH (1771), *reprinted in* 2 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 187, 188; *see Genesis* 1:26–28; *Psalms* 8:6–8 (on *dominion*). For other scriptural references consult WESLEY, *supra*. For related exposition in Wesley’s Sermons, *see especially* JOHN WESLEY, THE GENERAL DELIVERANCE (1782) [hereinafter WESLEY, GENERAL DELIVERANCE], *reprinted in* 2 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 436, 436–50. *See also* 2 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 284, 400, 409, 438, 474, 537; 3 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 75, 256; 4 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 63, 163, 292–93. Editor Albert C. Outler writes: “The recovery of the defaced image of God is the axial theme of Wesley’s soteriology.” 2 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 185 n.70. On mysticism and justification, Wesley wrote that “at the same time a man is justified, sanctification properly begins,” and his conversion or new birth (*John* 3:3, 6) is marked not by

an outward change only, as from drunkenness to sobriety, . . . but an inward change from all unholy to all holy tempers: from pride to humility, from passionateness to meekness, from peevishness and discontent to patience and resignation; in a word from an earthly, sensual, devilish mind to the mind that was in Christ Jesus [*cf. Philippians* 2:5].

JOHN WESLEY, ON GOD’S VINEYARD, *reprinted in* JOHN WESLEY 104, 108 (Albert C. Outler ed., Oxford Univ. Press 1964) [hereinafter JOHN WESLEY (Outler. ed.)] (alteration in original); *see id.* at 162 n.44 (Wesley’s interest in Thomas à Kempis and publication of his own translation of *De imitatione Christi* as *The Christian Pattern* in 1735). Outler writes: “If Wesley’s writings on perfection are to be read with understanding, his affirmative notion of ‘holiness’ *in the world* must be taken seriously—active holiness *in this* life—and it becomes intelligible only in the light of its indirect sources in early and Eastern spirituality.” *Id.* at 252.

But Adam sinned, and the Fall mutilated the divine image in man, which is now to be restored through grace in the faithful. It is at such a renewal and ascent toward Perfection that the evangelist's preaching aimed in proclaiming the Good News far and wide during his ministry and the "Revival" we call the Great Awakening. The specifically political implications of this influential and subtle perspective can more fully be grasped from the following insightful analysis given by a contemporary theologian.

[Wesley's] mode of thinking is vocational in that it is defined by the call of God to image the governing of God in the care of creation. . . . *Political image* keeps the focus of political institutions and their operations on God's political work, not on themselves.

It follows . . . that one does not grasp the true meaning of political institutions apart from faith in the clarifying, revelatory word of God. . . . How do [persons] fit into and serve the whole-making work of God, expressed in the Old Testament as *shalom* and in the New Testament as reconciliation? . . . The framing of these questions, and the possibility of answering them rightly, depend ultimately on trinitarian theology, not on natural law or common agreement or practical experience.

These dimensions of the political work of God shape the true meaning of political institutions They are fully consonant with John Wesley's transformationist theological language: his vision of the restoration of all things in the ultimate fulfillment of God's activity, and his evangelical call for the recovery of the moral image. In broad terms they conceptualize his vocation of peacemaking. They disclose the social meaning of "going on to perfection."⁴⁴

Theodore Weber further argues that the

⁴⁴ THEODORE R. WEBER, *POLITICS IN THE ORDER OF SALVATION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN WESLEYAN POLITICAL ETHICS* 407–10 (2001). The original should be consulted for details of a rich analysis. The Great Awakening is considered from the present perspective in SANDOZ, *supra* note 8, at 99, 147, 153, 230, and the literature cited therein. Indispensable is ALAN HEIMERT, *RELIGION AND THE AMERICAN MIND: FROM THE GREAT AWAKENING TO THE REVOLUTION* (1966); *see also* GREAT AWAKENING: DOCUMENTS, *supra* note 34. The Anglo-American *Second Reformation* (as that term is used herein) and its political significance is fatefully contrasted with German pietistic experiences in ERIC VOEGELIN, *DEMOCRACY IN THE NEW EUROPE* (1959), *reprinted in* 11 *THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ERIC VOEGELIN: PUBLISHED ESSAYS, 1953–1965*, at 59, 61–63 (Ellis Sandoz vol. ed., Univ. of Missouri Press 2000); ERIC VOEGELIN, *FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN ECONOMY AND DEMOCRACY* (1960), *reprinted in* 11 *THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ERIC VOEGELIN: PUBLISHED ESSAYS, 1953–1965*, *supra*, at 70, 72 ("Through the spreading of the Methodist Church and its influence on other churches, the second reformation, initiated by . . . John Wesley . . . became socially effective, with enormous consequences barely understood in their significance on the Continent. For in the critical period of the Industrial Revolution and the forming of the industrial proletariat, the second reformation carried Christendom in England to the people; it Christianized the working population and small middle class and thereby virtually immunized them against later ideological movements. A comparable phenomenon does not exist on the Continent, above all not in Germany.").

heart of John Wesley's evangelism is the message that God acts to restore the lost moral image, not for the few, but for the entire human race; not coercively, but through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that enables the response to God's gracious gift. God opens our eyes to our condition of being without God in the world (prevenient grace), bestows forgiveness of sins (justifying grace), and encourages us lovingly to become more loving and to "have that mind which also was in Christ Jesus" ([*Philippians* 2:5] sanctifying grace, Christian perfection). Through this process, this grace-filled ordering of salvation, the moral image is restored, the "capacity for God" returns, true humanity is recovered, and the born-again creature comes to stand before God and to love other creatures in the holiness of grace. This is the good news It is the order of God's salvation for sinful humanity.⁴⁵

Wesley's anthropology builds on the traditional Christian analysis and mysticism noticed earlier but is sharpened because of his emphasis upon the vital experiential aspects of faith and of the grace-filled life, i.e., the experience of "a movement toward[] immediacy, toward[] direct communion with God through His Holy Spirit, in independence of all outward and creaturely aids"⁴⁶ Made in the image of God, like God, man is spirit but designed to dwell on earth and so "lodged in an earthly tabernacle." His innate principle is *self-motion*, which distinguishes spirit from matter, and like his Creator he was endued with *understanding*, with "a *will*, exerting itself in various affections and passions; and lastly, with *liberty*, or freedom of choice, without which all the rest would have been in vain." It is in these attributes that "the natural image of God consisted."⁴⁷ Not only does Wesley stress that the nature of man is *spirit*, but he is at pains to reject the secularizing eighteenth-century Enlightenment's version of the idea that the *differentia specifica* separating human beings from brutes is reason.

It [is] not reason. . . . But it is *this: Man is capable of God; the inferior creatures are not*. We have no ground to believe that they are in any degree capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God. This is the specific difference between man and brute—the great gulf which they cannot pass over. And [before the Fall] a loving obedience to God was the perfection of men, [just as] a loving obedience to man was the perfection of brutes.⁴⁸

Through Christ and the New Birth the original image can be restored in those who experience it. The road to Perfection of faith-grace can thereby

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL, *THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PURITAN FAITH AND EXPERIENCE* 91–92 (Univ. of Chi. Press 2d ed. 1992).

⁴⁷ WESLEY, *GENERAL DELIVERANCE*, *supra* note 43, at 438–39. This sermon concludes with a vision of cosmic redemption as the climax of the eschatological transformation of man and the world in the end time, the universal deliverance.

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 441 (emphasis added).

be found that ultimately leads, beginning if not consummated in the here and now, to eternal blessedness and eschatological fulfillment.

Here then we see . . . what is real religion: a restoration of man, by him that bruises the serpent's head, to all that the old serpent deprived him of; a restoration not only to favour, but likewise to the image of God; implying not barely deliverance from sin but [to] being filled with the fullness of God. . . . [N]othing short of this is Christian religion.⁴⁹

The high standard, thus, is this, Wesley insisted: "None are [truly] Christians but they that have the mind which was in Christ, and walk as he walked."⁵⁰

The political implications seem never to have been drawn by John Wesley himself, and in his personal politics (as mentioned) he was no republican but a Tory who broke with the American movement for independence prior to the Revolution and withdrew his missionaries.⁵¹ Thus, his theology and his pragmatic politics must be distinguished. Nor was he, as a relentless itinerant evangelist, at all focused on politics but on the redemption of souls for eternity, as were the other leading figures in the Awakening. The republican—and one must say *democratic*—political implications would only emerge fully in the subsequent flowering of Methodism, begun, to be sure, in the eighteenth century but surging in the later frontier revivals, the rise of the "common man" in the Jacksonian period, into the moralistic effusions of the Abolitionist movement that culminated in the catastrophe of Civil War.⁵² The result was that by 1850 the Methodist Church was the largest organization in the United States, apart from the federal government itself. These later Methodists brought a new religious vision, one only incipient in Wesley's own theology. They viewed the state itself "as a moral being and political action as a way to introduce God's kingdom."⁵³ Such attitudes and convictions about national community and personal identity, prefigured in Wesley himself, were shared with Baptists and other denominations, to be sure, and ultimately burst the boundaries of mere church affiliation. They gained such general prominence and power over time as palpably to endure into the present as major components of anything that can be called American civil theology. As prominent scholars have recently argued:

⁴⁹ JOHN WESLEY, *THE END OF CHRIST'S COMING* (1781), reprinted in 2 *THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY*, *supra* note 42, at 471, 482–483.

⁵⁰ JOHN WESLEY, *THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY* (1783), reprinted in 2 *THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY*, *supra* note 42, at 451, 467; *Romans* 12:16; *Philippians* 1:27, 2:2–5 (KJV) ("Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . .").

⁵¹ See WESLEY, *CALM ADDRESS*, *supra* note 42, at 409–20.

⁵² See generally *METHODISM AND THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN CULTURE* (Nathan O. Hatch & John H. Wigger eds., 2001).

⁵³ *Id.* at 20, 27.

The Christianization of the United States was neither a residue of Puritan hegemony nor a transplantation of a European sacred canopy. It was the striking achievement of nineteenth-century activists. . . . Unlike Europe, American popular culture remained more religious than did high culture. David Martin has argued that Methodists, only a counterculture in England, succeeded in America in defining the core of democratic culture: “Arminian evangelical Protestantism provided the *differentia specifica* of the American religious and cultural ethos.”⁵⁴

The intellectual and spiritual groundwork was laid in the Great Awakening, and its aftermath, and in the Reformed theology articulate in John and Charles Wesley. The experiential power of Francis Asbury—in 1784 the first bishop ordained by John Wesley along with the “constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church as an independent . . . body”⁵⁵—and his “boiling hot religion” clearly was present in the revival as preached by the Wesleys, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and other eighteenth-century evangelists.

A glance at the sources is evidence enough. Especially telling is the dry reportage of Whitefield, who, after preaching in the church of the great philosopher and preacher Jonathan Edwards, in Northampton, wrote: “Preached this morning, and good Mr. Edwards wept during the whole time of exercise. The people were equally affected; and, in the afternoon, the power increased yet more. Our Lord seemed to keep the good wine till the last.”⁵⁶ Head and heart needed to be as one for *real* Christianity to flower in the man, and the evangelists sought to thread the needle between enthusiasm and formalism in stirring hearts and breaking the dry crust of doctrine and dogma through the power of the Word. The essential goal of them all, to repeat, was “a movement toward immediacy, toward direct communion with God through his Holy Spirit” *for every person*—“in independence of all outward and creaturely aids.” The goal was to do so in a way neatly captured in the title of a 1750 book by the Edwardsian Joseph Bellamy: *True Religion delineated; or, Experimental Religion, as distinguished from Formality on the one Hand, and Enthusiasm on the other, set in a Scriptural and Rational Light*.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 37–38 (citing DAVID MARTIN, *TONGUES OF FIRE* 21 (1990)).

⁵⁵ TAVES, *supra* note 35, at 84; METHODISM AND THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN CULTURE, *supra* note 52, at 34; cf. NOLL, *supra* note 34, at 161–86, 330–45.

⁵⁶ GEORGE WHITEFIELD, *GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S JOURNALS* 477 (Banner of Truth Trust 6th prtng. 1992) (1738–1741).

⁵⁷ W. Reginald Ward & Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Introduction* to 18 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 1, 10 (W. Reginald Ward & Richard P. Heitzenrater eds.) (quoting NUTTALL, *supra* note 46, at 91–92); TAVES, *supra* note 35, at 48. This was not unique to the Great Awakening, of course. “During the [English] Civil War testimonies of religious experience were published in great numbers, testimonies which took classic shape in Bunyan’s *Grace Abounding*.” WESLEY, *supra* (citations omitted).

Religious apperceptive *experience* grounded in a spiritual *sensorium* of the psyche was understood to be an indelible mark of the image of God in the person, restored through grace in his life, the fruit of the blessed presence in a person of the Holy Spirit exceeding merely naturalistic powers and modes of perceptual experience.⁵⁸ Its discernment and privileged place in the anthropology powerfully armed the rise of a true individualism and a human dignity now solidly anchored in the person's participatory spiritual and intellectual capacities. Man was more than a natural being and participated in the divine. His individualism, inherent liberty, and accountability did not bottom on his animal nature or acquisitive propensities (as in Locke), but in his higher faculties as a gift or infusion of divine grace. Both Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, in slightly different ways of no concern here, embraced *this* understanding of what it means to be a human being. It carried them and their publics philosophically and theologically far beyond the Lockean-Humean secularizing and naturalist models of experience and individualism. It was insistently and widely propagated and affirmed in the general population through the continuing revival where the stresses fell on each person's salvation or damnation, his ultimate answerability to God for his life and actions at the Judgment. Herein lies the root of the revolutionary conception of every individual person as both *king and priest*, as we have seen the Norman Anonymous long before proclaiming every baptized believer to be.⁵⁹

Against the British moral philosophers' movement toward a secularized understanding of the affections grounded in an innate "moral sense," Edwards grounded what he deemed to be specifically religious, that is God-given "gracious" affections, in a new "spiritual sense." . . .

. . . [He] described the new spiritual sense using the language of Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Arguing that the "Spirit of God" dwelt in true saints, he added that "Christ by his Spirit not only is in them [the saints], but lives in them . . . so that they live by his life; so is his Spirit united to them, as a principle of life in them; they don't only drink

⁵⁸ "Wesley presupposed a 'whole theory of knowledge with its notion of a "spiritual sensorium" analogous to our physical senses and responsive to prior initiatives of the Holy Spirit.'" TAVES, *supra* note 35, at 52 (citation omitted). The term is of interest also because of Eric Voegelin's characterization of the soul as the *sensorium of transcendence* in man. "The leap in being, the experience of divine being as world-transcendent, is inseparable from the understanding of man as human. The personal soul as the sensorium of transcendence must develop parallel with the understanding of a transcendent God." 1 ERIC VOEGELIN, *ORDER AND HISTORY: ISRAEL AND REVELATION* 235 (1956).

⁵⁹ WILLIAMS, *supra* note 29. The argument here is supported by the analyses of COLIN MORRIS, *THE DISCOVERY OF THE INDIVIDUAL, 1050–1200* (Univ. of Toronto Press 1987), and also by Louis Dumont, *A Modified View of Our Origins: The Christian Beginnings of Modern Individualism*, 12 *RELIGION* 1–27 (1982). See the discussion of *liber homo* in J. C. HOLT, *MAGNA CARTA* 2, 9–11, 276–80, 290–95 (Cambridge Univ. Press 2d ed. 1992).

living water, but this living water becomes a well or fountain of water, in the soul.”

. . . In other words, this new spiritual sense was not a new thing perceived by the senses, but an altogether new sense. It was not [merely, as in Locke’s sense,] “a new faculty of understanding, but . . . a new foundation laid in the nature of the soul.” This new spiritual sense thus provided the theoretical foundation for direct religious experience

While the Spirit of God operated *directly* through its indwelling in the new spiritual sense of the saints, the Spirit, “in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some way acts upon natural principles.” Thus while the Spirit of God operated as a “first cause” with respect to spiritual persons, the Spirit operated only as a “second cause,” that is, through natural means, with respect to [unconverted] natural persons.⁶⁰

As with early Christianity, so under the revivalist thrust from the Awakening onward, “to become a Christian was a deliberate personal choice, involving both an interior change (repentance) and an exterior one (baptism and acceptance of Christ as Lord).”⁶¹ The puzzle in the eighteenth century was how to draw the line between nature and the divine, but this was not novel either and had bedeviled Christian thought at least from the time of Aquinas (d. 1274). Is the “moral sense” (often designative of instinctive *storgé*)⁶² of Francis Hutcheson and the eighteenth-century British Common Sense philosophers natural, or is it the light of the Lord infused by grace into the soul of His creature man?⁶³

⁶⁰ TAVES, *supra* note 35, at 38–39 (second alteration in original) (citations omitted).

⁶¹ MORRIS, *supra* note 59, at 24. The debt to the classical as well as Christian past is stressed by Morris in his analysis of the twelfth-century developments. *Id.* at 159. A similar texture was present in eighteenth-century America, where the Golden Age of the classics coincided with the Revolutionary period. See generally MEYER REINHOLD, CLASSICA AMERICANA: THE GREEK AND ROMAN HERITAGE IN THE UNITED STATES (1984).

⁶² For the Greek *storgé* in this context, see the discussion of “permutations of self-love” in NORMAN FIERING, JONATHAN EDWARDS’S MORAL THOUGHT AND ITS BRITISH CONTEXT 158–60 (1981). In G. Leibniz’s explanation:

“nature gives to man and also to most of the animals affectionate and tender feelings for those of their species. . . . Besides this general instinct of *society*, . . . there are some more particular forms of it, as the affection between the male and female, the love which father and mother bear toward the children, which the Greeks call [*Storgé*] and other similar inclinations.”

Id. at 159 (quoting G. LEIBNIZ, NEW ESSAYS CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING 89, 91 (A.G. Langley ed. 1896) (*Storgé* in the quote above is the translation of the foreign language corollary appearing both in the primary and original source).

⁶³ The debate over “moral sense” and whether it was divine or natural was intense.

Edwards writes with indirect but obvious reference to Francis Hutcheson that “unless we will be atheists, we must allow that true virtue does primarily and most essentially consist in a supreme love to God.” Wesley writes with direct reference to him that “God has nothing to do with [Hutcheson’s] scheme of virtue from the beginning to the end. So that to say the truth, his scheme of virtue is atheism all over.”

Perhaps the decisive point is the acknowledgment of the *fact* of such a capacity in man—which immediately enlists the concurrence of Aristotle as well as Aquinas, not to mention Thomas Jefferson and John Adams—whatever the metaphysical differences. We may observe, however, that this is a false dichotomy to be set aside by recognition of the further facts that reason and passion are far from being opposites. Rather, they are reconcilable with and texture friendship (*philia*) as well as philosophy per se, understood (very much as Edwards himself ultimately understood it) as the love of wisdom through the love of Being as its source.⁶⁴ Also it is evidenced by noticing that the love of God and neighbor supremely expresses in the *shema* of ancient Israel (Deut. 6:4; Lev. 19:18) as well as in the Great Commandment of the Gospel (Matt. 22:37) *both* noetic rationality and profoundest revelatory passion: Plato's erotic rise to the vision of *Agathon* and the Christian mystic's loving rise to the *Beatific Vision* are more alike than dissimilar and tend to obliterate the distinctions between reason and revelation in sharing a common joyful tension toward the mysterious transcendent ground of Being. The mutual interaction of noetic and pneumatic experiences perhaps reaches its apogee in the Johanine *amicitia* proclaimed in the First Epistle of John (4:16, 19: "God is love. . . . We love him because he first loved us."), which was so marvelously elaborated philosophically by Aquinas. Never mind that it was Aquinas himself who routinely also embraced the natural reason-supernatural revelation dichotomy that, with continuing dogmatic authority, thereby inconsistently pits rationality and feeling, head and heart against one another existentially.⁶⁵

RICHARD B. STEELE, "GRACIOUS AFFECTION" AND "TRUE VIRTUE" ACCORDING TO JONATHAN EDWARDS AND JOHN WESLEY 340 (1994) (citations omitted).

⁶⁴ These matters are addressed in Edwards's two works, *SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE PRESENT REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN NEW ENGLAND* (1743), *reprinted in THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORICAL ANTHOLOGY* 27 (Robert R. Mathisen ed., 1982) and *TREATISE ON THE RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS* (Baker Book House 1982) (1746); see the discussion in TAVES, *supra* note 35, at 36–41. "By locating the higher, spiritual passions in the soul and by postulating a new spiritual sense through which God could act directly on the soul, Edwards could provide separate explanations for the genesis of true and false religion." *Id.* at 40. Also, see especially the first two chapters of Edwards's valedictory work, JONATHAN EDWARDS, *The Nature of True Virtue*, in *TWO DISSERTATIONS*, *reprinted in* 8 *THE WORKS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS: ETHICAL WRITINGS*, *supra* note 38, at 539, 539–61.

By these things it appears that a truly virtuous mind, being as it were under the sovereign dominion of *love to God*, does above all things seek the *glory of God*, and makes *this* his supreme, governing, and ultimate end. . . . And it may be asserted in general that nothing is of the nature of true virtue, in which God is not the *first* and the *last*.

Id. at 559–60.

⁶⁵ On the technical complexities of the general problem of the relationship of religious faith in pneumatic experience and noetic intuition in philosophical experience see ERIC VOEGELIN, *The Beginning and the Beyond: A Meditation on Truth*, in 28 *THE*

In sum: The adaptation of Platonism from multiple sources (whatever the terminological differences) structured the philosophical and moral theology of both Edwards and Wesley—from the meditative identification of *summum bonum* and highest Being alike with God-revealed-incarnate-in-Christ, to the understanding of morality-virtue in all its amplitude as *derivative* from loving communion with divine Being through the participatory faith-grace relationship as *fruitio dei* evinced in the individual person's pilgrimage through time toward blessedness from conversion and sanctification to Perfection.

The uneasy suspicion of anachronism in pointing to ancient and medieval sources and equivalences in the thought of such seminal eighteenth-century figures as Wesley and Edwards and their catholicity deserves a word of emphasis, so as to counter the prevalent false assumptions Ralph Barton Perry identified as the “fallacy of difference.”⁶⁶ The sources support the present line of interpretation, as I have tried to make clear even in this concise general account that is unable to do justice to the full complexities—which the reader is free to explore to his own satisfaction by looking for himself at the sources cited herein. On the chief point, for instance, in considering Jonathan Edwards's substantial agreement with Thomas Aquinas on the Beatific Vision, Paul Ramsey explains that the “contention that beatitude cannot consist in the vision of God because such an object absolutely surpasses human capacities is ruled out by Aquinas on theological and philosophical grounds.” Ramsey continues:

It is contrary to faith: since we are assured by faith that God is our ultimate good, we must suppose that our ultimate happiness will consist in a vision of the essence of God which will completely fulfill our highest human capacities as spiritual beings, intellect and will. To deny this destiny is also contrary to what we can know about human nature: if the rational creature were incapable of attaining knowledge of the first cause of things, then its natural tendency to know the causes of things would in the end be doomed to frustration. It is true that God transcends all creaturely knowledge, but this rules out creaturely *comprehension*, not *vision*, of his essence. . . . [T]he human mind must receive an infusion of the grace of glory to permit the human being to enjoy the vision of God. . . . Nothing short of this vision can render human beings ultimately happy. . . .

COLLECTED WORKS OF ERIC VOEGELIN: WHAT IS HISTORY? AND OTHER LATE UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS 173, 173–232 (Thomas A. Hollweck & Paul Caringella vol. eds., Univ. of Missouri Press 1990), especially the epistemological considerations stated at 188–93, which have application to the present discussion.

⁶⁶ SANDOZ, *supra* note 8, at 98–99.

Edwards would agree, including . . . that there is need for an infusion of grace or divine love in the heart.⁶⁷

Grappling more technically with the issues philosophically, Edwards no less than Wesley, both anchored in mystical experiences of transcendent truth, resolutely refuses to concede either reason or faith to the new Philistines, even in the face of a civilization-wide onslaught against both. Their common ground (and that of the emerging American community) is comprehensible in terms of *experience*—not dogmatics or doctrines or mere verbalism as matters indifferent. Indeed, only that can be the ultimate basis both of social *homonoia* and of the saving doubt that make civility in politics and toleration in religion and matters of conscience at all possible.⁶⁸ One scholar in comparing Edwards and Wesley writes of their commonality and its consequences as follows:

[T]he truth of every “Scripture doctrine” is supposed to be manifest in the moral virtues and religious affections of those who profess it. Both epistemologically and theologically, cognition, volition, and emotion are existentially inseparable, even if they may be heuristically distinguishable. Knowledge of, obedience to, and delight in God all presuppose, reinforce, and interpenetrate one another. One who claims to know God without obeying him is an antinomian . . . to know God without loving him, a rationalist . . . to obey God without loving him, a Pharisee . . . to love God without obeying him, a hypocrite . . . to love or obey God without knowing the Scriptures in which he is revealed, an illuminist. Experimental theology, as it was worked out by Edwards and Wesley, attempted to combat all these aberrations, to hold the profession of orthodox doctrine, the practice of “true virtue,” and the experience of “gracious affection” in a creative and dynamic equipoise.⁶⁹

In the immediate horizon of our discussion, the debate in context turned (as it still does) on the meaning of *experience*, with a monopoly of acceptability and authenticity increasingly being claimed (following Lockean-Humean epistemology) for “external” experience, with “internal” experience being darkly suspected of irrationality or as being the realm of demonism manifesting itself in enthusiasm and personal and social disorder. Never mind that all experience is *internal* to the experiencing *consciousness* of a concrete human personality. This onslaught by Enlightenment rationalism—deeply and rightly suspected of error and of the theoretical reductionism so grotesquely exhibited in the cadaverous stick-figure “Man” of positivism proffered in subsequent times into our own era—was rejected and resisted as deficient and vigorously fought by

⁶⁷ Paul Ramsey, *Appendix III* to 8 THE WORKS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS: ETHICAL WRITINGS, *supra* note 38, at 706, 722.

⁶⁸ This fundamental prerequisite of religious liberty and toleration is expounded in JOHN WESLEY, CATHOLIC SPIRIT, *reprinted in* 2 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 79, 79–96.

⁶⁹ STEELE, *supra* note 63, at 365.

both Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley. Full analysis of the complex issues lies beyond present purposes, but the points of their agreement have been summarized as follows:

First, both Edwards and Wesley defined true religion in opposition to both formalism and enthusiasm. Second, they both equated true religion with vital or heart religion as manifest in conversion and a continuing process of sanctification. Third, they both defended the possibility of a direct or immediate experience of the Spirit of God and they both argued that authentic experience must be tried and tested in practice. They differed somewhat in their terminology, with Edwards preferring the phrase “experimental religion” and the “indwelling of the Spirit of God” and Wesley “true Christian experience” and the “witness of the Spirit of God.”⁷⁰

The aim of it all, however, is the same in both men: “inward holiness,” “the union of the soul with God,” “true living faith” and not merely works, so as to become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). Drawing from various meditative traditions of holiness and mysticism, including Thomas à Kempis, Michael Molinos, and especially “Macarius the Egyptian,” Albert Outler writes that Wesley’s distinctive notion of “perfection” or “holiness’ *in the world* must be taken seriously—active holiness in *this* life.” This is the understanding of perfection as a process rather than a state. “Thus it was that the ancient and Eastern tradition of holiness as *disciplined* love became fused in Wesley’s mind with his own Anglican tradition of holiness as *aspiring* love” and came to be what he regarded as his most distinctive teaching.⁷¹ In Wesley’s exposition, the pilgrim’s progress in holiness moves by degrees, mounting upward from the faith of the *servant*, who obeys out of fear (the beginning of Wisdom) but who is exhorted not to stop there but to press on until he obeys out of love, as is the privilege of the children of God.

Exhort him to press on by all possible means, till he passes ‘from faith to faith’; from the faith of a *servant* to the faith of a *son*; from the spirit

⁷⁰ TAVES, *supra* note 35, at 48.

⁷¹ Albert C. Outler, *Introduction to JOHN WESLEY* (Outler, ed.), *supra* note 43, at 3, 9–10; JOHN WESLEY, *The Aldersgate Experience; The Fullness of Faith*, in JOHN WESLEY (Outler, ed.), *supra* note 43, at 51, 63–66, 251, 252. His third publication, a recent edition of Wesley’s English edition of Thomas à Kempis’s (d. 1471) classic of *devotio moderna*, *The Imitation of Christ*, is JOHN WESLEY, *THE CHRISTIAN’S PATTERN, OR, AN ABSTRACT OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, BY THOMAS À KEMPIS* (Abingdon Press 1954). The original—an Augustinian search of the disciple’s soul for union with God—is abbreviated and recast as a dialogue between Christ and the Christian. The anthropology (which echoes in Wesley’s *Sermons*) is especially to be found in bk. 3, chap. 38 (chap. 60 in the original) as it opens with the Christian’s supplication: “O lord, my God, who hast created me after thy image and likeness, grant me this grace which thou hast showed to be so great and necessary to salvation, that I may overcome my wicked nature which draweth me to sin and to perdition.” *Id.* at 97.

of bondage unto fear, to the spirit of childlike love. He will then have 'Christ revealed in his heart' [2 *Corinthians* 4:6; *Ephesians* 3:17].⁷²

From here the ascending way of holiness lies open to accept the Apostle Paul's invitation to leave those

'first principles of the doctrine of Christ' (namely repentance and faith) '[to] go on []to perfection. . . .' 'To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.' These are they to whom the Apostle John gives the venerable title of '*fathers*,' who 'have known him that is from the beginning,' [1 *John* 2:13, 14] the eternal Three-One God.⁷³

Wesley adds:

And those who are fathers in Christ generally (though I believe not always) enjoy the *plerophory* or "full assurance of hope" [*Hebrews* 6:11]; having no more doubt of reigning with him in glory than if they already saw him coming in the clouds of heaven. But this does not prevent their continually increasing in the knowledge and love of God. . . . [The mystic state is distinguished by this:] in the mystic state, God is not satisfied merely to help us think *about* him. . . . He gives us an experimental, intellectual knowledge of his presence.⁷⁴

Insight into the full range of spiritual experience (briefly hinted in the foregoing) as understood by Wesley and his contemporaries is important in itself but also for its implications for an adequate conception of authentic human existence. There are obvious implications for stewardship and for the latent *political* dimension of theology as involving godliness in man as well as in citizen. Action toward righteousness and justice by the faithful arises from this core experience as dimensions of the human vocation historically manifest in Methodism and in American culture generally. Thus, at the heart of spiritual individualism lay the *experience* (however accounted for) of the creature's communion with the Creator. Edwards attributed this capacity in the human being to his *spiritual sense* and emphatically argued against an array of critics at the time who espoused the new philosophy in various forms that God had no need for secondary or intermediate means for communicating spiritual knowledge. Norman Fiering writes:

Edwards meant by spiritual sense not only a new capacity for being affected by the things of God, but also a new inclination or a new will directed toward those things. The new sense of the heart brought about by the workings of grace is also a new disposition or an infused habit that is identical to holy love or holiness. . . . [God] imparts this Knowledge immediately, not making use of any intermediate natural Causes.⁷⁵

⁷² JOHN WESLEY, ON THE DISCOVERIES OF FAITH (1789), *reprinted in* 4 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY 28, 35 (Frank Baker ed., Abingdon Press 1987).

⁷³ *Id.* at 37.

⁷⁴ *Id.* at 37 & n.80.

⁷⁵ FIERING, *supra* note 62, at 126, 128 n.51.

He states the key point: “Edwards believed that converting grace was a physical influence on the will that changed the will’s delectation from self to God. This ‘fact’ cannot be broken down into simpler elements.”⁷⁶ There is nothing very novel in this. It in spirit reaches back to classical and medieval traditions, especially as formed by Platonic *noesis* (“intuitionism”) and Augustinian voluntarism, and to Scholastic philosophy and mysticism. We should try not to resent too deeply the fact that the likes of Wesley, Edwards, and the founding generation itself were more profoundly mindful of the Western heritage that is our birthright than are most educated people today. As one writer concisely eulogized the abiding insights at hand:

We are taught in metaphysics [sic], that being, truth and goodness, are really one. How sweet a rest now doth the spirit, with its understanding, and its will, find to it self [sic] in every being, in every truth, in every state or motion of being, in every form of truth. When it hath a *sense* of the highest love, which is the same with the highest goodness, designing, disposing, working all in all, even all conceptions in all understandings, all motions, in every will, human, angelical, divine? With what a joy and complacency unexpressible doth the will, the understanding, the whole spirit now lie down to rest everywhere, as upon a bed of love, as in the bosom of goodness it self [sic]?⁷⁷

Fiering writes: “For Edwards, true virtue is the spontaneous overflowing of a purified soul Love to being in general . . . is the essence of true virtue, and this internal habit or disposition produces an enormous superfluity of love, out of which, subordinately, love for the particular beings in the creation will flow.”⁷⁸

The aesthetic dimensions of experience are prominently stressed as beauty, goodness, and justice beckon the devout soul, especially in Edwards’s work, in keeping with his mystical Platonism. And it has been

⁷⁶ *Id.* at 128 n.51.

⁷⁷ *Id.* at 125 (quoting VIVIAN DE SOLA PINTO, PETER STERRY: PLATONIST AND PURITAN, 1613–1672, at 140 (1968)); cf. CONFESSIONS, *supra* note 20, bk. XIII, ch. 37, para. 52, at 304; CITY OF GOD, *supra* note 20, bk. XI, ch. 10, at 440–42.

⁷⁸ FIERING, *supra* note 62, at 350.

For Edwards, as for [Nicolas] Malebranche earlier, God is being. He who is, He whose essence is to exist, and He who is absolutely self-sufficient. God is also properly designated “being in general,” because God’s being is itself the cause of all created essences. All existence, all being, derives from God, who is the one self-sufficient being. It seems clear that Edwards meant by “being in general” the transcendent God *plus* His ordered creation. Similarly, St. Thomas had said that God is not contained in *ens commune* (being in general), but transcends it. Edwards’s concept of being in general included all of what is now called “nature” as well as God, who is above nature.

Id. at 326 (citations omitted). Edwards’s *The Nature of True Virtue*, the basis of these analytical remarks, was written in 1755 but first published (along with *Concerning the End for which God created the World* as *Two Dissertations*) posthumously in 1765. Edwards died in 1758. Cf. TWO DISSERTATIONS, *supra* note 38, at 400.

well-said that Methodism was born in song, often sung to poetry written by Charles Wesley. The hymns communicated and by rote taught the theology as it lifted the hearts of the faithful. The recondite insights of metaphysics and epistemology were thereby democratized and made lucid in the spiritual convictions of everyman: Christ came for all, not merely for the elite. The Wesleys's 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists* was a cornerstone of evangelism in the founding period. John Wesley stated in the preface that the

“hymns are not carelessly jumbled together, but carefully ranged under proper heads, according to the experience of real Christians.” The witness of the Spirit, the idea upon which Wesley built his theological understanding of real Christian experience, was central to the hymn-book and . . . comprised the heart of the distinctively Methodist message.⁷⁹

From this hymnal, for instance, congregations sang (hymn 93) about enlightenment through the witness of the Holy Spirit:

We by his Spirit *prove*
And *know* the things of God; . . .
His Spirit to us he gave,
And dwells in us, we *know*;
The witness in ourselves we have,
And all his fruits we show.⁸⁰

The milestone sermon by John Wesley, “Free Grace,” where he for the first time fully expounded his conviction that *all* may hope for eternal salvation through Christ and for a universal deliverance at the end of time (the “Arminian” defection from strict Calvinist predestination that aroused a furor and provoked the breach with George Whitefield in 1740), concludes with one of several poems titled “Universal Redemption.” It begins and ends as follows:

Hear, holy, holy, holy, Lord,
Father of all mankind,
Spirit of love, eternal Word,
In mystic union join'd.
Hear, and inspire, my stammering tongue,
Exalt my abject thought,
Speak from my mouth a sacred song,
Who spak'st the world from nought.
. . . .
A power to choose, a will to obey,
Freely his grace restores;
We all may find the Living Way,
And call the Saviour ours.
. . . .
Shine in our hearts, Father of light;

⁷⁹ TAVES, *supra* note 35, at 50 (citation omitted).

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 55–56 (citation omitted).

Jesu, thy beams impart;
 Spirit of truth, our minds unite,
 And make us one in heart.
 Then, only then, our eyes shall see
 Thy promised kingdom come;
 And every heart by grace set free,
 Shall make the Saviour room.
 Thee every tongue shall then confess,
 And every knee shall bow.
 Come quickly, Lord, we wait thy grace,
 We long to meet thee now.⁸¹

The youthful Eric Voegelin admiringly saw in Jonathan Edwards's thought the "independence of the American history of ideas from that of Europe" and, moreover, regarded him as a "pantheistic" mystic who had left far behind merely dogmatic Calvinism. As Voegelin expounds Edwards's posthumous work,

The divine being is being in general, encompassing universal existence. . . . The goal of world history is an ever more perfect emanation of God in the world, by his making it ever more like himself. "The heart is drawn nearer and nearer to God, and the union with him becomes more firm and close: and, at the same time, the creature becomes more and more conformed to God."

Instead of tending, as in Humean skepticism, toward the *closed* self that emerged and continued in English philosophy after Thomas Reid and the Scottish school, in Edwards and later on in "[America,] the same ideas did not follow any skeptical tradition but worked with the 'openness' of the self; the naïve juxtaposition of God and man remains intact. The theory of knowledge does not suffer from dialectics."⁸² The impetus toward understanding *openness* as the very essence of the human being, evident in Edwards (and in Wesley, as we have seen), was carried forward as a general American social characteristic. In American philosophy it can be traced in Charles Peirce and William James and even George Santayana—and, we would add, exceptionally in Europe in Henri Bergson's late work, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*.⁸³ Of his first

⁸¹ JOHN WESLEY, FREE GRACE (1739), *reprinted in* 3 THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY, *supra* note 42, at 542, 559–63. This text was set to music and published as a hymn in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740). Whether John Wesley or his brother Charles Wesley composed it is uncertain.

⁸² ERIC VOEGELIN, ON THE FORM OF THE AMERICAN MIND (1928), *reprinted in* 1 THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ERIC VOEGELIN 140–42 (Jürgen Gebhardt & Barry Cooper eds., Univ. of Missouri Press 1995). The original of this book, *Über die Form des amerikanischen Geistes*, his *Habilitationsschrift* at the University of Vienna, was published in 1928 when the author was twenty-seven years old, after he had spent two years in the United States studying and traveling.

⁸³ *Id.* The English translation of Henri Bergson's *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932) was published in 1935 by Henry Holt. See HENRI BERGSON, THE TWO SOURCES OF MORALITY AND RELIGION (R. Ashley Audra & Cloudesley Brereton trans., Univ.

experience in America Voegelin more than four decades later remarked: “I began to sense that American society had a *philosophical background* far superior in range and existential substance . . . to anything that I found represented in the methodological environment in which I had grown up [in Vienna].”⁸⁴

VI. REVOLUTION AND RELIGION

At the *common-sense* level—conceived as a generally held residual substratum of understanding anchoring the contemplative experiences and philosophizing we have been considering—ordinary pragmatic moral and result-oriented political *action* will be demanded of statesmen. The utilitarian perspective disdained by Wesley and Edwards, as evangelists intent not on this world but on saving souls for the next, will fade into the background, and one consequence will be the kind of outlook captured in Davy Crockett’s motto (which echoed Benjamin Franklin’s maxim): “Be sure you’re right, then go ahead[!]” The hierarchy of being—the layered structure of existence familiar from ordinary experience—is matched by a hierarchy of modes of response to experiences of reality’s truth. Human affairs of a political order, with life and death held in the balance, cannot be conducted like a mystic’s meditation or a philosophy seminar, but at best merely in light of understanding and conviction grounded in highest truth—and even that is often only faintly present or missing entirely. Thus, at the political and military (pragmatic) levels of action where the brute facts count and concrete actions must be taken, the resolute attitude formulated by Crockett was evidenced after 1765 in the movement increasingly fueling opposition to perceived tyranny and in favor of liberty and (ultimately) independence leading to the founding—as it must ever be in practical human affairs, if we are true to ourselves. Crockett’s attitude is still patently exemplified in American political policy and action.⁸⁵

The debt to loftier considerations and moralism may be present but is not necessarily an unmixed blessing. If we take social and political morality to be only private morality writ large, we run into problems that have bedeviled American policy-makers from the beginning of the republic, through the presidencies of Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson, until

of Notre Dame Press 1977) (1935). The *open soul* and society, and the *closed soul* and society, are key terms of Bergson’s analysis—but cannot be the source of Voegelin’s terminology here, since his book was published four years earlier than Bergson’s.

⁸⁴ ERIC VOEGELIN, *AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTIONS* 29 (Ellis Sandoz ed., 1989) (emphasis added) (The original text dates from 1973).

⁸⁵ D.H. MEYER, *THE INSTRUCTED CONSCIENCE: THE SHAPING OF THE AMERICAN NATIONAL ETHIC* 110 (1972). Meyer points out the analogous sentiment in Benjamin Franklin’s maxim: “Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.” *Id.* at 186 n.2.

today. This often consists in some variety of suspended judgment or utopian hopefulness (metastatic faith) that ignores the delimitation on rational action in the world concisely signaled for all time in the Gospel's "My kingdom is not of this world" (*John* 18:36): for familiar instance, fighting a war to end war, or one to rid the world of evil. As one writer formulates the poignant practical dilemma that still plagues us and flaws such thinking: "[I]t was inconceivable that we can be morally obliged to do what we ought not do."⁸⁶ The abiding structure of reality is not so malleable as ideologues, optimists, and well-intentioned millenarians compulsively suppose. At the surface, the watchword here is as old as Aristotle's dismissive critique of Plato's community of women, children, and property proposed by Socrates in the *Republic*, and it is sagely exemplified during the founding era nowhere better than in John Dickinson's famous comments in the Constitutional Convention of 1787: "Experience must be our only guide. Reason may mislead us[!]"⁸⁷ Dickinson had primarily the *philosophes* and their defective brand of "rationalism" in mind.⁸⁸ The root in both instances is a failure to observe the autonomy of the different strata of reality, especially as here those identified as spiritual and noetic reality on one hand and the political reality of statesmen on the other, and to distinguish between them.

⁸⁶ *Id.* at 118 (referencing slavery and FRANCIS WAYLAND'S, *THE LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY* (1838)).

⁸⁷ Convention Floor Debate (Aug. 13, 1787), in JAMES MADISON, *NOTES OF THE DEBATES IN THE FEDERAL CONVENTION OF 1787* (1840), *reprinted in* 2 *THE RECORDS OF THE FEDERAL CONVENTION OF 1787*, at 267, 278 (Max Farrand ed., Yale Univ. Press 1966); see the discussion in SANDOZ, *supra* note 8, at 220–22; ARISTOTLE, *supra* note 23, at 1260b37–1265b18, at 455–60.

⁸⁸ What this usage of the term *rationalism* specifically means in modern political theory has been explored by Michael Oakeshott in his essay *Rationalism in Politics*, in *RATIONALISM IN POLITICS AND OTHER ESSAYS* 5, 37 (Liberty Press 1991) (1962), who speaks of "the disease of Rationalism" and shows it to involve "an identifiable error, a misconception with regard to the nature of human knowledge, which amounts to a corruption of the mind." John Adams (and some of his colleagues) perfectly understood all the essentials of this already at the time, even before the dawn of behaviorism in psychology and behavioralism in the social sciences, and without benefit of Oakeshott's masterful analysis. Thus, at his acerbic best, Adams wrote in his marginalia:

"It is to Ideology, to that obscure metaphysics, which, searching with subtlety after first causes, wishes to found upon them the legislation of nations, instead of adapting the laws to the knowledge of the human heart and to the lessons of history, that we are to attribute all the calamities that our beloved France has experienced."

. . . .
"The political and literary world are much indebted for the invention of the new word IDEOLOGY. Our English words Ideocy, or Ideotism [sic], express not the force or meaning of it. It is presumed its proper definition is the science of ideocy [sic]."

ZOLTÁN HARASZTI, *JOHN ADAMS & THE PROPHETS OF PROGRESS* 167 (Grossett & Dunlap Universal Library ed. 1964) (Adams quoting a comment by Napoleon and Adams's reply).

Human life is a unity; but it is a complex unity, one not susceptible of simplistic treatment without courting disaster through inadvertent perversion. Thus, on further reflection, Aristotle was both right and wrong, as was also John Dickinson. The former ignored the noetic character of the argument setting forth the contours of the paradigmatic *polis* of the Idea in the *Republic* in favor of a kind of literalist fundamentalism—a move bordering on what we might call a cheap shot, one that Aristotle must have recognized as such as a connoisseur of Plato's thought. The latter tacitly acknowledged the deformed rationality (i.e., irrational rationalism: already fully diagnosed by John Adams) of the intellectuals' prevailing climate of opinion. He spoke to the problem at hand in those terms, but all the while in so speaking he restored the fullness of rationality to his own discourse and thereby tacitly appealed to that same amplitude in his auditors. As experienced men of affairs themselves, the other framers were largely uncorrupted by trendy Enlightenment fashions and, therefore, intuitively responded to Dickinson's caveat.

The American Revolution itself, of course, had been preached as a revival and had the astonishing result of succeeding, Perry Miller once remarked, and we have seen evidence that he was right in that judgment. The theology of the evangelists varied considerably, of course, but substantively it lay close to that of John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards as just glimpsed. Their differences over free will, election, predestination, free grace, universal reconciliation, and other burning theological issues provide a backdrop of importance as between especially John Wesley and Whitefield. But first things first. In George Whitefield's blunt statement: "Let a man go to the grammar school of faith and repentance, before he goes to the university of election and predestination. A bare head-knowledge of sound words availeth nothing. I am quite tired of Christless talkers."⁸⁹

An intimate connection between civic action and the holy work of redemption through faith and grace was widely assumed and manifested, whatever the details and precise rationale. As Ezra Stiles said in invoking a favorite biblical metaphor for providential favor, "It is truly important that this vine, which God hath planted with a mighty hand in this [A]merican wilderness, should be cultivated into confirmed maturity."⁹⁰ The matter cannot be stressed too much and is surely of central importance. Indicative is the fact that Congress declared at least

⁸⁹ WHITEFIELD, *supra* note 56, at 491. The thorny issues at stake can be seen from *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley in Answer to his Sermon entitled Free Grace. Id.* at app. 2. For the offending sermon itself (signaling the great "Arminian" split from orthodox Calvinism in the Awakening), see WESLEY, *supra* note 81, at 542, 542–63.

⁹⁰ Ezra Stiles, *A Discourse on the Christian Union*, in GREAT AWAKENING: DOCUMENTS, *supra* note 34, at 605; *cf. Psalms* 80:15.

sixteen national days of prayer, humiliation, and thanksgiving between 1776 and 1783; and Presidents Washington and Adams continued the practice under the Constitution.⁹¹ The onset of the so-called Second Great Awakening conventionally is dated from around 1790, but in fact it seems to have begun earlier. New Side and New Light evangelism stirring personal spiritual experience continued throughout the period, and the political sermons often were extraordinary in power and substance. Religious services were routinely held in the newly completed Capitol itself in Washington, in the House and Senate chambers as these became available. President Thomas Jefferson and his cabinet attended, along with the members of Congress and their families, inaugurating a practice that continued until after the Civil War. The newly formed United States Marine Corps band supplied the music for holy services at President Jefferson's instigation, we are told. When the playing of sacred music fell short of expectations, the President suggested recruitment of some professional Italian musicians to help out, and eighteen were in fact enlisted as Marines and brought from Italy for the purpose—where they found, to their dismay, the mud streets and “log huts” of the young nation's new capital.⁹² One authority has cogently argued that there was, indeed, a *Revolutionary revival* in America: “Far from suffering decline, religion experienced vigorous growth and luxuriant development during the Revolutionary period. . . . In a host of ways, both practical and intellectual, the church served as a school for politics.”⁹³

Swarms of witnesses might be called in support of the present line of analysis, but I shall mention only three as representative. Thomas Paine in *Common Sense* (1776) argued the biblical foundations of republican liberty. Thus, he wrote:

Near three thousand years passed away from the Mosaic account of the creation, till the Jews under a national delusion requested a king. Till then their form of government . . . was a kind of republic administered by a judge and the elders of the tribes. Kings they had none, and it was

⁹¹ On the national days of prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving in the founding period, see DEREK H. DAVIS, *RELIGION AND THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, 1774–1789: CONTRIBUTIONS TO ORIGINAL INTENT* 83–91 (2000), and his further remark that

all of the presidents since Jackson have issued prayer proclamations, either annually or in connection with important or critical events, such as American entries into war. Moreover, in 1952 the Congress passed a law providing for a National Day of Prayer, observed annually since, and which from 1988 has been observed on the first Thursday in May.

Id. at 90. See also SANDOZ, *supra* note 8, at 125–62, for texts and commentary.

⁹² HELEN CRIPE, *THOMAS JEFFERSON AND MUSIC* 24–26 (1974).

⁹³ Stephen A. Marini, *Religion, Politics, and Ratification*, in *RELIGION IN A REVOLUTIONARY AGE* 184, 188 (Ronald Hoffman & Peter J. Albert eds., 1994). See the related discussion in ELLIS SANDOZ, *Philosophical and Religious Dimensions of the American Founding*, in *THE POLITICS OF TRUTH AND OTHER UNTIMELY ESSAYS*, *supra* note 20, at 43, 43–64.

held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title but the Lord of Hosts.⁹⁴

Benjamin Rush, signatory of the Declaration of Independence, fervently urged (1786) the schools of Pennsylvania to adopt the Bible as the basic textbook, writing:

The only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in RELIGION. Without this, there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments. . . . The religion I mean to recommend in this place is the religion of JESUS CHRIST. . . . A Christian cannot fail of being a republican.⁹⁵

Last, we hear the aged John Adams, in the marvelous correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, identifying the two principal springs of their original revolutionary republicanism and the community that undergirded it as *Whig Liberty* and *Christianity*. Adams movingly wrote (1813): “Now I will avow, that I then believed, and now believe, that those general Principles of Christianity, are as eternal and immutable, as the Existence and Attributes of God; and those Principles of Liberty, are as unalterable as human Nature and our terrestrial, mundane System.”⁹⁶

These sentiments did not die with the original founders. In the middle of the nineteenth century and a time of great crisis, Abraham Lincoln borrowed Paul’s symbol of *corpus mysticum* from 1 Corinthians 12 and applied it to the America evoked through the Declaration of Independence:

“We have besides these men—descended by blood from our ancestors—among us perhaps half our people who are not descendants at all of these men, they are men who came from Europe—German, Irish, French and Scandinavian [T]hey cannot carry themselves back into that glorious epoch and make themselves feel that they are parts of us, but when they look through that old Declaration of Independence they find that those old men say that ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal,’ and then they feel that that moral sentiment taught in that day evidences their relation to those men, that it is the father of all moral principle in them, and that they have a right to claim it as though they were blood of blood and flesh of flesh of the men who wrote that Declaration, and so they are. That is the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic

⁹⁴ THOMAS PAINE, *COMMON SENSE* (1776), reprinted in *COMMON SENSE, THE RIGHTS OF MAN, AND OTHER ESSENTIAL WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE* 21, 30 (New Am. Library 1969).

⁹⁵ SANDOZ, *supra* note 8, at 132 (quoting BENJAMIN RUSH, *A PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS* (1786), reprinted in *1 AMERICAN POLITICAL WRITING DURING THE FOUNDING ERA, 1760–1805*, at 675, 681–82 (Charles S. Hyneman & Donald S. Lutz eds., 1983)).

⁹⁶ ELLIS SANDOZ, *Religious Liberty and Religion in the American Founding*, in *THE POLITICS OF TRUTH AND OTHER UNTIMELY ESSAYS*, *supra* note 20, at 65, 68 (citation omitted).

and liberty-loving men together, that will link those patriotic hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world.”⁹⁷

VII. ESCHATOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE

As a study in contrast, Girolamo Savonarola and his community reestablished the Florentine republic at the end of the fifteenth century as a “civil and political government,” one observed by Machiavelli, who gained immortality partly as theorist of classical republicanism.⁹⁸ For his trouble Fra Girolamo and two principal associates were at length excommunicated and burnt together as heretics in 1498 in the central marketplace of the city, where a plaque in the pavement still marks the spot. He was graciously spared the worst torments of this horrendous death by first being strangled, since he was an old friend of Pope Alexander VI, and friends in high places should count for something. In the history of republicanism the Machiavellian Moment might with almost equal warrant be known as the Savonarolan Moment: Modern free popular republican government was off to its rocky start after a scant four years of existence. Savonarola’s was preached as a republic of virtue and godliness, one thirsting for revival and aimed at purifying and

⁹⁷ JOSEPH R. FORNIERI, ABRAHAM LINCOLN’S POLITICAL FAITH 154–55 (2003) (quoting Abraham Lincoln, Speech at Chicago, Illinois (July 10, 1858), in 2 THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN 484, 499–500 (Roy P. Basler ed., Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953).

⁹⁸ DONALD WEINSTEIN, SAVONAROLA AND FLORENCE: PROPHECY AND PATRIOTISM IN THE RENAISSANCE 308 (1970); see LORENZO POLIZZOTTO, THE ELECT NATION: THE SAVONAROLAN MOVEMENT IN FLORENCE, 1494–1545 *passim* (1994).

Savonarola . . . took seriously many of Saint Paul’s teachings. Savonarola indicated that he sought to please God, not men, “because as the Apostle says, ‘if I should still please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.’ . . . It was never in Savonarola’s vision to please men. He believed in the wisdom of Saint Paul’s words: “To those [who think they are wise] I shall say, together with the Apostle: “We are fools for Christ: you, however, are the wise” [cf. 1 *Corinthians* 3:18–19].

MARION LEATHERS KUNTZ, THE ANOINTMENT OF DIONISIO: PROPHECY AND POLITICS IN RENAISSANCE ITALY 234–35 (2001) (citation omitted) (first alteration in original). For Savonarola’s vision, see his TREATISE ON THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF FLORENCE (1498), reprinted in HUMANISM AND LIBERTY: WRITINGS ON FREEDOM FROM FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENCE 231, 231–60 (Renée Neu Watkins ed. & trans., Univ. of S.C. Press 1978). “This government is made more by God than by men, and those citizens who, for the glory of God and for the common good, obey our instructions and strive to make it perfect, will enjoy earthly happiness, spiritual happiness, and eternal happiness.” *Id.* at 256. William Penn’s perspective is brought to mind in this regard:

Now, what is this Kingdom of God, but God’s Government? And where is this Kingdom and Government to be set up, but in Man? So Christ tells us, *Behold the Kingdom of God is within you.* . . . We are taught to pray for it *Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done.*

WILLIAM PENN, AN ADDRESS TO PROTESTANTS OF ALL PERSWASIONS, MORE ESPECIALLY THE MAGISTRACY AND CLERGY, FOR THE PROMOTION OF VIRTUE AND CHARITY (1679), reprinted in THE POLITICAL WRITINGS OF WILLIAM PENN 137, 190–91 (Andrew R. Murphy ed., Liberty Fund 2002) (quoting *Luke* 11:2, 17:21).

reforming not only corruption in the church but the evil world itself—the beginning of an eschatological and holy *sacrum imperium* with Florence the New Jerusalem of a chosen people, an Elect protected by the Holy Ghost, apocalyptically envisaged as *perhaps* leading mankind’s transition into the Millennium and the final Eighth Day of eternal Sabbath ending history.

An array of comparable chiliastic and millenarian sentiments was well represented in America during the Revolutionary period and potentially influenced the political theology of the fledgling nation as perhaps destined to be the new Israel or chosen people and even the site of the inauguration of the thousand-year reign of God’s saints on earth. Since Christianity still plays a large role in America, echoes of these sentiments can be heard to this very day.⁹⁹ But “enthusiasm” already was restrained in Milton’s work with *reason* the centerpiece, and the validity of traditional authority was readily embraced unless in conflict with scripture.¹⁰⁰ Now muted were the earlier radical expectations of the *Parousia*, or imminent divine intervention, when God “shall come skipping over the mountains and over difficulties” and Christ “shall reign

⁹⁹ See Stephen A. Marini, *Uncertain Dawn: Millennialism and Political Theology in Revolutionary America*, in *ANGLO-AMERICAN MILLENNIALISM FROM MILTON TO THE MILLERITES* 159, 159–76 (Richard Connor & Andrew C. Gow eds., Brill Press 2004), and the literature cited therein. See also WALD, *supra* note 2, 42–72.

America’s anointment as the world’s political messiah did not end . . . in 1919. . . . Transcending party politics and most ideological boundaries, nearly all of the language of universality and emancipation, of the ‘city on a hill’ and the world’s rebirth, of light and dark, Messiah and Armageddon, reverberates down to the present moment.

RICHARD M. GAMBLE, *THE WAR FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY, THE GREAT WAR, AND THE RISE OF THE MESSIANIC NATION* 22 (2003). Further, a German scholar writes:

With respect to the religious underpinning of cultural life, the U.S. is a non-secularized modern society. . . . Wilsonianism became the synonym for the moralism, liberal or conservative American foreign policies of the twentieth century. It merged national interest and the American Creed and proclaimed America custodian of a new world order. The rise to global world leadership . . . confirmed the notion of an ‘Almost Chosen People’ engaged in war against evil . . . under the benevolent guidance of the American God.

Jürgen Gebhardt, *Conservatism and Religion in the United States*, in *CONSERVATIVE PARTIES AND RIGHT-WING POLITICS IN NORTH AMERICA: REAPING THE BENEFITS OF AN IDEOLOGICAL VICTORY?* 151, 159 (Rainer-Olaf Schultze et al. eds., 2003).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. MILTON, *supra* note 26, at 172, 238; MILTON, *supra* note 13, at 425–29, 435. But “libertie hath a sharp and double edge fitt onelie to be handl’d by just and vertuous men . . .” JOHN MILTON, *MR. JOHN MILTON’S CHARACTER OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT AND ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES* (1681), *reprinted in AREOPAGITICA AND OTHER POLITICAL WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON*, *supra* note 13, at 446, 453.

upon earth, here in this world” with His saints.¹⁰¹ Wesleyan theology served as a moderating force in this respect. In his great election sermon of 1783 at the war’s end, Ezra Stiles (president of Yale College) cautiously found “reason to hope, and, . . . to expect, that God [might] . . . make us high among the nations in praise, and in name, and in honor.”¹⁰² In 1790 Samuel Adams replied to cousin John Adams’s startling (perhaps ironic, perhaps not) inquiry: “You ask what the World is about to become? [A]nd, Is the Millennium commencing?” Samuel Adams cautiously continued:

The Love of Liberty is interwoven in the soul of Man, and can never be totally extinguished What then is to be done?—Let Divines, and Philosophers, Statesmen and Patriots unite their endeavors to renovate the Age, by . . . inculcating in the Minds of youth the fear, and Love of the Deity, and universal Phylanthropy; [sic] and in subordination to these great principles, the Love of their Country—of instructing them in the Art of *self* government, . . . in short of leading them in the Study, and Practice of the exalted Virtues of the Christian system, which will happily tend to subdue the turbulent passions of Men, and introduce that Golden Age beautifully described in figurative language [*Isaiah* 11:6–9]; when the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid—the Cow, and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the Lyon shall eat straw like the Ox—none shall then hurt, or destroy; for the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord. When this *Millennium* shall commence, if there shall be any need of Civil Government, indulge me in the fancy that it will be in the republican form, or something *better*.¹⁰³

Within this rich context of faith and common sense, American republicanism, as it came from the hands of the founders in 1787 and 1791, provided a redefinition of the concept. It took on sobriety and a substantially different aspect. It retained covenantal form as a newly conceived compound representative republic, one federally organized. But it became more emphatically a republic for sinners rather than saints—for a people at best hopeful under divine Providence of salvation through faith and divine grace—rather than for the wholly virtuous or perfect (*Matthew* 5:48).¹⁰⁴ Above all else, American statesmen were both realists and men of faith who relied on experience and common sense, who

¹⁰¹ Quoted from a 1641 tract, HANSERD KNOLLYS, A GLIMPSE OF SION’S GLORY (1641), reprinted in PURITANISM AND LIBERTY: BEING THE ARMY DEBATES (1647–9) 233, 236, 240 (A.S.P. Woodhouse ed., J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 3d prtg. 1956); see *id.* at 233–41.

¹⁰² EZRA STILES, THE FUTURE GLORY OF THE UNITED STATES (1783), reprinted in THE PULPIT OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 401, 438–39 (John Wingate Thornton ed., Burt Franklin 1970) (1860).

¹⁰³ Letter from Samuel Adams to John Adams (Oct. 4, 1790), in 4 THE WRITINGS OF SAMUEL ADAMS 340, 340–43 (Harry Alonzo Cushing ed., Octagon Books, Inc. 1968) (1908).

¹⁰⁴ THE FEDERALIST NO. 9 (Alexander Hamilton), NOS. 10, 39, 47–51, 55 (James Madison).

profoundly understood the history and operations of the sophisticated constitutional order of which they were heirs and adapters.

These attributes are reflected in John Adams's *Defence of the Constitutions* (1787), written in response to Turgot's criticisms of America's early state constitutions. There, Adams stressed the rationality of his countrymen's statesmanship and their reliance on "the simple principles of nature," and insisted that it should "never be pretended that any persons employed in that service had interviews with the gods, or were in any degree under the inspiration of Heaven . . ." ¹⁰⁵ But lest it be inferred that atheism and rationalism suddenly had triumphed in America (as is sometimes done) Adams goes on to clarify his meaning in so denouncing enthusiasm and bigotry. Tyranny and superstition in the form of popery remained the enemies of liberty of an enlightened American people.

Thirteen governments thus founded on the natural authority of the people alone, without a pretence of miracle or mystery [even the pious mystery of holy oil had no more influence than that other one of holy water] . . . are a great point gained in favor of the rights of mankind. The experiment is made, and has completely succeeded; it can no longer be called in question, whether authority in magistrates and obedience of citizens can be grounded on reason, morality, and the Christian religion, without the monkery of priests, or the knavery of politicians. ¹⁰⁶

VIII. CONCLUSION: A TRUE MAP OF MAN

While the American founders relied on Aristotle and Cicero and cited Montesquieu, they understood with Saint Paul that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (*Romans* 3:23; cf. 1 *Timothy* 1:15). They, therefore, accepted the corollary drawn by the judicious Hooker that laws can rightly be made only by assuming men so depraved as to be hardly

¹⁰⁵ JOHN ADAMS, A DEFENCE OF THE CONSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (1787–1788), reprinted in 4 THE WORKS OF JOHN ADAMS, SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES 271, 292 (Charles Francis Adams ed., Little, Brown & Co. 1865) [hereinafter THE WORKS OF JOHN ADAMS].

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* at 293 (emphasis added). On Adams's dim view of the Middle Ages as a conspiracy of monarchs and priests to keep the people "ignorant of everything but the tools of agriculture and war" and the Reformation as the dawn of liberty, see JOHN ADAMS, DISSERTATION ON THE CANON AND FEUDAL LAW (1765), reprinted in 3 THE WORKS OF JOHN ADAMS, *supra* note 105, at 450–51 *passim*; see also the discussion in JOHN R. HOWE, JR., THE CHANGING POLITICAL THOUGHT OF JOHN ADAMS 40–45, 133–55 (1966); HARASZTI, *supra* note 88, at 139–64 (on Turgot and the *Defence*). The fatal flaw of philosophers, and especially of French *philosophes*, such as Condorcet, is this, Adams writes: "Not one of them takes human nature as it is for his foundation"—as Americans had in fact done. HARASZTI, *supra* note 88, at 258.

better than wild beasts¹⁰⁷—even though they are created little lower than the angels and beloved of God their Creator (*Psalms* 8).

To generalize and simplify, but not to argue perfect homogeneity: From the Anglo-Norman Anonymous and John Wyclif to John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, John Adams, and Abraham Lincoln's evocation of "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," lines of religious development undergirded and fostered a shared sense of the sanctity of the individual human being living in immediacy to God and associated the Christian calling to imitate God in their lives with political duty, capacity for self government based on consent, *salus populi*, and the ethic of aspiration through a reciprocal love of God. From this fertile ground emerged the institutions of civil society and republicanism so admirably devised in the American founding.

Among other things, the framers—faced with the weighty challenge of how to make free government work—banked the fires of zealotry and political millenarianism in favor of latitudinarian faith and a quasi-Augustinian understanding of the two cities. They humbly bowed before the inscrutable mystery of history and the human condition with its suffering and imperfection and accepted watchful waiting for fulfillment

¹⁰⁷ Cf. THE FEDERALIST NO. 6 (Alexander Hamilton). Thus:

Laws politic, ordained for external order and regiment amongst men, are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature; in a word, unless presuming man to be in regard of his depraved mind little better than a wild beast, they do accordingly provide notwithstanding so to frame his outward actions, that they be no hindrance unto the common good for which societies are instituted: unless they do this, they are not perfect.

HOOKER, *supra* note 22, bk. 1, ch. 10.1, at 87–88. Similarly Machiavelli: "All writers on politics have pointed out . . . that in constituting and legislating for a commonwealth it must needs be taken for granted that all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers." MACHIAVELLI, THE DISCOURSES 1.3, at 111–12 (Leslie J. Walker & Brian Richardson trans., Bernard Crick ed., Penguin Books 1970). Indeed, the tension between the reason of the law and the passion of the human being is fundamental to the philosophical anthropology underlying the whole conception of rule of law and of a government of laws and not of men, from Aristotle onward. Cf. the *locus classicus*:

He who asks law [*nomos*] to rule is asking God and intelligence [reason, *nous*] alone to rule; while he who asks for the rule of a human being is importing a wild beast too; for desire is like a wild beast, and anger perverts rulers and the very best of men. Hence the law is intelligence without appetition.

ARISTOTLE, *supra* note 23, at 1287a23–31, at 485. In sum, as stated elsewhere:

In fact, my axiom of politics (a minor contribution to science) is this: [*H*]uman beings are virtually ungovernable. After all, human beings in addition to possessing reason and gifts of conscience are material, corporeal, passionate, self-serving, devious, obstreperous, ornery, unreliable, imperfect, fallible, and prone to sin if not outright depraved. And we have some bad qualities besides.

ELLIS SANDOZ, *The Politics of Truth*, in THE POLITICS OF TRUTH AND OTHER UNTIMELY ESSAYS, *supra* note 20, at 35, 39.

of the hoped-for providential destiny known only to God—whose “kingdom is not of this world” (*John* 18:36). But as we have seen—in addition to understanding government as a necessary coercive restraint on the sinful creature—they reflected a faith that political practice in perfecting the image of God in every man through just dominion was *itself* a blessed vocation and the calling of free men: It was stewardship in imitation of God’s care for his freely created and sustained world, one enabled solely by the grace bestowed on individuals in a favored community. They embraced freedom of conscience as quintessential liberty for a citizenry of free men and women, as had John Milton long before, who exclaimed in *Areopagitica*: “Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.” And, for better or worse, they followed Milton (as well as Roger Williams and John Locke) in heeding his plea to “leave the church to itself” and “not suffer the two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, which are so totally distinct, to commit whoredom together”¹⁰⁸ The correlate was religious toleration within limits, as necessary for the peaceful existence of a flourishing civil society whose free operations minimized tampering with religious institutions or dogmas. Yet the historically affirmed vocation of a special people under God still could be pursued through active devotion to public good, liberty, and justice solidly grounded in Judaeo-Christian transcendentalism. Citizens were at the same time self-consciously also pilgrims aware that this world is not their home, that they were merely sojourners passing through this mysterious process of historical existence in the attitude of *homo viator*, since nothing better than hope through faith avails them. It is this ever-present balanced living tension with the divine Ground above all else, perhaps, that has made the United States so nearly immune politically to the ideological and eschatological maladies that have ravaged the modern world, such as fascism and Marxism and now Islamism.

Like all of politics, the founders’ solutions were compromises, offensive to utopians and all other flaming idealists. But this may be no detraction from their work, since despite all national vicissitudes, we still

¹⁰⁸ JOHN MILTON, *AREOPAGITICA* (1644), *reprinted in AREOPAGITICA AND OTHER POLITICAL WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON*, *supra* note 13, at 3, 44; JOHN MILTON, *SECOND DEFENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND* (1654), *reprinted in AREOPAGITICA AND OTHER POLITICAL WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON*, *supra* note 13, at 315, 406; *see also* JOHN LOCKE, *WRITINGS ON RELIGION* 73–82 (Victor Nuovo ed., Clarendon Press 2002); EDWIN S. GAUSTAD, *LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE: ROGER WILLIAMS IN AMERICA* 219 (1991) (“In the past half-century, American society has become noisily and notoriously pluralistic. This has made Roger Williams more relevant, for he had strong opinions about what government should do about religious pluralism: leave it alone. Turks, Jews, infidels, papists: leave them alone. . . . Religion has the power to persuade, never the power to compel. Government does have the power to compel, but that government is wisest and best which offers to liberty of conscience its widest possible range.”).

today strive to keep our republic—under the world’s oldest existing constitution. Moreover, there has yet to appear an American dictator after more than two centuries of independent national existence; and the United States, at grievous cost in lives and treasure, has steadfastly stood in wars of global reach as the champion of human freedom in the face of raging despotisms of every description.

To conclude then: Let us not overlook the great secret that a *sound map of human nature* (as John Adams insisted) uniquely lies at the heart of the Constitution of the United States and its elaborate institutional arrangements. Men are not angels, and government, admittedly, is the greatest of all reflections on human nature: The *demos* ever tends to become the *ochlos*—even if there could be a population of philosophers and saints—and constantly threatens majoritarian tyranny. Merely mortal magistrates, no less than self-serving factions, riven by *superbia*, avarice, and *libido dominandi*, must be restrained artfully by a vast net of adversarial devices if just government is to have any chance whatever of prevailing over self-serving human passions while still nurturing the liberty of free men. To attain these noble ends in what is called a government of laws and not of men, it was daringly thought, perhaps ambition could effectively counteract ambition and, as one more *felix culpa*, therewith supply the defect of better motives. This is most dramatically achieved, at least in theory, through the routine operations of the central mechanisms of divided and separated powers and of checks and balances that display the genius of the Constitution and serve as the well-known hallmark of America’s republican experiment itself. *All of this would have been quite inconceivable without a Christian anthropology, enriched by classical political theory and the common law tradition, as uniquely embedded in the habits of the American people at the time of the founding and nurtured thereafter.* On this ground an extended commercial republic flourished where love of God and love of mammon somehow sweetly kissed, and America became a light to the nations. Alexis de Tocqueville noticed this incongruity in the 1830s and wrote: “I know of no country, indeed, where the love of money has taken a stronger hold on the affections of men.” One scholar attributes this striking alliance to the prevalent form taken by American Christianity, in “a society that was awash in religion and in making money—and confident of divine favor upon both endeavors. American Methodism was the prototype of a religious organization taking on market form.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Puzzle of American Methodism*, in *METHODISM AND THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN CULTURE*, *supra* note 52, at 23, 38 (quoting ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA* 53 (Henry Reeve trans., Random House 1945) (1858)). Cf. the conclusion of Calvin’s role in this by Dumont, *supra* note 59, at 23.

As is evident, a true map of man is vital, and so are the principles of what the founders termed the “divine science of politics.” Love of liberty and even love of God, vital as both assuredly are, of themselves clearly are not enough in politics. Thus, representative of the many cautions on this head by John Adams is this one: “John Milton was as honest a man as his nation ever bred, and as great a friend of liberty; but his greatness most certainly did not consist in the knowledge of the nature of man and of government” All philosophers ancient and modern had missed the mark and for one basic reason, he thought: “Not one of them takes human nature as it is for his foundation.”¹¹⁰ The true *political* anthropology, divine science of politics, and the principles of government Adams had in view and helped to formulate were later refined for our compound constitutional republic and collected in a book written for forensic purposes and entitled *The Federalist Papers*.¹¹¹ This does not mean that Adams substituted his political faith for his religious faith, of course, as he explained to Jefferson in 1818:

I believe in God and in his Wisdom and Benevolence: and I cannot conceive that such a Being could make such a Species as the human merely to live and die on this Earth. If I did not believe in a future State I should believe in no God. This Un[i]verse; this all; this [*to pan*]; would appear with all its swelling Pomp, a boyish Fire Work.

And if there be a future State Why should the Almighty dissolve forever all the tender [t]ies which [u]nite [u]s so delightfully in this [w]orld and forbid [u]s to see each other in the next?¹¹²

Nagging questions remain: Can a political order ultimately grounded in the tension toward transcendent divine Being, memorably proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence and solidly informed by biblical revelation and philosophy, indefinitely endure—resilient though it may be—in the face of nihilistic assault on this vital spiritual tension by every means, including by the very institutions of liberty themselves? Perhaps these are only growing pains that afflict us, rather than the symptoms of the disintegration of our civilization. The positivist, scientific, and Marxist climate of opinion is so pervasive and intellectually debilitating in the public arena and universities as often to make philosophical and

¹¹⁰ ADAMS, *supra* note 105, at 466; HARASZTI, *supra* note 88, at 258.

¹¹¹ On *forensics*, in this sense, and *forensic history*, see JOHN PHILLIP REID, THE ANCIENT CONSTITUTION AND THE ORIGINS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN LIBERTY 8–16 (2005).

¹¹² Letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson (Dec. 8, 1818), in THE ADAMS-JEFFERSON LETTERS: THE COMPLETE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THOMAS JEFFERSON AND ABIGAIL AND JOHN ADAMS, at 530 (Lester J. Cappon ed., Simon & Schuster 1959); cf. DAVID LYNN HOLMES, THE RELIGION OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS 130–31 (2003). Holmes concludes as follows: “The six Founding Fathers surveyed in this study appear to have been neither wholehearted Deists nor orthodox Christians. . . . In the spirit of their times, they appeared less devout than they were—which seems a reversal from modern politics.” *Id.*; see also John Witte, Jr., *Facts and Fictions about the History of Separation of Church and State*, 48 J. CHURCH & ST., Winter 2006, at 15, 15–45.

religious discourse incomprehensible oddities whose meaning is lost to consciousness amid the din of deformation and deculturation. And the damage to common sense itself, and to the middling range of publicly effective prudential understanding basic to the science of human affairs—first elaborated by Aristotle and adapted for our republic by the American founders’ divine science of politics—by neglect, miseducation, and deculturation is incalculable. For instance, the “walls of separation between these two [church and state] must forever be upheld,” Richard Hooker wrote in contemptuously characterizing religious zealots of his distant time. By way of Thomas Jefferson’s famous 1801 letter and the U.S. Supreme Court more recently, that metaphor now lives on as the shibboleth of strange new fanatics of our own day, including those sometimes identified as atheist humanists.¹¹³ The abiding truths of politics and of faith atrophy together before our eyes, even as we weigh their distinctiveness and autonomy as independent spheres of human knowledge and action. But like every other consideration, this one too becomes a meaningless gesture to clever reductionists and nihilists in our midst who find no truth worth living for, preserving, or, for that matter, worrying about.

Even as religious revival today enlivens American spirituality, we observe the strong countercurrents of intellectual, moral, and social disarray of the republic—and not of the American republic alone. We test our faith that the truth shall prevail and look for hopeful signs on the horizon. But this is not new either. Perhaps we remember and take heart from the epochal images of Elijah on Horeb and of Socrates in the Heliaia, to recall that revealed truth and philosophical reason ever have been nurtured by resolute *individuals*’ resistance to apostasy, injustice, and corruption. Those called to be representatives of truth play their modest parts in the drama of history. At time’s decree, they pass the mantle to younger hands, thereby vivifying through the generations some adventitious saving remnant that perseveres and, against all odds, may help illumine the darkness encompassing our mysterious existence.

¹¹³ HOOKER, *supra* note 22, bk. 8, ch. 1.2, at 131; *Everson v. Bd. of Educ.*, 330 U.S. 1, 15–16 (1947); *cf.* the classic study by HENRI DE LUBAC, *THE DRAMA OF ATHEIST HUMANISM* (Edith M. Riley trans., Sheed & Ward 1950) (1944).