The Trail of Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus
A Case of Premeditated Murder

Christian Revisionists on Trial
The Christian History and Meaning of the First Amendment

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Acknowledgements

I thank Jesus Christ for saving me and making a new creature of me.

I thank the martyrs of Jesus for their willingness to give all for the savior.

This book attempts to glorify the Lord by indicting Christian Revisionists—past, present, and future—for murder and/or conspiracy to murder his saints.
“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

Revelation 17.6
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“The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”
Luke 18.8
Preface

“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”  

After the Lord saved me, I was dedicated to serving him. I went to church, read my Bible, read “Christian” books advertised on Christian media, and listened to “Christian” radio. I read The Trail of Blood and was much moved by the stories of Christian martyrs, but had no idea that the descendants of the “Christians” who killed millions of my spiritual ancestors were hard at work in America to reconstruct America according to the theology of the persecutors of old.

I unknowingly went to work for the same cause that, when in control as history proves, murders everyone labeled “heretic.” Christian Right propaganda motivated, educated, and led me to become a Christian Activist. America was in a mess and needed redirection. I went to Republican Party meetings, introduced Platform Resolutions, became a precinct chairman, served on various committees, put up yard signs, made calls for candidates, served as a delegate to Party Conventions, etc.

By the late 1990s, my enthusiasm waned because of the obvious steep decline in all that we had worked for—respect for the true Gospel, more heretical and apostate churches, declining morality to depths inconceivable in 1980, the year I was saved, and increasing political tyranny. Since then, things have gotten much worse, and the rates of decline are accelerating.

Twenty-two years after Christian Revisionists lured me into the political arena, I began a self-study of Bible doctrines of church, government, and separation of church and state. Sometime in 2006, I began to learn that books and other writings and teaching by some mainline Christian authors, which I and millions of believers had depended on, were not accurate.

One Nation Under Law, some of the books it cited, and some other books that came to my attention launched me into the universe of historical information which I never dreamed existed. I discovered that Christian

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1 Re. 2.14.
2 In the 1980s I was first made aware of the history of Christian martyrs when I bought, read, and put aside the following book: J. M. Carroll, The Trail of Blood, (Distributed by Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, 163 N. Ashland Avenue, Lexington KY 40502, 606-266-4341). J. M. Carroll was a leader among Baptists who studied history and the Bible in an attempt to “find the church which was the oldest and most like churches described in the New Testament.” In the course of his studies, he gathered “one of the greatest libraries on church history. This library was given at his death to the Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas.” Carroll, Introduction at pp. 1-2, 11.
Historical Revisionism is fiction peppered with selected facts taken out of context to support brutal church/state theologies.

Christian Right Activists follow Christian Revisionist teachings which secularists call Christian Rightest ideology. Sadly, they are not Christian at all. Christian Revisionism follows Old Testament guidelines for worldly warfare,\(^4\) not New Testament guidelines for spiritual warfare. History puts them in a bad light so they lie, select facts out of context, and state conclusions without proof. They claim they seek a nation “under God,” but actually, as always, wish the state/church to comprehensively enforce morality and God’s law, as they see it. The results of their efforts:

1. Christian Activists continue to fight the same misguided battles under the same leadership and lies;
2. Deceived Christians do not fight the eternal spiritual warfare the Bible calls them to fight;
3. Deceived Christians fight a temporal warfare as directed by Christian Revisionists;
4. Christ is blasphemed and his cause discredited;
5. Religious apostasy expands, morality sinks into the cesspool at an accelerating rate, and political tyranny abounds.

Secularists who expose the lies of Christians do their homework. For example, this book gleans much from the writings of Leo Pfeffer\(^5\) and other secular scholars and writers. Their facts are far more reliable and thorough than those of Christian Revisionists. Their analyses of Christian Revisionist theology are very insightful.

However, secularists also lie and offer their own dangerous conclusions, analyses, and revisions of history. They fill their biased writings with humanist slants, beliefs, and conclusions. Their support for “America’s open and pluralistic democracy” is totally misguided. Nonetheless, their writings and those of reliable Christian historians prove that Christian Revisionist historical facts are manipulative and not to be trusted for any purpose. Yet when another Christian Revisionist book repeating the same false information comes out, especially one authored by a popular Revisionist, Christians rush to buy and study it. Christian Activists continue to follow Christian Revisionist leaders down the road to destruction.

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\(^4\) Christian “jihad.”

\(^5\) Leo Pfeffer, *Church, State, and Freedom* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1953). Leo Pfeffer (December 25, 1910 in Austria-Hungary—June 4, 1993 in Goshen, New York) was an American Jewish lawyer, constitutional scholar, and humanist who was active in movement for religious freedom in the United States, and was one of leading legal proponents of the separation of church and state. Sadly, the facts presented by Pfeffer are far more reliable that those published by Christian Historical Revisionists. Although Pfeffer was right in his conclusion that church and state should be completely separate, his reasoning is fatally flawed. His influence was very important in Supreme Court jurisprudence which resulted in separation of God and state (removed God from practically all civil government affairs in America). For more analysis of this, see Jerald Finney, *God Betrayed, Separation of Church and State: The Biblical Principles and the American Application* (Xulon Press, 2008 [www.xulonpress.com]), Section V. A reading of Pfeffer’s writings emphasizes the need for Christians to read and analyze, from a Biblical perspective, the issues of the day before proceeding behind the heretical and apostate teachings of Christian Revisionists.
INTRODUCTION

The topics covered in this INTRODUCTION are:

(1) The Case Presented
(2) Some Brief Opening Remarks
(3) Relevant Bible Facts and Doctrines
(4) Relevant Pre-Colonial History
(5) Relevant Contemporary Matters

This book is a public indictment\(^1\) and presentation of a criminal case. The indictment charges Catholic/Reformed (Christian) Revisionists prior to the adoption of the First Amendment with murder and conspiracy to commit murder. It charges Catholic/Reformed Revisionists since then with conspiracy to commit murder since the First Amendment has prevented them from murdering “heretics.” Within these pages are the prosecution’s opening statement, presentation of evidence, and closing argument.

You are the jury. You have a solemn duty to render a just verdict. To do so, you must set aside your opinions, beliefs, life experiences, and anything else that will prevent you from reaching a verdict based upon the law and the facts. The law is clear—murder without legal justification or defense is a crime.

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Section I

Christian and Secular Revisionism

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\(^1\)“Indictment” as used here means “a thing that serves to illustrate that a system or situation is bad and deserves to be condemned.”
Section II

Christian History of the First Amendment

“[B]y the dawn of the American Revolution all the colonies were approaching or had reached a readiness to separate Church and State. Only Rhode Island had traveled no road and followed no route to reach that destination; Rhode Island had been there from the start. For Pennsylvania the route was short and direct; full civil rights had to be granted to Catholics and to disbelievers in the Trinity for full civil liberty to be achieved. In the other colonies … far reaching and profound changes in attitude were necessary before the … concept could become a possibility.”

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceable to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

2 Marnell, p. 93.
3 U.S. CONST. amend. I.
Chapter 1
Introduction

God’s people, in spite of their display of love for God and man, have been persecuted more often than not. Paul wrote in the midst of persecution. “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;”¹ “We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.”²

In the preceding verse, Paul quoted a portion of Psalm 116.10: “I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.” Believers can expect persecution, as history proves, for exercising their God-given freedoms. Christ expects those to whom he has given religious freedom and soul liberty to speak,³ write, publish the Bible (God inspired the writing and dissemination of the Holy Bible⁴ which in certain times past was banned and burned.), associate or meet together,⁵ and to proclaim to all the truths of the Gospel. The First Amendment was written and ratified with the intent of protecting God’s churches, the exercise of religion, the preaching of the Gospel (and other speech), the coming together to worship God (and assembly for other reasons), the dissemination of literature, mainly the dissemination of God’s word, and the right to petition the civil government for a redress of grievances. The Old Testament prophets, and the Apostles and other believers in the New Testament exemplified and exercised these God given freedoms, even though they knew they would be persecuted for doing so.

The First Amendment was the culmination of the long spiritual warfare between established churches and dissenters, mainly the

¹ 2 Co. 4.8-9.
² 2 Co. 4.13.
³ “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mk. 16.15.
⁴ “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Ti. 3:16-17.
⁵ “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;” He. 10.25a.
Section II: Christian History of the First Amendment

Baptists. God’s power moved mightily during that period of conflict.

Bible-believing Christians continued in the footsteps of their spiritual ancestors by fighting spiritual warfare in the colonies. They made spiritual Bible-based arguments, which gradually convinced others. They practiced believer’s baptism; preached in public; spoke at political conventions and gatherings; published books, tracts, and other literature; met in houses; and petitioned colonial governments for official recognition and protection of their God-given freedoms. They continued following the examples of their spiritual ancestors by seeking separation of church and state and religious freedom. They exercised their liberties under God. Colonial establishments persecuted them for obeying God rather than man. For practicing their faith despite persecution, they paid a high price. Their sacrifice resulted in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The INTRODUCTION traced the struggle (1) from the fourth century to the colonization of America and (2) after the adoption of the First Amendment, especially the last seventy or eighty years. It did not cover the period of colonization in America.

This section covers the American colonial period. The roots of the struggle in America were embedded in New England, spread to the south, to Virginia, and then to the new nation. The steadfastness of the dissenters resulted in civil government protection of religious liberty in America!

Christian Revisionists, as they attempt to redefine the First Amendment, have ignored and hidden the true history of the First Amendment. One historical example involves the claims made by the Presbyterians and the Honorable William Wirt Henry near the close of the nineteenth century. Mr. Henry “told of Virginia’s leadership in bringing in religious liberty but made no allusion to the Baptists, and said it was ‘under the leadership of Patrick Henry that religious liberty has been established as a fundamental part of the law of our land.’”\(^6\) Because of Mr. Henry’s assertions, Charles F. James published the historical truth about the matter and

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exposed the lies of Mr. Henry. Mr. James was a Baptist who revealed that “at the date of the [American] Revolution the Baptists were the only denomination of Christians which, as such, held to the idea of religious liberty, and that, of the political leaders of that day, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson were chiefly instrumental in establishing that principle in the laws of our land.”

Secular Revisionists have also influenced modern misconceptions of the First Amendment. The teachings of influential constitutional scholars such as Leo Pfeffer, since they have no concept of God or his sovereignty, are misleading as to an important aspect of debate—the spiritual aspect. Pfeffer, generally but not totally a master of the facts, misrepresents spiritual matters because he does not understand them. He relegates the spiritual to the merely “ideological.” For example, he attributes Madison’s positions on the issue of separation of church and state to his reliance on John Locke. He quotes Locke. Then, even though Locke, in the quotes cited by Pfeffer, talks of government interference with the care and salvation of souls which belongs to God, Pfeffer never mentions God but stresses Locke’s “social contract theory.” He also over-emphasizes the influence of rationalism and deism in the adoption of the First Amendment. He falsely proclaims that the “first four presidents of the United States were either Deists or Unitarians.” He asserts that the Great Awakening “emphasized an emotional, personal religion” which appealed directly to the individual, stressing the rights and duties of the individual conscience and its answerability exclusively to God. He, like all secular scholars, simply did not get it even though he did mention God. In the scenario he addressed, he had no choice but to mention God. Because of his biased point of view, he simply did not and could not honestly examine the facts. However, he presents a multitude of reliable facts.

The establishment clause of the First Amendment forbids federal government establishment of religion. The free exercise clause protects soul liberty (the free exercise of religion according

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7 Ibid., p. e.
8 Pfeffer, pp. 81-93.
9 The establishment clause: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.”
Section II: Christian History of the First Amendment

to the dictates of one’s conscience). Thus, the religion clause of the First Amendment prevents the establishment of religion and secures freedom of conscience. In other words, the First Amendment implements the Bible principle of separation of church and state.

Many of the early colonists were Protestants who thought Luther, Calvin, or the Church of England was correct about union of church and state. Dissenters believed in and fought for separation of church and state. The First Amendment was primarily the result of a spiritual warfare between those holding opposing Scriptural interpretations, the established churches versus the dissenters, primarily the Baptists.

“Of the Baptists, at least, it may be truly said that they entered the conflict in the New World with a clear and consistent record on the subject of soul liberty. ‘Freedom of conscience’ had ever been one of their fundamental tenets. John Locke, in his ‘essay on Toleration,’ said, ‘The Baptists were the first and only propounders of absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty.’ And the great American historian, Bancroft, says: ‘Freedom of Conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was from the first a trophy of the Baptists.’ Vol. II., pages 66, 67.

“The history of the other denominations shows that, in the Old World, at least, they were not in sympathy with the Baptist doctrine of soul liberty, but in favor of the union of Church and State, and using the civil power to compel conformity to the established church…. ‘… It was left to the sect once ‘everywhere spoken against’ to teach their Protestant brethren the lesson of soul liberty, and this they did in the school of adversity in the New World.’

At times, members of the persecuting established churches became the persecuted when they moved to a colony controlled by another sect. When that happened, the persecutors generally became dissenters seeking religious tolerance or religious freedom.

The First Amendment to the Constitution resulted from “a factual relationship that was rapidly solidifying when the Constitution was amended by the Bill of Rights.” The First Amendment was the final product of a long struggle by men who believed strongly in the God of the Bible and who were willing to

10 The free exercise clause: “or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”
11 James, pp. 14-15.
die rather than bow down to false religion. Their spirit was fused into the ordering of the affairs of the United States. “A wall of separation which would bar that spirit from making itself felt in secular concerns can never be built, because it would have to bisect the human heart.”

William H. Marnell correctly observed that

“[t]he First Amendment was not the product of indifference toward religion. It was not the product of the deism which prevailed in the Enlightenment, however much the spirit of deism may have been present in certain of the Founding Fathers. Above all, it was not the product of secularism, and to translate the spirit of twentieth-century secularism back to eighteenth-century America is an outrage to history. The First Amendment was rather a logical outcome of the Reformation and its ensuing developments. It was so far removed from secularism as to be the product of its exact opposite, the deep-seated concern of a people whose religious faith had taken many forms, all of them active, all of them sincerely held. It was so far removed from indifference toward religion [specifically Christianity] as to be the result of its antithesis, the American determination that the diversity of churches might survive the fact of political action.”

The dissidents in the colonies, mainly the Baptists, gained a foothold and played it for all it was worth. Baptist theology of the founding era, first expounded by Roger Williams and John Clarke, successfully challenged the doctrines of the established churches concerning the relationship of church and state. Among the results were civil governments which protected religious and related freedoms—Rhode Island colony and thereafter the United States and all the states. The First Amendment did not apply to the states; but by 1833, all the states inserted separation of church and state, soul liberty, and other First Amendment freedoms into their Constitutions.

Primarily due to the efforts of our Baptist forefathers, a time came when, as Baptist pastor and historian John Callender said in 1838:

“[e]xperience has dearly convinced the world, that unanimity in judgment and affection cannot be secured by penal laws....

“Indulgence to tender consciences, might be a reproach to the Colony [of Rhode Island], an hundred years ago, [that is in 1738, one hundred

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12 Marnell, pp. xii-xiii.
13 Ibid.
years before Callender wrote this], but a better way of thinking prevails in the Protestant part of the Christian church at present. It is now a glory to the Colony, to have avowed such sentiments so long ago, while blindness in this article happened in other places, and to have led the way as an example to others, and to have first put the theory into practice.

“Liberty of conscience is more fully established and enjoyed now, in the other New-English Colonies; and our mother Kingdom grants a legal toleration to all peaceable and conscientious dissenters from the parliamentary establishment. Greater light breaking into the world and the church, and especially all parties by turns experiencing and complaining aloud of the hardships of constraint, they are come to allow as reasonable to all others, what they want and challenge for themselves. And there is no other bottom but this to rest upon, to leave others the liberty we should desire ourselves, the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. This is doing as we would be done by, the grand rule of justice and equity; this is leaving the government of the church to Jesus Christ, the King and head over all things, and suffering his subjects to obey and serve him.”

By the time the First Amendment was added to the United States Constitution, only New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut had established churches. In 1833, Massachusetts became the last state to disestablish.

Baptists wanted religious freedom. Some probably could foresee the ideal of a church under God, a civil government under God, with neither church nor state working with or over the other. However, few knew how to have a civil government under God without establishing a church. Why? Fifteen hundred years of history had witnessed Christian establishments made up of church-state unions. Therefore, one should not be too hard on those early Protestants in America who continued those unions, since, as Isaac Backus stated:

“[many things] prove that those fathers [the leaders of the Puritans in Massachusetts] were earnestly concerned to frame their constitution both in church and state by divine rule; and as all allow that nothing teaches like experience, surely they who are enabled well to improve the experience of past ages, must find it easier now to discover the mistakes of that day, than it was for them to do it then. Even in 1637, when a number of puritan ministers in England, and the famous Mr.

Dod among them, wrote to the ministers here, that it was reported that they had embraced certain new opinions, such as ‘that a stitfed form of prayer and set liturgy is unlawful; that the children of godly and approved Christians are not to be baptized, until their parents be set members of some particular congregation; that the parents themselves, though of approved piety, are not to be received to the Lord’s Supper until they be admitted set members,’ &c., Mr. Hooker expressed his fears of troublesome work about answering of them, though they may appear easy to the present generation.”

Nor should one be too critical of those leaders of the founding era who struggled with the question of how to construct this nation. They produced the best governing document of any nation in history, but, since the founders were influenced by Enlightenment thinking more that Biblical thinking, that document had some serious flaws which are playing out to the detriment of the nation as well as individuals, families, and churches within the nation. Nonetheless, because of great revivals which began shortly after ratification of the Constitution, huge numbers of people were saved and those regenerated individuals held back the spiritual and moral decline of America.

How can a civil government be under God without entanglement with the church? A civil government, like other governments, can choose to be under God. Since God was directly over only one nation, the nation Israel, the only way God chooses to speak to a Gentile government prior to his second return is through his word, the Bible. Therefore, for a nation to be under God, the leader(s) of that nation must understand and apply Biblical principles including those principles concerning civil government (state), and separation of church and state.

As has been shown, only born-again believers have the power, through the Holy Spirit, to understand the word of God. Only studied regenerate leader(s) of a civil government can operate the government according to those principles laid down for Gentile nations in the Bible. In America, the people choose the leaders. Therefore, America will have a regenerate leadership only if America should have a population made up of a majority of knowledgeable active Christians who choose Christian leaders.

Except for a remnant, American “Christians” are ignorant, heretical, and/or apostate. As has been shown, most Christian Activists depend almost entirely upon heretical and apostate Christian Revisionist leaders for historical, Biblical, and political guidance.

This section will succinctly summarize the true history of religious liberty in America. As will be proven in this section, the Constitution provided for separation of church and state; but the Constitution and the amendments thereto, even when the Declaration of Independence is considered, was not a Christian document. The Constitution was a product of a blend of Enlightenment thinking and Bible principle, the former being dominant.

A God-honoring constitution would proclaim that:

(1) The nation is under God, Jesus Christ.
(2) The purpose of the nation is to glorify God.
(3) God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
(4) The nation will follow the precepts for Gentile nations as declared in the Bible.
(5) The nation will remain within its God-given jurisdiction.
(6) The civil government protects everyone’s freedom of religion, conscience, assembly, press, speech, and the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
(7) Civil government can enforce only the second table of the law (those laws dealing with man’s relationship to man).

Here are a few examples of the many teachings of Christian Revisionists which the facts in this section disprove.

(1) America owes her religious freedom to the Pilgrims and Puritans. They do not prove this with historical fact, but with facts or lies followed by conclusions without proof.
(2) The Mayflower Compact speaks of a covenant with God. Then, they summarily conclude that, based upon that true statement in the Mayflower Compact, America is also in covenant with God, as was Israel. Again, they give no contextual historical analysis and facts or relevant Bible teachings to support their conclusion.
(3) The Puritans came to America for religious freedom. They leave off part of the sentence: The Puritans came to America and settled in Massachusetts for religious liberty for themselves only.
(4) America has religious freedom because the Puritans came to the New World for religious liberty. They forgot to report the history between the arrival of the Pilgrims and Puritans and the adoption of the First Amendment which disproves their conclusion.

(5) America is the New Israel.

(6) “Puritans were the people who, more than any other, made possible America’s foundation as a Christian nation.”16 Herein are two lies: The early colonial Puritans would never have approved the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution as adopted. Second, there is no such thing as a Christian nation. God ordained only Gentile nations and the theocracy of Israel. America is a Gentile nation founded upon predominantly Enlightenment principles with some Bible principles, such as the First Amendment, mixed in.

Christian Revisionists do not teach the following facts, among many others, that will be revealed and developed in this section:

(1) The Mayflower compact implemented Calvinism.
(2) Calvinism viciously persecuted those labeled to be “heretics.”
(3) The Puritans enforced all ten commandments.
(4) The Puritans punished all that they deemed to be sin.
(5) The Puritans persecuted dissenters.
(6) The Puritans banished those who were deemed to be heretics and mercilessly murdered those who returned after being banished until England put a stop to that practice.
(7) The Puritans banished Roger Williams from Massachusetts.
(8) The reasons they banished Roger Williams.
(9) The history and substance of the dispute between Williams and the Puritans as expressed in Williams’ writings and those written in reply by Puritan John Cotton and the importance of those matters in the development of the First Amendment.
(10) The history and influence of Dr. John Clarke and his writings on the development of the First Amendment.
(11) The Puritan experiment, as have all church/state establishments, failed miserably.
(12) The Puritan experiment proved corruptive to the church, the state, and members of society.
(13) The history and importance of Baptist preachers such as Shubal Stearns, Daniel Marshall, John Leland, and many others in the development of the First Amendment.

The importance of Isaac Backus and his activities and writings in the development of the First Amendment.

The Puritans were forefathers of today’s Christian Revisionist leaders of the Christian Right.

Today’s Christian Revisionists use the same tactics and seek the same goals as did the Puritans, absent persecution which is presently forbidden by the First Amendment and corresponding state constitutional provisions.

The First Amendment was the result of a spiritual warfare which had raged since the beginning of establishment in the early fourth century.

Wound into Christian colonial history is the conflict between Christian Revisionists and true believers in Christ and the Bible. The irrefutable facts already presented and those pointed out in this section prove the accused guilty as charged.
Chapter 2
The Light Begins to Shine

Many forces came together to bring religious freedom to America. The Protestant Reformation was one step in that direction, even though the resulting Protestant denominations took from the Catholic church the idea of the church-state—the church controls the state. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire established a church-state. England established a state-church—the state controls the church—and several of the early colonies in the South established a state-church.

With the Reformation, new light was beginning to shine over the English-speaking world. The printing press made it possible to print and distribute the Bible in large quantities to the public. The Bible became available in English and all could compare what they were told with the word of God. Of course, this would result in some heresies, but no heresy is more contrary to the word of God and more destructive to eternal life, temporal human life, and the glory of God than the heresies and apostasy of the Catholic church. Alongside new heresies would continue the light of truth—which had before been attacked mercilessly by the establishment which had attempted to brutally stamp it out—about matters such as salvation, baptism, and the relationship of church and state. Men were beginning to study the Bible and to debate issues. Those debates were published and disseminated and the light of truth further extended.

God assures man that one can find truth. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” 1 The Bible tells believers, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Of course, Catholicism would have one believe that only the clergy has the God-given ability to understand Scripture—such a belief assures the power of the clergy, but the loss of God’s power. God

1 Jn. 8.31-32.
2 2 Ti. 2.15.
commended the Jews at Berea for studying the Scriptures: “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

While the colonial debate was going on, the establishment persecuted dissenters. These persecutions gradually began to soften even members of the established churches, as people began to realize that persecution did not stand up to the test of Bible truth. The Baptists were by far the most active of all the colonial dissidents in their unceasing struggle for religious freedom.

Unlike those areas of the New World where only Catholics could immigrate and hold offices, and where the official religion was maintained by the government, “the English statesmen opened the gates of their American colonies to every kind of religious faith that could be found in Europe.” Additionally, unlike church-state relationships in Spain and France where no significant change occurred, England experienced changes of religion, which ranged from Catholicism (which was a minute minority) to Protestantism. As a result, only in Catholic Mexico and Catholic Quebec was uniformity of religion achieved.

“The individualism of the American colonist, which manifested itself in the great number of sects, also resulted in much unaffiliated religion. It is probably true that religion was widespread but was mostly a personal, noninstitutional matter.” This contributed to the growing movement toward religious liberty since “[p]ersons not themselves connected with any church were not likely to persecute others for similar independence.”

In the English colonies, unlike in Mexico and Quebec, no single faith dominated the others and religious uniformity was very limited. On the European Continent, “the Reformation from the start was an effort to return the Church itself to the doctrines and practices of its apostolic days.” However, while discarding some of the heresies of the Catholic “church,” Protestantism, under pressure from civil governments, soon resumed the Catholic

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3 Ac. 17.11.
4 Pfeffer, pp. 74, 83.
5 Ibid., p. 85.
6 Ibid.
conceived theology which united church and state. The final, logical thought of the reformers was reached at Geneva, where the church absorbed the state and the church-state originated. The state became an aspect of the church. “That is the tradition which the Puritans of England and later of New England inherited.”7 New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut had church-state establishments—the church used the state to enforce the Ten Commandments and dissenters were persecuted.

In England, the problem was to “wean the Church in England away from the Pope, but otherwise to leave it as little changed as possible.”8 The monarch created the state-church and became the head of the church. The church became an aspect of the state. The king was the final authority on church doctrine and practice. “[T]he Church in England [became] the Church of England, [and] the Church [became] an aspect of the State.”9 Under Queen Elizabeth, such Catholic doctrines as transubstantiation, the communion of saints, and purgatory were abandoned and the Mass was labeled a “blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit;” but ecclesiastical organization remained mainly unchanged, and episcopacy was its principle. Because she wanted a united state, Queen Elizabeth wanted a church where the Anglo-Catholics and the Anglo-Calvinists could worship together. The Anglo-Catholicism of England was later transferred to the southern colonies.10 Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia had state-church establishments—the state was over the church.

“The Calvinists who governed New England and oppressed Anglicans were themselves persecuted in Virginia, and forced to pay taxes to support the hated Anglican establishment from which they fled.”11 “[T]he Reformed Church was the state-church in New Amsterdam; the Quakers dominated Pennsylvania, ... and, for a short time, the Catholics Maryland.”12 In New England—Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Hampshire—Congregationalism was the established church. In Virginia and

7 Marnell, pp. 32, 33, 37.
8 Ibid., p. 33.
9 Ibid., p. 34.
10 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
11 Pfeffer, p. 65.
12 Ibid.
North and South Carolina, the Church of England was established. New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Georgia experienced changes in church-state establishments. “In … Pennsylvania and Delaware, no single church ever attained the status of monopolistic establishment.”\(^\text{13}\)

“From Maryland south to Georgia there were recurring periods of persecution and repression.”\(^\text{14}\) In Maryland, the Calverts tolerated the Puritan settlers who later suppressed Catholicism. Anglicanism was established in 1689 after conflict in charters granted the second Lord Baltimore and William Penn.\(^\text{15}\)

The Anglican Church was established in North and South Carolina much as in Virginia. However, dissenters were allowed to immigrate into those states due to the need for settlers. From 1700 on, the major political clash in South Carolina shaped up around the conflict of the establishment and the dissenters, with the latter growing in the back country and a pronounced shift to Anglicanism on the coast. In 1704, a bill was jammed through to exclude all dissenters from the legislature. In 1706, the Church Act was passed, with dissenters excluded from voting; the land was divided into parishes.... Anglican clergy were frequently immoral and guilty of gross neglect of their people. In 1722, nearly one fourth of the taxes went to the established church. With independence in South Carolina came disestablishment.\(^\text{16}\)

Emigrants from the persecuted Baptist church in Boston came to Charleston, South Carolina in 1683. The second Baptist church in South Carolina was Ashley River, founded in 1736. By 1755, there were four Baptist churches in South Carolina and the second Baptist Association in America, the Charleston Association, was founded in 1751.\(^\text{17}\) The General Baptists established several churches in North Carolina between 1727 and 1755. All but three of those churches converted to Particular Baptist churches in 1755 or 1756. By 1755, there were only twelve Baptist churches in

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{15}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid., p. 14.
\(^\text{17}\) Beller, *America in Crimson Red*, pp. 139-140, 142.
North Carolina. However, as will be seen, this was about to change with the arrival of some Baptists from Connecticut.

New York colonial history was unique in some ways. Until 1664, the state established and supported the Dutch reformed church. Imprisonment was required for those who failed to contribute to the support of the church minister. All children were required to be baptized by a Reformed minister in the Reformed Church. Only the Reformed, the English Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists could build church buildings. Lutherans were imprisoned for holding services; and Baptists were subject to arrest, fine, whipping, and banishment for so doing.

In 1664, New Amsterdam surrendered to the English, and New York extended its jurisdiction over all sects. The Protestant religion, and not one church, was established as the state religion. The head of the state was head over every Protestant church. All Protestant churches were established. Only four counties conferred preferential status upon the Church of England after attempts to confer such status throughout the state were unsuccessful.

“In New Jersey agitation by Episcopal clergy for the legal establishment of the Church of England failed to attain even the partial success achieved in New York.”

“In Georgia, the original charter of 1732, which guaranteed liberty of conscience to all persons ‘except Papists,’ was voided in 1752, and the Church of England was formally established.”

Nonetheless, Georgia had a history of public hostility toward dissenters even before the church-state establishment. Jews and Moravians were persecuted to the extent that nearly all of these peoples fled that state in 1740 or retreated to their own enclaves. “In 1754, the colony reverted to the status of a royal province and several efforts were made to enforce the Anglican establishment.”

There were no Baptist churches in Georgia in 1755. In 1758, the law of Anglican Establishment was passed. By 1786, there were not over five hundred active Christians in

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18 Ibid., pp. 141-142.
19 Pfeffer, pp. 70-71.
20 Ibid., p. 71.
21 Ibid.
22 Littell, p. 15.
23 Beller, America in Crimson Red, p. 142.
Georgia: “there were three Episcopal parishes without rectors and three Lutheran churches, three Presbyterian churches, three Baptist churches—all small and struggling.” The Constitution of 1798 provided for complete religious freedom including Catholicism.

Maryland, established in 1631 and settled by both Catholics and Protestants, practiced a degree of toleration. Catholics attempted to procure the preferred position possessed in European countries with Catholic establishments, but they were unsuccessful since they were never in the majority. Although the Maryland Act of Toleration of 1649 has been lauded as “the first decree granting complete religious liberty to emanate from an assembly,” “even a superficial examination of the law shows quite clearly that it is far from a grant of ‘complete religious liberty.’” The first three of the four main provisions of the act “were denials rather than grants of religious liberty; only the last four dealt with toleration.” The first imposed death for infractions such as blasphemy, denying Jesus Christ to be the son of God, using or uttering any reproachful speeches, words or language concerning the Holy Trinity,” etc. The second imposed fines, whipping, and imprisonment on any who called another any one of certain names. The third imposed fines or imprisonment for profaning the Lord’s day. By 1688, the Anglicans had the upper hand and the Church of England was established in Maryland.

Pennsylvania, like Maryland, was colonized partly as a business venture and partly as a “holy experiment.” The proprietor of the colony, William Penn, joined the Quakers while a student at Oxford. Penn opposed coercion in matters of conscience and provided for it in the fundamentals of the government of Pennsylvania. “Nevertheless, profanity was penalized, and Sunday observance for church, scripture reading, and rest was required. Political privileges were limited to Christians, and complete freedom of worship, at least at the beginning, was not allowed Catholics or Jews. As in Calvert’s Maryland, Penn’s motivation was at least partly his desire to reap substantial profits and this required attracting large numbers of settlers.

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24 Littell, pp. 16-17.
25 Pfeffer, pp. 71-75.
26 Ibid., pp. 78-79.
King James made New Hampshire a royal colony in 1679. Liberty of conscience was allowed to all Protestants, but the Church of England was “particularly countenanced and encouraged.” Each town in New Hampshire determined the church to be supported with its tax revenues. Dissenters, with submission of a certificate proving regular attendance and financial support of a dissenting church, were exempted from the tax. However, the assembly was slow to accord financial recognition to dissenting sects.  

Chapter 3
The Pilgrims and Puritans in Massachusetts

Being the continuation of the religious upheaval in Europe, the early history of New England was one of religious turmoil.

“It is acknowledged, on all hands, the first settlements of New-England were a consequence of the disputes which attended the Reformation in England; and therefore we must observe, that during this time, viz. 1517, learning having revived all over Europe, the Reformation was begun by Luther, and others in Germany, and carried on in several parts of Christendom, particularly in England, where, after a long struggle, it was finally established, by act of Parliament, under Queen Elizabeth, who began to reign November 17, 1558.

“As the whole Christian religion had been corrupted and disfigured by the inventions and impositions of Popery ... it could not but be expected that many, who were justly and equally offended, at the horrid corruptions of Popery, should yet be unable entirely to agree in their sentiments, of what things were to be reformed, or how far they should carry the Reformation at the first.”

The theological turmoil that resulted from the Reformation continued in the new world, and out of that storm emerged a separation of church and state that had never before existed of any lasting influence in any nation in the history of the world.

John Calvin had the greatest influence of any continental reformer on the relationship of church and state in the American colonies. The founders of the Massachusetts Bay Company modeled the Massachusetts church-state after that constructed by Calvin. Calvin taught predestination—that God predestined men to heaven or hell—and effectively denied freedom of human will. He further taught that the Prince, to whom God grants his power and who is responsible directly to God, is God’s leader on earth, and men have a duty to absolutely honor and obey him. Those who rebel against the ruler rebel against God, even if the ruler rules contrary to the word of God.

The state, according to Calvin, must enforce God’s spiritual and moral laws. The state is responsible for enforcing all of the commandments, including the first four. Therefore, the state must

1 Callender, pp. 60-61.
suppress, for example, “idolatry, blasphemy, and other scandals to religion.” Church and state must work together although the church is “competent to declare what is the godly life.” Calvin believed that “there is but one possible correct interpretation of the word of God, and it is the only interpretation possible for an honest man of sound intelligence to reach.”

At the same time, “we should obey God rather than men;” when the law of the ruler contradicts the law of God, according to Calvin, man should obey God, but only passively. The Calvinistic ideal, the superiority of an aristocratic republic form of civil government, led naturally to election of both pastors and civil rulers and was implemented in the Mayflower Compact the night before the Pilgrims first came onto shore in America. Subsequent leaders of Calvinistic thought “added the right of rebellion against the wicked Prince to their spiritual arsenal. The United States of America was born when that right was exercised, and none exercised it with greater enthusiasm that the Calvinists of Boston.”

John Knox modified Calvinism.

“[T]he one conviction at which the legalistic mind of Calvin quailed.... If the Prince does not perform [his God given duty] said Knox, the people have the duty to put him to the sword of vengeance. In Calvinism the Church is the State, but in Knox far more than in Calvin the State and the Church both are the People. In neither man is there the faintest glimmer that even suggests to the backward-looking eye the distant dawn of tolerance. But in Knox the sword of the Almighty’s vengeance in the hands of an outraged People is the first strange symbol of what some day will be democracy.”

Jesus said, “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” In fulfillment of prophecies of the Lord, the established churches thought they were doing God’s will. “And

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2 Ibid., pp. 21-28; see also Verduin, Anatomy of a Hybrid, pp. 198-211 for insight into Calvin’s church-state theology.
3 Marnell, pp. 21-28.
4 Ibid., pp. 28-30.
5 Jn. 16.2.
these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.”

The Old World patterns of church-state union and religious oppression were transplanted to the New World with all their rigor. Eleven of the original thirteen colonies established a church prior to the Revolution. One of those eleven was Massachusetts. Puritans, most of whom were Congregationalists, founded Massachusetts. All New England colonies, except Rhode Island, had established churches based upon the same theology. As noted by the Rhode Island Baptist, John Callender, in the early nineteenth century:

“[The Puritans] were not the only people who thought they were doing God good service when smiting their brethren and fellow-servants. All other Christian sects generally, as if they thought this was the very best way to promote the gospel of peace, and prove themselves the true and genuine disciples of Jesus Christ—‘sic,’ who hath declared, his kingdom was not of this world, who had commanded his disciples to call no man master on earth, who had forbidden them to exercise lordship over each other’s consciences, who had required them to let the tares grow with the wheat till the harvest, and who had, in fine, given mutual love, peace, long-suffering, and kindness, as the badge and mark of his religion.”

The fight for religious liberty started in the New England colonies and then spread throughout the other colonies. The seventeenth century ended with firmly established church-states in all New England colonies except Rhode Island. The ecclesiocracies there were as absolute as the world has known, with persecution of “heretics” but, because of intervention by England, not as brutal as past ecclesiocracies in Europe.

The Church of England was established in the southern colonies.

In the Southern colonies, “the church enjoyed the favor of the colonial governors but it lacked the one pearl without price which the Congregational Church had. No Anglican ever left England to secure freedom of worship; no Virginia Episcopalian had the fervent motivation of a Massachusetts Puritan. In Massachusetts, the church

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6 Jn. 16.3.
7 Pfeffer, p. 63.
8 Callender, p. 71.
was the state. In Virginia and, to a lesser degree, in the rest of the South the Church was formally part of the State although hardly a part that loomed large in southern minds.\(^9\)

The theology of the established churches in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire led to a combination of church and state; infant baptism; taxing for payment of clergy, church charities, and other church expenses; persecution of dissenters; and many other unscriptural practices.\(^10\) Persecution of dissenters follows the example of Israel. For example, after Moses came down from the mountain with the Commandments, three thousand were killed.\(^11\) In contrast, after Jesus came down from the cross and was resurrected, three thousand were saved.

The Pilgrims, the original settlers in Massachusetts, landed at what was to become Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. The Pilgrims “have been described as men with their ‘hearts full of charity, kindliness, and toleration; their minds broadened by experience in a land where religion was free to all men.’” “The Puritans, who arrived a few years later, had no such ideas. They desired liberty for themselves and perfect toleration; but they were not willing to grant this liberty to others.”\(^12\) The Pilgrims were Separatists who had left the Church of England in the Autumn of 1608 and formed their own church. The Bishops of the Church of England considered them to be dangerous radicals. “They believed that the Reformation had not gone far enough, that the Reformers had assumed an infallibility no more palatable when lodged in a ruler than when lodged in the Pope, that the Church of England had rejected the Pope but not Popery, that the bishops of the Church of England had no more authority than the bishops of the Church of Rome.”\(^13\)

Under James I, the Bishops were given a free hand to suppress the less than a thousand Separatists before they got out of hand. Puritan followers Peter Marshall and David Manuel, who approved

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\(^9\) Marnell, pp. 63-64.
\(^11\) Ex. 32.27.
\(^13\) Marnell, p. 44.
of the persecutions of the dissenters by the Puritan established churches in the colonies, complained that these were “dedicated followers of the Lord” who were:

“hounded, bullied, forced to pay assessments to the Church of England, clapped into prison on trumped-up charges, and driven underground. They met in private homes, to which they came at staggered intervals and by different routes, because they were constantly being spied upon. In the little Midlands town of Scrooby, persecution finally reached the point where the congregation to which William Bradford belonged elected to follow those other Separatists who had already sought religious asylum in Holland.”14

Because of the persecution in England, some Separatists went elsewhere, going first to Leyden, Holland. After over ten years of a hard life in Holland, they decided to try to go to America. They reached an agreement with an English merchant named Thomas Weston under which they were able to set sail. They could not obtain assurance of liberty of their consciences. “However, they determined at length to remove, depending on some general promises of connivance, if they behaved themselves peaceably, and hoping that the distance and remoteness of the place, as well as the public service they should do the King and Kingdom, would prevent their being disturbed.”15 One hundred and one Pilgrim souls sailed from Plymouth, England, on September 6, 1620, arriving at Cape Cod on November 11, 1620, and at a place they named Plymouth, in December 1620.16 Upon arrival, they drafted the Mayflower Compact:

In the name of God, amen. We whose names are under-written, the loyall subjects of our dread Soveraigne Lord King James by ye Grace of God of Great Britain, France, Ireland king, defender of the Faith, etc., having undertaken, for ye glorie of God, and advancemente of ye Christian faith and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly and mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enacte, constitute, and frame such

15 Callender, p. 64.
just and equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from
time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for the
generall good of ye colony, unto which we promise all due submission
and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our
names at Cap-Codd, ye 11. of November, in ye year of ye raigne of our
soveraigne lord, King James of England, France, & Ireland, ye
eighteenth, and by Scotland ye fiftie fourth. Ano: Dom. 1620.

As a matter of human compassion, the Pilgrims were
hospitable to all; and, at first, grudgingly tolerated those of other
creeds. However, they gradually began to close their doors to those
of other creeds. “Plymouth was a Church-State ruled by a governor
and a small and highly select theological aristocracy, a Church-
State with various grades of citizenship and non-citizenship.” By
1651, the government of Plymouth colony was enforcing the laws
of Congregationalist Massachusetts. “By the time Plymouth was
united with Massachusetts in 1691 all major differences between
the two had disappeared.”

The Pilgrims overcame much adversity, such as hunger,
drought, and heat which caused their corn to wither, and the failure
of delivery of much needed supplies from England. They
increased to three hundred souls and obtained a patent from the
New England Company on January 13, 1630. The comparative
handful of Pilgrims who were eventually absorbed by the Puritans
are much admired by Americans. Neither they nor their Mayflower
compact influenced the development of the Constitution or the Bill
of Rights in any way which can be supported by the factual history
of the colonies.

The Puritans wrongly, but truly, believed they could build the
Kingdom of God on earth, in their lifetime. Since they were the
right people who “were willing to commit themselves totally,” all
they needed, they felt, was “the right time and the right place” to
show the world God’s truths in action. They would be a city set on
a hill.

17 Marnell, p. 48.
18 Pfeffer, p. 66, citing Sanford H. Cobb, The Rise of Religious Liberty in America (New York: The
21 Mt. 5:14, says, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” However,
Mt. 5:10-11, which the Puritans forgot to read, says, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for
The Puritans, unlike the Pilgrims who wanted to separate from the Church of England, wanted to purify the Church from within. “The State, in their view, had the duty to maintain the true Church; but the State was in every way subordinate to the Church.”\footnote{Marnell, p. 40.} King James I was far more belligerently opposed to the Calvinistic church-state than even Queen Elizabeth had been, and his “determination toward the Puritans was to make them conform or to harry them out of the land.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 42.} The Puritans who suffered under the combined pressure of accelerated persecution and the advanced moral decay in their society began to flee England for the new world.\footnote{Marshall and Manuel, \textit{The Light and the Glory}, p. 146.} “There was no ground at all left them to hope for any condescension or indulgence to their scruples, but uniformity was pressed with harder measures than ever.”\footnote{Callender, p. 66.} Cheating, double-dealing, the betrayal of one’s word were all part of the game for London’s financial district. Mercantile power brokers loved, honored, and worshipped money, and accumulated as much of it as possible and as fast as possible. The ends justified the means. “London was an accurate spiritual barometer for the rest of the country, for England had become a nation without a soul.”\footnote{Ibid., pp. 147-148.} England was morally awful, and this came about under the auspices of a state-church practicing its theology.\footnote{Ibid., p. 148.} 1628 marked the beginning of the Great Migration that lasted sixteen years in which twenty thousand Puritans embarked for New England and forty-five thousand other Englishmen headed for Virginia, the West Indies, and points south.\footnote{Ibid., p. 148.}

A young Puritan minister named John Cotton preached a farewell sermon to the departing Puritans:

[righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when 
\textit{men} shall revile you, and persecute \textit{you}, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” Puritans persecuted others, including true believers who rightly divided the word of God. “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.” (Jn. 16.2-3).]
“He preached on 2 Samuel 7.10 (KJV): ‘Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.’

‘Go forth,’ Cotton exhorted, ‘... With a public spirit,’ with that ‘care of universal helpfulness…. Have a tender care ... to your children, that they do not degenerate as the Israelites did....’

“Samuel Eliot Morison put it thus: ‘Cotton’s sermon was of a nature to inspire these new children of Israel with the belief that they were the Lord’s chosen people; destined, if they kept the covenant with him, to people and fructify this new Canaan in the western wilderness.’”

The Puritans landed at Salem at the end of June 1629. They were motivated by religious principles and purposes, seeking a home and a refuge from religious persecution. Having suffered long for conscience sake, they came for religious freedom, for themselves only. “They believed [in] the doctrine of John Calvin, with some important modifications, in the church-state ruled on theocratic principles, and in full government regulation of economic life.”

The Puritan churches “secretly call[ed] their mother a whore, not daring in America to join with their own mother’s children, though unexcommunicate: no, nor permit[ed] them to worship God after their consciences, and as their mother hath taught them this secretly and silently, they have a mind to do, which publicly they would seem to disclaim, and profess against.” In 1630, 1500 more persons arrived, several new settlements were formed, and the seat of government was fixed at Boston. Thinking not of toleration of others,” they were prepared to practice over other consciences the like tyranny to that from which they had fled.

Although they differed from the Church of England and others on some doctrines, “[t]he Puritans brought 2 principles with them from their native country, in which they did not differ from others; which are, that natural birth, and the doings of men, can bring children into the Covenant of Grace; and, that it is right to enforce & support their own sentiments about religion with the
magistrate’s sword.” The Puritans built their false theocracy on Old Testament Jewish principles. The state, as well as the church was to be a community of believers.

John Cotton was called upon to arrange the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the colony. They set up a ecclesiocracy in which no one could hold office who was not a member of an approved church. “The civil laws were adjusted to the polity of the church, and while nominally distinct, they supported and assisted each other.”

“It was requested of Mr. Cotton,’ says his descendant Cotton Mather, ‘that he would from the laws wherewith God governed his ancient people, form an abstract of such as were of a moral and lasting equity; which he performed as acceptably as judiciously.... He propounded unto them, an endeavour after a theocracy, as near as might be to that which was the glory of Israel, the peculiar people.”

The goal of the Puritans was to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. Two modern day Covenant Theologians wrote:

“They determined to change their society in the only way that could make any lasting difference: by giving it a Christianity that worked. And this they set out to do, not by words but by example, in the one place where it was still possible to live the life to which Christ had called them: three thousand miles beyond the reach of the very Church they were seeking to purify.

“[T]he legacy of Puritan New England to this nation, which can still be found at the core of our American way of life, may be summed up in one word: covenant.... [O]n the night of the Last Supper, to those who were closest to Him, Jesus said, “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins....”

Covenant cannot be found, as understood by the Puritan theologians, now or anytime in the past, at the core of our American way of life. The idea of covenant at the core of our

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36 Williams and Underhill, p. xii.
37 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 35; Williams and Underhill, pp. x-xi.
38 Williams and Underhill, pp. xii-xiii.
39 Ibid., footnote 8, pp. xii-xiii, citing sources.
American way of life was that of the Baptists as expressed by the Warren Association at the close of the War for Independence:

“The American Revolution is wholly built upon the doctrine, that all men are born with an equal right to what Providence gives them, and that all righteous government is founded in compact or covenant, which is equally binding upon the officers and members of each community…. And as surely as Christianity is true, Christ is the only lawgiver and head of his church….”

Nor is there a Biblical principle that allows any nation to covenant with God contrary to the principles laid down in God’s word. The Puritans incorrectly believed that every nation is in covenant with the Lord to enforce all the laws he gave to Israel. As shown in the INTRODUCTION, the Puritans incorrectly interpreted the Bible by applying the principles for the Jewish theocracy to all nations. They did not distinguish between Gentile nations and the theocracy of Israel. Scripture gives no authority for any nation to initiate a covenant with God. God alone initiated the Old Testament covenants to which he was the controlling party, thereby, among other things, establishing Israel as a theocracy. He made no such covenant with any other nation. All other nations, as was shown in the INTRODUCTION, are called Gentile, and are judged by God primarily based upon their treatment of Israel.

As has been pointed out in Section I, Chapter 4 above, Covenant Theology asserts that there are only two covenants, or three, in the Bible, with the other covenants which came after the Covenant of Grace being only a continuation thereof. Covenant Theology superimposes the New Testament over the Old. Herein lies some of the fatal flaws in this interpretation of the Bible. In the Puritan formulation of those covenants, the principles and practices of the nation Israel and the Jewish religion were applied to the church and state. As has been shown, this presents irreconcilable conflicts with Old and New Testament teachings concerning law and grace and the relationship of church and state.

God permits a mutual compact or covenant between a ruler or the rulers and the people—a covenant that does not include God and His principles and that is not initiated or ordained by God. God

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allowed even the people of the theocracy of Israel to reject him and, like the Gentile nations, to have a king. Isaac Backus taught as follows:

“All the word of God plainly shows, that this way of mutual compact or covenant, is the only righteous foundation for civil government. For when Israel must needs have a king like the rest of the nations, and he indulged them in that request, yet neither Saul nor David, who were anointed by his immediate direction, ever assumed the regal power over the people, but by their free consent. And though the family of David had the clearest claim to hereditary succession than any family on earth ever had, yet, when ten of the twelve tribes revolted from his grandson, because he refused to comply with what they esteemed a reasonable proposal, and he had collected an army to bring them back by force, God warned him not to do it, and he obeyed him therein. Had these plain precedents been regarded in later times, what woes and miseries would they have prevented? But the history of all ages and nations shows, that when men have got the power into their hands, they often use it to gratify their own lusts, and recur to nature, religion or the constitution (as they think it will best serve) to carry, and yet cover, their wretched designs.”

Several things disprove the Puritan ideal: correct interpretation of the word of God; Bible history and prophecy; and secular history, including the history of the colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Israel, populated by God’s chosen race, was directly under God, yet the Israelites rejected his theocracy so that they could have a king like all the other nations. Israel fared ill when they did things their way and kings ruled. Under both God and king, Israel refused to do things God’s way, and rejected his commandments and statutes. After the death of King Solomon, the nation divided in two. All of the kings of the northern kingdom, Israel, were bad. The southern Kingdom, Judah, had twenty kings—eight were good, and twelve were bad. Both Israel and Judah, in accord with God’s philosophy of history, became apostate, morally awful, and politically anarchist. They failed to love God and keep his commandments and statutes. As a result, other nations conquered them and took them into captivity.

42 See 1 S. 8, 12.
44 Mannessa started out bad and was judged of God. He then did good, making him the only bad king in Judah or Israel to repent and turn from his wicked ways. See 2 K. 21.1-18, 2 Chr. 33.1-20.
The Puritans failed to correctly interpret both the Old and New Testaments and secular history which clearly show that all nations that have ever existed have been judged by God, are in the process of being judged by God, or will be judged by God. They misinterpreted prophecy concerning the end times to say that the church, working hand in hand with the state, will establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Oh, had they only realized that the New Covenant for the church had so much better promises and procedures than the Old Testament covenants. “But now hath he [Jesus Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”

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The Puritans did not realize that the philosophy of history in the Bible and the basic nature of man rendered impossible their goal of establishing the Kingdom of Heaven. God describes the cycle of every civil government, Jewish and Gentile.

“The book of Judges is a philosophy of history. ‘Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people’ (Proverbs 14.34).”


“We see that philosophy in the book of Judges. Israel at first, for a short time, served God. Then they did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth. The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies. Israel then entered into a time of servitude. Israel cried out to God in their plight and distress. They turned to God and repented. God heard their prayers and raised up judges through whom they were delivered.

“This cycle was repeated over and over. The book of Isaiah opens with God giving his philosophy of history. Isaiah outlines three steps that cause the downfall of a nation: (1) spiritual apostasy, (2) moral awfulness, (3) and political anarchy.”

47 Ibid., pp. 112-113.

“Every nation goes down in this order: (1) religious apostasy; (2) moral awfulness; (3) political anarchy. Deterioration begins in the church, then to the home, and finally to the state. That is the way a nation falls.”

48 Ibid., pp. 113, 203.

45 He. 8.6; See all of He. 8.
46 Ibid., pp. 112-113.
47 Ibid., pp. 113, 203.
‘In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21.25).’

“If you want to know just how up-to-date the book of Judges is, listen to the words of the late General Douglas McArthur: ‘In this day of gathering storms, as moral deterioration of political power spreads its growing infection, it is essential that every spiritual force be mobilized to defend and preserve the religious base upon which this nation is founded; for it has been that base which has been the motivating impulse to our moral and national growth. History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual reawakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster.’”

All nations, prior to the establishment of the kingdom of heaven, are doomed to judgment because of the depravity of man which always seeks the lowest common denominator, the principles of the god of this world. As to the nature of man, the word of God points out that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Even after salvation, men have a great struggle with the flesh. False teachers from within and without the church immediately began to introduce heresy and apostasy into the first churches. Many pernicious doctrines have deceived God’s people, who are led by heretical pastors. Most churches will become apostate and many professing members will be unregenerate.

The Puritans felt that they were dedicated to serving the Lord and to doing things his way. They believed that they could set up a civil government modeled after Biblical principles. They did not realize that even should they have been upright in God’s eyes, future leaders would depart from the faith and lead the civil government downhill into depravity just as happened in all Gentile nations as recorded in the Old Testament; in all nations which will ever exist as prophesied in God’s word; in the theocracy of Israel; in all church-state marriages starting with the Catholics and up to the established churches after the Reformation, including the Church of England from which they were fleeing.

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49 Ibid., pp. 203-214.
50 Ibid., p. 113.
51 Ro. 3.23. The Bible teaches, and reality reveals, the depravity of man.
52 See Section I above.
Soon after the founding of Massachusetts, events there proved the folly of their false theology and the truth of accurate Biblical and historical interpretation. As Isaac Backus reported, by 1660 or 1670 Puritan theologians and pastors in New England were pointing out the “general religious declension” that was already taking place as the first generation of settlers passed away. 53 “Mr. Willard published a discourse in the year 1700 entitled, ‘The Perils of the Times Displayed,’ in which he said:

“That there is a form of godliness among us is manifest; but the great inquiry is, whether there be not too much of a general denying of the power of it. Whence else is it, that there be such things as these that follow, to be observed? that there is such a prevalency of so many immoralties among professors? that there is so little success of the gospel? How few thorough conversions [are] to be observed, how scarce and seldom.... It hath been a frequent observation that if one generation begins to decline, the next that follows usually grows worse, and so on, until God pours out his Spirit again upon them. The decays which we do already languish under are sad; and what tokens are on our children, that it is like to be better hereafter.... How do young professors grow weary of the strict profession of their fathers, and become strong disputants for the [those] things which their progenitors forsook a pleasant land for the avoidance of.

“And forty years after, Mr. Prince said, ‘We have been generally growing worse and worse ever since.’ The greatest evils that [the founders of New England] came here to avoid were the mixture of worthy and unworthy communicants in the churches, and the tyranny of secular and ministerial Courts over them; but these evils were now coming in like a flood upon New England.” 54

The Halfway Covenant, established by the Massachusetts synod in 1662, was witness to the spiritual decline of the Puritan Congregationalist church. As a result, a large number of church members were baptized into the church without conversion. Any person who professed belief in the doctrines of Calvinism and who lived an upright, moral life was allowed to join the parish church and sign the covenant or membership contract. Such persons were only allowed halfway into the church—they could have their children baptized but they could not take communion or vote in

53 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, pp. 457-464. Examples of what the religious leaders were saying are given in those pages.
54 Ibid., p. 461.
church affairs. The church to which Isaac Backus’ parents belonged practiced this method.\textsuperscript{55}

The Puritans, unlike the Separatists, although continuing to acknowledge canonical authority, desired to purify the church from within. The Massachusetts Bay Company, a trading corporation with powers of ownership and government over a specified area, enlisted Puritans. The leaders of this company devised a plan to effectively remove the colony of Massachusetts from control of the Crown.\textsuperscript{56} Their purpose was to become a self-governing commonwealth able to enforce the laws of God and win divine favor—a citadel of God’s chosen people, a spearhead of world Protestantism, a government of Christ.\textsuperscript{57} They believed this was a common goal, which all must seek together, with church and state working side by side.\textsuperscript{58} They believed that the pure church they intended to establish in New England would someday, somehow, rescue its English parent from the mire of corruption.\textsuperscript{59}

Since the Puritans believed that every nation existed by virtue of a covenant with God in which it promised to obey his commands, as a modern legal scholar has pointed out, “They knew, in the most elementary terms, that they must punish every sin committed in Massachusetts. And punish they did, with the eager cooperation of the whole community, who knew that sin unpunished might expose them all the wrath of God.”\textsuperscript{60} Sins punished included those in the first four commandments, those dealing strictly with man’s relationship to God, as well as other sins, including those dealing with man’s relationship to man. Thus, the churches were thronged every Sunday with willing and unwilling worshipers—everyone was required to attend.\textsuperscript{61} Although the church could not enforce the commandments, the state, which was charged with the colony’s commission, had the

\textsuperscript{56} Morgan, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 46-47, 48.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.}. 
final and supreme responsibility for suppressing heresy as well as drunkenness and theft and murder.  

In 1629, the trading company in Massachusetts was transformed into a commonwealth. According to the Puritan theology of these early Massachusetts settlers, after the people joined in covenant with God, agreeing to be bound by his laws, they had to establish a government to see those laws enforced, for they did not have enough virtue to carry out their agreement without the compulsive force of government.

“[They] soon discovered themselves as fond of uniformity, and as loath to allow liberty of conscience to such as differed from themselves, as those from whose power they had fled. Notwithstanding all their sufferings and complaints in England, they seemed incapable of mutual forbearance; perhaps they were afraid of provoking the higher powers at home, if they countenanced other sects; and perhaps those who differed from them took the more freedom, in venting and pressing their peculiar opinions, from the safety and protection they expected, under a charter that had granted liberty of conscience.

“In reality, the true grounds of liberty of conscience were not then known, or embraced by any sect or party of Christians; all parties seemed to think that as they only were in the possession of the truth, so they alone had a right to restrain, and crush all other opinions, which they respectively called error and heresy, where they were the most numerous and powerful; and in other places they pleaded a title to liberty and freedom of their consciences. And yet, at the same time, all would disclaim persecution for conscience sake, which has something in it so unjust and absurd, so cruel and impious, that all men are ashamed of the least imputation of it. A pretence of public peace, the preservation of the Church of Christ from infection, and the obstinacy of the heretics, are always made use of, to excuse and justify that, which stripped of all disguises, and called by its true name, the light of nature, and the laws of Christ Jesus condemn and forbid, in the most plain and solemn manner....”

After arriving in Massachusetts, they quickly formed churches. Mainly under the leadership of the Reverend John Cotton, they arranged ecclesiastical and state matters. “Whatever he delivered in the pulpit was soon put into an order of court, if of a civil, or set

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62 Ibid., p. 82.
63 Ibid., pp. 84-100.
64 Ibid., p. 93.
65 Callender, pp. 69-70.
up as a practice in the church, if of an ecclesiastical concernment.”

The established Congregational church differed from other churches in four main points:

“(1) The visible church was to consist of those who made an open profession of faith, and did not ‘scandalize their profession by an unchristian conversation.’

“(2) A particular visible church should preferably explicitly covenant to walk together in their Christian communion, according to the rules of the gospel.

“(3) Any particular church ought not to be larger in number than needed to meet in one place for the enjoyment of all the same numerical ordinances and celebrating of divine worship, nor fewer than may conveniently carry on church work.

“(4) Each particular church was subject to no other jurisdiction.

“But this people brought two other principles with them from their native country, in which they did not differ from others; which are, that natural birth, and the doings of men, can bring children into the Covenant of Grace; and, that it is right to enforce and support their own sentiments about religion with the magistrate’s sword.”

Compulsive uniformity “was planted at a General Court in Boston, May 18, 1631 when it was ordered that no one could be admitted ‘to the freedom of [the] body politic’ who was not a member of a church.”

“This test in after times had such influence, that he who ‘did not conform, was deprived of more civil privileges than a nonconformist is deprived of by the test in England.’” Since rulers, however selected, received their authority from God, not from the people, and were accountable to God, not to the people, their business was to enforce the nation’s covenant with God. Ministers were not to seek or hold public office, but were counted on to give the people sound advice and to instruct them about the kind of men who were best fitted to rule. Although only church

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67 Ibid., pp. 33-34.
68 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
69 Ibid., p. 35.
70 Ibid., p. 35.
71 Morgan, p. 94.
72 Ibid., pp. 95-96.
members had political rights, this was a larger group than had political rights in England.  

By 1635, the General Court regulated the affairs of the local churches and passed on the qualifications of preachers and elders, since:

“[t]he civil authority … hath the power and liberty to see the peace, ordinances, and rules of Christ observed in every Church, according to His word…. It is the duty of the Christian magistrate to take care that the people be fed with wholesome and sound doctrine.”

The Court continued to put its theology into force by act of law. At the General Assembly held March 3, 1636, it was held (1) that no church would form and meet without informing the magistrates and elders of the majority of the churches of their intentions and gaining their approval and (2) that no one who was a member of a church not approved by the magistrates and the majority of state-churches would be admitted to the freedom of the commonwealth.

Soon thereafter, the Court passed an act that stated that they were entreated to make “a draught of laws agreeable to the word of God, which may be the fundamentals of this commonwealth, and to present the same to the next General Court,” and that “in the mean time the magistrates and their associates shall proceed in the courts to hear and determine all causes according to the laws now established, and where there is no law, then as near the laws of God as they can.” This act immediately led to the persecution by banishment, disfranchisement and the forbidding of speaking certain things, removal from public office, fines, and the confiscation of arms. Soon to that act was added that anyone convicted of defaming any court, “or the sentence or proceedings of the same, or any of the magistrates or other judges of any such court, would be punished by ‘fine, imprisonment, or

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73 Ibid., p. 92.
74 Pfeffer, p. 66.
76 Ibid., pp. 62-63.
77 Ibid., pp. 64-70.
disfranchisement of banishment, as the quality and measure of the offence shall deserve.”

The banishment and the voluntary exile of many dissidents “did not put an end to the unhappy divisions and contentions in Massachusetts.” As a result of animosities and contentions between what were called the Legalists and the Familists or Antinomians, a synod was held, eighty erroneous opinions were presented, debated, and condemned; and a court was held which “banished a few of the chief persons, among those who were aspersed with those errors, and censured several that had been the most active, not it seems, for their holding those opinions, but for their pretended seditious carriage and behavior; and the church at Boston likewise excommunicated at least one of her members, not for those opinions, but for denying they ever held them, and the behavior which these heats occasioned[.]

On September 6, 1638, the Assembly at Boston made 2 laws: (1) anyone excommunicated lawfully from a church would, after six months and if not restored, be presented to the Court and there fined, imprisoned, banished or further “as their contempt and obstinacy upon full hearing shall deserve;” and (2) that every inhabitant would be taxed to pay for all common charges as well as for upholding the ordinances of the churches; and, if not so doing, would be compelled thereto by assessment and distress, to be levied by the constable or other officer of the town. The first law was repealed the next fall, but the second remained.

On March 13, 1639, acts were passed which fined, disenfranchised if no repentance made, and/or committed certain men for certain acts or pronouncements against the established churches. On November 13, 1644, the General Court passed an act which provided:

“that if any person or persons, within this jurisdiction, shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the ministration of the ordinance, or shall

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78 Ibid., pp. 69-70.
79 Callender, p. 75.
80 Ibid., pp. 75-76.
82 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
deny the ordinance of magistry, or their lawful right and authority to make war, or to punish the outward breaches of the first table, and shall appear to the court willfully and obstinately to continue therein after due time and means of conviction, every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment.”

As to this law, Isaac Backus appropriately commented:

“A like method of treating the Baptists, in Courts, from pulpits and from the press has been handed down by tradition ever since. And can we believe that men so knowing and virtuous in other respects, as men on that side have been, would have introduced and continued in a way of treating their neighbors, which is so unjust and scandalous, if they could have found better arguments to support that cause upon? I have diligently searched all the books, records and papers I could come at upon all sides, and have found a great number of instances of Baptists suffering for the above points that we own; but not one instance of the conviction of any member of a Baptist church in this country, in any Court, of the errors or evils which are inserted in this law to justify their making of it, and to render our denomination odious. Much has been said to exalt the characters of those good fathers; I have no desire of detracting from any of their virtues; but the better the men were, the worse must be the principle that could ensnare them in such bad actions.”

In 1644, a law against the Baptists was passed asserting that the Anabaptists “have been the incendiaries of the commonwealths, and the infectors of persons in main matters of religion, and the troublers of churches in all places where they have been.”

In 1646, the General Court adopted the Act, imposing “banishment on any person denying the immortality of the soul, or the resurrection, or sin in the regenerate, or the need of repentance, or the baptism of infants, or ‘who shall purposely depart the congregation at the administration of that ordinance’ or endeavor to reduce others to any of these heresies.” Also, in 1646 an act against “contemptuous conduct toward preachers and nonattendance on divine service were made punishable, the former by ‘standing on a block four feet high’ having on the breast a

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83 Ibid., p. 126.
84 Ibid., p. 127.
85 Ibid., p. 205.
placard with the words ‘An Open and Obstinate Contemner of God’s Holy Ordinances.’”

The magistrates passed a bill in March 1646 which required “the calling a synod to settle ... ecclesiastical affairs,” the synod to be convened not by command, but to motion only to the churches (This was agreed because some questioned the power of civil magistrates over the churches.). In August, 1648, the synod met and “completed the Cambridge platform; the last article of which sa[id]:

“If any church, one or more, shall grow schismatical, rending itself from the communion of other churches, or shall walk incorrigibly or obstinately in any corrupt way of their own, contrary to the rule of the word; in such case the magistrate [Josh. 22.] is to put forth his coercive power, as the matter shall require.

“This principle the Baptists and others felt the cruel effects of for many years after.”

The Assembly passed laws against gathering churches without the consent of the assembly, and another “wherein they enacted, ‘that no minister would be called unto office, without the approbation of some of the magistrates, as well as the neighboring churches.’”

In 1657, laws were passed which imposed fine or whipping on those who entertained a Quaker, required citizens to report Quakers, fined those who allowed Quakers to meet on their property, and fined anyone who brought in a Quaker or notorious heretic. Although these laws were repealed on June 30, 1660, they were reenacted immediately, “with slight modifications, or to give place to new laws quite as oppressive.” In September, 1658, the Commissioners of the United Colonies recommended that all the New England colonies “make a law, that all Quakers formerly convicted and punished as such, shall (if they return again) be imprisoned, and forthwith banished or expelled out of the said

86 Pfeffer, pp. 66-67, citing Cobb, pp. 176-177.
87 Ibid., p. 159.
88 Ibid., fn. 1, p. 214.
89 Ibid., fn. 3, pp. 263-264.
90 Ibid.
jurisdiction, under pain of death.” In October 1658, the Assembly at Boston passed a law banishing “Quakers on pain of death” but no other colony passed such a law.

“Many [Quakers] were whipped, some were branded, and Holder, Copeland and Rouse, three single young men, had each his right ear cut off in the prison at Boston....” Three of them who were banished, on pain of death, returned to Boston and were condemned to die. Two of them, men, were executed. One, Mary Dyre, was released and sent away. She returned and was hanged on June 1, 1660. William Leddra was hanged on March 14, 1661. Charles II ordered that such persecutions cease, and that Quakers that offended were to be sent to England to be tried. “How justly then did Mr. Williams call the use of force in such affairs, ‘The bloody tenet!”

Members of the first Baptist church in Boston were imprisoned. Thomas Gould, Thomas Osborne, William Turner, Edward Drinker, and John George were imprisoned for starting that Baptist church without approbation from other ministers and their rulers.... Isaac Backus recorded:

“But when their ministers were moved to exert such force against Baptists, though they saw the chief procurers of that sentence struck dead before the time came for its execution, and many more of them about that time, yet their posterity have approved their sayings even to this day. Robert Mascall of England wrote his Congregationalist brethren in Massachusetts pointing out that they, in England, admitted those who practiced believer’s baptism to their churches as required by the Love of God, that their persecutions of the Baptists were contrary to Scripture, that they themselves had been persecuted, and now their brethren were persecuting so that ‘Whatever you can plead for yourselves against those that persecute you, those whom you persecute may plead for themselves against you,’ and ‘Whatever you can say against these poor men, your enemies say against you;’ that ‘[Y]ou cast a reproach upon us, that are Congregational in England, and furnish our adversaries with weapons against us;’” and ‘Persecution is bad in wicked men, but it is most abominable in good men, who have suffered and pleaded for liberty of conscience themselves.’”

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92 Ibid., p. 253.
93 Ibid., fn. 1, p. 249; pp. 254-255.
94 Ibid., fn. 1, p. 252; pp. 258, 262-263, 265.
95 Ibid., pp. 287, 298, 299, 311-313.
The persecutions of the Baptists in Massachusetts for withdrawing from public meetings continued.

“On May 15, 1672, the Assembly ordered their law-book to be revised and reprinted.” Banishment was required for those who broached and maintained any damnable heresies among which were denying justification by faith alone, denial of the fourth commandment, condemnation of or opposition to infant baptism, denial of the power of the magistrate to punish breaches of the first four commandments, and endeavoring to influence others to any of the errors and heresies mentioned in the law.96

After some Baptists organized a church in Boston, and erected a meetinghouse there, the General Court ordered:

“That no persons whatever, without the consent of the freemen of the town where they live, first orderly had, and obtained, at a public meeting assembled for that end, and license of the County Court, or in defect of such consent, a license by the special order of the General Court, shall erect or make use of any house as above said; and in case any person or persons shall be convicted of transgressing this law, every such house or houses wherein such persons shall so meet more than three times, with the land whereon such house or houses stand, and all private ways leading thereto, shall be forfeited to the use of the county, and disposed of by the County Treasurer, by sale or demolishing, as the Court that gives judgment in the case shall order.”97

However, a special act was procured to exempt Boston “from any compulsive power for the support of any religious ministers.” As a result, the Baptist church in Boston, which had begun in 1665, was able to build a meetinghouse.98 Thus, Baptist churches in Boston had equal liberties with other denominations since 1693, but this liberty was denied throughout the rest of Massachusetts.99

As a result of these repressive laws, the king of England sent a letter requiring that liberty of conscience be allowed to all Protestants, that they be allowed to take part in the government, and not be fined, subjected to forfeiture, or other incapacities,
“whereas,” he said, “liberty of conscience was made a [one] principle motive for your first transportation to these parts.”\(^{100}\)

Soon a synod was called which condemned Quakers and Anabaptists. The General Court agreed. The magistrates had the doors of the Baptist meeting house boarded up, fined some of their members, forbade the Baptists to meet anywhere else, and fined some who were found to have gone to Baptist meetings. Following this came much controversy between the Baptists and the establishment.\(^{101}\)

The established church ignored pleas to leniency toward those with whom it disagreed. For example, they ignored the plea Sir Henry Vane wrote John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts, in 1645: “The exercise and troubles which God is pleased to lay upon these kingdoms, and the inhabitants in them teaches us patience and forbearance one with another in some measure, though there be difference in our opinions, which makes me hope that, from the experience here, it may also be derived to yourselves....”\(^{102}\)

Because of their strong bias, the Congregationalists wrote much against the dissenters, their method being asserting the disputed point taken by them:

“for truth, without any evidence, they blended that with many known facts recorded in Scripture, and thereupon rank the opposers to that point with the old serpent the devil and Satan, and with his instruments Cain, Pharaoh, Herod, and other murderers; yea, with such as sacrifice their children to devils! This history contains abundant evidence of their adding the magistrate’s sword to all these hard words, which were used in their prefaces before they came to any of the Baptists arguments.”\(^{103}\)

The atmosphere in Massachusetts, amidst the persecutions and debate of the issues, began to shift toward toleration and even


\(^{101}\) Ibid., pp. 384-404.

\(^{102}\) Ibid., p. 147.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., p. 151. Mr. Backus gives examples of such establishment arguments on pp. 148-150. On pp. 151-153, he thoroughly debunks the argument for infant baptism as well as arguments that baptism under the New Covenant follows the principles of circumcision under the Old Covenant. For example, Backus points out, “God says his new covenant is not according to that he made with Israel. Heb. viii. 8-11.... By divine institution a whole family and a whole nation were then taken into covenant; now none are added to the church by the Lord but believers who shall be saved. Acts ii.41, 47....”
freedom of conscience. Even Governor John Winthrop, who had been a leader of the Puritans from the beginning of the colony, refused on his deathbed in 1649 to sign a warrant to banish a Welsh minister, “saying, ‘I have had my hand too much in such things already.’”\(^{104}\) “The second Massachusetts charter, which was dated October 7, 1691, allowed equal liberty of conscience to all Christians, except Papists.”\(^ {105}\)

Many of the establishment resisted the allowance of liberty of conscience contained in the 1691 charter. The ministers of the established churches construed the liberty of conscience provided for in the 1691 charter to mean, “that the General Court might, by laws, encourage and protect that religion which is the general profession of the inhabitants.”\(^ {106}\) “For thirty-six years after … Massachusetts received [the 1691 charter], they exerted all their power, both in their legislative and executive courts, with every art that ministers could help them to, in attempts to compel every town to receive and support such ministers as they called orthodox.” Thus, despite the new charter, on October 12, 1692, in 1695, 1715, and 1723, the Assembly in Massachusetts enacted new laws requiring that every town provide a minister to be chosen and supported by all the inhabitants of the town; giving the Assembly and General Court power to determine, upon recommendation of three approved ministers, the pastor of a church; and requiring the towns of Dartmouth and Tiverton to tax to support ministers. In 1693, the 1692 law was changed to allow each church to choose its own minister and exempted Boston from the requirement that all citizens be taxed to support that pastor.\(^ {107}\)

Thus, equal religious liberty was enjoyed in Boston, but was denied in the country. Many, including Baptists and Quakers, were taxed to support paedobaptist ministers. Those who did not pay the tax were imprisoned for failing to pay the tax, and some officials were taxed for failing to assess the tax. The cattle, horses, sheep, corn, and household goods of Quakers were from time to time taken from them by violence to support the approved ministers. In

\(^{104}\) Ibid., p. 436.
\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 445.
\(^{106}\) Ibid., APPENDIX B, p. 532.
\(^{107}\) Ibid., pp. 446-448, 499-505.
1723, Richard Partridge presented a memorial to King George requesting that inasmuch as the Massachusetts charter allowed equal liberty of conscience to all Christians except Papists, the laws contravening the charter be declared null and void, and the prisoners who refused to pay the tax be released. In 1724, the King ordered that the prisoners be released and the taxes remitted. The Massachusetts assembly passed an act in November 1724 that required release of the prisoners held for failing to assess the tax.\(^{108}\)

In 1728, the Assembly passed a law exempting poll tax for ministerial support and forbidding imprisonment of those Baptists and Quakers, who gave their names and regularly attended their church meetings, for failure to pay ministerial taxes assessed on their “estates or faculty.” In November 1729, an act was added that exempted their estates and faculties also, under the same conditions.\(^{109}\)

The law exempting Baptists was renewed when it expired. Persecutions continued. The law which exempted taxes to Baptists expired in 1747, but was renewed for ten years. Nonetheless, the establishment found ways to persecute members of Baptist churches in various towns in Massachusetts for not paying the tax—some imprisoned, and property such as cows, geese, swine, oxen, cooking utensils, implements of occupation such as carpenter’s tools and spinning wheel, etc. of some was confiscated.\(^{110}\) The law expired in 1757, but a new one to continue in force thirteen years was made which exempted Baptists and Quakers if certain requirements were met. The law was renewed in 1771, even though Isaac Backus wrote Samuel Adams, never a supporter of separation of church and state, warning that the Baptists “might carry their complaints before those who would be glad to hear that the Legislature of Massachusetts deny to their fellow servants that liberty which they so earnestly insist upon for themselves.”\(^{111}\) Isaac Backus said of the oppressions under this law, “[N]o tongue nor pen can fully describe all the evils that were practiced under it.”\(^{112}\) Baptists, including single mothers with


children, were unjustly taxed in violation of the law, property was unjustly taken from Baptists to pay established ministers, lies were disseminated about Baptists and their beliefs, and courts of law conducted grossly unfair trials and rendered obviously unjust opinions against Baptists.\(^\text{113}\)

In 1786, the legislature passed a law which allowed each town to tax for the support of ministry, schools, and the poor, and other necessary charges arising within the same town. This tax resulted in collectors’ efforts to get their taxes, which caused much business in courts, and a great increase in lawyers. Some citizens arose in arms. They were subdued by force of arms. Before fourteen men who were condemned for their rebellion could be hanged, the Governor and over half the legislature were voted out and the men were all pardoned.\(^\text{114}\)

On February 6, 1788, delegates from Massachusetts who were meeting in Boston voted to adopt the newly drafted and proposed constitution for the states. One of the greatest objections against it had been that no religious test for any government officer was required. During debate, prior to adoption, a Congregational minister, Reverend Philips Payson, of Chelsea, arose and said, “… I infer that God alone is the God of the conscience, and consequently, attempts to erect human tribunals for the consciences of men, are impious encroachments upon the prerogatives of God.”\(^\text{115}\) Isaac Backus arose also and said:

“Nothing is more evident, both in reason, and in the Holy Scriptures, than that religion is ever a matter between God and individuals; and therefore no man or men can impose any religious test, without invading the essential prerogatives of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ministers first assumed this power under the Christian name; and then Constantine approved of the practice, when he adopted the profession of Christianity as an engine of State policy. And let the history of all nations be searched, from that day to this, and it will appear that the imposing of religious tests hath been the greatest engine of tyranny in the world…. The covenant of circumcision gave the seed of Abraham a right to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, and to take their houses, vineyards, and all their estates as their own; and also to buy and hold

\(^\text{113}\) Ibid., pp. 141-166.
\(^\text{114}\) Ibid., pp. 330-331.
\(^\text{115}\) Ibid., p. 336.
others as servants. And as Christian privileges are much greater than those of the Hebrews were, many have imagined that they had a right to seize upon the lands of the heathen, and to destroy or enslave them as far as they could extend their power. And from thence the mystery of iniquity carried many into the practice of making merchandise of slaves and souls of men.”

By 1794, very few if any were collecting taxes to pay ministers, but establishment remained in Massachusetts until 1833.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution did not prevent establishment on the state level. Opponents of establishment in Massachusetts never gained a majority. Rather, law, under the contract clause of Article I, Section 10 of the Constitution of the United States of America proved to be the tool used by the legal system to bring about disestablishment in that state. Massachusetts held a constitutional convention in 1820, but declined to eliminate a religious test for officeholders, control of Harvard, and public support for religion. However,

“[i]n 1821, the Massachusetts Supreme Court, in [Baker v. Fales, 16 Mass. 487 (1821) (known as the Dedham case),] a holding consistent with the Supreme Court of the United States in Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward, 17 U.S. (3 Wheat) 1 (1819), ruled that only corporations could hold property, not amorphous societies of believers. Only in response to these court decisions did the citizens support disestablishment, putting all the churches on equal footing in 1833. Contract law succeeded where politics would not, in overcoming support of religion.”

It should be noted that even with disestablishment, a church was not forced to incorporate and other methods of possessing (not owning) property on which to assemble as a body of believers were available. In reality, a true church is a spiritual, not an earthly, entity. Therefore, a New Testament church cannot own property. Any kind of legal entity cannot be a New Testament church.

116 Ibid.
117 Ibid., p. 379.
119 See Finney, God Betrayed, Section II for a study of the Bible doctrine of the church.
120 See Ibid., Section VI for explanation.
Chapter 4
The Baptists in Rhode Island

As pointed out by John Callender in 1838:

“Bishop Sanderson says [] that ‘the Rev. Archbishop Whitgift, and learned Hooker, men of great judgment, and famous in their times, did long since foresee and declare their fear, that if ever Puritanism should prevail among us, it would soon draw in Anabaptism after it.—This Cartwright and the Disciplinarians denied, and were offended at.—But these good men judged right; they considered, only as prudent men, that Anabaptism had its rise from the same principles the Puritans held, and its growth from the same course they took; together with the natural tendency of their principles and practices toward it especially that ONE PRINCIPLE, as it was then by them misunderstood that the scripture was *adequate agendorum regula*, so as nothing might be lawfully done, without express warrant, either from some command or example therein contained....”¹

History certainly proves that to have been the case in the English colonies, as shown by the establishment of Rhode Island. Biblical disagreement with Puritan theology was the force behind the creation of the first government in history of any lasting significance with religious freedom, the government of the colony of Rhode Island.

“Mr. R[oger] Williams and Mr. J[ohn] Clark[e], two fathers of [Rhode Island], appear among the first who publicly avowed that Jesus Christ is king in his own kingdom, and that no others had authority over his subjects, in the affairs of conscience and eternal salvation.”² “Roger Williams was the first person in modern Christendom to maintain the doctrine of religious liberty and unlimited toleration.”³

Although America owes its present form of government to Roger Williams, along with Dr. John Clarke, as much or more than to any men, Mr. Williams is vilified and Dr. Clarke is generally ignored by Peter Marshall and David Manuel, who laughably assert that the “Puritans were the people who, more than any other,

¹ Callender, pp. 113-114.
made possible America’s foundation as a Christian nation.”

Because Roger Williams disagreed with those in the established church in Massachusetts, Marshall and Manuel condemn him as a hopeless heretic. For example, Marshall and Manuel, in condemning and lying about Williams, reveal that Christian Revisionists condemn, in a way that praises their own views, anyone who disagrees with their contorted interpretation of Scripture. They also justify the intervention of the civil government, at the behest of the established church, into spiritual matters. Marshall and Manuel sharply criticize Williams for his views and for refusing to change his views because those views were contrary to those of the established church in Massachusetts:

“Williams insistence upon absolute purity in the church, beyond all normal extremes, grew out of his own personal obsession with having to be right—in doctrine, in conduct, in church associations—in short, in every area of life. This need to be right colored everything he did or thought; indeed, it drove him into one untenable position after another. For the alternative—facing up to one’s self-righteousness and repenting of it on a continuing basis—was more than he could bring himself to accept.

“For Williams, then, Christianity became so super-spiritualized that it was removed from all contact with the sinful realities of daily living. In his view, the saints of New England belonged to a spiritual Israel, in the same way as did all Christians everywhere. But there should be no talk of any attempt on God’s part to build his Kingdom on earth through imperfect human beings. For Winthrop and the others to even suggest that God might be creating a new Israel in this Promised Land of America was to ‘... pull God and Christ and Spirit out of Heaven, and subject them unto natural, sinful, inconstant men....’”

Actually, Williams was driven by his determination not to betray his Lord, not by his desire to be right. He believed the Bible and acted according to what the Bible said. Puritans interpreted the Bible and acted according to their philosophized interpretation.

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4 Marshall and Manuel, *The Light and the Glory*, p. 146. What is a Christian nation? No such thing is mentioned in the Bible which talks only of Gentile nations and the theocratic nation Israel. Only individuals can be “Christian” (Ac. 11.26). Certainly, the Constitution does not so much as mention Jesus Christ. America is a Gentile nation. Of course, a Gentile nation can honor God as discussed in other parts of this book. See, e.g., pp. 83, 95-96.

Marshall and Manuel glorified the Puritans for disagreeing with the Church of England, but condemned Roger Williams for disagreeing with the Puritans. They applauded the Puritans for persecuting Roger Williams and other dissenters, but condemned the Church of England for persecuting the Puritans and Pilgrims.

Their biased account of Williams does not chronicle the facts. Instead, it is a distortion of facts. Williams did not super-spiritualize Christianity. He pointed out that the Bible teaches that a church and a Gentile nation are to operate under different rules than did Judaism and the nation Israel. He did not remove Christianity from all contact with the sinful realities of daily living. He correctly argued that the church deals with those realities in a manner differing from that of Judaism and the nation Israel in the theocracy. He believed that man should have freedom of conscience in all things spiritual, a concept diametrically opposed to the theology of the established church of Massachusetts. He believed that penal laws should deal only with man’s relationship with his fellow man. He believed, contrary to Puritan theology, that the church should not merge with the state for any reason, and that the state should enforce only those commandments dealing with man’s relationship with man (the last six of the Commandments), not the first four of the Commandments which deal with man’s relationship to God. He condemned the king’s patent and taught that it was wrong to take the land of the natives without payment.6

Marshall and Manuel continue their distortions and inaccuracies. They define liberty of conscience as meaning, “Nobody is going to tell me what I should do or believe.”7 As to the issue of “liberty of conscience,” they state:

“Liberty of conscience is indeed a vital part of Christianity—as long as it is in balance with all the other parts. But taken out of balance and pursued to its extremes (which is where Williams, ever the purist, invariably pursued everything), it becomes a license to disregard all authority with which we do not happen to agree at the time. This was the boat which Williams was rowing when he landed at Boston. Since, at its extreme, liberty of conscience stressed freedom from any

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6 See page 142.
7 Ibid.
commitment to corporate unity, Williams was not about to hear God through Winthrop or anyone else. (And tragically, he never did.)

Williams did not believe that liberty of conscience becomes a license to disregard all authority with which we do not happen to agree. He correctly believed that the laws of a civil government should protect freedom of conscience, and that God limited the jurisdiction of every Gentile civil government to certain actions by citizens against other citizens—to the Second Table of the Ten Commandments.

Williams believed that both church and state were to be under God. He wrote and taught concerning the jurisdiction of civil government and the church. Here is one example:

“I acknowledge [the civil magistrate] ought to cherish, as a foster-father, the Lord Jesus, in his truth, in his saints, to cleave unto them himself, and to countenance them even to the death, yea, also, to break the teeth of the lions, who offer civil violence and injury to them.

“But to see all his subjects Christians, to keep such church or Christians in the purity of worship, and see them do their duty, this belongs to the head of the body, Christ Jesus, and [to] such spiritual officers as he hath to this purpose deputed, whose right it is, according to the true pattern. Abimelech, Saul, Adonijah, Athalia, were but usurpers: David, Solomon, Joash, &c., they were the true heirs and types of Christ Jesus, in his true power and authority in his kingdom.”

Marshall and Manuel attribute the qualities of the leaders of the established church in Massachusetts to Roger Williams instead. They assert that he “desperately needed to come into reality and see his sin—how arrogant and judgmental and self-righteous he was.” They assert that he could have been “a great general in Christ’s army” since “he was tremendously gifted: in intellect, preaching, personality, and leadership ability.” However, he had one tragic flaw: he believed in freedom of conscience, held other views contrary to that of the established church, and could not be persuaded otherwise, or, as Marshall and Manuel put it:

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8 Ibid., p. 194.
11 Ibid., pp. 194-195.
“[H]e would not see his wrongness, and he was so bound up in his intellect that no one could get close to the man, because he was forever hammering home points on ‘the truth.’ Trying to relate to him on a personal level was like trying to relate to cold steel—highly polished and refined.”

On the other hand, Marshall and Manuel have nothing but praise for the Puritans. Every page of *The Light and the Glory* dealing with the Puritans and their leaders is filled with praise and notations as to how the providence of God was opening the door for the right people, at the right time, in the right place to correct all the errors of Christendom. For example, they write:

“Since God’s will was made known to them [the Puritans] through His inspired word in the Bible, they naturally wanted to get as close to a Scriptural order of worship as possible. Indeed, what they ultimately wanted was to bring the Church back to something approximating New Testament Christianity.

“The Puritan dilemma was similar to that of many newly regenerate Christians of our time. They faced a difficult choice: should they leave their seemingly lifeless churches to join or start a live one, or should they stay where they were, to be used as that one small candle to which William Bradford referred?

“God was bringing the Puritans into compassion and humility.

“As historian Perry Miller would say, ‘Winthrop and his colleagues believed ... that their errand was not a mere scouting expedition: it was an essential maneuver in the drama of Christendom. The [Massachusetts] Bay Company was not a battered remnant of suffering Separatists thrown up on a rocky shore; it was an organized task force of Christians, executing a flank attack on the corruptions of Christendom. These Puritans did not flee to America; they went in order to work out that complete reformation which was not yet accomplished in England and Europe.’”

The Puritans grew into such compassion and humility that they horribly persecuted Christians and others who did not agree with the unbiblical doctrines which they proudly believed to be inerrant.

Marshall and Manuel follow the example of prior Puritan Revisionists such as John Quincy Adams who stated, “in the annals of religious persecution is there to be found a martyr more gently dealt with by those against whom he began the war of

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intolerance.”14 Few accept this verdict. The facts are clear: they banished him because of his religious opinions. “Charles Francis Adams states the case thus:

“The trouble with the historical writers who have taken upon themselves the defense of the founders of Massachusetts is that they have tried to sophisticate away the facts…. In Spain it was the dungeon, the rack and the fagot; in Massachusetts, it was banishment, the whip and the gibbet. In neither case can the records be obliterated. Between them it is only a question of degree—one may be in color a dark drab, while the other is unmistakably a jetty black. The difficulty is with those who, expatiating with great force of language on the sooty aspect of the one, turn and twist the other in the light, and then solemnly asseverate its resemblance to driven snow. Unfortunately, for those who advocate this view of the Old and New World records, the facts do not justify it.”15

Williams, in his relationship to the religious leaders of Massachusetts, was a lot like the Lord Jesus and the apostles in their relationship to the religious Jews. The religious leaders of Massachusetts made a mistake—they did not call upon the civil government (which was at their disposal) to kill Williams as they did with some other dissenters. Had they done so, we might not have our present form of civil government. They only banished him, to them a tragic error of highest proportions as it turned out.

As to the issue of persecution by the established church, Marshall and Manuel are hypocrites. They condemn the persecution of the Separatists (later called Pilgrims) and the Puritans in England, but glorify the Puritans when they were persecuted and when they persecuted those dissenters such as the Baptists and Quakers who did not conform to their theology in the New World. They complain that the Separatists:

“were hounded, bullied, forced to pay assessments to the Church of England, clapped into prison on trumped-up charges, and driven underground. They met in private homes, to which they came at staggered intervals and by different routes, because they were constantly being spied upon. In the little Midlands town of Scrooby, persecution finally reached the point where the congregation to which

Bradford belonged elected to follow those other Separatists who had already sought religious asylum in Holland.”

As to the Puritans … they write, “[The Puritans accepted the pressure of the mounting persecution] with grace and, as persecution often does, it served to rapidly deepen and mature the movement, bonding them together in common cause and making them more determined than ever to live as God had called them.... For a number of Puritans, [the marking of the Puritans for suppression by Charles I] was a watershed. It appeared no longer possible to reform the Church of England from within.”

Under the theology of Marshall and Manuel, and those of like mind, the government of Rhode Island—which provided a model for the First Amendment—would not have existed nor would the United States exist in its present form. America would have no First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the amendment written and adopted to provide for freedom of religion and conscience. Men would still be forced to accept infant baptism, pay taxes to support the established church, attend the established church, proclaim allegiance to the established church, etc. Dissenters would still be persecuted. The church would still be working with the state to “bring in the kingdom.”

Roger Williams, like the Puritans, fled tyranny over thought and conscience and sought refuge for conscience amid the wilds of America. He arrived in Boston on February 5, 1631. He was highly educated and well acquainted with the classics and original languages of the Scriptures, and had been in charge of a parish in England. In England, he had attended the preaching of Samuel Howe, a Baptist minister in London who practiced immersion. He was very intimate with Baptists in London; they uniformly pleaded liberty of conscience. By the time he arrived in Massachusetts, “[i]t is probable that Williams already believed in immersion and rejected infant baptism,” and, in “1633 he was ‘already inclined to the opinions of the Anabaptists.’”

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17 Ibid., p. 152.
19 Ibid., p. 370.
Upon arrival, he was invited to become pastor of the church in Boston but declined because he found that it was “an unseparated church,” and he “durst not officiate” it. Mr. Williams, not being a man who could hide his views and principles, declared, “the magistrate might not punish a breach of the Sabbath, nor any other offence, as it was a breach of the first table.” He also, contrary to the practice of the church at Boston, hesitated to hold communion with any church who held communion with the Church of England. “He could not regard the cruelties and severities, and oppression, exercised by the Church of England, with any feelings but those of indignation.”

Mr. Williams remained at odds with the established church and government ministers in Massachusetts. He was accepted by the church at Salem, but that was blocked by the General Court of the Colony. Plymouth warmly received him into the ministry where he labored two years. Exercising their right under congregational governance, the church at Salem called him, over the objections of the magistrates and ministers, to be their settled teacher. At Salem, he filled the place with principles of rigid separation tending to anabaptism. In spite of the fact that “Mr. Williams appears, by the whole course and tenor of his life and conduct [], to have been one of the most disinterested men that ever lived, a most pious and heavenly minded soul,” the Court soon summoned him “for teaching publicly ‘against the king’s patent, and our great sin in claiming right thereby to this country’” by taking the land of the natives without payment; “and for terming the churches of England antichristian.” Charges were brought. “He was accused of maintaining:

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20 Ibid.  
22 Williams and Underhill, p. x.  
23 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 44.  
24 Callender, p. 72.  
25 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, pp. 44-46. Williams and Underhill, p. xiii. The colonies held their land under the royal patent. Under the royal right of patent, Christian kings (so called) were given the right to take and give away the lands and countries of other men. Armitage, The History of the Baptists, Volume 2, pp. 638-639.  
26 Williams and Underhill, pp. xiii-xiv.
“(1) That the magistrate ought not to punish the breach of the first table of the law, otherwise in such cases as did disturb the civil peace.
“(2) That he ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man.
“(3) That a man ought not to pray with the unregenerate, though wife or child.
“(4) That a man ought not to give thanks after the sacrament nor after meat.”

The ministers of the Court, when Mr. Williams appeared before them, “had already decided ‘that any one was worthy of banishment who should obstinately assert, that the civil magistrate might not intermeddle even to stop a church from apostasy and heresy.’” The “grand difficulty they had with Mr. Williams was, his denying the civil magistrate’s right to govern in ecclesiastical affairs.”

He was banished from the colony and ordered to board ship for England. Instead, he went, in the dead of winter, to what was to become Rhode Island where he was supported by the Indians whom he, throughout his long life, unceasingly tried to benefit and befriend. He bought land from the Indians and founded the town of Providence where persecution has never “sullied its annals.”

“[T]he harsh treatment and cruel exile of Mr. Williams seem designed by his brethren for the same evil end [as that of the brethren of Joseph when they sold him into slavery], but was, by the goodness of the same overruling hand [of divine providence] turned to the most beneficent purposes.” In 1638, “[m]any Massachusetts Christians who had adopted Baptist views, and finding themselves subjected to persecution on that account, moved to Providence.”

“[W]hat human heart can be unaffected with the thought that a people who had been sorely persecuted in their own country, so as to flee three thousand miles into a wilderness for religious liberty,

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27 Ibid, p. xiv; Callender, p. 72; Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 53 (Backus adds item 2, as, according to footnote 1, p. 53, his is from Governor Winthrop’s Journal, Vol. 1, pp. [162, 163]).
30 Williams and Underhill, p. xxiii.
31 Ibid.
yet should have that imposing temper cleaving so fast to them, as
not to be willing to let a godly minister, who testified against it,
stay even in any neighboring part of this wilderness, but it moved
them to attempt to take him by force, to send him back into the
land of their persecutors!”

Thirty-five years later Mr. Williams wrote, “Here, all over this
colony, a great number of weak and distressed souls, scattered, are
flying hither from Old and New England, the Most High and Only
Wise hath, in his infinite wisdom, provided this country and this
corner as a shelter for the poor and persecuted, according to their
several persuasions.” By 1838 in Rhode Island, there were no
less than thirty-two distinct societies or worshipping assemblies of
Christians of varying denominations, including eight of the Quaker
persuasion, eight Baptist churches, four Episcopal, and three
Presbyterian or Congregationalist.

Notable historians have praised Roger Williams for his
contributions in the quest for religious freedom. For example:

Isaac Backus wrote that Rhode Island “was laid upon such principles as
no other civil government had ever been, as we know of, since
antichrist’s first appearance; “and ROGER WILLIAMS justly claims
the honor of having been the first legislator in the world, in its latter
ages, that fully and effectually provided for and established a free, full
and absolute LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.”

“We cannot forbear to add the oft-quoted tribute paid to Roger
Williams by the historian Bancroft:—‘He was the first person in
modern Christendom to assert in its plentitude the doctrine of liberty of
conscience, the equality of opinions before the law; and in its defence
he was the harbinger of Milton, the precursor and the superior of
Jeremy Taylor. For Taylor limited his toleration to a few Christian
sects; the philanthropy of Williams compassed the earth. Taylor
favored partial reform, commended lenity, argued for forbearance, and
entered a special plea in behalf of each tolerable sect; Williams would
permit persecution of no opinion, of no religion, leaving heresy
unharmed by law, and orthodoxy unprotected by the terrors of penal
statutes.... If Copernicus is held in perpetual reverence, because, on his
deathbed, he published to the world that the sun is the centre of our
system; if the name of Kepler is preserved in the annals of human

34 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 56.
36 Callender, pp. 121-122.
37 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, pp. 75-76.
excellence for his sagacity in detecting the laws of the planetary motion; if the genius of Newton has been almost adored for dissecting a ray of light, and weighing heavenly bodies in a balance,—let there be for the name of Roger Williams, at least some humble place among those who have advanced moral science and made themselves the benefactors of mankind."

In 1638, others driven from Massachusetts by the ruling clerical power settled in Rhode Island. Massachusetts had such great hate for Rhode Island that it passed a law prohibiting the inhabitants of Providence from coming within its bounds.

Another leader instrumental in the formation of the government of the Rhode Island colony was Dr. John Clarke, a physician from England. Dr. Clarke moved to Boston in November of 1637. He proposed to some friends “for peace sake, and to enjoy the freedom of their consciences, to remove out of that jurisdiction.” Their motion was granted & Dr. Clarke and eighteen families went to New Hampshire, which proved too cold for their liking. They left and stopped in Rhode Island, intending to go to Long Island or Delaware Bay. There Dr. Clarke met Roger Williams. The two “immediately became fast friends and associates, working together in a most harmonious manner, both socially and politically, throughout the remainder of Clarke’s life.”

With the help of Mr. Williams, they settled in that colony at Aquidneck. “The first settlement on the Island was called Pocasset; after the founding of Newport, it was renamed Portsmouth.”

Perhaps Marshall and Manuel had good reason, from their point of view, for making not a single mention of Dr. Clarke in The Light and the Glory. Isaac Backus found it to be very extraordinary that he could find from any author or record no reflection cast upon Dr. Clarke by any one. Dr. Clarke left as spotless a character as any man [Isaac Backus] knew of, that ever acted in any public

41 Asher, p. 29; Clarke.
42 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 349.
station in this country.43 “The Massachusetts writers have been so watchful and careful, to publish whatever they could find, which might seem to countenance the severities, they used towards dissenters from their way, that [Mr. Backus] expected to find something of that nature against Mr. Clarke.”44

The first government of note in history that was to have complete freedom of conscience and religious liberty also declared that the government was to be under the Lord Jesus Christ. Signed on March 7, 1638, the Portsmouth Compact read:

“We whose names are underwritten do swear solemnly, in the presence of Jehovah, to incorporate ourselves into a body politic, and as he shall help us, will submit our persons, lives and estates, unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and to all those most perfect and absolute laws of his, given us in his holy word of truth, to be guided and judged thereby.” 45 [19 signatures followed: Thomas Savage, William Dyre, William Freeborne, Philip Sherman, John Walker, Richard Carder, William Baulstone, Edward Hutchinson, Sen., Henry Bull, Randal Holden, William Coddington, John Clarke, William Hutchinson, John Cogshall, William Aspinwall, Samuel Wilbore, John Porter, Edward Hutchinson, Jun., and John Sanford.].

Three passages were marked in support of the compact: Exodus 24.3, 4; II Chronicles 11.3; and II Kings 11.17.

The chief architect of this concise and powerful piece of political history was either William Aspinwall or Dr. John Clarke, probably Dr. Clarke.46 This compact placed Rhode Island under the one true God, the Lord Jesus Christ and his principles and laws given in the Bible. That Dr. Clarke “sought to help establish a government free of all religious restriction, one which in no way infringed upon the freedom of any religious conscience” is “evident from his remarks to the leaders of the established colonies upon his first arrival in Boston and by his subsequent activities throughout New

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43 Ibid., p. 348.  
44 Ibid., p. 349.  
45 Ibid., pp. 77, 427. On p. 427 is the exact copy from Rhode Island records. In the margin are citations to Exodus 34.3, 4; 2 Chr. 11.3, and 2 K. 11, 17.  
46 Asher, p. 23; Beller, America in Crimson Red, p. 24. Mr. Beller states that the author was John Clarke. Mr. Asher asserts that Clarke was probably the writer since the passages referenced in support of the agreement were marked in Dr. Clarke’s Bible.
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England.” A Gentile civil government under Jesus Christ with freedom of religion is consistent with Biblical principles.

Isaac Backus commented on this compact:

“This was doubtless in their view a better plan than any of the others had laid, as they were to be governed by the perfect laws of Christ. But the question is, how a civil polity could be so governed, when he never erected any such state under the gospel?”

Mr. Backus asked a good question. Too bad America’s founding fathers did not find and apply the answer. On the same day the Portsmouth Compact was signed, “[n]ineteen men incorporated into a body politic, and chose Mr. Coddington to be their judge or chief magistrate.” The first General Meeting of the Portsmouth government convened on May 13, 1638. “The apportionment of land, a mutual defense of territory, and provision for a ‘Meeting House’ were ordered.” Soon, a civil government was formed which invested power in the freemen, none of whom were to be “accounted delinquents for doctrine,” “provided it be not directly repugnant to or laws established.”

In August of 1638, the people of Providence approved the first public document establishing government without interference in religious matters, the Providence Compact:

“We whose names are here underwritten being desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to submit ourselves in active or passive obedience to all such orders or agreement as shall be made for public good to the body in an orderly way, by the major consent of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated together into a township, and such others whom they shall admit into the same, only in civil things.” [Signed by Stukely Westcoat, William Arnold, Thomas James, Robert Cole, John Greene, John Throckmorton, William Harris, William Carpenter, Thomas Olney, Francis Weston, Richard Waterman, and Ezekiel Holliman.]

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47 Asher, p. 27.
48 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 78.
49 See pp. 83, 95-96 for more insight.
50 Ibid., p. 72; Asher, p. 27.
51 Asher, p. 29.
52 Williams and Underhill, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
As James R. Beller proclaims, the document was “the first of a series of American political documents promulgating government by the consent of the governed and liberty of conscience.” Thus, liberty of conscience was the basis for legislation in Rhode Island, and its annals have remained to this day [when Underhill wrote this] unsullied by the blot of persecution.

Rhode Island was ruled according to the original covenant, “til on January 2, 1639, an assembly of the freemen said:

“By the consent of the body it is agreed that such who shall be chosen to the place of Eldership, they are to assist the Judge in the execution of the justice and judgment, for the regulating and ordering of all offences and offenders, and for the drawing up and determining of all such rules and laws as shall be according to God, which may conduce to the good and welfare of the commonweal; and to them is committed by the body the whole care and charge of all the affairs thereof; and that the Judge together with the Elders, shall rule and govern according to the general rules [rule] of the word of God, when they have no particular rule from God’s word, by the body prescribed as a direction unto them in the case. And further, it is agreed and consented unto, that the Judge and [with the] Elders shall be accountable unto the body once every quarter of the year, (when as the body shall be assembled) of all such cases, actions or [and] rules which have passed through their hands, by they to be scanned and weighed by the word of Christ; and if by the body or any of them, the Lord shall be pleased to dispense light to the contrary of what by the Judge or [and] Elders hath been determined formerly, that then and there it shall be repealed as the act of the body; and if it be otherwise, that then it shall stand, (till further light concerning it) for the present, to be according to God, and the tender care of indulging [indulgent] fathers.”

In March 1639, Mr. Williams attempted to become a Baptist, together with several more of his companions in exile. However, since he was never Scripturally baptized, he could not have been a Baptist. Williams, being familiar with “the General Baptist view of a proper administrator of baptism, namely, that two believers had the right to begin baptism,” was baptized by immersion by one

55 Williams and Underhill, p. xxviii.
58 Christian, Volume 1, p. 371.
59 Ibid., pp. 372-373.
Mr. Williams stepped down as pastor of the church after only a few months because his baptism was not administered by an apostle, but the church continued.62 Isaac Backus commented on the requirement of apostolic succession for baptism at length, stating, “And if we review the text (II Tim. ii. 2-Ed.) that is now so much harped upon, we shall find that the apostolic succession is in the line of ‘faithful men;' and no others are truly in it, though false brethren have sometimes crept in unawares.”63

Mr. Williams set sail for England in June 1643 to attempt to secure a charter for Rhode Island. With help from his friend, Sir Henry Vane, he quickly obtained a charter, dated March 14, 1644,
which empowered the Providence Plantations “to rule themselves, and such as should inhabit within their bounds, by such a form of civil government as by the voluntary agreement of all, or the greater part, shall be found most serviceable, in their estate and condition; and to make suitable laws, agreeable to the laws of England, so far as the nature and constitution of the place shall admit, &c.”

The knowledge which was being disseminated through the power of the press was affecting the religious leaders as well as the general population in America. People were now able to read the Bible and other works and thereby make decisions as to the accuracy of what others were asserting. “Many books [were] coming out of England in the year 1645, some in defence of anabaptism and other errors, and for liberty of conscience, as a shelter for a general toleration of all opinions, &c....”

Mr. Williams wrote The Blody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience which was published in London in 1644. “In this work he maintains the absolute right of every man, to a ‘full liberty in religious concernments,’ supported by the most luminous and powerful reasoning ... [w]hich have excited admiration in the writings of Jeremy Taylor, Milton, Locke and Furneau.”

John Cotton’s reply, The Blody Tenent washed, and made white in the Blood of the Lamb, was printed in London in 1649. Mr. Williams’ reply entitled The Blody Tenent yet more Blody, was published in 1652. “The same clear, enlarged and consistent views of religious freedom are maintained in this last work, as in his preceding, with additional arguments, evincing an acute, vigorous, and fearless mind, imbued with various erudition and undissembled piety.”

“To the point we have arrived, the history of Roger Williams and the state he founded were indissolubly allied together. Others imbued with his principles henceforth took part in working out the

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65 Ibid., p. 98.
66 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 145, quoting Hubbard, [413-415].
67 Callender, Appendix IV, p. 191.
69 For an excellent summary of some of the more important arguments presented by both sides see Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, pp. 134-145.
70 Callender, pp. 191-192.
The first Baptist church in Newport was formed under the ministry of Dr. John Clarke. According to some who suppose that the church was founded by Clarke and his company upon their arrival in Rhode Island, it could have been established as early as 1638.

Under the leadership of Dr. Clarke, Rhode Island became a government of religious liberty. When elected General Treasurer and General Assistant for Newport in 1650, Dr. Clarke added law and politics to his already crowded professions of medicine and religious ministry. “As a servant of the people, Dr. Clarke would steer the colony toward a government of unprecedented civil and religious liberty—convinced that any other move would be in the direction of a self-centered autocratic theocracy.”

The people followed him as he steered a course between democracy with its “attending threat of anarchy and all of its evils of disorder, violence, and ultimate chaos,” and aristocracy and its restrictions on all forms of liberty.

Dr. Clarke and two friends were persecuted when they went to Massachusetts in 1651. He, Obadiah Holmes, and John Crandal went to visit a friend in Boston. They were on “an errand of mercy and had traveled all the way from their church in Newport to visit one of their aging and blind members, William Witter.” They stayed over, and held a service on Sunday. During that service, they were arrested and jailed. Before they were brought to trial, they were forced to attend a Congregational Puritan religious

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71 Williams and Underhill, p. xxx.
72 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, pp. 125-26 and fn. 1, p. 125; see also Beller, America in Crimson Red, pp. 31-33. Mr. Beller argues that the Baptist church in Newport, meeting in the wilderness in 1637 with Dr. John Clarke as pastor, was the first Baptist church to meet in America. Mr. Beller considers the writings of Isaac Backus, John Callender, and John Winthrop on this subject.
73 Asher, p. 35.
74 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
75 Obadiah Holmes moved from England to Massachusetts. He and several others decided the Baptist way was right and were baptized. He and others were excommunicated in 1650. They moved to Rhode Island where Mr. Holmes became a member of the church pastored by Dr. John Clarke.
76 Asher, p. 57; See Clarke, pp. 27-65 for a full account of the event; Christian, Volume I, pp. 379-381.
meeting. There, they refused to remove their hats, and Dr. Clarke stood and explained why they declared their dissent from them.

They were charged with denying infant baptism, holding a public worship, administering the Lord’s Supper to an excommunicated person, to another under admonition, proselytizing the Baptist way and rebaptizing such converts, and failing to post security or bail and other ecclesiastical infractions. He asked for a public debate on his religious views, which the Puritans avoided. “Clarke said they were examined in the morning of July 31 and sentenced that afternoon without producing any accuser or witness against them,” and that “Governor John Endicott even insulted the accused and denounced them as ‘trash.’”

Dr. Clarke was “fined twenty pounds or to be well whipped;” Mr. Crandal was fined five pounds, only for being with the others; and Mr. Holmes was held in prison, where sentence of a fine of thirty pounds or to be well whipped was entered. A friend paid Mr. Clarke’s fine, Mr. Clarke and Mr. Crandal were released.

Mr. Holmes was beaten mercilessly. His infractions were denying infant baptism, proclaiming that the church was not according to the gospel of Jesus Christ, receiving the sacrament while excommunicated by the church, and other spiritual infractions. Mr. Holmes refused to pay his fine, prepared for the whipping by “communicat[ing] with [his] God, commit[ting] himself to him, and beg[ging] strength from him.” Holmes was confined over two months before his whipping. He related the experience of being whipped for the Lord as follows, in part:

“And as the man began to lay the strokes upon my back, I said to the people, though my flesh should fail, and my spirit should fail, yet my God would not fail. So it please the Lord to come in, and so to fill my heart and tongue as a vessel full, and with an audible voice I broke forth praying unto the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge; and telling the people, that now I found he did not fail me, and therefore now I should trust him forever who failed me not; for in truth, as the

78 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, pp. 180, 187; Asher, p. 60.
79 Backus, fn. 1, p. 189.
80 Ibid., p. 190.
strokes fell upon me, I had such a spiritual manifestation of God’s presence as the like thereof I never had nor felt, nor can with fleshly tongue express; and the outward pain was so removed from me, that indeed I am not able to declare it to you, it was so easy to me, that I could well bear it, yea, and in a manner felt it not although it was grievous as the spectators said, the man striking with all his strength (yea spitting in [on] his hand three times as many affirmed) with a three-corded whip, giving me therewith thirty strokes. When he had loosed me from the post, having joyfulness in my heart, and cheerfulness in my countenance, as the spectators observed, I told the magistrates, You have struck me as with roses; and said moreover, Although the Lord hath made it easy to me, yet I pray God it may not be laid to your charge.”

Mr. Holmes “could take no rest but as he lay upon his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereupon he lay.”

Two men who shook Mr. Holmes’ hand after the beating were, without trial and without being informed of any written law they had broken, sentenced to a fine of forty shillings or to be whipped. Although they refused to pay the fines, others paid their fines and were released.

Of course, the Puritans were fully persuaded of the righteousness of persecution. Here are two examples of their reasoning. Sir Richard Saltonstall wrote to Messrs. Cotton and Wilson of Boston condemning them for this tyranny in Boston, for “compelling any in matters of worship to do that whereof they are not fully persuaded” thus making “them sin, for so the apostle (Rom. 14 and 23) tells us, and many are made hypocrites thereby,” etc. Mr. Cotton replied in part:

“If it do make men hypocrites, yet better be hypocrites than profane persons. Hypocrites give God part of his due, the outward man, but the profane person giveth God neither outward nor inward man. We believe there is a vast difference between men’s inventions and God’s institutions; we fled from men’s inventions, to which we else should have been compelled; we compel none to men’s inventions. If our ways (rigid ways as you call them) have laid us low in the hearts of God’s

81 Ibid., p. 192; Clarke, pp. 50-51.
82 Ibid., fn. 1, p. 193. (This from a manuscript of Governor Joseph Jencks).
83 See Clarke, pp. 55-62 for the personal accounts of John Spur and John Hazell.
people, yea, and of the saints (as you style them) we do not believe it is any part of their saintship.”\textsuperscript{85}

A second example occurred when some protested being taxed to support the state-church with which they did not agree. The main point of the answer received was as follows:

“What we demand of you is equal and right; what you demand of us is evil and sinful; and hence we have the golden rule upon our side, while you are receding and departing from it; for if we were in an error, and out of the right way, as we see and know that you are in several respects, and you see and know it is of us, as we do of you, we think the golden rule would oblige you to tell us of our error, and not let us alone to go on peaceably in it, that is without proper means to recover and reclaim us; whether by the laws of God, or the good and wholesome laws of the land, as we now treat you.”\textsuperscript{86}

In November 1651, Dr. Clarke went to England with Roger Williams to promote the interests of Rhode Island. The objects of their commissions were different, but they mutually aided each other in removing a dangerous threat to their experiment of democracy—a Parliamentary Commission granted Governor Coddington, whose autocratic rule threatened the future of Rhode Island, on April 3, 1751, which installed him as governor of Aquidneck for life. “Mr. Clark[e] was the sole agent of the island towns, to procure a repeal of Mr. Coddington’s commission” and “Mr. Williams was the sole agent of Providence and Warwick, to procure a new charter for these two towns.”\textsuperscript{87}

Dr. Clarke published his book \textit{Ill News from New-England: or a Narative of New-Englands Persecution...Also four conclusions touching the faith and order of the Gospel of Christ out of his last Will and Testament, confirmed and justified} shortly after he arrived in London.

The work clearly demonstrated “Clarke’s subjection to an orderly state” showing that, to “him the secular rule is ordained of God, but it should not interfere with one’s religious convictions.”\textsuperscript{88} “Both the church and the status of mankind, he argue[d], are ‘a two fold administration of

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 200.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 201.
\textsuperscript{87} Asher, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
power suitable to the two fold state of being of man.’ Love and conscience are emphasized by Clarke as inducements toward state honor and subjection rather than as engagements by force and fear. He implore[d] rulers to distinguish between these two ‘administrations of Christ’s power here on earth’ and to leave the spiritual realm to the control of God’s Spirit.”

“The book combines a spirited defense on liberty of individual conscience toward God in religious matters, with pleas directed to England’s consideration in such matters.”

“While the letter appears as an apology for the Baptist faith, it seems that Clarke probably intends it as a timely and effective instrument, aimed at drawing British sympathy.” Of Dr. Clarke’s book, Louis Franklin Asher commented, in part:

“Clearly and forcefully, Clarke calls attention to what he conceives as the necessary separation between the two real administrations of Christ’s power as exercised in the world—that is, the sword of steel, ‘whose Sword-bearers you are,’ as he styles the magistrates. The other administration he calls Scripture, the ‘sword that proceeds out of the mouth of his servants, the word of truth.’ Thus Clarke views ‘this spiritual administration as far as it concerns the outward man…[as] managed not by a sword of Steel,’ he argues, but by the Scripture of truth.

“In a bold but subservient manner, Clarke sets forth four simple but imploring proposals to the British Counsel of State. He begs the magistracy not to forcibly inhibit spiritual ministers but allow time to minister according to each one’s own conscience toward God. In so doing, he advises—even if they are heretics—they merely represent the tares among the wheat, to which Christ referred in his prohibition of their harvest or persecution by the secular arm of government. Clarke then asks that the secular power or ‘sword’ be withheld from use against the spiritual ‘tares’ rather than heaping abuse on them. In the fourth proposal, Clarke compares his majesty to that of a prophetic nursing Father in the Old Testament; thus he pleads for encouragement by spiritual ministers....

“[Included in the book is a letter to the Puritan clergy at Massachusetts.] That letter served as a fitting climax to Clarke’s encounter with the Bay officials and, it seems, he made use of it to maneuver the Rhode Island Colony into an advantageous posture with the English government. [He pointed out his persecution, contrasting it

89 Ibid.
90 Ibid., p. 66.
91 Ibid., p. 67.
with] “the much kinder treatment and other ‘curtesies with far greater liberties in point of conscience,’ which previously the Puritan messengers had enjoyed on their tour through Rhode Island....

“He also] denounces the Puritan church order ..., and [t]he firm allegiance of the Puritans to the magistrates in matters of religion.... Clarke’s entire letter appears as a scorching public censure against the Massachusetts Puritanical system and its integrated form of civil power over ecclesiastical liberties.

“Never, under any circumstances, Clarke preached, should Christians force their persuasion on others nor should they resort to obeying magistrates in matters of religious concerns.”*92

Through Mr. Clarke’s mediation and statesmanship, Coddington’s commission was revoked in 1652. Mr. Clarke was then further commissioned to stay in England to obtain a better and more substantial safeguard against “any further encroachments on their new [] way of life.”*93 Mr. Williams returned to New England in the early summer of 1654.

Mr. Clarke remained in England until, on July 8, 1663, he secured a new charter from Charles II. “By this Charter all the powers of government were conferred on the Colony, the King not having reserved to himself the right of revising its proceedings.”*94 This charter was in effect until the constitution, which was adopted in November 1842, became operative the first Tuesday of May 1843. In addition to other matters, the charter cleared up land disputes with Massachusetts and some of the other colonies, provided for the organization of the government, and provided for freedom of conscience.*95 That charter stated, in part:

Inhabitants of Rhode Island “pursuing, with peaceable and loyal minds, their sober, serious, and religious intentions, of godly edifying themselves, and one another, in the holy Christian faith and worship, as they were persuaded ... did ... transport themselves out of this kingdom of England into America,” and did then “leave their desirable stations and habitations, and with excessive labor and travel, hazard and charge did transport themselves into the midst of Indian natives” ... “whereby, as is hoped, there may, in time, by the blessing of God upon their endeavors be laid a sure foundation of happiness to all America:

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*92 Ibid., pp. 67-68.
*93 Ibid., p. 73.
*94 Callender, Appendix XXI, pp. 261-262.
And whereas, in their humble address, they have freely declared, that it is much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) to hold forth a lively experiment, that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained, and that among our English subjects, with a full liberty in religious concerns; and that true piety rightly grounded upon gospel principles, will give the best and greatest security to sovereignty, and will lay in the hearts of men the strongest obligations to true loyalty: ... and to secure them in the free exercise and enjoyment of all their civil and religious rights, appertaining to them, as our loving subjects; and to preserve unto them that liberty in true Christian faith and worship of God, ... that no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter shall be any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion in matters of religion, and do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony.”

The charter granted “unprecedented liberties in religious concerns. Moreover representation for the people and the limit of power to public officials provided a basic check and balance to popular sovereignty. The Royal Charter of 1663 proved to be distinctive, installing safeguards in the election process through the governing body of the State Assembly, made up of a governor, deputy-governor, assistants, and representatives from each of the towns,” each elected by the people.

The most important Biblical principle of the government they founded was incorporated into the supreme law of the United States of America by the First Amendment to United States Constitution.

Sadly, the founding documents or America, although the best governing documents ever conceived, as a whole fell short of the ideal. For example, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution blended Enlightenment and Biblical principles. The Founding Fathers hoped for virtue, not piety. The Founding Fathers desire was to secure the “happiness of man,” whereas, under the Portsmouth Compact and the Rhode Island Charter, the goal was the Glory of God; they desired that the colony be under God and his principles contained in the Bible.

96 See Callender, Appendix No. XXI, pp. 241-262 for the complete charter; see also Beller, America in Crimson Red, Appendix D, pp. 505-506.
97 Asher, pp. 78-79.
As to the effect of the Rhode Island government thus established, John Callender wrote in 1838:

“The civil State has flourished, as well as if secured by ever so many penal laws, and in inquisition to put them to execution. Our civil officers have been chosen out of every religious society, and the public peace has been as well preserved, and the public counsels as well conducted, as we could have expected, had we been assisted by ever so many religious tests.

“All profaneness and immorality are punished by the laws made to suppress them; and while these laws are well executed, speculative opinions or modes of worship can never disturb or injure the peace of a State that allows all its subjects an equal liberty of conscience. Indeed, it is not variety of opinions, or separation in worship, that makes disorders and confusions in government. It is the unjust, unnatural, and absurd attempt to force all to be of one opinion, or to feign and dissemble that they are; or the cruel and impious punishing those, who cannot change their opinions without light or reason, and will not dissemble against all reason and conscience. It is the wicked attempt to force men to worship God in a way they believe He hath neither commanded nor will accept; and the restraining them from worshipping Him in a method they think He has instituted and made necessary for them, and in which alone they can be sincere worshippers, and accepted of God; in which alone, they can find comfort and peace of conscience, and approve themselves before God; in which alone, they can be honest men and good Christians. Persecution will ever occasion confusion and disorder, or if every tongue is forced to confess, and every knee to bow to the power of the sword: this itself is the greatest of all disorders, and the worst of confusions in the Kingdom of Christ Jesus.

“[T]his Colony with some since formed on the same model, have proved that the terrible fears that barbarity would break in, where no particular forms of worship or discipline are established by the civil power, are really vain and groundless; and that Christianity can subsist without a national Church, or visible Head, and without being incorporated into the State. It subsisted for the first three hundred years; yea, in opposition and defiance to all the powers of hell and earth. And it is amazing to hear those who plead for penal laws, and the magistrate’s right and duty to govern the Church of Christ, to hear such persons call those early times the golden age of Christianity.”

Mr. Clarke, on his return to Rhode Island, was elected Deputy-Governor three successive years. “He continued the esteemed pastor of the first Baptist Church of Newport, till his death” on

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98 Callender, pp. 163-164.
April 20, 1676. Of Mr. Clarke, Isaac Backus wrote: He “left as spotless a character as any man I know of.” The testimony which Backus proceeds to give of the purity of [Mr. Clarke’s] character and to his good name, even among his enemies, has been fully corroborated by later writers. “To no man, except Roger Williams, is Rhode Island more indebted than to him.”

“An eminent American historian justly observed:

“The annals of Rhode-Island, if written in the spirit of philosophy, would exhibit the forms of society under a peculiar aspect. Had the territory of the State corresponded to the importance and singularity of the principles of its early existence, the world would have been filled with wonder at the phenomena of its early history.”

An example of the manner in which Rhode Island honored the doctrine of freedom of conscience is the way they upheld the standard in regards to the Quakers. Other colonies persecuted the Quakers from 1656 until 1661. Massachusetts hanged four Quakers who returned to the colony after being banished. The Commissioners of the United Colonies threatened Rhode Island with cutting off all commerce or trade with them if Rhode Island did not likewise persecute the Quakers by enacting penal legislation against them. Rhode Island “refused, and pointed out that it had no law for punishing people because of their utterances concerning the things and ways of God, as to salvation and to eternal condition.” The Commissioners of Rhode Island notified John Clarke. As a result, King Charles II ordered, “neither capital nor corporal punishment should be inflicted on Quakers, but that offenders should be sent to England.” This decree of the King probably saved the lives of other dissenters.

Not all that was happening was for naught. Isaac Backus wrote, “It is readily granted that the sentiments of Mr. Williams and Mr. Clarke, about religious liberty, have had a great spread since that

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99 Ibid., Appendix IX, p. 211.
100 Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, p. 348.
101 Ibid., fn. 1, pp. 348-349.
102 Callender, p. 212.
105 Callender, Appendix XIX, pp. 234-236.
day, so that men of a contrary mind cannot carry their oppressive schemes so far now as they did then,”\textsuperscript{106} but they still had a ways to go to achieve religious liberty. It was not until 1838 that John Callender declared “[t]he principles of religious freedom, which they [of Rhode Island] clearly and consistently maintained, are now the rule of action adopted by all Christian sects.”\textsuperscript{107}


\textsuperscript{107} Callender, Appendix XIX, p. 238.
Chapter 5
The Separates and the Baptists in New England

“Congregationalism claimed a large class of inferior church members by 1720, baptized into the churches without conversion.” Generally speaking, by 1740, religious decay had spread throughout New England. However, “the relentless preaching of Jonathan Edwards of complete surrender to the will of God introduced the novel phenomenon of revival in Massachusetts.” Although the revival spread down the Connecticut Valley into Connecticut, the initial revival was of short duration ... and did not touch the people of New England generally.

Then, George Whitefield, the world-famous English evangelist arrived at Newport. Great crowds greeted Whitefield wherever he went to preach. In Connecticut, he was greeted with great enthusiasm. All Connecticut was at his feet.

As a result of that great revival, many were converted and churches experienced unprecedented growth. The Great Awakening emphasized individual conversion and the new birth. “[T]he new converts were dubbed ‘New Lights’ by their critics because the awakened people emphasized the immediacy of the Holy Spirit’s illumination and leadership in their personal lives.” The members of the old churches were called “Old Lights.” “The former favored Whitefield’s type of evangelism and the idea of the regenerate church; the latter opposed revivalism and defended the state church order.”

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1 Lumpkin, p. 2.
2 Ibid.
3 Asher, p. 21: Between 1635 and 1640 Congregationalism had been planted in the Connecticut colony. Callender, pp. 67-68: “As the country was more fully discovered, the lands on Connecticut river grew so famous for their fruitfulness, and convenience to keep cattle, that great numbers from New-Town, Dorchester, &c., removed there, under the conduct of Mr. Hains, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Ludlow, and Mr. Hooker, &c., and through inexpressible hardships, through famine, and weariness, and perils of the enemy, they at length settled at Hartford, 1635 and 1636, which was the beginning of the Connecticut colony; and, in 1637, New-Haven colony was begun by a people directly from England[.]”
4 Lumpkin, p. 2.
5 Ibid., pp. 3-5.
6 Ibid., p. 7.
7 Ibid.
Many itinerant preachers arose because of this revival. Consequently, the General Court of Connecticut “forbade all itinerant preaching under penalty of loss of the right to collect one’s legal salary and imprisonment. Itinerant lay preachers or strange ministers were to be silenced or expelled from the colony.”

“In Connecticut, legal action was taken against the revivalists, their churches were deprived of legal status, and some of the preachers were thrown into jail.”

The Great Awakening brought as many as 50,000 new converts, and brought into being, between 1740 and 1760, one hundred and fifty new Congregationalist churches and added to the number of Separatist and Baptist churches. “It brought the personal and pietistic religious tradition into a section previously dominated without challenge by Calvinistic rationalization…. As always and everywhere, the New England situation shows that such separation and disestablishment arose out of religion and not its opposite.”

A number of New Lights who initially tried to influence the church to return to the concept of the pure church were forced out of the established churches. The term “Separates” referred to those who believed that the church should only include regenerate members and those who separated from the state-churches on this conviction. The Separate movement started in Connecticut and moved to Massachusetts. Separate churches began to appear at various towns.

There was great prejudice against Baptists. England forced New England to exempt Baptists from taxation in 1728, but the establishment found ways to circumvent this exemption. Operating clandestinely because of opposition by the authorities, Baptist preachers had come into Connecticut from Rhode Island, as they had done in Massachusetts, starting in 1674. They made some converts and even started some churches in Connecticut in 1704, 1710, 1735, and 1740. All dissenters were taxed to support the established church unless certified to pay the tax to their own churches. To be exempted they had to regularly attend their own churches.

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8 Ibid., p. 8; see also for the actual wording of the act against itinerant and other preachers, Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 2, pp. 44-46.
9 Marnell, p. 87.
10 Ibid.
Chapter 5: The Separates and the Baptists in New England

church and live within five miles of their meeting place. Those who belonged to no church were also assessed the tax. However, Separates were not given the privileges accorded Baptists, Quakers, and Anglicans.

One of the most prominent of the Separates was Isaac Backus. Although he spent much of his ministry in Massachusetts, he was a native of Norwich, Connecticut. In the new movement, he became the leading figure; and his shift from the Separate to the Baptist camp is central to the religious history of New England.

Mr. Backus was saved in 1741. On August 24, 1741, Mr. Backus, in his own words, speaking of himself, realized:

“that he had done his utmost to make himself better, without obtaining any such thing; but that he was a guilty sinner in the hands of a holy God, who had a right to do with him as seemed good in God’s sight; which he then yielded to and all his objections against it were silenced. And soon upon this a way of relief was opened to his soul, which he never had any true idea of before, wherein truth and justice shine with luster, in the bestowment of free mercy and salvation upon objects who have nothing in themselves but badness. And while this divine glory engaged all his attention, his burthen of guilt and evil dispositions was gone, and such ideas and inclinations were implanted in his heart as were never there before, but which have never been rooted out since, though often overclouded.”

Two years later, he, his mother, and some of his other relatives walked out of the established Norwich Church they belonged to and started holding meetings of their own. They left the church because the church voted to admit new members by a majority vote without evidence of conversion, the minister appeared to think that the Lord’s Supper was a converting ordinance, and the church exhibited a “strong affection for the Saybrook scheme.”

A revolution had begun.

“The essence of the religious revolution which the Separate movement began (and the Baptists finished) lay in church government and not in theology—though it became necessary eventually to modify Calvinism in order that it might conform more nearly to the unforeseen ramifications of the new practices in church discipline and polity. The

11 Lumpkin, pp. 11-13.
major issues involved in church government were the autonomy and purity of the church, the nature of the ministry, and the relationship between Church and State.\footnote{McLoughlin, Isaac Backus and the American Piestic Tradition, pp. 23-24.}

The church and state were interwoven in New England. Into the eighteenth century, the Puritan tradition continued in greater strength in Connecticut than elsewhere. The state taxed all citizens to support religion. In 1708, the Connecticut legislature ordained the Saybrook Platform. Under it, county associations of ministers met frequently to deal with matters of common interest, regional bodies called consociations were to handle all kinds of ecclesiastical difficulties, and a general state association exercised a general superintendency over churches and ministers. Under the Saybrook Platform, the county associations approved, licensed, and ordained the ministers of the parishes.\footnote{Lumpkin, p. 11; Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 1, pp. 472-474; Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 2, p. 319.} The state supported the actions of the county associations, and could deny the right of a minister to preach and collect his salary.\footnote{McLoughlin, Isaac Backus and the American Piestic Tradition, p. 24.}

Various struggles arose. In 1742 and 1743, laws were passed forbidding itinerant preachers from preaching without permission of the parish minister with penalty of imprisonment, excluding settled ministers who preached in any other parish without consent of the parish minister from any benefit of the laws for their support, removing from Connecticut any minister from any other colony who preached in Connecticut, and giving the legislature authority to license dissenting churches which complied with the British Toleration Act of 1689.\footnote{Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 2, pp. 319-320.} The Legislature disciplined members of the Council and General Assembly known to sympathize with the New Lights. “Unauthorized schools and colleges were forbidden and only university graduates were eligible for ministerial standing before the law.”\footnote{Lumpkin, p. 15; see also Backus, A History of New England..., Volume 2, p. 57, fn. 3.} The county associations began to act. The New Haven Consociation in 1742 expelled pastors of established churches for preaching to a group of Separates and Baptists against the wishes of the established minister. In Canterbury, Windham County the majority of the
church, New Lights, voted for a certain man to be pastor, but the Old Lights who were the majority in the parish voted for another. By law, both the church and parish had to concur, but the Windham Consociation declared that the minority of Old Lights in the church were the true church and ordained their choice.\textsuperscript{19} In Plainfield, the Windham Consociation “reversed the position it had taken in Canterbury and sided with a minority of Old Lights in the church to choose an Old Light minister over the objection of the majority of New Lights in the parish.”\textsuperscript{20}

The inequities and the persecutions by the established church and civil government resulted in more and more defections to the New Light position. The civil government used repressive measures to compel the Separates to return to the fold. “Revivalistic ministers were shut out of meeting houses; members were moved from civic office and, when they refused to pay taxes for support of the regular ministry, imprisoned.”\textsuperscript{21} At first most Separates that left the state-churches seemed destined to become Baptists. However, great disagreement arose between those who still adhered to infant baptism and those who insisted upon believer’s baptism—baptism after a confession of faith only. Because of this disagreement, the Baptist members left the Separate churches and formed their own churches.

This Separate movement had enduring consequences. One writer appropriately noted:

“[T]he Separatist movement is not appreciated as it deserves. We have too nearly forgotten our obligations to those men who dared to break away from the corrupt and worldly churches of the Standing Order, though they were armed with all the power of the State, of which they were a part, and to establish other churches in which vital godliness was the condition of membership. It was a transition movement, it is true, and of necessity only temporary, but its results were enduring. Many of the Baptist churches in New England spring from it directly, and through them, indirectly, almost all the rest; and other evangelical churches are largely indebted to it for their vitality and efficiency.—ED.”\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{22} Backus, \textit{A History of New England...}, Volume 2, fn. 1, p. 64.
From the point of his conversion, Isaac Backus gradually became a leader of the Baptist movement. He was asked to preach to a church at Titicut in 1748, a revival resulted, people were saved, and a Separate church was formed in February, 1748, in defiance of the authorities. Mr. Backus and sixteen men signed the church covenant which provided for election and dismissal of the ministers, deacons, and elders by a majority vote, repudiated the claim that the minister was superior in authority to the brethren, stated that the minister was to be supported by free contribution of the members, and asserted the priesthood of all believers and the right and duty of all members to exercise any ability they had to preach or pray in public.\textsuperscript{23}

Mr. Backus was opposed by scurrilous opposition. As he said, “I had many things thrown upon me to represent my Character odious and hinder me in this glorious Work.” Lies were told about him, such as that he had a wife and children in the country, that he had “bastards in this place or that, that there was a girl or two with his child.”\textsuperscript{24}

The members of the church were taxed to support the established church. The church protested the tax, but parish committee refused to exempt Mr. Backus and his followers from religious taxes. Their rationale was basically that the golden rule required them to do so, and that the committee would want their neighbors to force them to pay such a tax if they were in error. “[N]either doth God himself countenance or give Liberty to any men to follow the ‘Dictates of a misguided Eronius Conscience.’”\textsuperscript{25} The reply gave an argument over the separation of church and state with which Backus had to wrestle the rest of his life.

\textquote{Oppression ‘can’t mean and intend that Tis unwarrantable or sinfull for men to urge and press others to a compliance with their Duty as it is pointed out by the Laws of God or the good and wholesome Laws of the Land and in case men through obstinacy and willfulness [refuse] and so will not make good either Lawfull Contracts [&] Covenants the original good and Design of their being incorporated into Distinct

\textsuperscript{23} McLoughlin, Isaac Backus and the American Piestic Tradition, pp. 42-43.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 46.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 52.
[religious] societies [or parishes] and so Tis no oppression....’ Under the Golden Rule the committee said it would want their neighbors to force them to do their duty if they were in error. ‘Liberty of Conscience according to the word of god is not for men to Live as they list or Do as they please while they maintain Erors in Judgment, Disown the truth of god, Exclaim against a faithful ministry, make Light of that good order and government which Jesus Christ has set up in his church; neither does God himself countenance or give Liberty to any men to follow the Dictates of a misguided Eronius Conscience....’ ‘Let it be observed that there is a great difference between persecution and prosecution.’”

In February 1749, Backus was arrested for not paying a ministerial tax, but someone paid it for him, and he was released. Other members of the church were imprisoned or had their property confiscated for failing to pay the tax.

“Three-quarters of a century were to pass and Backus was to be in his grave before the people of Massachusetts yielded to the radical New Light view that the state should allow individuals to ‘act and Conduct as they pleas’ in matters of religion even if it meant imperiling their souls, the destruction of the parish system, the end of compulsory religious taxation, and the abandonment of the Puritan ideal of a corporate Christian commonwealth.”

Backus struggled with the issue of baptism, studied Scripture, rejected infant baptism, and was baptized by dipping on August 22, 1751. He set out to refute the anti-pedobaptist position by first turning to the Bible, and then to the claims of Baptist scholars in England that infant baptism was a corruption brought into the Christian church in the 2nd or 3rd century. What he found surprised him.

Next, Backus examined the Covenant Theology which lay at the heart of New England Puritanism. The relevance of this theology to Backus was mainly its effect on the church-state issue.

First, “[T]he Jewish church was clearly a national church, a theocracy in which Moses and Aaron ruled together, and thus the Puritans were able to utilize the covenant theology to justify their ecclesiastical laws

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., pp. 52-53.
and their system of territorial parishes and religious taxes. Second, the covenant theology provided the Puritans with justifications for the Halfway Covenant, thus polluting the purity of the mystical body of Christ. And in the third place the covenant theology, by emphasizing that grace ran ‘through the loins of godly parents,’ that the baptized children of visible saints were somehow more likely than others to obtain salvation, thereby established a kind of hereditary spiritual aristocracy; it also undermined the sovereignty of God by implying that God was bound by this covenant to save certain persons rather than others. [Etc.]

The Puritans supported the unity of the Abrahamic Covenant in Romans 11.17.

“Here, the apostle Paul spoke of the Christian covenant as being grafted on to the Jewish covenant as a branch is grafted on to an olive tree, from whence the Puritans ‘argued the right of professors now to baptize their children, because the Jews circumcised theirs.’ This Backus rejected as misinterpretation. ‘The Jews were broken off thro’ unbelief, and the Gentiles were grafted in, and stand only by faith.’ Faith was essential to baptism. What Puritans stressed as organic continuity, Backus and the Baptists stressed as a complete break.”

Backus concluded that the Separates must explicitly reject the Covenant Theology, the whole conception of the corporate Christian state, which the Puritans had so painstakingly constructed in the wilderness of New England. Backus decided against infant baptism and was baptized. “[H]e rejected the Covenant Theology of the Puritans by arguing as the Baptists had long done that the Bible contained two covenants, the old Covenant of Works made with the Jews, and the Covenant of Grace made with those who believe in Christ.…” “[T]he Puritans had confused the gospel of grace with the doctrine of works and transformed the gospel church of visible saints into a national church with a birthright membership.” “Backus and the Baptists stressed the discontinuity, the antithetical nature of the two, the complete and distinct break between the past and the present dispensations. That Americans were ready to grasp this new outlook after 1740 and to pursue it to its logical conclusions marks

30 Ibid., pp. 62-64.
31 Ibid., p. 76.
32 Ibid., pp. 73-76.
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the real break with the Old World, the medieval mind and the Puritan ethos....”

At first the Separatists and Baptists desired to meet together. This proved untenable.

“[They] were bound together by the closest ties. The [Baptists] left the Separate Congregational churches with no ill feeling but with heartiest love, and this love continued, on both sides, after their separation. Their members had been converted together in the Great Awakening; together they had come out from the Standing Order; together they had suffered and were still suffering for the truth; they had the same enemies and oppressors; they felt the force of the same unjust and cruel laws; their plundered goods were sold at the same auctions, and their bodies confined in the same prisons; they had many kindred views and feelings, by which they sympathized most closely, and in which there were no others to sympathize with them. Moreover, they mutually desired inter-communion. Council after council and conference after conference recommended it, and there seemed to be no voice against it. And yet it failed. Practical difficulties arose.... The truth could not be escaped that Baptist churches, by renouncing infant baptism and sprinkling, and then practically recognizing them again as a proper declaration of discipleship and initiation to membership in the visible church, placed themselves in a position of direct inconsistency. One by one, reluctantly, but at last universally, they abandoned the untenable ground.—ED.”

By 1754, “the alliance between the two groups within Separatism was practically at an end, and the Baptist members left to form new churches or join existing ones.”

A Baptist church was instituted in Middleborough, Massachusetts by a number of brethren led by Mr. Backus from the Titicut Separatist church who were convinced communion should be limited to believers baptized upon a profession of their own faith. On July 23, 1756, Mr. Backus was installed as their pastor.

“He ... published a discourse from Gal. iv. 31, to shew that Abraham’s first son that was circumcised was the son of the bond-woman, an emblem of the national church of the Jews; in distinction from regenerate souls, the spiritual seed of Abraham, of whom the Christian

33 Ibid., p. 74.
35 Lumpkin, p. 18.
church was constituted; into which neither natural birth, nor the doings of others, can rightly bring any one soul, without its own consent. Upon these principles was the first Baptist church in Plymouth county then founded[.]

The revival died out almost as fast as it had appeared. Conversions became rare. People turned their attention to politics and controversy. The Separate churches and groups either died, or found their way into the Baptist camp. The Baptist denomination experienced an unprecedented growth. In 1740 no more than six Calvinistic Baptist churches existed in New England; but by 1800 there were more than 325 Baptist churches, most of them Calvinistic.

The Warren Association, an association of Baptist churches, was formed in 1770. The main goal was to obtain religious liberty. This marked an important movement in the history of New England. An advertisement to all Baptists in New England was published requesting them to bring in exact accounts of their cases of persecution to the first annual meeting on September 11, 1770. The establishment feared the association and countered by dealing deceitfully with it and spreading lies about the association.

Isaac Backus was the key member of the grievance committee of the Warren Association in September 1771. “[He soon] became the principal spokesman for the Baptists in their efforts to disestablish the Puritan churches. As such he did more than any other man to formulate and publicize the evangelical position on Church and State which was ultimately to prevail throughout America.”

“An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty Against the Oppression of the Present Day” was the most important of the 37 tracts which Backus published during his lifetime and was central to the whole movement for separation of church and state in America. “It remains the best exposition of the 18th century

37 Lumpkin, p. 20.
In that tract, Backus argued, among other things:

“Basic to the Baptist position was the belief that all direct connections between the state and institutionalized religion must be broken in order that America might become a truly Christian country. Backus, like Jefferson and Madison, believed that ‘Truth is great and will prevail’—but by ‘Truth’ he meant the revealed doctrines of grace. His fundamental assumption was that ‘God has appointed two different kinds of government in the world which are different in their nature and ought never to be confounded together; one of which is called civil, the other ecclesiastical government.’ The two had been ‘confounded together’ by the Emperor Constantine and the Papacy and had ultimately been brought to New England by the Puritans ‘who had not taken up the cross so as to separate from the national church before they came away.’ A ‘Brief view of how civil and ecclesiastical affairs are blended together among us [in 1773] to the depriving of many of God’s people of that liberty of conscience which he [God] has given us’ utilized also the long-forgotten arguments of Roger Williams to defend the doctrines of separation.”

Amidst persecutions of Baptists for failing to pay ministerial taxes, the association met on September 1773 and voted to refrain from giving any more certificates for tax exemption to pay the established minister. Backus listed the reasons why they would no longer obey “a law requiring annual certificates to the other denomination.” “Jefferson in his preamble to the Religious Liberty Act of Virginia and Madison in his famous Remonstrance of 1785 utilized essentially deistic arguments based upon reason and natural law. Backus’s arguments were pure pietism[:]

1. [To get a certificate] “implies an acknowledgement that religious rulers had a right to set one sect over another, which they did not have.”
2. Civil rulers have no right to impose religious taxes. 3. Such practice emboldens the “actors to assume God’s prerogative.” 4. For the church, which is presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, to place her trust and love upon others for temporal support is playing the harlot. 5. “[B]y the law of Christ every man is not only allowed but also required to judge for himself concerning the circumstantials as well as the essentials of

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42 Ibid., p. 126.
religion, and to act according to the full persuasion of his own mind.”
The practice tends to envy, hypocrisy, and confusion, and the ruin of
civil society.43

“An Appeal to the Public was pietistic America’s declaration of
spiritual independence. Like Jefferson’s Declaration three years
later, it contained a legal brief against a long train of abuses, a
theoretical defense of principle, and a moral argument for civil
disobedience.”44 No answer was ever given to “An Appeal to the
Public” which was published in Boston. The collection of taxes for
support of the established religion continued with confiscation of
property and imprisonments occurring.45

Attempts to gain religious freedom continued. The Warren
Association sent Isaac Backus to the Continental Congress in 1774
where he met with an Association of other Baptist churches from
several adjacent colonies which had elected a large committee to
assist. They presented their appeal for religious liberty. John
Adams and Samuel Adams, neither of whom was a friend to
separation of church and state, falsely asserted that Massachusetts
had only a “very slender” establishment, hardly to be called an
establishment, that the General Court was clear of blame and
always there to hear complaints and grant reasonable help.46 While
Mr. Backus was gone, the lie was spread that he had gone to
Philadelphia to break the union of the colonies.

All the time these happenings were going on, the issues were
being debated in the newspapers. The Warren Association
continued to publish to the public instances of persecution as well
as to actively seek religious liberty from the government. The
Warren Association presented a memorial on July 19, 1775,
requesting religious liberty and pointing out the inconsistency of
rebelling against England for taxing without representation while
doing the same thing in the colonies. Ultimately, nothing came of
this. In 1777, Mr. Backus prepared an address, which was
supported by a large number from various denominations, urging

Religious Liberty.”
46 Ibid., pp. 200-202, and fn. 1, p. 201.
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religious liberty to the Assembly which had been empowered to frame a new Constitution which was accomplished in 1780. The Third Article of the new constitution “excluded all subordination of one religious sect to another,” but imprisonment, and confiscation of property from men who refused to acknowledge such subordination continued.47

In 1778, Mr. Backus wrote “Government and Liberty Described and Ecclesiastical Tyranny Exposed.” He quoted Charles Chauncy:

“We are in principle against all civil establishments in religion. It does not appear to us that God has entrusted the State with a right to make religious establishments.... We claim no right to desire the interposition of the State to establish that mode of worship, [church] government, or discipline we apprehend is most agreeable to the mind of Christ. We desire no other liberty than to be left unrestrained in the exercise of our principles in so far as we are good members of society.” This, said Backus, was all that Baptists asked. 48

Perhaps as a result of this tract, the General Assembly tried to conciliate the Baptists by appointing a Baptist minister to deliver the election sermon in May 1779. That minister, in his sermon, remained faithful to the principle of separation.”49

Massachusetts began efforts to adopt a new constitution in 1777. The proposed constitution was defeated, but a new effort which began in 1779 proved successful. John Adams worked against the Baptist position at the convention. Mr. Backus, although not a delegate, went to Boston to stand for Baptist principles during the constitutional convention. He lobbied, wrote newspaper articles, published new tracts, and informed his brethren of what was going on.50

Mr. Backus worked at the convention for a Bill of Rights. The first basic rights he listed were:

“All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, among which are the enjoying

49 Ibid., 141.
50 Ibid., p. 142.
and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.”

“As God is the only worthy object of all religious worship, and nothing can be true religion but a voluntary obedience unto his revealed will, of which each rational soul has an equal right to judge for itself; every person has an unalienable right to act in all religious affairs according to the full persuasion of his own mind, where others are not injured thereby. And civil rulers are so far from having any right to empower any person or persons to judge for others in such affairs, and to enforce their judgments with the sword, that their power ought to be exerted to protect all persons and societies, within their jurisdiction, from being injured or interrupted in the free enjoyment of his right, under any pretence whatsoever.”

Backus’ position, although seeking the same end, was from a different point of view than that of George Mason, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

“Three years earlier George Mason, with Jefferson’s approval and Madison’s amendments, had written a statement on religious freedom into the Bill of Rights in the Virginia Constitution:

‘That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other.’

“Backus’s tone was that of a New Light pietist; Mason’s that of an Enlightened latitudinarian. The Virginians spoke of the ‘Creator,’ Backus spoke of ‘God.’ Mason stressed reason and duty, Backus stressed ‘religious worship.’ Backus referred directly to God’s ‘revealed will’ and to the ‘soul.’ Mason omitted any reference to them.

“The difference was obvious and fundamental. The Virginia separationists were interested in leaving the mind free to follow its own rational direction. The Massachusetts pietists believed that separation was necessary in order to leave the ‘rational soul’ free to find ‘true religion’ as expressed in the Bible, ‘the revealed will’ of God. Implicit in both statements was a belief in God, in natural law, in man’s ability to find them. But the deistic separationists of Virginia trusted entirely to man’s reason and free will. The pietists insisted that only through the supernatural grace of God would men find the Truth that is in Jesus

51 Ibid., pp. 142-144.
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Christ. Though both views were individualistic, the deist was anthropocentric, the pietist theocentric.”

The humanistic view of Mason, Jefferson, and Madison that man, through his reason could successfully address all his problems, and the humanistic goal of the “happiness of man” were inherent in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the two greatest governing documents of all time, although blended with Biblical principles. Neither the name of Jesus nor the goal of “the glory of God” was in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution.

The Warren Association, on September 13, 1780, published a remonstrance, authored by Mr. Backus, against Article Three of the proposed constitution. The remonstrance stated, among other things, that the provision therein requiring the majority of each parish “the exclusive right of covenan ting for the rest with religious teachers,” thereby granting a power no man has a right to; and further stating that “the Legislature, by this Article, are empowered to compel both civil and religious societies to make what they shall judge to be suitable provision for religious teachers in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily.”

However, support for ministry could only be through voluntary support, not coercion that denied freedom of conscience. Backus and other Baptists “did not object to the view that Massachusetts should remain a Christian commonwealth; piety, religion, and morality could only be maintained with the institution of the public worship of God and of public instructions in piety, religion, and morality” were “generally diffused throughout the community.”

“Jefferson, Mason, and Madison, designing the creation of a secular state, not only opposed all such practices but also objected to the use of chaplains in the Congress and armed forces, the authorization by the state of certain days of fasting, thanksgiving, and prayer; and the compulsory religious services in state universities. Jefferson explicitly stated that America was not and ought not to be a Christian country….

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52 Ibid., pp. 142-144.
53 Again, the Constitution is the greatest governing document ever conceived by a nation, but the Biblical principle of “leaven”—bad doctrine always corrupts the good—has proven again, by the national experience, to be true. To understand and address a problem, one must be willing to face all the facts head on.
Backus never qualified his belief in a Christian commonwealth. He consistently argued for ‘a sweet harmony between’ Church and State. ‘It is readily granted,’ he wrote in 1784, ‘that piety, religion, and morality are essentially necessary for the good order of civil society.’

The Baptists fought on. They took their case to the courts. Attleboro, Massachusetts assessed a religious tax on everyone. Some members of a Baptist church in Attleboro refused to file a certificate and refused to pay the tax. The property of some was sold to pay the tax. Elijah Balkcom, after being arrested, paid the tax under protest, and then sued to test the constitutionality of Article Three. They won an initial victory in county court.

However, the case was overturned two years later on appeal of the favorable trial court decision in the case of Cutter v. Frost. Cutter also held that only incorporated religious societies were entitled to legal recognition. Since most, if not all, of the Baptist churches in Massachusetts were unincorporated, they were not qualified for exemption. A lawyer advised Mr. Backus and the grievance committee to file the certificates, pay their taxes, and sue if the parish treasurer refused to turn the money over to their own pastor. The committee voted to follow this advice, Mr. Backus casting the lone negative vote. This was a reversal of the 1773 stand against giving of the certificates. “The spirit of the times did not call for martyrdom and fanaticism. The other members of the committee were more interested in improving the status and respectability of their denomination.”

As a result, three cases were brought in three different courts and the Baptists prevailed at trial court and on appeal. In other cases over the years, much time and expense was expended to get tax money earmarked for Baptist ministers. One case required fourteen lawsuits before the town treasurer yielded the taxes. In some towns, when it was shown the Baptists would sue, the “Standing Order” ceased to argue the matter.

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Mr. Backus, being disappointed with his twelve-year battle against certificates, turned his zeal to other outlets—to fighting the threat to Baptist doctrines.

As new Baptist churches continued to be constituted, and the number of Baptists continued to increase, the persecution continued in Connecticut. In 1784, Connecticut made a new law continuing the support of established ministers by taxation. However, another act exempted all persons from that tax who filed a certificate to the effect that they regularly attended and supported worship services in any type of gospel ministry. Mr. Backus said of this act, “[I]s not this a mark of the beast? ... Blood hath ever followed the support of worship by the sword of the magistrate…. And how can any man keep himself unspotted from the world, if he forces the world to support his worship?" 60

Then, in May of 1791, Connecticut passed an addition to the ineffectual law of 1784 which held that “no certificate could be legal, until it was approbated by two justices of the peace, or only by one, if there was no more in the town where the dissenter lived,” and that such certificate was ineffective as to taxes granted before the certificate was lodged. 61 However, after a remonstrance and petition were presented, the law was repealed in October 1791 and another law made to allow every man to give in his own certificate, if he dissented from the ruling sect.

The quest for religious freedom in Connecticut continued until 1818 when state support was withdrawn from the Congregationalist Church. 62

62 Marnell, p. 114.
Chapter 6

From New England to the South

By 1755, only a few Baptist churches had been constituted in the South. This was about to change. The change came partly as a result of the Great Awakening.

Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, both members of Congregationalist churches in Connecticut, separated from the established churches, later became Baptists, as had Isaac Backus, and became chief instruments in carrying the Great Awakening to the South. The Separates were subject to persecution—fines, imprisonment, placing in stocks, and whipping—for their defiance of the laws of the commonwealth. They were subjected to a more intense persecution than the dissenters such as Baptists and Quakers, and many of them were imprisoned for practicing their beliefs.

Shubal Stearns was born in Boston on January 28, 1706. His family moved to Connecticut in his youth and joined the Congregational church in Tolland. He was converted to New Light views in 1745 because of the Whitefield revival. Mr. Stearns led others in his church to become a Separate church. After a thorough study of the Scriptures, he declared himself a Baptist and was baptized.\(^1\)

Daniel Marshall was born in 1706 in Windsor. He became a prosperous farmer and a deacon in the established Congregational church. Deeply affected by George Whitefield, by 1747 he was a Separate; and by 1751, he, along with Shubal Sterns, was a radical Separate.\(^2\)

George Whitefield’s preaching had a grand effect on his converts. A “twofold conviction was borne in and upon the hearts of the Separates around 1750.” Since all men can be saved, the urgency of missions and the need for men to hear the gospel now was impressed upon their hearts. “Love for [all] others, said Whitefield, stands alongside aversion to sin, a spirit of

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1 Lumpkin, p. 21.
2 Ibid., pp. 21-23.
supplication, and a spirit of conquest over the world as a mark of having the Holy Spirit.”

In 1751 or 1752, as had others before him, Mr. Marshall set out with his wife and three children and possibly with one other couple, with no prospect of material reward, to minister to the Indians in New York. They settled at the Indian town of Onnaquaggy. They had to leave after eighteen months because strife among the Indians caused by the French and English struggle and attempts to gain the support of various tribes disrupted his work and threatened his family. He went to Connogogig, Pennsylvania for a short stay, then moved to Opekon, Virginia. The pastor of Mill Creek Baptist Church baptized him. His powerful preaching ability was recognized and a revival ensued.

Shubal Stearns and his wife, along with five other families, possessed with missionary zeal, left Tolland, Connecticut in August 1754. They moved to Virginia. Daniel Marshall greeted them there. They settled in Cacapon Creek, Virginia, but did not stay there long. Members of some neighboring churches (later called “Regular” Baptist churches), which upheld dignity and orderliness in worship, were upset with the “noisy and emotional preaching of the Separates,” by some of the preaching, which “may have suggested Armenianism to them,” and by “the prominent place occupied by women in some Separate meetings which hinted at disorder.” The Indians broke into open hostility in 1755. Consequently, Mr. Stearns and his party moved to Sandy Creek, North Carolina, “a strategic center from which he could itinerate to a growing and spiritually destitute population.” There they constituted the Sandy Creek Church with Mr. Stearns as minister and Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed as assistant ministers.

Mr. Stearns immediately began to preach. People from neighboring farms began to attend, for the first time hearing the doctrine of the new birth.

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5 Ibid., pp. 28-30.
“The enthusiastic manner of preaching, too, was unprecedented. Stearns’ delivery was warm and appealing, full of persuasive zeal, not at all the commonplace, lecture-type discourses which the people had formerly heard. Strong gestures and a fervent plea told the people that the preacher was intensely involved in his message. It was obvious he wanted a verdict.

“The preachers deep feeling and personality passed to the members of the church and from them to the visitors. The music in the little pastor’s voice soon penetrated every heart, and his piercing, discursive eye seemed to peer into every soul. The tears, tremblings, and shouts of the members quickly affected the visitors, and from the little meetinghouse a tumult of grief at sin and joy at salvation ascended to heaven. Men who came to the meetings to mock returned home praising and glorifying God. The church began to grow!

“Then the Separates knew that they had found their home and that God’s will was being perfected in them. The heart of their little community held a plan worthy of the heart of an empire.”

The population of North Carolina was growing rapidly. People were coming from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania; and large families were common. Although law established the Church of England in 1701 in North Carolina, it had a feeble career there, and the colony gained a reputation as an asylum for the religiously persecuted. By 1755, the population of North Carolina was nearly a hundred thousand.

The Quakers preached the first sermon in North Carolina in 1672 and were the earliest dissenters. The Moravians also flourished there. The Anglicans were few in number, had only one or two ministers in the colony at any given time, and were looked upon with indifference and hostility by the people of North Carolina. Except for the Quakers and Moravians, until the middle of the eighteenth century, “[r]eligious concerns among the early dissenters were doomed to steady decline because of the shortage of churches, religious instruction, and pastors.”

The work at Sandy Creek soon began to produce much fruit. Mr. Stearns and the other preachers in his church were in great demand to go preach at other settlements. He and Daniel Marshall

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6 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
7 Ibid., pp. 33-34, citing G. W. Paschal, History of North Carolina Baptists (Raleigh: General Board of North Carolina Baptist State Convention, 1930), I, pp. 252-254.
8 Ibid., pp. 34-36.
decided, before having been at Sandy Creek a year, to go on a preaching mission all the way to the coast. Converts were being called into ministry, and the Separate Baptist movement was seeing the birth of new churches. Within three years, there were three churches with a combined membership of over nine hundred, and these churches had numerous branches. Young evangelists were “beginning to occupy the land of promise.” In 1758, the Sandy Creek Association was organized. The plan for the association “required careful planning, for the associational movement would usher in a grand new chapter in Separate Baptist expansion.”

The movement exploded. Ministers and converts went all over North Carolina, then into South Carolina and Georgia. The power of God was with these Separate Baptist preachers. Churches were planted and many were converted. In North Carolina, the Baptists displaced the Anglicans and the Presbyterians. Daniel Marshall went to South Carolina with some others in his church and started a church there. From there, he went on preaching trips into Georgia. He was so successful in some of his forays there that he was arrested, convicted, and commanded to preach no more in Georgia. “The arresting constable and even the magistrate who tried Marshall were soon converted and baptized.” In 1771, Mr. Marshall moved to Kiokee Creek, Georgia and formed the first Baptist church in Georgia at Appling in 1772.

In 1771, the so-called War of the Regulation broke out. The government of North Carolina tried to suppress the Separate Baptists, but succeeded only in spreading their movement all along the southern frontier. Before the suppression began, the established church, the Anglican Church, was ineffectual in North Carolina and only had five ministers in the state in 1765.

Before 1765 the western counties, made up of frontiersman, a large percentage of whom had become Baptists, were disproportionately taxed and represented in the Assembly. “Sheriffs, judges, and other officials of county government, were notorious for their injustice, and in the western counties they were,

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9 Ibid., pp. 41-45.
as a rule, dishonest, haughty, and overbearing.” A license was required for teachers, and no place of higher education could be administered, except by ministers of the Church of England. The Church of England was given exclusive rights to perform marriages. In 1755, poll and vestry taxes were imposed upon North Carolinians. The settlers mounted protests against these injustices.

When William Tryon became governor of North Carolina in 1765, the troubles moved quickly to a crisis. Governor Tryon set out to strengthen the position of the Church of England. He called for twenty-seven more Anglican clergymen, increased taxes, and raised a military force. By 1770, Governor Tryon had established eighteen Anglican priests in thirty-two parishes in North Carolina. Property was seized for back taxes, people accused of rioting were arrested and set for trial, and others were fined and imprisoned. “In several places the Regulators yielded to mob spirit, broke up courts, and whipped the officers” and “some court records were destroyed.” Armed conflict finally broke out. On May 16, 1771, the state militiamen routed a poorly trained and supplied force of two thousand regulators. Although Shubal Stearns and the Sandy Creek Association forbade Baptists to take up arms against the government, many did.

After the defeat of the regulators, Tryon “laid waste to plantations, burned homes, and sent numbers of men in chains to Hillsboro. The countryside was terrorized.” Tryon seized Benjamin Merrill, who appears to have been a church leader. Merrill was convicted as a traitor, hung publicly, cut into pieces—quartered—and his body scattered.

The Baptists had a mass exodus from North Carolina. By 1772, Sandy Creek Church had only fourteen members, down from six hundred and six. Little River Church went from five hundred to a dozen members. Nevertheless, as with the persecution of the first Christians in Jerusalem, the persecuted spread to other parts and carried out the Great Commission. The departing Baptists went

11 Ibid., pp. 72-74.
13 Lumpkin, pp. 78-79.
14 Ibid., p. 83.
15 Beller, America in Crimson Red, p. 197.
into South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee, spreading the Gospel and reaping the harvest. What Satan meant for evil, God used for His glory.

Shubal Stearns, the chief light and the guiding genius behind the Separate Baptist movement, died on November 20, 1771, at the age of sixty-five. Forty-two churches and one hundred and twenty-five ministers had sprung from the Sandy Creek Church by 1772. Fires, which could not be quenched, had been started in North Carolina and in other states. 16

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16 Lumpkin, p. 59.
Chapter 7
To Virginia

Although the final expression of religious freedom that would be incorporated into the Constitution came from Virginia, the final motivation came because of the convictions of the dissenters, mainly the Baptists, and the thrust for their growth and influence came from the Great Awakening.

“[T]he early Baptists of Virginia, … while they could not boast of great wealth, or culture, or refinement, they possessed some things of more real value, and which the Commonwealth greatly needed. In the first place they had religion—genuine religion; not a sham, nor an empty form, but the old time religion of the heart. Then they had a personal worth or character, that character which always follows from having genuine religion. And then, again, those early Baptists had an unquenchable love of liberty. The truth of the New Testament makes men free indeed, and it inspires them with a love of freedom, not for themselves only, but for all men. And it was because they possessed these traits that they resisted the temptations of the General Incorporation and General Assessment, and stood their ground amid the general desertion. They resolved to continue to fight.”

The conflict in Virginia originally involved the Anglicans and Presbyterians, neither of which originally believed in either religious freedom or separation of church and state. Religious freedom and separation are owed mainly to the Baptists who believed in both. What Jefferson and Madison wrote about and did for religious freedom resulted from their observance of the conflict among Christians and is not to be found in the pages of philosophers of the Enlightenment.

“The Presbyterians [in Virginia] won religious liberty for themselves against the opposition of the Episcopalians. Next the Baptists won religious liberty for themselves against the opposition of the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians. By 1775 about three quarters of the people of Virginia were outside the Church of England, but many of the most influential Virginians were inside. When the war started, there were ninety-five Anglican parishes in Virginia. The war killed off at least a quarter of them. Nowhere in the colonies was Tory sentiment

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1 James, Appendix A, pp. 207-208.
2 See, e.g., Marnell, pp. 89-90.
stronger than among the Anglican clergy of Virginia, and they found themselves at the gravest of odds with their flocks.”³

Virginia “was founded by members of the Church of England and none others were tolerated in its jurisdiction.”⁴ The Episcopal church, the Church of England, in Virginia was established from the founding of Jamestown in 1607.

“It was known, also, as the ‘Established Church,’ because it was made, by legal enactment, the church of the State and was supported by taxation. Not only so, but it was designed to be the established church, to the exclusion of all others. Rigid laws, with severe penalties affixed, were passed, having for their object the exclusion of all Dissenters from the colony, and the compelling of conformity to the established, or State, religion. Even after the Revolution of 1688, which placed William and Mary upon the throne of England and secured the passage of the ‘Act of Toleration’ the following year, the ‘General Court of the Colony’ of Virginia construed that act to suit themselves, and withheld its benefits from Dissenters … until they were compelled to yield to the force of circumstances.”⁵

The Church of England was stronger in Virginia than in any colony.

In Virginia, the established Anglican church was controlled by the state, unlike in New England where the established church controlled the state. From the beginning of the colony, the “company knew not how to control the members composing the colony but by religion and law.”⁶ The original “Lawes Divine, Moral and Martial” which were decreed in 1612, were severe. Speaking impiously of the Trinity or of God the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, blaspheming God, incorrigibly cursing, a third failure to attend religious services, and a third “Sabbath-breaking,” were punishable by death. Other spiritual offenses were punished by whipping and other penalties.⁷

Upon appeal to England, these laws were repealed. The laws enacted in support of the Anglican establishment were less severe. Still, the Anglican church was established (and this establishment

⁴ *Christian, Volume I*, p. 381.
⁵ *James*, pp. 10-11.
⁷ See Pfeffer, p. 69 for the text of this law.
continued until the revolution with one short interruption), nonattendance at church services was the subject of fines, the payment of tithes were mandatory, every parson was entitled to the glebe—a piece of land—parish churches were built by taxes, and ministers were required to “conform themselves in all things according to the canons of the Church of England.”

“A Puritan clergy were banished for failing to conform to Anglican services; Quakers [and Baptists] were fined, imprisoned, and banished. Catholics were disqualified from public office, and any priest who ventured to enter the colony was subject to instant expulsion. Penalties were imposed on those who having scruples against infant baptism, neglected to present their children for that purpose.”

A 1643 law forbade anyone to teach or preach religion, publicly or privately, who was not a minister of the Church of England, and instructed governor and council to expel all nonconformists from the colony. In 1643, three Congregationalist ministers from Boston were forced to leave the colony. Also in 1643, “Sir William Berkeley, Royal Governor of Virginia, strove, by whippings and brandings, to make the inhabitants of that colony conform to the Established church, and thus drove out the Baptists and Quakers, who found a refuge in … North Carolina.” Quakers first came to Virginia in “1659-60, and … the utmost degree of persecution was exercised towards them.” “During the period of the Commonwealth in England, there had been a kind of interregnum as to both Church and State in Virginia; but in 1661, the supremacy of the Church of England was again fully established.” Only ministers of the Church of England were permitted to preach, and only ministers of that church could “celebrate the rites of matrimony,” and only “according to the ceremony prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer.”

Although some Presbyterians settled in Virginia from 1670 to 1680, the number & influence of Presbyterians in Virginia was small until the mid-1700s. In the mid-1700s an influential body of Presbyterians settled in Hanover County as a result of a 1738

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8 Ibid.; see also James, pp. 17-20 for a more comprehensive overview of the laws of Virginia which provided for religious persecution and the established church.
7 Lumpkin, p. 105.
10 James, pp. 17-20.
agreement between the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia and Virginia governor William Gooch which allowed “emigrants to occupy the frontier portions of Virginia and enjoy the benefits of the Act of Toleration.”

The first non-Anglican minister to receive a license under the Act of Toleration passed by the British Parliament in 1689, which instructed liberty of conscience for all but Papists, was Francis Makemie, a Presbyterian minister in Accomac County. By 1725, no more than five conventicles, “three small meetings of Quakers and two of Presbyterians,” were licensed, and these in poorer counties who were unable to pay the established minister enough to stay. In 1725, a similar license was granted to “certain parties (doubtless Presbyterians)” in Richmond County.

Presbyterian families from Pennsylvania and Maryland began to move to remote parts of Virginia on the western frontier in 1738. The Presbyterian Synod of Pennsylvania wrote Governor Gooch of Virginia asking for religious freedom for those Presbyterians. Governor Gooch, knowing these people “to be firm, enterprising, hardy, brave, good citizens and soldiers,” and desiring “to form a complete line of defense against the savage inroads,” welcomed them. “At so great a distance from the older settlements, he anticipated no danger to the established church.” The conditions of settlement were that they “were not only to settle in the frontier counties as a buffer between the Churchmen and the Indians, but they had to swear allegiance to ‘His Majesty’s person and government,’” pay the taxes levied in support of the Established Church, and never by word or deed seek to injure the said church.... “Houses for public worship could not be occupied without permission from the civil authorities, and each application for a house of worship was heard on its own merits.” “[Those early Presbyterians] did not break their promise nor violate their oaths.” Up to the Revolution, “they never demanded anything more than their rights under the Act of Toleration, and ... not until the Revolution was accomplished, and Virginia had thrown off allegiance to Great Britain, did they (the Presbyterians) strike hands with the Baptists in the effort to pull down the

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11 Ibid., pp. 11-12.  
12 Ibid., pp. 20-22.
Establishments.” However, with the fury of the French and Indian War, which broke out in 1755, Presbyterians east of the Blue Ridge occupied houses of worship without license or molestation.\textsuperscript{13}

Different bodies of Baptists came to Virginia during the colonial period. The “Regular Baptists,” like the Presbyterians, “applied for license and took the prescribed oaths.” As for the “Separate Baptists,” the “body spread so rapidly throughout the State from 1755 to the … Revolution,” and “did not recognize the right of any civil power to regulate preaching or places of meeting.” They were the “most active in evangelizing Virginia and most severely persecuted, and … had the largest share of the work of pulling down the ‘Establishment’ and securing religious liberty for all.” “While yielding a ready obedience to the civil authorities in all civil affairs, in matters of religion they recognized no lord but Christ. They were truly apostolic in refusing to obey man rather than God.”\textsuperscript{14}

Conditions were favorable for the rapid growth of Baptist principles. “First, the distress of the colonists, consequent upon the French and Indian wars, inclined them towards religion.” Secondly, the distressed people could find no solace or comfort in the immoral established clergy.

“The great success and rapid increase of the Baptists in Virginia must be ascribed primarily to the power of God working with them. Yet it cannot be denied but that there were subordinate and cooperating causes; one of which, and the main one, was the loose and immoral deportment of the Established clergy, by which the people were left almost destitute of even the shadow of true religion. ‘Tis true, they had some outward forms of worship, but the essential principles of Christianity were not only not understood among them, but by many never heard of. Some of the cardinal precepts of morality were discarded, and actions plainly forbidden by the New Testament were often proclaimed by the clergy as harmless and innocent, or, at worst, foibles of but little account. Having no discipline, every man followed the bent of his own inclination. It was not uncommon for the rectors of parishes to be men of the lowest morals. The Baptist preachers were, in almost every respect, the reverse of the Established clergy.”\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 12-14, 26.
Section II: Christian History of the First Amendment

Their own authorities prove the bad character and actions of the established clergy. Many of that clergy came to Virginia “to retrieve either lost fortune or lost character....” “Many of them had been addicted to the race-field, the card-table, the theatre—nay, more, to drunken revel, etc....” “They could babble in a pulpit, roar in a tavern, exact from their parishioners, and rather by their dissoluteness destroy than feed the flock.”

The Baptists grew stronger and more numerous in Virginia. Robert Nordin, when he arrived from England in 1714, established the first Baptist church in Virginia. By 1755, there were six Baptist churches in Virginia. 17 1758 to 1769 was a period of slow but persistent growth in the face of a determined popular hostility. The early opposition to the Baptists came from the lower classes and was based upon prejudice.

The Virginia expansion was intimately tied up with the ministry of Colonel Samuel Harris. Harris—who served at various times as churchwarden, sheriff, justice of the peace, colonel of the county, and captain and commissary of Fort Mayo and its military garrison—was the first person of prominence to join the Separates in Virginia and was just one of many examples of the power of this movement. He was saved at a house meeting after hearing a sermon preached by a Separate Baptist from North Carolina. He resigned from his official positions and narrowed his business interests almost to the vanishing point in order to preach. He began to preach throughout Virginia, and many were converted because of his ministry. 18

Harris was a fearless preacher. “The excellence of his preaching lay chiefly in ‘addressing the heart,’ and Semple holds that ‘perhaps even Whitefield did not surpass him in this.’” 19 He had the assistance of several North Carolina itinerant evangelists planting the earliest Separate churches in south central Virginia. In 1760, Daniel Marshall and Philip Mulkey with seventy-four

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16 Ibid., pp. 27-28, citing Foote, p. 38 quoting from the Bishop of London; Bishop Meade, “Old Parishes and Families of Virginia” (Vol. I, 118, 385, etc.; Dr. Hawks, “History of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia,” p. 65.).
17 Beller, America in Crimson Red, pp. 140-142.
18 Lumpkin, pp. 48-49.
charter members, eleven of whom were Negroes, started the Dan River Church. Other churches were soon constituted from the Dan River Church.20

Wherever the Baptist itinerants preached, great crowds came to hear them. Many were converted in Virginia, and many Baptist churches were started. In 1770, there were only two Separate churches north of the James River, four south of it. The General Association of Separate Baptists of Virginia was held in May 1771 in Orange County with twelve churches represented, and three not represented.

By 1772, the Separate Churches outnumbered those of the Regular churches. In that year, as many as forty thousand Virginians may have heard the gospel. By 1773, thirty-four churches were represented at the General Association meeting, and they reported a combined membership of 3,195. By May 1774, when Baptist expansion and Baptist persecution were at high tide, the Southern District in Virginia had twenty-seven churches with 2,033 members and the Northern District had twenty-four churches with 1,921 members. By the end of 1774, there was at least one Separate Baptist church in twenty-eight of the sixty counties of Virginia. During the Revolution, Baptist growth continued, but at a much slower pace.21

From 1768 through 1774, the Baptists were persecuted severely. “Baptist preachers were whipped, arrested, fined, imprisoned on bread and water, although the authorities sanctimoniously denied that punishment was for ‘preaching’; the crime they said, was ‘breach of the peace.’”22 The first instance of actual imprisonment was on June 4, 1768, when John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, James Reed, and William Marsh were arrested at Craig’s meetinghouse in Spotsylvania and charged with disturbing the peace. The magistrates offered to release them if they would promise to preach no more for a year and a day. They

20 Ibid., pp. 90-98.
21 Ibid., pp. 90-103.
refused and were jailed. Many more were jailed and otherwise persecuted until 1774.\textsuperscript{23}

“[The persecutors] seemed sometimes to strive to treat the Baptists and their worship with as much rudeness and indecency as was possible. They often insulted the preacher in time of service, and would ride into the water and make sport when they administered baptism. They frequently fabricated and spread the most groundless reports, which were injurious to the characters of the Baptists. When any Baptist fell into any improper conduct, it was always exaggerated to the utmost extent.”\textsuperscript{24}

“The enemy, not contented with ridicule and defamation, manifested their abhorrence to the Baptists in another way. By a law then in force in Virginia, all were under obligation to go to church several times a year; the failure subjected them to fine. [Little action against members of the Established church was taken under this law, but] as soon as the ‘New Lights’ were absent, they were presented by grand jury, and fined…. [Others were imprisoned for preaching without a license.] ‘When persecutors found religion could not be stopped … by ridicule, defamation, and abusive language, the resolution was to take a different step and see what they could do; and the preachers in different places were apprehended by magisterial authority, some of whom were imprisoned and some escaped. Before this step was taken, the parson of the parish was consulted [and he advised that] the ‘New Lights’ ought to be taken up and imprisoned, as necessary for the peace and harmony of the old church…”\textsuperscript{25}

“[An Episcopalian wrote,] No dissenters in Virginia experienced, for a time, harsher treatment than did the Baptists. They were beaten and imprisoned, and cruelty taxed its ingenuity to devise new modes of punishment and annoyance.”\textsuperscript{26}

Because of the persecutions and oppressions, Baptists began to petition the House of Burgesses for relief. Their first petition in 1770 requesting that Baptist ministers “not be compelled to bear

\textsuperscript{23} James, pp. 29-30. Included is a listing of some of those jailed and otherwise persecuted. See also Beller, America in Crimson Red, pp. 230-250; Lumpkin, pp. 105-120; Grady, What Hath God Wrought, Appendix A, pp. 593-598 citing Lewis Peyton Little, Imprisoned Preachers and Religious Liberty in Virginia, (Galatin, Tenn.: Church History Research and Archives, 1987), pp. 516-520 (lists many Baptists and the persecutions they endured in Virginia; persecutions such as being jailed for preaching, civil suit, being annoyed by men drinking and playing cards, being jerked off stage and head beaten against the ground, hands being slashed, beaten with bludgeons, being shot with a shotgun, ousted as a justice for preaching, being brutally beaten by a mob, severely beaten with a stick, etc.).
\textsuperscript{24} James, p. 30, citing Semple, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., pp. 30-31, citing William Fristoe, “History of the Ketocton Baptist Association,” p. 69.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., citing Dr. Hawks, “History of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia,” p. 121.
arms or attend musters” was rejected. Other petitions from Baptists in several counties were submitted in 1772 requesting that they “be treated with the same indulgence, in religious matters, as Quakers, Presbyterians, and other Protestant dissenters enjoy.” The petitions continued until 1775. The Presbyterians petitioned also, but for the right to incorporate so that they could receive and hold gifts of land and slaves for the support of their ministers. One of the Presbyterian petitions was improperly hailed as proof “that the Presbyterians anticipated the Baptists in their memorials asking for religious liberty.” An examination of that petition reveals that it “contemplate[d] nothing more than securing for Presbyterians and others in Virginia the same privileges and liberties which they enjoyed in England under the Act of Toleration,” and contained no “attack upon the Establishment, or any sign of hostility to it.”

During this time, James Madison wrote to his old college friend, Bradford of Philadelphia, in a letter dated January 24, 1774. He expressed his belief that if

“uninterrupted harmony had prevailed throughout the continent [in matters of established religion as practiced in Virginia] it is clear to me that slavery and subjection might and would have been gradually insinuated among us. Union of religious sentiments begets a surprising confidence, and ecclesiastical establishments tend to greatly ignorance and corruption, all of which facilitates the execution of mischievous projects…. Poverty and luxury prevail among all sorts; pride, ignorance, and knavery among the priesthood, and vice and wickedness among the laity. This is bad enough; but it is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some, and to their eternal infamy, the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time in the adjacent country not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which in the main are very orthodox. I have neither patience to hear, talk, or think of anything relative to this matter; for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed, so long about it to little purpose, that I am without common patience…. So I must beg you to pity me, and pray for liberty of conscience to all.”

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27 Ibid., pp. 31-35.
28 Ibid., pp. 42-47.
29 Lenni Brenner, editor, Jefferson and Madison on Separation of Church and State (Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books, Inc, 2004), pp. 11-12; James, p. 36.
[In another letter to Bradford dated April 1, 1774, Madison wrote that he doubted that anything would be done to help the dissenters in the Assembly meeting beginning May 1, 1774.] He spoke of “the incredible and extravagant stories [which were] told in the House of the monstrous effects of the enthusiasm prevalent among the sectaries, and so greedily swallowed by their enemies…. And the bad name they still have with those who pretend too much contempt to examine into their principles and conduct, and are too much devoted to ecclesiastical establishment to hear of the toleration of the dissentients…. The liberal, catholic, and equitable way of thinking, as to the rights of conscience, which is one of the characteristics of a free people, and so strongly marks the people of your province, is little known among the zealous adherents to our hierarchy…. [Although we have some persons of generous principles in the legislature] the clergy are a numerous and powerful body, have great influence at home by reason of their connection with and dependence on the bishops and crown, and will naturally employ all their arts and interest to depress their rising adversaries; for such they must consider dissentients, who rob them of the good will of the people, and may in time endanger their livings and security.

“… Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind, and unfits if for every enterprise, every expanded prospect.”

1775 closed the period of “Intolerance, Toleration, and Persecution.”

“The colony is involved in trouble with the mother country. Virginia has denounced the ‘Boston Port Bill,’ and made common cause with Massachusetts. The First Continental Congress has already met in Philadelphia. Patrick Henry has electrified the country by his memorable speech in the popular Convention which met March, 1775…. The Battles of Lexington and Concord have been fought (April 19), and Virginia has taken steps to enroll companies of volunteers in every county. The war of the Revolution is on, and the times call for union and harmony among all classes. Hence, there is no more persecution of Baptists. There are no more imprisonments in 1775, and that obnoxious Toleration Bill is indefinitely postponed. The same ruling class that admitted the Presbyterians to Virginia and to the benefits of the Act of Toleration, on condition that they occupied the frontier counties, and thus protected them against Indian raids, are now inclined to tolerate, not only the Presbyterians, but the Baptists also, with all their ‘pernicious doctrines,’ if only they will help in the

struggle with Great Britain. The Baptists will help, and not a Tory will be found among them. But they will strike for something more and something dearer to them than civil liberty—for freedom of conscience, for ‘just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty.’”

31

The Baptists were ready to push for religious freedom and abolition of the establishment. In their Association meeting on the fourth Saturday of May 1775, “they were to a man favorable to any revolution by which they could obtain freedom of religion. They had known from experience that mere toleration was not a sufficient check, having been imprisoned at a time when that law was considered by many as being in force.” “The Revolutionary War opened up possibilities to overthrow the entire system of persecution…. [Baptists] were everywhere the friends of liberty…. There was not a tory among the Baptists of America.”

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They received the highest praise for their patriotic endeavors.

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The Baptists decided to circulate petitions throughout the state calling for abolition of the church establishment and freedom of religion, and also to appoint commissioners to present their address for military resistance to British oppression and “offering the services of their young men as soldiers and asking only that, so far as the army was concerned, their ministers might enjoy like privileges with the clergy of the Established church” to the State Convention which was the House of Burgess under a new name and in a different character. The Convention, still controlled by “the same class that had, a few years before made concessions to the … Presbyterians on condition that they settle on the western counties forming a line of defense against the Indians, resolved to allow those dissenters in the military who so desired to attend divine worship administered by dissenting preachers. This first step towards placing all Virginia clergy on an equal footing, came as a result of the need for the numerical strength of the Baptists in what was considered by the establishment in 1775 a “struggle for their rights ‘in the union’ [with England].” The Convention maintained their “faith and true allegiance to His Majesty, George the Third, [their] only lawful and rightful King.” “It would have

31 James, pp. 47-48. See also Christian, Volume I, pp. 381-384.
33 Ibid., pp. 390-391.
been very impolitic, even if their petitions had been ready, to have sprung the question of disestablishment upon [the Convention] before they had committed themselves to the cause of independence.”

Virginia adopted a new constitution in 1776. The Convention of 1776 was, by its act, made the “House of Delegates” of the first General Assembly under the new constitution. Twenty-nine new members in this meeting were not in the 1775 Convention. “[W]hen there was anything near a division among the other inhabitants in a county, the Baptists, together with their influence, gave a caste to the scale, by which means many a worthy and useful member was lodged in the House of Assembly and answered a valuable purpose there.” Among those favorable to Baptist causes was James Madison. On May 12, the Congress met in Philadelphia “and instructed the colonies to organize independent governments of their own. The war was on.” On May 15, the Convention resolved to declare the “colonies free and independent states” and that a committee be appointed to prepare Declaration of Rights and a plan of government which would “maintain peace and order” and “secure substantial and equal liberty to the people.”

Other than Rhode Island, Virginia was the first colony to recognize religious liberty “in her organic law, and this she did in Article XVI. of her Bill of Rights, which was adopted on the 12th day of June 1776.” In 1776, petitions from all over Virginia seeking religious freedom and freedom of conscience beset the Virginia state convention. Patrick Henry proposed the provision to section sixteen of the Virginia Bill of Rights, which granted religious tolerance. On June 12, the House adopted a Declaration of Rights. The 16th Article provided for religious tolerance. However, [o]n motion on the floor by James Madison, the article was amended to provide for religious liberty. In committee, Madison opposed toleration because toleration “belonged to a system where there was an established church, and where it was a

34 James, pp. 49-57.
35 Ibid., p. 58.
36 Ibid., pp. 58-62.
37 Ibid., p. 10.
38 Marnell, pp. 94-95; James, pp. 62-65.
thing granted, not of right, but of grace. He feared the power, in the hands of a dominant religion, to construe what ‘may disturb the peace, the happiness, or the safety of society,’ and he ventured to propose a substitute, which was finally adopted.”

He probably moved to change the amendment before the whole house in order to demonstrate his position to the Baptists who were viewing the proceedings. The amendment as passed by the convention read:

“That religion, or the duty which we owe to our CREATOR, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and, therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other.”

“The adoption of the Bill of Rights marked the beginning of the end of the establishment.”

Where did Madison learn the distinction between religious freedom and religious toleration?

“It had not then begun to be recognized in treatises on religion and morals. He did not learn it from Jeremy Taylor or John Locke, but from his Baptist neighbors, whose wrongs he had witnessed, and who persistently taught that the civil magistrate had nothing to do with matters of religion.”

Madison studied for the ministry at Princeton University, then the College of New Jersey, under John Witherspoon. When he returned to Virginia, he continued his theological interests and developed a strong concern for freedom of worship.

“At the time of Madison’s return from Princeton, several ‘well-meaning men,’ as he described them, were put in prison for their religious views. Baptists were being fined or imprisoned for holding unauthorized meetings. Dissenters were taxed for the support of the State Church. Preachers had to be licensed. Madison saw at first hand the repetition of the main evils of the Old Country. But he also saw a deep dissatisfaction among the people—the kind of dissatisfaction that

39 See Brenner, pp. 21-22 for George Mason’s Article, Madison’s Amendment to Mason’s Article, The Proposal of Committee of Virginia’s Revolutionary Convention, Madison’s Amendment to the Committee’s Article, and the Article as Passed); James, pp. 62-65.
40 James, pp. 62-64; Pfeffer, p. 96.
41 Pfeffer, p. 96.
42 James, p. 63 quoting Dr. John Long.
would grow and that would serve as a mighty battering ram for religious freedom.”

It appears that the Baptists were the only denomination of Christians that addressed the 1775 and 1776 conventions on the subject of the rights of conscience. Not until the Revolution in Virginia were the Presbyterians free from the agreement with Governor Gooch. When the Assembly met in October 1776, they were “powerful allies of the Baptists and other dissenters in the war against the Establishment.”

“From that time down to January 19, 1786, when Jefferson’s ‘Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom,’ became the law of the State, the battle for soul liberty was on,” and the process of disestablishment gathered momentum. The legislature of 1776 repealed the laws punishing heresy and absence from worship and exempted dissenters from paying taxes for support of the Church. Although this bill was a compromise, it sounded the death knell of the Anglican establishment. A later statute removed the law fixing the salaries of clergymen, and the position of the Established church was limited more and more until the Declaratory Act of 1787 ended establishment in Virginia.

“From 1776 to 1779 the assembly was engaged almost daily in the desperate contests between the contending factions.” Whereas only one Baptist petition had been presented to the first Convention in 1776, and that after the adoption of the Bill of Rights, the Legislature that assembled on October 7, 1776, was immediately flooded with petitions both for and against establishment. “None of the petitions against establishment were from Baptists as such. However, historians of the times admit that Baptists ‘were not only the first to begin the work, but also the most active in circulating petitions for signatures.’” Among the signers were some of all denominations of Christians, and many of no denomination. This explains why the Baptist petition or petitions were from dissenters in general, instead of from Baptist

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43 Cousins, p. 296.
44 James, pp. 66-67.
46 Marnell, pp. 94-95; Pfeffer, p. 96.
47 Pfeffer, p. 97.
dissenters in particular.” The Reverend E. G. Robinson, in his review of Rives’ Life and Times of James Madison, *Christian Review* of January 1860, said, “The [Presbyterians] argued their petitions on various grounds, and indeed sought for different degrees of religious freedom, while the [Baptists] were undeviating and uncompromising in their demands for a total exemption from every kind of legal restraint or interference in matters of religion.” The Methodists and the established church presented petitions for establishment.

The established church did not give up. Thomas Jefferson gave an account of the struggle through which the Legislature, meeting in late 1776, had just passed:

“The first republican Legislature, which met in 1776, was crowded with petitions to abolish this spiritual tyranny. These brought on the severest contest in which I have ever been engaged…. The petitions were referred to a Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Country; and, after desperate contests in the committee almost daily from the 11th of October to the 5th of December, we prevailed so far only as to repeal the laws which rendered criminal the maintenance of any religious opinions (other than those of the Episcopalians), the forbearance of repairing to the (Episcopal) church, or the exercise of any (other than the Episcopal) mode of worship; and to suspend only until the next session levies on the members of that church for the salaries of its own incumbents. For, although the majority of our citizens were dissenters, as has been observed, a majority of the legislature were churchmen. Among these, however, were some reasonable and liberal men, who enabled us on some points to obtain feeble majorities. But our opponents carried, in the general resolutions of November the 19th, a declaration that religious assemblies ought to be regulated, and that provision ought to be made for continuing the succession of the clergy and superintending their conduct. And in the bill now passed was inserted an express reservation of the question whether a general assessment should not be established by law on every one to the support of the pastor of his choice; or whether all should be left to voluntary contributions; and on thus question, debated at every session from 1776 to 1779 (some of our dissenting allies, having now secured their particular object, going over to the advocates of a general assessment,) we could only obtain a suspension from session to session.
until 1779, when the question against a general assessment was finally carried, and the establishment of the Anglican church entirely put down.”\(^51\)

Legislative meetings from 1776 to December 1779 were presented with memorials both for and against establishment.\(^52\)

When the House met in June 1779, petitions presented to the Assembly showed that the old establishment and its friends were fighting for some sort of compromise based on a general assessment. In 1779, the assembly repealed all laws requiring members of the Episcopal Church to contribute to the support of their own ministry.\(^53\) In December 1779, a bill passed which “cut the purse strings of the Establishment, so that the clergy could no longer look for support to taxation. But they still retained possession of the rich glebes, and enjoyed a monopoly, almost, of marriage fees.”\(^54\) It took until 1779 to pass a bill taking away tax support for the clergy because the dissenters, with the exception of the Baptists, “having been relieved from a tax which they felt to be both unjust and degrading, had no objection to a general assessment.”\(^55\)

“Jefferson sought to press the advantage, and introduced his Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, but Virginia was not quite ready to formalize the separation which had in effect taken place, and the bill was not voted on.”\(^56\) Instead “a bill was introduced which declared that “the Christian Religion shall in all times coming be deemed and held to be the established Religion of this Commonwealth.” This bill required everyone to register with the county clerk stating which church he wished to support.\(^57\)

Although various petitions were presented to the Assembly during the period from 1780 until the end of the Revolution on September 3, 1783, the General Assembly did very little regarding the cause of religious liberty. In 1783 “the project … of

\(^{51}\) Ibid., pp. 80-81; See also Pfeffer, p. 96.
\(^{52}\) James, pp. 84-91 quotes those memorials.
\(^{53}\) Pfeffer, p. 97.
\(^{54}\) James, p. 95.
\(^{55}\) Ibid., pp. 96-98.
\(^{56}\) Pfeffer, p. 97.
incorporating, or establishing as the religion of the State, all the prevailing denominations, and assessing taxes upon the people to support the ministers of all alike, was now warmly advocated by Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists, and becoming quite popular. To this scheme the Baptists still gave the most determined opposition, and sent up against it the most vigorous remonstrances.” The Baptists also continued to petition for the adoption of the Act to Establish Religious Freedom.\textsuperscript{58}

After the Revolution, numerous petitions and memorials were presented to the House of Delegates in 1784 and 1785 by the above-mentioned denominations in support of their positions.\textsuperscript{59} The Episcopalians sought to recover lost ground. “In the late spring of 1784, a resolution was introduced in the Virginia Assembly seeking official recognition for the Episcopal Church. The resolution was debated for two days, with notable opposition from Baptists and Presbyterians.”\textsuperscript{60} Madison, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson dated July 3, 1784, wrote concerning this resolution:

“The Episcopal clergy introduced a notable project for re-establishing their independence of laity. The foundation of it was that the whole body should be legally incorporated, invested with the present property of the Church, made capable of acquiring indefinitely—empowered to make canons and by-laws not contrary to the laws of the land, and incumbents when once chosen by vestries, to be immovable otherwise than by sentence of the Convocation.”\textsuperscript{61}

The Baptists continued their uncompromising stand against any vestige of union of church and state. They gave their reasons for their position against a general assessment:

“First, it was contrary to their principles and avowed sentiments, the making provision for the support of religion by law; that the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical governments ought to be kept up without blending them together; that Christ Jesus hath given laws for the government of his kingdom and direction of his subjects, and gave instruction concerning collections for the various purposes of religion, and therefore needs not legislative interference.

\textsuperscript{58} James, pp. 112-121 citing Dr. R. B. C. Howell, “Early Baptists of Virginia” for the quotation which is on p. 120.
\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 122-133.
\textsuperscript{60} Cousins, p. 301.
\textsuperscript{61}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 302; Brenner, pp. 60-61.
“Secondly, should a legislative body undertake to pass laws for the government of the church, for them to say what doctrines shall be believed, in what mode worship shall be performed, and what the sum collected shall be, what a dreadful precedent it would establish; for when such a right is claimed by a legislature, and given up by the people, by the same rule that they decide in one instance they may in every instance. Religion is like the press; if government limits the press, and says this shall be printed and that shall not, in the event it will destroy the freedom of the press; so when legislatures undertake to pass laws about religion, religion loses its form, and Christianity is reduced to a system of worldly policy.

“Thirdly, it has been believed by us that that Almighty Power that instituted religion will support his own cause; that in the course of divine Providence events will be overruled, and the influence of grace on the hearts of the Lord’s people will incline them to afford and contribute what is necessary for the support of religion, and therefore there is no need for compulsory measures.

“Fourthly, it would give an opportunity to the party that were numerous (and, of course, possessed the ruling power) to use their influence and exercise their art and cunning, and multiply signers to their own favorite party. And last, the most deserving, the faithful preacher, who in a pointed manner reproved sin and bore testimony against every species of vice and dissipation, would in all possibility, have been profited very little by such a law, while men-pleasers, the gay and the fashionable, who can wink at sin and daub his hearers with untempered mortar, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace, who can lay out his oratory in dealing out smooth things mingled with deception, the wicked, it is clear, would like to have it so; and it follows the irreligious and carnal part of the people would richly reward them for their flattery, and the undeserving go off with the gain.”62

The Presbyterians took “a sort of middle ground, which caused confusion in their own ranks and compromised them in the estimation of others.” It appears that the Presbyterian clergy advocated a plan of general assessment supporting all denominations who believed in union of church and state, but not those who believed in religious liberty and absolute freedom of conscience. James Madison commented on the position of the Presbyterians:

“The laity of the other sects (other than Episcopalian) are generally unanimous [against the general assessment]. So are all the clergy,

62 James, pp. 132-133, citing William Fristoe, “History of the Ketocton Association.”
except the Presbyterian, who seem as ready to set up an establishment which is to take them in as they were to pull down that which shut them out. I do not know a more shameful contrast than might be found between their memorials on the latter and former occasions. Rives, I., 630.” [Quoting a letter to James Monroe, April 12, 1775]

Thus, “[i]n [these] later stages of disestablishment there was a curious alliance formed between the Episcopalian and Presbyterian clergy with an eye to creating a new line of defense.”64 “In 1784, the Virginia House of Delegates having under consideration a ‘bill establishing provision for teachers of the Christian religion,’ postponed it until the next session, and directed that the Bill should be published and distributed, and that the people be requested ‘to signify their opinion respecting the adoption of such a bill at the next session of assembly.’”65 This last action was a result of a resolution offered by the Baptists and adopted by the Legislature. The Baptists, appearing to be losing ground as the only opponents of a general assessment, the majority of the Legislature being churchmen, the only hope of the opponents of the assessment was an appeal to the people.66

The bill—which was proposed by Patrick Henry and supported by George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, and John Marshall—provided for the establishment a provision for teachers of the Christian religion, in effect providing for the “establishment of Christianity, but without precedence in such an establishment to any particular church.”67 The bill required all persons

“to pay a moderate tax or contribution annually for the support of the Christian religion, or of some Christian church, denomination or communion of Christians, or for some form of Christian worship.”68

Leo Pfeffer noted:

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63 Ibid., p. 130; Cousins, p. 306.
64 Marnell, p. 95.
65 Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145, 163 (1879); see James, p. 129 where the preamble to the bill is quoted.
66 James, p. 135.
67 Marnell, pp. 95, 96.
68 Pfeffer, p. 98, citing N. J. Eckenrode, The Separation of Church and State in Virginia (Richmond, Va.: Virginia State Library, 1910), p. 86. Pfeffer notes in Chapter 4 fn. 102 that the text of the bill is printed as an appendix to Justice Rutledge’s dissent in Everson, 330 U.S. 1.
“the bill was predicated on the legislative determination in its preamble that ‘the general diffusion of Christian knowledge hath a natural tendency to correct the morals of men, restrain their vices, and preserve the peace of society; which cannot be effected without a competent provision for licensed teachers.’

“The preamble is of great significance, because it recognized the widely held belief that religion was not within the competence of civil legislatures. It sought to justify intervention not on any theocratic ground but on what today would be called the ‘police’ or ‘welfare’ power. Government support of religion is required to restrain vice and preserve peace, not to promote God’s kingdom on earth.” 69

Pfeffer does not understand that God has given civil government the choice of whether to honor his principles. The government is to intervene, according to God’s word, to control and restrain certain crimes. Government does not support religion in order to do its job. Government merely makes a choice of whether to honor God and his principles for the purpose of restraining vice and preserving peace.

James Madison, among others, opposed the bill. Mr. Madison had witnessed and opposed the persecution of the Baptists in his own state.

“Madison wrote to a friend in 1774: ‘That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some.... This vexes me the worst of anything whatever. There are at this time in the adjacent country not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which in the main are very orthodox. I have neither patience to hear, talk, or think of anything relative to this matter; for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed, so long about it to little purpose, that I am without common patience. So I must beg you to pity me, and pray for liberty of conscience to all.’ I Writings of James Madison (1900) 18, 21.” 70

Mr. Madison prepared his famous “Memorial and Remonstrance,” in which he maintained “that religion, or the duty we owe the Creator,” was not within the cognizance of civil government. The “Memorial” presents fifteen arguments against

69 Ibid.
70 Everson, 330 U.S. fn. 9 at 11; 67 S. Ct. at 509.
the assessment bill.\textsuperscript{71} One historian says of this document, “For elegance of style, strength of reasoning, and purity of principle, it has, perhaps, seldom been equaled, certainly never surpassed, by anything in the English language.”\textsuperscript{72} “Dr. George B. Taylor says: ‘It may certainly be called a Baptist document this far, that they only, \textit{as a people}, held its views, and pressed those views without wavering.’”\textsuperscript{73} Dr. E. G. Robinson wrote of the document:

“In a word, the great idea which he [Madison] put forth was identical with that which had always been devoutly cherished by our Baptist fathers, alike in the old world and the new, and which precisely a century and a half before had been perfectly expressed in the celebrated letter of Roger Williams to the people of his settlement, and by him incorporated into the fundamental law of the colony of Rhode Island. By Mr. Madison it was elaborated with arguments and wrought into the generalizations of statesmanship, but the essential idea is precisely the same with the ‘soul liberty’ so earnestly contended for by the Baptists of every age.”\textsuperscript{74}

One must keep in mind that although the document advocated freedom of conscience, something for which Baptists had long struggled, the tone was that of deistic or humanistic arguments based upon reason and natural law. As pointed out \textit{supra}, Jefferson and Madison and other deistic separatists “were interested in leaving the mind free to follow its own rational direction.” A trust in man’s reason without consideration of principles in the word of God is a leaven which eventually totally pollutes. Tragically, the pietistic arguments of Isaac Backus never prevailed in America. America never fully proceeded upon the lessons taught by the Bible, and implemented by Roger Williams, John Clarke, and the other founders of Rhode Island.

Some excerpts from Madison’s “Memorial and Remonstrance” follow:

“Because we hold it for a fundamental and unalienable truth, ‘that religion, or the duty which we owe to the Creator, and the manner of

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{71} Pfeffer, p. 101. Pfeffer states that “[i]t is important to note the emphasis the ‘Memorial’ places on ideological factors.” His comments following that quote ignore the references to our “creator,” and the “Governor of the Universe.”
\textsuperscript{72} James, p. 135, quoting Semple.
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 135, quoting Dr. George B. Taylor, Memorial Series, No. IV., page 19.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 135.}
discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence,’ the religion, then of every man, must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate. The right is, in its nature, an unalienable right. It is unalienable, because the opinions of men depending only on the evidence contemplated by their own minds, cannot follow the dictates of other men. It is unalienable, also, because what is here a right towards man, is a duty towards the Creator.... The duty is precedent both in order and time, and in degree of obligation, to the claims of civil society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe.... We maintain, therefore, that in matters of religion, no man’s rights is abridged by the institution of civil society; and that religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance....

“Because if religion be exempt from the authority of society at large, still less can it be subject to that of the legislative body. The latter are but the creatures and viceregents of the former. Their jurisdiction is both derivative and limited.... The preservation of a free government requires, not merely that the metes and bounds which separate each department of power, be invariably maintained; but more especially that neither of them be suffered to overleap the great barrier which defends the rights of the people. The rulers, who are guilty of such an encroachment, exceed the commission from which they derive their authority, and are tyrants. The people who submit to it, are governed by laws made neither by themselves, nor by an authority derived from them, and are slaves.

“Because it is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties, we hold this prudent jealousy to be first duty of citizens, and one of the noblest characteristics of the late revolution.... Who does not see that the same authority, which can establish Christianity in exclusion of all other religions, may establish, with the same ease, any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other sects; that the same authority, which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property, for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment, in all cases whatsoever?

“Because the bill violates that equality which ought to be the basis of every law; and which is more indispensable, in proportion as the validity or expedition of any law is more liable to be impeached.... Whilst we assert for ourselves a freedom to embrace, to profess, and observe the religion which we believe to be of divine origin, we cannot deny an equal freedom to those, whose minds have not yet yielded to the evidence which has convinced us. If this freedom be abused, it is an offense against God, not against man. To God, therefore, and not to man, must account of it be rendered....

“Because the bill implies, either that the civil magistrate is a competent judge of religious truths, or that he may employ religion as an engine of civil policy. The first is an arrogant pretension, falsified by
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the extraordinary opinion of rulers, in all ages, and throughout the world; the second, an unhallowed perversion of the means of salvation.

"Because the establishment proposed by the bill, is not requisite for the support of the Christian religion itself; for every page of it disavows a dependence on the power of the world; it is a contradiction to fact, for it is known that this religion both existed and flourished, not only without the support of human laws, but in spite of every opposition from them; and not only during the period of miraculous aid, but long after it had been left to its own evidence and the ordinary care of Providence: nay, it is a contradiction in terms; for a religion not invented by human policy, must have pre-existed and been supported, before it was established by human policy: it is, moreover, to weaken those, who profess this religion, a pious confidence in its innate excellence, and the patronage of its Author; and to foster in those, who still reject it, a suspicion that its friends are too conscious of its faculties, to trust it to its own merits.

"Because experience witnesses that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry, and persecution. Inquire of the teachers of Christianity for the ages in which it appeared in its greatest luster; those of every sect point to the ages prior to its incorporation with civil policy. Propose a restoration of this primitive state, in which its teachers depended on the voluntary rewards of their flocks, many of them predict its downfall….

"Because the establishment in question is not necessary for the support of civil government…. If religion be not within the cognizance of civil government, how can its legal establishment be said to be necessary for civil government? What influences, in fact, have ecclesiastical establishments had on civil society? In some instances, they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the civil authority; in more instances, have they been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instance have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people. Rulers who wished to subvert the publick liberty, may have found on established clergy convenient auxiliaries. A just government instituted to secure and perpetuate it needs them not. Such a government will be best supported by protecting every citizen in the enjoyment of his religion, with the same equal hand which protects his person and property; by neither invading the equal hand which protects his person and property; by neither invading the equal rights of any sect, nor suffering any sect to invade those of another.

"Because the proposed establishment is a departure from that generous policy, which, offering an asylum to the persecuted and oppressed of every nation and religion, promised a luster to our
country, and an accession to the number of its citizens…. [The proposed bill] is a signal of persecution. It degrades from the equal rank of citizens, all of those whose opinions in religion do not bend to those of the legislative authority. Distant as it may be, in its present form, from the inquisition, it differs from it only in degree; the one is the first step, the other the last, in the career of intolerance….

“Because it will have a tendency to banish our citizens…. Torrents of blood have been spilt in the old world, by vain attempts of the secular arm to extinguish religious discord, by proscribing all differences in religious opinion…. 

“Because the policy of the bill is adverse to the light of Christianity. The first wish of those, who ought to enjoy this precious gift, ought to be, that it may be imparted to the whole race of mankind. Compare the number of those, who have as yet received it, with the number still remaining under the dominion of false religions, and how small is the former? Does the policy of the bill tend to lessen the disproportion? No; it at once discourages those who are strangers to the light of truth, from coming into the regions of it; and countenances, by example, the nations who continue in darkness, in shutting out those who might convey it to them…. 

“Because, finally, ‘the equal right of every citizen to the free exercise of his religion according to the dictates of his conscience,’ is held by the same tenure with all our other rights…. Either then we must say, that the will of the Legislature is the only measure of their authority; and that in the plentitude of this authority, they may sweep away all our fundamental rights; or, that they are bound to leave this particular right untouched and sacred: either we must say, that they may control the freedom of the press; may abolish the trial by jury; may swallow up the executive and judiciary powers of the State; nay, that they have no authority our very right of suffrage, and erect themselves into an independent and hereditary assembly; or we must say that they have no authority to enact into a law, the bill under consideration. We the subscribers say, that the General Assembly of this Commonwealth have no such authority; and that no effort may be omitted on our part, against so dangerous an usurpation, we oppose to it this Remonstrance, earnestly praying, as we are in duty bound, that the Supreme Lawgiver of the Universe, by illuminating those to whom it is addressed, may, on the one hand, turn their councils from every act, which would affront his holy prerogative, or violate the trust committed to them; and on the other guide them into every measure which may be worthy of His blessing, may redound to their own praise, and may establish more firmly the liberties, the property, and the happiness of the Commonwealth.”

75 James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments, June 20, 1785, cited in Beller, America in Crimson Red, pp. 512-515; Cousins, pp. 308-314; may also be viewed online.
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Madison, who led the opposition, was able to obtain a postponement of consideration of the bill from December 1784 to November 1785. Before adjourning, the legislature passed a bill which incorporated the Protestant Episcopal Church,

“deemed necessary in order to regulate the status of that church in view of the severance of its subordination to the Church of England that had resulted from the Revolution. The bill gave the Episcopal ministers title to the churches, glebes, and other property, and prescribed the method of electing vestrymen.

“Even Madison voted for the incorporation bill, though reluctantly and only in order to stave off passage of the assessment bill. Nonetheless, the incorporation bill aroused a good deal of opposition.”76

The people were against the assessment bill, and the Presbyterians reversed their position, opposed the bill, and for the first time, on August 10, 1785, the whole Presbyterian body supported Jefferson’s “Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom,” “although that bill had been before the Legislature since June 1779.” The Baptists asked all counties which had not yet prepared a petition to do so and agreed to prepare a remonstrance and petition against the assessment. Thus the Presbyterians and Baptists stood together, but for different motives. Mr. Madison’s opinion was that the Presbyterians were “moved by either a fear of their laity or a jealousy of the Episcopalians. The mutual hatred of these sects has been much inflamed by the late act incorporating the latter…. Writings of Madison, I., 175.”77

Patrick Henry, the leading proponent of the assessment bill was elected governor, “depriving the bill of its ablest legislative leader.” The Memorial and Remonstrance had received wide distribution. At the next session, the General Assembly was flooded with petitions and memorials from all parts of the State, overwhelmingly against the bill. The bill was defeated by three votes.

76 Pfeffer, p. 99, citing Eckenrode, p. 100.
77 Brenner, p. 74 (letter dated August 20, 1785); James, pp. 134-139. Madison’s quote was from a letter to Mr. Jefferson.
On January 16, 1786, the Virginia Act for Religious Liberty, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, was passed instead. That bill provided for religious liberty and freedom of conscience. It stated:

“I. Well aware that Almighty God hath created the mind free; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the Holy Author of our religion, who being Lord of both body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do;

that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such, endeavoring to impose them on others hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world and through all time;

that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, … that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions any more than [on] our opinions in physics or geometry;

that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which in common with his fellow citizens he has a natural right; …

that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles, on supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency, will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with, or differ from his own;

that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt [open, or public] acts against peace and good order;

and, finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, that she is proper and sufficient antagonist to error and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural
The act included three factors: church, state, and individual. It protected the individual from loss at the hands of the state incursion into his church affiliation, and implicitly banned church establishment. “It did not attempt to define the relations between Church and State except in terms of the individual.”

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the above bill, never swerved from his devotion to the complete independence of church and state. He wrote:

“The care of every man’s soul belongs to himself. But what if he neglect the care of it? Well, what if he neglect the care of his health or estate, which more clearly relate to the state. Will the magistrate make a law that he shall not be poor or sick? Laws provide against injury from others; but not from ourselves. God himself will not save men against their wills.”

“But our rulers can have no authority over such natural rights, only as we have submitted to them. The rights of conscience we never

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79 Marnell, pp. 96-97.
80 Pfeffer, p. 94, citing Saul K. Padover, The Complete Jefferson (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1943), p. 943. Keep in mind that although Pfeffer’s quotes of Jefferson and others often spoke of God and His sovereignty and freedom of conscience, Pfeffer passes over God as though he had not been mentioned.
submitted, we could not submit. We are answerable for them to our God….

“Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth.”81

According to Biblical principles, the bill was right about some things and wrong about others. It was right about its position on freedom of conscience from interference by civil and ecclesiastical governments, about compelling contributions to opinions to which one is opposed, about forcing any contributions to any pastor whatsoever, and about its assertion “that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order.”

However, the act was wrong in four ways. First, it was wrong in not recognizing that the word of God is the source of all ultimate truth. Second, it was wrong in not recognizing that God desires all nations to be under Him, and that judgment is the ultimate fate of all nations which do not glorify Him. Third, it was wrong in not recognizing that the only way to determine what acts against peace and good order against one’s fellow man is through God-given conscience and the study of the word of God as led by the Holy Spirit. Fourth, the act was also wrong when it asserted “that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, that she is proper and sufficient antagonist to error and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate, [for] errors [cease] to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.” As mankind has proven over and over, truth never prevails. Ultimately, mankind always reverts to satanic principles instead of truth, which is of God. Not recognizing this accelerates the ultimate deterioration and judgment of a nation.

The Baptists continued their struggle to remove all vestiges of the establishment until 1802 when the glebes were sold and all religious societies were placed on equal footing before the law. The glebes were tracts of land and buildings built thereon for the accommodation of the minister and his family, all at the expense of the people within the parish. The Baptists fought to have the act incorporating the Episcopal church repealed. Reuben Ford and John Leland attended the first 1787 assembly meeting as agents in behalf of the Baptist General Committee. On August 10, 1787, the act incorporating the Episcopal church was repealed, and until 2001—when Jerry Falwell and trustees of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, who were joined by the American Civil Liberties Union, challenged the Virginia Constitutional provision forbidding the incorporation of churches in federal district court—no church in Virginia could be incorporated.

“The Baptists continued to memorialize the Legislature … and in 1799 that body passed an act entitled ‘An Act to Repeal Certain Acts, and to Declare the Construction of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution Concerning Religion,’ which act declared that no religious establishment had legally existed since the Commonwealth took the place of the regal government, repealed all laws giving to the Protestant Episcopal church any special privileges, and declared that ‘the act establishing religious freedom’ contains the true construction of the Bill of Rights and of the Constitution; but no order was given for the sale of the glebes.”

As the Anglican establishment in Virginia yielded to pressure from Baptists [and to a much lesser extent Presbyterians] so that religious liberty was established in that state, “[t]he same pressure, reinforced by the conditions of frontier living, ended the Anglican establishment in the Carolinas and Georgia…. [T]he conditions which made establishment possible never existed in the states admitted after Vermont, nor in the territories with the exception of unique Utah.”

82 James, pp. 142-146.
84 James, pp. 142-145.
85 Marnell, p. 130.
By the time the Constitutional Convention convened in 1787, “three states, Rhode Island, New York, and Virginia granted full religious freedom. Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland demanded in different degrees adherence to Christianity. New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia demanded Protestantism.”

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86 Ibid., p. 98.
A convention was called in Philadelphia in 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation.

“In a little more than a year after the passage of the Virginia Act for Religious Liberty the convention met which prepared the Constitution of the United States. Of this convention Mr. Jefferson was not a member, he being then absent as minister to France…. Five of the states, while adopting the Constitution, proposed amendments. Three—New Hampshire, New York, and Virginia—included in one form or another a declaration of religious freedom in the changes they desired to have made, as did also North Carolina, where the convention at first declined to ratify the Constitution until the proposed amendments were acted upon. Accordingly, at the first session of the first Congress the amendment now under consideration [the First Amendment] was proposed with others by Mr. Madison. It met the views of the advocates of religious freedom, and was adopted.”

After the drafting of the Constitution, it was submitted to the states for ratification. “[I]t was doubtful whether it would pass. Massachusetts and Virginia were the pivotal states.” The Baptists of Virginia were against ratification because the Constitution did not have sufficient provision for religious liberty. Patrick Henry had declined to serve at the Convention and was against it. He posed as the champion of the Baptists in opposition to the Constitution. Of course, Madison was for ratification. However, the Baptists chose John Leland, the most popular preacher in Virginia, as candidate of Orange County to the state ratification convention opposed to ratification, and his opponent was to be James Madison. Mr. Leland likely would have been elected had he not later withdrawn. Mr. Madison, when he returned from Philadelphia, stopped by Mr. Leland’s house and spent half a day communicating to him about “the great matters which were then agitating the people of the state and the Confederacy” and relieving Baptist apprehensions as to the question of religious liberty. Because of this meeting, Mr. Leland withdrew in favor of Mr.

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2 [Christian, Volume I](https://www.loc.gov/item/95519771/), p. 391.
Madison and the Baptists of Orange County were won over to the side of Madison.3 “If Madison had not been in the Virginia Convention, that Constitution would not have been ratified by the State, and as the approval of nine states was required to give effect to this instrument, and as Virginia was the ninth, if it had been rejected by her, the Constitution would have failed.... [A]nd that it was by Elder Leland’s influence that Madison was elected to the Convention.”4

The Constitution was ratified and election of the officers of government was the next order of business. Patrick Henry, using his influence in the Legislature, prevented Madison from being elected as Senator. In addition, the Legislature drew the lines for Representative district to prevent Madison from being elected as Representative. However, he was able to “relieve Baptist apprehensions as to any change in his principles, and assure them of his readiness to aid in securing a proper amendment to the Constitution on the subject of religious liberty.” He was elected.

His first act, after the First Congress was organized, in 1789, was to propose, on June 8, certain amendments, including what is now the First Amendment. His purpose was to “conciliate and to make all reasonable concessions to the doubting and distrustful”—to those, the Baptists, who were concerned about the issue of religious liberty. “Of all the denominations in Virginia, [the Baptists] were the only ones that had expressed any dissatisfaction with the Constitution on that point, or that had taken any action into looking to an amendment.” The Baptists of Virginia had also corresponded with Baptists of other states to “secure cooperation in the matter of obtaining” a religious liberty amendment. No other denomination asked for this change.5 A general committee of Baptist churches from Virginia presented an address to President Washington, dated August 8, 1789, expressing concern that “liberty of conscience was not sufficiently secured,” perhaps because “on account of the usage we received in Virginia, under the regal government, when mobs, bonds, fines and prisons, were

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3 James, pp. 150-158; Grady, What Hath God Wrought?, pp. 166-167.
5 James, p. 167.
President Washington assured them that he would not have signed the Constitution if he had had the slightest apprehension that it “might endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical society.”

Some Baptists and others did not see the need for a religious freedom amendment. Indeed, the First Amendment may not have been necessary to guarantee separation of church and state. Isaac Backus was elected as a delegate to the Massachusetts convention of January, 1788, which considered the issue of ratification of the new Constitution. He spoke at the convention.

“On February 4, [Backus] spoke of ‘the great advantage of having religious tests and hereditary nobility excluded from our government.’ These two items in the Constitution seemed to him a guarantee against any establishment of religion and against the formation of any aristocracy. ‘Some serious minds discover a concern lest, if all religious tests should be excluded, the congress would hereafter establish Popery, or some other tyrannical way of worship. But it is most certain that no such way of worship can be established without any religious test.’ He said ‘Popery,’ but he probably feared, as many Baptists did, that some form of Calvinism of the Presbyterian or Consociational variety was more likely. His interpretation of this article helps to explain why the Baptists [of Massachusetts] made no effort to fight for an amendment on freedom of religion along with the others which the convention sent to Congress.”

Even Madison, who proposed and fought for the First Amendment, did not believe that it was necessary for the security of religion. He wrote in his Journal on June 12, 1788:

“… Is a bill of rights a security for Religion? … If there were a majority of one sect, a bill of rights would be a poor protection for liberty. Happily for the states, they enjoy the utmost freedom of religion. This freedom arises from that multiplicity of sects, which pervades America, and which is the best and only security for religious liberty in any society. For where there is such a variety of sects, there cannot be a majority of any one to oppress and persecute the rest. Fortunately for this commonwealth, a majority of the people are decidedly against any exclusive establishment—I believe it to be so in the other states…. But the United States abounds in such a variety of

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7 Ibid.
sects, that it is a strong security against religious persecution, and it is sufficient to authorize a conclusion, that no one sect will ever be able to outnumber or depress the rest.”

Others were against a bill of rights. “James Wilson argued that ‘all is reserved in a general government which is not given,’ and that since the power to legislate on religion or speech or press was not given to the Federal government, the government did not possess it, and there was therefore no need for an express prohibition.”

“Alexander Hamilton argued that a bill of rights, not only was unnecessary, but would be dangerous, since it might create the inference that a power to deal with the reserved subject was in fact conferred.”

The amendment was adopted on September 25, 1789, and was approved by the required number of states in 1791.

“No more fitting conclusion can be had … than to quote the language of the Father of his country. The days of persecution, of blood and of martyrdom were passed. Civil and soul liberty, the inalienable rights of man, enlargement, benevolent operations, educational advantages, and worldwide missionary endeavor, all had been made possible by the struggles of the past. The Baptists consulted George Washington to assist in the securing freedom of conscience. He replied:

“I have often expressed my sentiments, that every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience. While I recognize with satisfaction, that the religious society of which you are members have been, throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously the firm friends to civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution, I cannot hesitate to believe, faithful supporters of a free, yet efficient general government. Under this pleasing expectation, I rejoice to assure them, that they may rely on my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity.”

9 Cousins, pp. 314-315.
10 Pfeffer, p. 112.
Chapter 9
Conclusion

Early in the colonial period, men formed the first notable government that legally protected separation of church and state and religious liberty. This historical event arose out of a conflict between the two currents which flowed in opposite directions.

“A large number of people fled out of the old world into this wilderness for religious liberty; but had not been here long before some put in high claims for power, under the name of orthodoxy; to whom others made fierce opposition professedly from the light within; and their clashings were so great that several lives were lost in the fray. This made a terrible noise on the other side of the water. But as self-defence is a natural principle, each party wrote volume after volume to clear themselves from blame; and they both conspired to cast a great part of it upon one singular man [Roger Williams], whom they called a weathercock and a windmill. Now let the curious find out if they can, first how men of university learning, or of divine inspiration, came to write great volumes against a windmill and a weathercock? secondly, how such a strange creature came to be an overmatch for them all, and to carry his point against the arts of priestcraft, the intrigues of court, the flights of enthusiasm and the power of factions, so as after he had pulled down ruin upon himself and his friends, yet to be able, in the midst of heathen savages, to erect the best form of civil government that the world had seen in sixteen hundred years? thirdly, how he and his ruined friends came to lie under those reproaches for a hundred years, and yet that their plan should then be adopted by thirteen colonies, to whom these despised people could afford senators of principal note, as well as commanders by sea and land? The excellency of this scene above those which many are bewitched with, consists in its being founded upon facts and not fictions; being not the creature of distempered brains, but of an unerring Providence.”

Many brave men and women, with Baptists at the forefront, paid a high price on the path to religious liberty and freedom of speech, association, and the press. One should not forget that those people were motivated by a deep love for God and his word, not by earthly concerns.

As a result of the fight, Christians, and everyone else in America, have religious freedom. The United States Supreme

Court still upholds the wall of separation between church and state and freedom of conscience.²

Christians in America have been blessed above measure and can choose to please God and not be persecuted for it. The brief time men will be on earth is miniscule compared to eternity. The time an individual Christian is here is nothing more than a blink of the eye. An American believer now has the opportunity to glorify God without persecution. That opportunity was the result of the trail of blood left by the martyrs for Christ.

Every breath a believer takes out of God’s will is a wasted breath. He will praise God naturally, not as a matter of choice, in heaven. This is his one chance, during his eternal existence, to live for Christ of his own free will. This is the one shot he has to choose to please, serve, praise, and glorify God. After leaving this world, some will learn, when it is too late, that they never glorified him when they had the choice. Some will learn that they did not proceed according to knowledge, understanding, and wisdom; and that they followed and promoted the principles and goals of the god of this world because they were deceived by Christian Revisionists.

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² See Finney, *God Betrayed*, Section V. Sadly, while upholding that wall of separation, the Court has also twisted the meaning of the First Amendment so as to remove God from practically all civil government matters.
Epilogue

The trail of blood of the martyrs of Jesus proves the guilt of the accused. The evidence presented against those charged is reliable and overwhelming. It leaves no doubt that the accused are guilty as charged. Christian Revisionists conspired to murder and murdered untold millions when they had the power. Since they no longer have the power in America, they relentlessly work to destroy the obstacles to their reclaiming that power: the freedoms provided by the First Amendment and corresponding state constitutional provisions. They are guilty of conspiracy to commit murder.

When contemporary Christian Revisionists succeed, they will again enforce, with the sword, their abominable religion. Millions will be annihilated in the name of God. “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.” However, their religious reign will be short lived. Political Babylon will destroy religious Babylon. “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”

“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”

God desires that civil government officials and evil religious leaders who conspire to kill and do kill millions of dissidents, be held accountable both temporally and eternally. Truth and justice requires you, the jury, to pronounce a temporal judgment of “guilty as charged,” educate others about the truths you have learned, and expose the accused for what they are. Those of you who were deceived and worked unknowingly to spread the lies and achieve

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1 Re. 17.6.
2 Re. 17.16.
3 Re. 18.2-3.
the goals of Christian Revisionists are not guilty since temporal
guilt requires mental culpability. However, you are now
accountable for your actions since you have heard the evidence and
know the truth. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye
separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will
receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my
sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Should you refuse to honestly evaluate the evidence, repent of your actions, and
follow truth, you will also be culpable and guilty of conspiracy to commit murder.

Of course, all are guilty before God:

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none
that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all
gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is
none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre;
with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under
their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are
swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the
way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their
eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to
them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all
the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of
the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the
knowledge of sin.”

All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ for eternal
judgment.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose
face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place
for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and
the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the
book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were
written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the
dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which
were in them: and they were judged every man according to their
works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the
second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life
was cast into the lake of fire.”

4 2 Co. 6.17-18.
5 Ro. 3.10-20.
6 Re. 20.11-15.
When one is saved, his name is written in the book of life; he is justified. Thus, everyone is guilty before God, but anyone may be justified, found not guilty, when he stands before the Supreme Judge.\(^7\) Justification means “a reason to be found not guilty” or “made righteous in the sight of God.”

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.”\(^8\)

God provides a means for everyone, no matter how atrocious his sins, to be justified, that is to be found not guilty even though he is guilty. Anyone may repent toward God of his evil deeds and trust Christ for salvation from sin. For example, Saul, of Tarsus, a great persecutor of Christians, repented, trusted Christ for salvation, and was thereafter greatly persecuted for his faith.\(^9\)

Christ died to save men from their sins.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures[.].”\(^10\)
A believer in Christ is a new creature. His foundation for all matters, the Bible, instructs him to be baptized into a local, autonomous, New Testament church, a spiritual body, where he can properly exercise his spiritual gifts. It instructs babes in Christ, to “desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby,” to study, and to grow in knowledge, understanding and wisdom so that they fall not and be not destroyed.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The temporal cost of following Christ is minute compared to the eternal rewards. Some followers of Christ will be temporally persecuted and will not receive the promise, but obtain a good report through faith. Jesus highly esteems his martyrs. “They shall walk with God in white: for they are worthy.” “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

11 2 Co. 5.17.
12 1 Co. 12-13; Ep.4.
13 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Ti. 2.15).”
14 See, e.g., Pr. 8-9.
15 See, e.g., 2. Pe. 1.1-11.
16 See, e.g., Ho. 4.6-19.
17 1 Pe. 5.8-11.
18 He. 11.32-40.
19 Re. 3.4.
20 Re. 3.5; see also, Re. 6.10-11, 7.13-14.
21 Re. 20.4.
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