

Christianity: The Foundation of our Freedom

Today's Scripture: Psalm 9:17; 11:3; Matthew 7:24-27; 2 Cor. 3:17.

America's Founding Fathers and Creationism

by Henry M. Morris, Ph.D.

... James Madison, who is often considered the chief architect of the Constitution as well as the Bill of Rights, was a profound Bible student studying for the ministry during his college days at Princeton (then known as the College of New Jersey). Although he eventually became a lawyer and statesman, his Christian convictions never wavered. It was especially his influence that eventually established religious freedom in our country. He later wrote that "belief in a God All Powerful, wise and good, is...essential to the moral order of the world and to the happiness of man."

Madison's theology had been largely shaped by the teachings of President John Witherspoon of the College of New Jersey (also a signer of the Declaration), whose strong biblical Calvinist faith included the doctrine of the natural depravity of man. This truth in turn was behind Madison's unique insistence on a government of checks-and-balances in which the innate sinfulness of men attaining power could be prevented thereby from usurping total power. This doctrine, of course, rests squarely on the biblical record of the creation and Fall of man. . .

Consider also the testimony of John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. In an address to the American Bible Society (of which he was then president), he said:

The Bible will also inform them that our gracious Creator has provided for us a Redeemer, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed: that this Redeemer has made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and . . . has opened a way for our redemption and salvation.⁶

In fact, all the signers of the Declaration and the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, as well as the delegates to the various sessions of the Continental Congress—at least so far as known—were men who believed in God and the special creation of the world and mankind. Nearly all were members of Christian churches and believed the Bible to be the inspired Word of God.

This has been true of their forebears as well:

In colonial times, the Bible was the primary tool in the educational process. In fact, according to Columbia University Professor Dr. Lawrence A. Cremin, the Bible was the single most primary source for the intellectual history of Colonial America. From their knowledge of the Bible, a

highly literate, creative people emerged. Their wise system of education was later replaced by a man-centered system which has caused a steady decline in literacy and creativity.⁷

No wonder the evolutionary historian Gilman Ostrander, in his history of the rise of evolutionism in this country, started out by saying:

The American nation had been founded by intellectuals who had accepted a worldview that was based upon Biblical authority as well as Newtonian science. They had assumed that God created the earth and all life upon it at the time of creation and had continued without change thereafter. Adam and Eve were God's final creations and all of mankind had descended from them.⁸

Many more of the founding fathers could be quoted to similar effect—men such as John Adams, Roger Sherman, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry, Governor Morris, Samuel Adams, George Mason, and others. The same is true of the great colonial leaders before them—Roger Williams, William Penn, Jonathan Edwards, John Winthrop, Thomas Hooker, and many, many others.

IMPORTANCE OF MORAL CHARACTER

[N]either the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt.

Samuel Adams, essay in *The Public Advertiser*, Circa 1749

Since private and publick Vices, are in Reality, though not always apparently, so nearly connected, of how much Importance, how necessary is it, that the utmost Pains be taken by the Publick, to have the Principles of Virtue early inculcated on the Minds even of children, and the moral Sense kept alive, and that the wise institutions of our Ancestors for these great Purposes be encouraged by the Government. For no people will tamely surrender their Liberties, nor can any be easily subdued, when knowledge is diffused and Virtue is preserved. On the Contrary, when People are universally ignorant, and debauched in their Manners, they will sink under their own weight without the Aid of foreign Invaders.

Samuel Adams, letter to James Warren, November 4, 1775

Nothing is more certain than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners make a people ripe for destruction. A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch, even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue.

John Witherspoon, *The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men*, 1776

OUR GOV'T IS DESIGNED TO PRESERVE LIBERTY FOR A GODLY PEOPLE

Our Founders state repeatedly the form of government handed to posterity depends upon self-government by a virtuous people. In other words, the usurping power of government can only be held at bay if the people of the nation remain godly.

Dr. James Kennedy in his research writes: "About seventy-five years after our nation began, U.S. Congressman Robert Charles Winthrop, descendent of the great Puritan leader John Winthrop, made a classic speech at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Bible Society in Boston, reflecting the idea that we must be self-governed (through Judeo-Christian morality) or we will be governed by tyrants. He declared:

All societies of men must be governed in some way or other. The less they have of stringent State Government, the more they must have of individual self-government. The less they rely on public law or physical force, the more they must rely on private moral restraint. Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them, or a power without them; either by the word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible or by the bayonet."

CONCLUSION

Fisher Ames, delegate to the Constitutional Convention and co-writer of the First Amendment wrote: ... **"the Bible should always remain the principle text book in America's classrooms. Its morals are pure, its examples captivating and noble...the Bible will justly remain the standard of language as well as of faith."**

America's God and Country, William Federer, p.26

Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration, member of Continental Congress, founder of 5 universities, in a "Defense of the Use of The Bible in Schools", 1791:

"Surely future generations wouldn't try to take the Bible out of schools. In contemplating the political institutions of the United States, if we were to remove the Bible from schools, I lament that we could be wasting so much time and money in punishing crime and would be taking so little pains to prevent them."