

John Witherspoon, Resistance, and Revolution:

"Rebellion to Tyrants [or George III] is Obedience to God" [1]

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Abstract: There was no abler advocate for American independence, or better representative of the legacy of the Reformation's theory of resistance in early America, than the parson-politician the Reverend John Witherspoon. Although something of a forgotten founder today, in fact Witherspoon has been called a "colossus" of his own day: nationally reputed as a politician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, one of the most influential clergymen in the colonies, and president of the College of New Jersey at Princeton during one of the most important quarter-centuries in American history (1768-1794). Given Witherspoon's unique status among the founders as a political clergyman, this paper briefly rehearses his careers in politics and religion in the first section, and reconstructs his thinking on the public role of religion in the Revolutionary period, or what can be called his political theology of resistance, in the second section. The discussion of political theology centers around two political sermons, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men" (1776) and the misnamed "Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving After Peace" (1782), along with three religious proclamations (1776, 1781, 1782) drafted by Witherspoon for the Continental Congress.

There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire.

--John Witherspoonii [2]

In America it is religion which leads to enlightenment and the observance of divine laws which leads men to liberty.

--Alexis de Tocquevilleiii [3]

Introduction

In the portentous year 1776 Edward Gibbon published the first volume of his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, in which he had little good to say about Christianity and even less about clerics. "The influence of the clergy, he wrote, "might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind; but so intimate is the connection between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people."iv [4] But Gibbon was wrong about that, as even the editors of his magnificent history note,v [5] and as the career of his contemporary the Rev. John Witherspoon illustrates. In 1776 Gibbon (d. 1794) was a member of Parliament, implacably opposed to the American Revolution, while Witherspoon (d. 1794) was sitting in the American Continental Congress pushing for independence from Gibbon's King George III. Rev. Witherspoon was a member of the so-called "Black Regiment," American clergy who agitated and sometimes even fought for independence.vi [6]

There was no abler advocate for American independence, or better representative of the legacy of the Reformation's theory of resistance, than the parson-politician Witherspoon. In 1774 John Adams, who had no patience for fools or innocents, called Witherspoon a "clear, sensible" preacher, and "as high a Son of Liberty, as any Man in America."vii [7] Although something of a forgotten founder today, in fact Witherspoon was a "colossus" in his day:viii [8] nationally reputed as a politician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, one of the most influential clergyman in America, and president of the College of New Jersey at Princeton during perhaps the most important quarter-century in American history. In each of these roles Witherspoon was outstanding; taken together they mark him off as "an incredible . . . figure in the growth of America," in the words of Ralph Ketcham.ix [9]

Given Witherspoon's unique status among the founders as a political clergyman, this paper briefly rehearses his careers in politics and religion in the first section, and reconstructs his thinking on the public role of religion in the Revolutionary period, or what can be called his political theology of resistance, in the second section. The discussion of political theology centers around two political sermons, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men" (1776) and the "Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving After Peace" (1782), along with three religious proclamations (1776, 1781, 1782) drafted by Witherspoon for the Continental Congress.

Revolutionary Politics and Religion

John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.,^x [10] lived an eventful life that spanned the last three quarters of the eighteenth century. Born in Scotland the same year as Adam Smith at the dawn of the Scottish Enlightenment, Witherspoon was educated at its heart at the University of Edinburgh. After graduation and ordination, Witherspoon emerged as the leader of the more evangelical Popular party in the Scottish Presbyterian church. His witty and sometimes caustic pen, coupled with shrewdness and genuine piety, earned him an international reputation by the 1760s, and an invitation to fill the presidency of the *de facto* Presbyterian College of New Jersey in Princeton. At the urging of Benjamin Rush, the trustees of the College, and George Whitefield,^{xi} [11] the Anglican evangelist who helped touched off the First Great Awakening, Witherspoon emigrated to Princeton in 1768 to become sixth president of the College. He remained at Princeton until his death in 1794.

Witherspoon's formal political career was spent at the founding's epicenter around Philadelphia during 15 crucial years. He served periodically in the New Jersey provincial and state legislatures (1774-89), in the Continental and Confederation Congresses throughout the Revolution (1776-82),^{xii} [12] and in the New Jersey convention that ratified the federal Constitution (1787). Witherspoon made a lasting mark on the Congress during his six year career. He argued for declaring independence at a critical juncture in early July 1776,^{xiii} [13] and he was the only practicing clergyman and college president to sign the Declaration. He served on 126 committees (Presbyterians are hell on committees), and drafted the instructions to the American peace commissioners in France in 1781. He also drafted three religious proclamations for the Congress, a full third of those issued by Congress during his tenure. Between signing the Declaration of Independence and ratifying the Constitution,^{xiv} [14] Witherspoon had a direct hand in passing the two most celebrated documents of the American founding.

Witherspoon's political influence continued long after his own retirement from elective politics in 1789. The list of his Princeton students who went on to significant positions in public affairs during the founding period is long and distinguished. Among these were twelve members of the Continental Congress; five delegates to the Constitutional Convention; one U.S. president (James Madison, who stayed on following his 1771 graduation to study Hebrew and law under Witherspoon);^{xv} [15] a vice president (Aaron Burr, class of 1772); forty-nine U.S. Representatives; twenty-eight Senators; three Supreme Court Justices; eight District Judges; one Secretary of State; three Attorneys General; and two foreign ministers. Twenty-six of Witherspoon's graduates were state judges, seventeen were members of their state constitutional

conventions, and fourteen were members of the state conventions that ratified the federal Constitution.xvi [16] Garry Wills has accordingly tagged Witherspoon "probably the most influential teacher in the entire history of American education.♦xvii [17]

Witherspoon also had a formidable ministerial career and was among the most influential clergymen in America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. He came from a distinguished line of Presbyterian pastors: his great-grandfather had signed the Solemn League and Covenant (1648) aligning Scotland with the Parliamentary forces in the English Civil War in exchange for preserving the Reformed (i.e. Calvinist) religion in Scotland, and his mother claimed lineal descent from John Knox. His international reputation was quickly transferred to America. Early on he formed powerful connections throughout the colonies with pastors like Ezra Stiles and Timothy Dwight in New England, other ministers in the deep South, and even a clerical son-in-law. One daughter married Madison's friend the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, founder of Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, and later seventh president of Princeton. Witherspoon was also a fixture in the Congregational-Presbyterian Confederation that met between 1766 and 1775. That Confederation linked Congregationalists from the General Association of Connecticut with Presbyterians to oppose a potential Anglican establishment,xviii [18] that perennial bugaboo of American dissenters. In those joint conventions Witherspoon solidified his relationship with Rev. Stiles, the Congregationalist president of Yale College who found Witherspoon "a very learned divine♦ but complained privately that he was too much of a politician.xix [19]

His status as a minister and a magistrate inevitably led Witherspoon to the crossroads of religion and politics in the founding period, and gave his messages heft. On the congressional

fast day of May 17, 1776, Witherspoon preached what became his most famous sermon, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men."^{xx} [20] That sermon, by his own admission the first overtly political one from his pulpit, was dedicated to "the Honourable JOHN HANCOCK, Esq., President of the Congress of the United States of America."[?] It turned out to be one of the most important political sermons of the Revolutionary era, and it helped vault Witherspoon into the Continental Congress less than two months later. "The Dominion of Providence"[?] was a predictable Calvinist discourse on the general sovereignty of God, inspired by Psalm 76:10, "surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shall thou restrain."^{xxi} [21] But the sermon also contained a large section which Witherspoon called an "improvement"[?] of the biblical text, in which he applied the general scriptural teaching to the particulars of the American situation and laid out some of his own thoughts on the proper relationship between religion and government. (Like the "plain style"[?] Puritan sermons of old and New England, Witherspoon's sermons were typically in three parts, the last of which applied the biblical text to the lives and immediate circumstances of his listeners.)^{xxii} [22]

Late that same year, Witherspoon was tapped to draft a proclamation for the Congress recommending a "day of solemn fasting and humiliation."[?] Issued on December 11, 1776, it was the first of three religious proclamations composed by Witherspoon during the war years between 1776 and 1782. It urged all the United States "to implore of Almighty God the forgiveness of the many sins prevailing among the ranks, and to beg the countenance and assistance of his Providence in the prosecution of the present just and necessary war."[?] And it recommended to both civil and military officers "the exercise of repentance and reformation."^{xxiii} [23]

Witherspoon also wrote thanksgiving day proclamations that were issued on October 26, 1781, and October 11, 1782, in keeping with Congress's practice of issuing thanksgiving day proclamations each October throughout the War.^{xxiv} [24] These days of fasting, prayer and thanksgiving were sometimes recommended to the states in strong language. Witherspoon's Fast Day Proclamation of 1776, for example, recommended that a fast be appointed "as soon as possible" and advised "in the most earnest manner" that persons in authority encourage repentance and reformation, and discourage immorality in those under them. These proclamations employed the language of the covenant theology held by Witherspoon and other Reformed Protestants, which taught that God had made a covenant with the people of the United States to bless them as long as they were holy and curse them when they were sinful. Engaged in a desperate war with Great Britain, Witherspoon and the Congress urged all the American people, "public bodies, as well as private persons, to reverence the Providence of God, and look up to him as the supreme disposer of all events."^{xxv} [25] Even on days of thanksgiving the people were "to confess our manifold sins; to offer up our most fervent supplications to the God of all grace, that it may please Him to pardon our offences, and incline our hearts for the future to keep all his laws . . . and cause the knowledge of God to cover the earth, as the water covers the seas."^{xxvi} [26]

In September of 1782, Witherspoon was a member of a three-man congressional committee appointed to consider a petition of support for Philadelphia printer Robert Aitken's translation and printing of the Bible.^{xxvii} [27] The committee returned a resolution on September 12, drafted by Witherspoon and approved substantially unchanged by the Congress, which said: "The United States in Congress assembled, highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion . . . and being satisfied . . . of

his care and accuracy in the execution of the work, they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States.❖xxviii [28] Aitken's work thus became the first English Bible published in North America.xxix [29] Apparently Witherspoon and his colleagues believed that the ready availability of Bibles was an important prerequisite not only to personal but also to public happiness. "[M]ake us a holy, that so we may be an happy people,❖ Congress prayed in a fast day proclamation of March 19, 1782.xxx [30]

That autumn Witherspoon also delivered what has erroneously been called the "Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving After Peace,❖xxxi [31] a sermon which, like "The Dominion of Providence,❖ expresses Witherspoon's thinking on the proper relationship between religion and American politics. This sermon is peculiarly interesting: Witherspoon preached it in his capacity as a minister just weeks after he retired from the Continental Congress, and in obedience to a congressional thanksgiving day proclamation he had written himself in his capacity as a congressman. The proclamation asked the States to "command❖ those citizens under their authority to observe a day of "solemn thanksgiving to God for all his mercies❖ and further recommended a "cheerful obedience to his [God's] laws, and . . . the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.❖xxxii [32] Witherspoon accordingly began his sermon by thanking God for "the goodness of his providence to the United States of America, in the course of a war, which has now lasted seven years,❖ and then suggested that "[t]hose who are vested with civil authority ought also, with much care, to promote religion and good morals among all under their government.❖xxxiii [33]

We can see from these few examples just how visible a symbol Witherspoon was of the intermingling of religion and politics during the American founding. In fact, if we wished to invent a figure who at once represented America's early commitments to religion and politics, we could hardly do better than to invent the parson-politician from New Jersey. Certainly Witherspoon never shrank from this dual role. He conspicuously wore his clerical outfit (including a large Geneva collar) to sessions of the Congress,^{xxxiv} [34] and he ridiculed a provision in the new Georgia constitution of 1789 that stated, "No clergyman of any denomination shall be a member of the general assembly."^{xxxv} [35] Posing as a confused parson, Witherspoon suggested in a newspaper editorial that a lengthy and humorous section be substituted to clear up "ambiguities" in the anticlerical Georgia constitution. Witherspoon was able to move deftly, sometimes even comically, between his sacred and secular roles because his beliefs about religion and civil government were perfectly synchronized with those of nearly all the founders, even less-than-orthodox founders like Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and George Washington.

Political Theology of Resistance

How did John Witherspoon, this most visible symbol of both church and state during the Revolutionary period, conceive of the public role of religion in resisting English oppression, and what did he think was the proper interaction between church and state in the young American republic he helped liberate? In other words, what was his political theology?

Witherspoon, like other Reformed Americans, saw himself as the inheritor of a sturdy tradition of Protestant resistance to the absolute and divine right of kings and civil tyranny that predated John Locke and Algernon Sydney (two thinkers named by Jefferson as influences on the Declaration of Independence)xxxvi [36] by a century. True, hints of popular sovereignty can be detected in the early medieval period, and a more radical statement of the doctrine was made by Marsilius of Padua in the late Middle Ages.xxxvii [37] But of the modern constitutionalists, the English, French, Swiss, and Scottish reformers developed a sophisticated body of literature arguing against the divine right of kings, and more important to Witherspoon, articulating a case for resistance to arbitrary or tyrannical government. The resistance literature that arose during the later stages of the Protestant Reformation built on the work of John Calvin (1509-64), but went far beyond the limited right of resistance articulated in his Institutes of the Christian Religion. Even that arch-predestinarian, who generally emphasized the obligation of individual Christians to obey their earthly rulers in the Institutes, had to admit that "[n]othing is more desirable than liberty.❖xxxviii [38] Calvin accordingly left the door to resistance slightly ajar by recognizing a right of "magistrates of the people, appointed to restrain the willfulness of kings❖ to disobey oppressive rulers. These magistrates were to be appointed by the people in extraordinary circumstances to restrain the "fierce licentiousness of kings❖ who "betray the freedom of the people.❖xxxix [39]

Witherspoon appears to have considered the Continental Congress just such a magistracy of the people, appointed to restrain a willful British ministry and Parliament--more than the king--who were curtailing American liberties. (Indeed, Witherspoon pointedly objected to Jefferson's language in the Declaration of Independence that labeled George III a tyrant. Benjamin Rush asserted that Witherspoon objected, as John Adams did, to calling King George a "tyrant" on the floor of the Continental Congress;^{xl [40]} V. L. Collins says Witherspoon "protested, as he always did, against calling the King a tyrant, etc., as being false and undignified."^{xli [41]}) Like Calvin, Witherspoon believed that "[a]ll persons, young and old, love liberty.❖xlii [42] Especially to Reformed audiences, he repeatedly emphasized that the Revolution was a popular movement and that the Congress was composed of the legitimate representatives of the people, and rejected the notion that a small group of political elites engineered the War over the wishes of the people.

In the Thanksgiving Day Sermon of 1782 Witherspoon reminded the congregation that "[t]he truth is, the American Congress owes its existence and its influence to the people at large. I might easily shew, that there has hardly any great or important step been taken, but the public opinion has gone before the resolutions of that body.❖xlili [43] The "Pastoral Letter❖ to the Presbyterian ministers of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1775 emphasized that Congress had been appointed by the people under extraordinary circumstances. "In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, consist of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiased manner, by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect, and encouraged in their difficult service . . . but adhere firmly to their resolutions.❖xliv [44] In a personal letter from 1778 Witherspoon related that "[a]nother mistake, into which the ministry and parliament of England fell, was, that this was a deep-laid scheme of a few artful and designing men, who stirred up the multitude for their own ends; that the sentiments in favour of

America, were by no means general; but that the artful leaders imposed upon them. . . . Alas! they know nothing of the matter. ♦xlv [45] Two years later Witherspoon wrote to a friend in Scotland that "[t]here is no instance in the whole contest, in which the public opinion did not go before their [Congress's] resolutions. To go back to the very beginning -- the declaration of independence was forced upon the majority of the then Congress, by the people in general. ♦xlvi [46] Even a public document like his "Thoughts on American Liberty" ♦ (1774) contained an analysis of the Congress that sounded remarkably similar to Calvin's magistracy:

The Congress is, properly speaking, the representative of the great body of the people of North America. Their election is for a particular purpose, and a particular season only It is an interruption or suspension of the usual forms, and an appeal to the great law of reason, the first principles of the social union, and the multitude collectively, for whose benefit all the particular laws and customs of a constituted state, are supposed to have been originally established. ♦xlvii [47]

In addition to the work of Calvin himself, Witherspoon was doubtless familiar with other influential works of late-Reformation resistance theory, including Francois Hotman's Francogallia (1573), Theodore Beza's Right of Magistrates (1574), the Huguenot Phillipe du Plessis-Mornay's Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos [A Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants] (1579), George Buchanan's De jure regni apud Scotos [The Law of Scottish Kingship] (1579), ♦xlviii [48] and Samuel Rutherford's Lex, Rex [The Law and the Prince] (1644). ♦xlix [49] (We can say this with some certainty because we know that Witherspoon owned, at the time of his death, volumes by Calvin, including the Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin's student Beza, and by

Buchanan. His personal library also contained Sydney's Discourses Concerning Government and the 1713 edition of Locke's Two Treatises.)^{1 [50]}

Reformation resistance theory was especially typified in Rutherford's Lex, Rex and Buchanan's De Jure Regni apud Scotos, which were published together well into the nineteenth century. Both tracts were translated into English from their original Latin, argued against absolute monarchy, and argued for graduated resistance to civil oppression. Of the two, Rutherford's Law and the Prince was the more radical. It suggested that a campaign of graduated resistance against "unjust violence" by the civil magistrate was perfectly justified and warranted by the Bible. Rutherford suggested three legitimate steps to be taken, in order, against oppression by the state: resistance of the word (e.g. petitioning), resistance of flight, and the active resistance of fighting. Witherspoon embraced these steps, or rather the first and third (since the colonists had already "flown" to an extent, by leaving England for the New World), as legitimate actions taken by the Continental Congress on behalf of British North Americans.

These Reformation treatises from which Witherspoon drew collectively contained what Herbert Foster has called the "five points of political Calvinism," which were "fundamental law, natural rights, contract and consent of people, popular sovereignty, resistance to tyranny through responsible representatives."^{li [51]} Foster also claims that these five points were passed along to the American revolutionaries through Locke's Two Treatises. Nor is Foster the only intellectual historian to notice the similarity between the liberal Lockean arguments and those from the late-Reformation period that preceded them. J. N. Figgis, for one, has noticed the remarkable similarity between the Vindiciae contra Tyrannos and Locke's "Second Treatise of Government," insisting that "[i]t is hard to overestimate the resemblance between the ideas of

Locke and the author of the Vindiciae.^{lii [52]} (One can also point to an uncanny resemblance between Locke's Two Treatises, the first of which was written to refute the theory of absolute divine right monarchy in Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha: or, The Natural Power of Kings, and Rutherford's 1644 Lex, Rex, written before Locke's work in order to refute, as its lengthy subtitle indicated, John Maxwell's Sacro-Sancta Regum Majestas, or The Sacred and Royal Prerogative of Christian Kings.) Harold Laski, for another, writes that the Vindiciae was "an essential source of English radicalism" and that "through Locke . . . it supplies the perspective of the American Revolution."^{liii [53]} Locke's contemporary Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), profoundly ambivalent about Protestantism himself, acknowledged that "Locke's Civil Government proves that the sovereignty belongs to the people. . . . This is the gospel of the day among Protestants."^{liv [54]} Montesquieu (1689-1755) thought that "[t]he Genevese should bless the birthday of Calvin,"^{lv [55]} and even Voltaire (1694-1778) had to admit that "Calvinism conforms to the republican spirit."^{lvi [56]} It seems, therefore, that Locke's contemporaries and modern scholars have perceived a genuine connection between late-Reformation political theory and Locke, and it is possible that Locke read the Vindiciae before writing his Two Treatises, as it appears among his 1681 "Catalogue of my Books at Oxford."^{lvii [57]}

Yet none of the foregoing means that Reformed Puritan political theory held an exclusive, or even necessarily preeminent, place in John Locke's political thought. It does, however, suggest that the influence of Puritan resistance theory upon Locke was not merely trivial; that Locke was in some sense, as Winthrop Hudson has put it, an "heir of Puritan political theorists,"^{lviii [58]} just as he was the fleshly heir of Puritan parents.^{lix [59]} That he may have sought to secularize Puritan political theory is perhaps beside the point. Locke adopted the categories of Puritan resistance theory, although he filled in those categories with more secular

content. Like Nathaniel Hawthorne in America,^{lx [60]} Locke's writing was haunted by the Puritan ideas of his forebears even though he was not a Puritan himself. Religious Americans--even the highly literate like Witherspoon--could and probably did see Locke in the long Reformed tradition begun by Calvin and carried on by his English, Scottish and Huguenot followers. That a reasonably sophisticated moral philosopher like Witherspoon was able to harmonize the basic tenets of Reformation political theory and those of an English liberal like Locke suggests that the latter may indeed have been a carrier of Puritan political theory. Even so clever an unbeliever as Gibbon, a contemporary of the American founders, saw Locke in Christian terms. "Nor can it be deemed incredible,◆ Gibbon wrote, "that the mind of an unlettered soldier [Constantine] should have yielded to the weight of evidence [for Christianity] which, in a more enlightened age, has satisfied or subdued the reason of a Grotius, a Pascal, or a Locke.◆^{lxi [61]} But even if the modest connection between John Locke and Reformation thought is weaker than I have suggested, it would have required very little effort--or no effort at all--for Witherspoon to view Locke as an heir of the Puritans. As Herbert Foster notes, "Locke cites authorities sparingly; but in his Two Treatises on Government, his citations are almost entirely Calvinistic: . . . seven Calvinists (Hooker, Bilson, James I., Milton, Hunton, Ainsworth, Selden); one ex-Calvinist, the Dutch Remonstrant Grotius; and only one reference uninfected by Calvinism, the Scottish Catholic Barclay.◆^{lxii [62]}

This Puritan infection in Locke may account for the apparent ease with which Americans in general, and Witherspoon in particular, could rely simultaneously on Locke, Sidney and Calvin for support in resisting perceived British religious and civil tyranny.^{lxiii [63]} Witherspoon could speak with equal eloquence, to use Carey McWilliams's metaphor, in at least those two voices of English liberalism (Locke and Sydney) and Reformed Christianity (Calvin). Nowhere

is this better illustrated than in his celebrated political sermon from May 1776, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men."^{lxiv} [64]

The sermon is interesting as a near-perfect exemplar of the melding of Christian and liberal political theory. This melding is apparent in the text of the sermon itself, and becomes even more apparent when the published version, including the appended "Address,"^{lxv} is examined. The "Address to the Natives of Scotland Residing in America"^{lxvi} argued for independence much as the "Dominion of Providence"^{lxvii} had, but in more secular-sounding, liberal language. The published sermon containing both pieces is therefore a noteworthy example of a larger religio-political mindset present in the colonies around the time of the Revolution.^{lxviii} [65] Witherspoon's contemporaries--many of them hostile to the American cause--recognized it as such. The critical editor of the 1777 Glasgow edition of the sermon noted that Witherspoon had "the audacity to affirm, that not only the temporal but eternal happiness of the revolted colonists depends upon persevering in their independence, and undauntedly opposing the arms of their lawful sovereign"^{lxix} and that his sermon combined "the most rebellious sentiments with the most sacred and important truths."^{lxx} [66] Just as the Glasgow editor recognized, Witherspoon's arguments for independence in the "Dominion of Providence"^{lxxi} can conveniently be grouped under two heads: overtly religious arguments and liberal arguments, although Witherspoon moved back and forth between the two with little difficulty.

Witherspoon prefaced his religious arguments with an appropriate allusion to David and the Philistine Goliath, suggesting, of course, that the United States were playing David to Great Britain's Goliath. (Biblical images such as these were standard fare in Reformed sermons of the day: George Duffield, minister of the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, preached a

sermon the same day with John Adams in attendance, in which he drew a parallel between Pharaoh and George III.) Just as God favored the righteous David and the rest of his chosen people over Goliath and the Philistines, so he was siding with the Americans against the British.

The first religious argument in the sermon was thus an implicit endorsement of America's status as God's favored nation, and of Americans as his almost-chosen people, to borrow a phrase from Lincoln. Although he presented it "as a matter rather of conjecture than certainty" and disclaimed any intention to speak "prophetically," Witherspoon pointed out that "[s]ome have observed that true religion and in her train dominion, riches, literature, and arts have taken their course in a slow and gradual manner from east to west since the earth was settled after the flood, and from thence forebode the future glory of America."^{lxvii} [67] (Recall that five years earlier, Philip Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge wrote Princeton's 1771 commencement address, which they titled "The Rising Glory of America" and published in 1772.) The belief that America was somehow uniquely singled out by God was shared by several of the counselors who had urged Witherspoon to emigrate. Not least of these was George Whitefield, who, along with Jonathan Edwards, had sparked the first Great Awakening. Witherspoon later recalled how Whitefield had told him, "[y]ou will be greatly mortified to see the difference between a small country society in America, and a large city congregation in Scotland; but if you be instrumental in sending out ministers of the New Testament, it will be a still more important station, for every gownsmen is a legion."^{lxviii} [68] Even more pointedly, the Rev. Thomas Randall, Scottish minister and Witherspoon's confidant, wrote to his friend that "[w]hen I heard, some time ago, of your being called to the Presidency of N. Jersey College, I judged it a matter of thankfulness to GOD; as I have long thought it the intention of Providence (after our abuse of our great mercies, & our dreadful degeneracy from real religion) to fix the great seat of truth and righteousness in

America; and that N. Jersey seemed to promise fair for being the *nursery* of the most approved instruments, for carrying on that great design, in that wide continent.❖^{lxi} [69] By the time Randall's letter arrived, Witherspoon had already made up his mind to sail for America, since "[f]rom the Persuasion of you & other friends at Edinbr & what Mr Stockton has said of the State of Religion in American I find a pretty favourable Inclination in my own Mind to the Proposal though many Difficulties ly [sic] in the Way.❖^{lxx} [70] To minds like these, independence was seen as the next step in the divinely-ordained glorification of America.

A second religious argument for independence used by Witherspoon in the "Dominion of Providence❖ was the intertwining of civil and religious rights. To reiterate a point made earlier, for Witherspoon resistance and ultimately independence were necessary because both religious and civil liberties were at stake. "I am satisfied,❖ he said, "that the confederacy of the colonies has not been the effect of pride, resentment, or sedition, but of a deep and general conviction that our civil and religious liberties, and consequently in a great measure the temporal and eternal happiness of us and our posterity, depended on the issue.❖ History teaches that true religion has been spread almost exclusively in those parts of the world that experienced political liberty and justice. Lose your civil liberty and religious liberty will go with it. "If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage.❖^{lxxi} [71]

Witherspoon was implying that religious liberty or freedom of conscience was the end, and civil liberty the means to that end. Since the two liberties were interdependent, the struggle for civil liberty became a struggle for religious liberty. As Witherspoon saw things, the Revolution was, in Marvin Olasky's language, a matter of "fighting for liberty and virtue,❖ or in Perry Miller's, "a protest of native piety against foreign impiety.❖^{lxxii}

[72] As early as 1771 Witherspoon was arguing that American Christianity and morality had surpassed those of the decadent British. Speaking of the New England Congregationalists, Witherspoon wrote in a letter to the Scottish press, "[n]or do I think that any part of the British empire is at this day equal to them for real religion and sound morals."^{lxxiii [73]} Thus Witherspoon could claim that "[t]he cause [independence] is sacred, and the champions for it ought to be holy."^{lxxiv [74]} Two years later he was more convinced than ever that "[a]s to the public cause, I look upon the separation of America from Britain to be the visible intention of Providence."^{lxxv [75]} This belief was reiterated in 1782 in the "Thanksgiving Sermon."[?] "Upon the whole,"[?] Witherspoon explained, "nothing appears to me more manifest, than that the separation of this country from Britain has been of God; for every step the British took to prevent, served to accelerate it, which has generally been the case when men have undertaken to go in opposition to the course of Providence, and to make war with the nature of things."^{lxxvi [76]} Note that an equation is made between "the course of Providence"[?] and "the nature of things,"[?] or, in slightly different but more famous terms, between the laws of nature and of nature's God.

There is even an oral tradition that Witherspoon urged adoption of the Calvinistic-sounding phrase "with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence"[?] toward the end of the Declaration. Although there is no contemporary written record of Witherspoon making such a suggestion, either in the scanty records of the Continental Congress from July 1776 or elsewhere, that tradition has found its way into the musical 1776 and polemical books like Christianity and the Constitution.^{lxxvii [77]} However, the providential language does not appear in Jefferson's so-called "Original Rough Draft"[?] (which includes the changes made by Jefferson himself and the Committee of Five);^{lxxviii [78]} that language was, by Jefferson's own

account, suggested by someone else from the floor of the Congress.^{lxxix} [79] Whether that someone was Witherspoon or not, no one knows. Such a suggestion would have been consistent with Witherspoon's Reformed political theology, and "divine Providence" was his preferred way of referring to God's active superintendence over creation.

For Witherspoon, in order to be most useful in public affairs, religion had to be rooted in sincere belief in, and worship of, God. Witherspoon did occasionally refer to the cause of independence as "sacred,"^{lxxx} [80] Witherspoon was careful not to sacralize the state. He sometimes spoke of "visible religion,"^{lxxxi} [81] or "the public credit of religion,"^{lxxxii} [82] but most often, Witherspoon used the phrase "the public interest of religion."

What sort of religion did Witherspoon consider to be in "the public interest"? That is not a trivial question, because, as Gibbon noted, "a prudent magistrate might observe with pleasure and eventually support the progress of a religion which diffused among the people a pure, benevolent, and universal system of ethics, adapted to every duty and every condition of life, recommended as the will and reason of the supreme Deity, and enforced by the sanction of eternal rewards and punishments," regardless of whether it were true or even sincerely believed.^{lxxxiii} [83] Since Witherspoon was a magistrate and a minister, we ought perhaps to ask how he defined religion's public interest, and whether it mattered to him if the religion were true, or if its practitioners really believed it.

The only kind of religion that could be in the public interest for Witherspoon was what he habitually called "true religion." He preferred compound terms like "true religion" or "true and undefiled religion"^{lxxxiv} [84] to the naked word "religion," and he supplied a precise definition of what true religion meant to him. First (and we would expect nothing less from a

minister of the gospel), true religion had to be Christian. "There can be no true religion, he said, "till there be a discovery of your lost state by nature and practice and an unfeigned acceptance of Christ Jesus as he is offered in the gospel. lxxxv [85] Second, "True religion is nothing else but an inward temper and outward conduct suited to your state and circumstances in providence at any time. lxxxvi [86] True religion thus had both inward and outward components, the inward being the soul's "temper and the outward the expression of that temper in personal conduct. This understanding of true religion was consistent with the New Light theology of the day that stressed personal regeneration and holy conduct as a necessary accompaniment of saving faith.

By true religion Witherspoon meant something like genuine or sincere religion, the kind of Christianity that was marked by genuine conversion and that changed a person inside and out. However, while Witherspoon always emphasized the importance of right living, it is not clear how closely he identified with all the expressions of New Light piety. According to the memoirs of Aaron Burr (no New Light he), Witherspoon passed off the revival that swept the Princeton campus during his presidency as "not true and rational religion, but fanaticism. lxxxvii [87] Ebenezer Bradford, a student during the Princeton revival of 1772, wrote to Joseph Bellamy that Witherspoon and Rev. Elihu Spencer were "great enemies to what they call Eastward, or New Divinity. . . . The Dr. has lately been conversed with upon these things since they have made such progress in the College, and declares that he is neither for nor against them; however, he both preaches and converses in contradistinction to them. lxxxviii [88] Bellamy, a Connecticut New Light revivalist and associate of Jonathan Edwards, had written a well-known booklet, The Nature of True Religion Delineated (1750), which Witherspoon owned and appears to have read closely. Bellamy wrote that part of being made in the image of God included

having a "temper of mind or frame of heart perfectly answerable to the moral law; the moral law being, as it were, a transcript of the moral perfections of God.❖lxxxix [89] In his fourth lecture on moral philosophy, Witherspoon concluded that "[t]he result of the whole is, that we ought to take the rule of duty from conscience enlightened by reason, experience, and every way by which we can be supposed to learn the will of our Maker, and his intention in creating us such as we are. And we ought to believe that it is as deeply founded as the nature of God himself, being a transcript of his moral excellence, and that it is productive of the greatest good.❖xc [90] While his posture may have been noncommittal or even skeptical toward the New Divinity enthusiasm of Edwards and Bellamy, Witherspoon was solidly in their camp regarding Christian doctrines such as the moral law and the moral attributes of God.

When he spoke of "true religion,❖ and especially when his topic had to do with public life, Witherspoon meant non-sectarian orthodox Christianity as expressed, for example, in the Nicene Creed. Witherspoon was a staunch Calvinist, and it is tempting to read Reformed Protestantism back into his language, but his works do not necessarily warrant such a reading, and there are other factors which suggest a broader catholic meaning. Chiefly, there is his manifest Christian ecumenism. Witherspoon was on good terms with individual Anglicans like George Whitefield, whom he considered a minister of "great zeal and discernment.❖ He complimented Roman Catholic sects like the Jansenists, whose "admirable practical treatises❖ he commended to his Protestant divinity students, and this in an age of anti-Catholic bigotry.xci [91] True, he sometimes used prejudicial language -- he referred to "papists❖ and "Popery❖ -- but then what colonial Protestant did not? Witherspoon was more tolerant than most, and he hinted at increased religious liberty for Catholics: "we ought in general to guard against persecution on a religious ac❖count as much as possible . . . Papists are tolerated in Holland

without danger to liberty. And though not properly tolerated, they are now connived at in Britain.❖xcii [92]

In his political sermons and addresses, Witherspoon continually brought his audiences back to the state of their own souls, despite emphasizing proper Christian behavior. Even in "The Dominion of Providence,❖ preached on an explicitly political occasion, Witherspoon reminded his listeners that the eternal state of their souls was to be their crucial concern. Important as the political questions of the day were (and in May of 1776 they were important indeed), still Witherspoon had to ask, "is it of less moment my brethren whether you shall be the heirs of glory or the heirs of hell?❖xciii [93] In less political settings Witherspoon was even more emphatic about the centrality of salvation. Lecturing his divinity students, President Witherspoon insisted that "[r]eligion is the grand concern to us all, as we are men; -- whatever be our calling and profession, the salvation of our souls is the one thing needful.❖xciv [94] From first to last Witherspoon comes across as a sincere, pious and orthodox Christian. Throughout his pastoral career he was unwavering in his commitment to Reformed Protestantism even though he was also committed (in qualified ways) to some tenets of the Enlightenment, such as confidence in the methods of natural science and in human reason.xcv [95] And he was consistent in defining true religion: sincere, orthodox Christianity that results in virtuous behavior.

Witherspoon supplied an equally explicit definition of the public interest of religion in "The Dominion of Providence.❖ "Suffer me to recommend to you,❖ he said, "an attention to the public interest of religion, or in other words, zeal for the glory of God and the good of others. I have already endeavored to exhort sinners to repentance; what I have here in view is to point

out to you the concern which every good man ought to take in the national character and manners, and the means which he ought to use for promoting public virtue; and bearing down impiety and vice.❖xcvi [96] Here Witherspoon emphasized the public or "visible❖ nature of religion, by recasting the two tablets of the Decalogue as "the glory of God and the good of others.❖ Having exhorted his listeners to attend to the private component of religion, that is, to the state of their own souls, he turned to the public or corporate component, the "public interest❖ of religion. True religion must have a keen interest in "the national character and manners,❖ and its role must be nothing less than the promotion of public virtue and the prevention of public vice. Profanity, impiety and "immorality of every kind❖ must be ridden down for the political good of the republic. "Nothing is more certain than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners make a people ripe for destruction. A good form of govern❖ment may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch, even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue. On the other hand, when the manners of a nation are pure, when true religion and internal principles maintain their vigour, the attempts of the most powerful enemies to oppress them are commonly baffled and disappointed.❖xcvii [97]

For Witherspoon (and indeed for nearly all the founders) virtue, and therefore religion, was a necessary condition for successful republican government. This was so because virtue was thought to be necessary for maintaining republican liberty, and religion in turn was thought to be necessary for virtue. "[I]f we go to the history of mankind,❖ Witherspoon said, "we shall find that . . . the knowledge of divine truth . . . certainly is the way to virtue.❖xcviii [98] In a protracted section of the Thanksgiving Day Sermon (1782), Witherspoon elaborated on what he

had said in "The Dominion of Providence" concerning the place that virtue and religion had in holding a republic together. "[I]n free states, where the body of the people have the supreme power properly in their own hands, and must be ultimately resorted to on all great matters, if there be a general corruption of manners, there can be nothing but confusion. So true is this, that civil liberty cannot be long preserved without virtue. A monarchy may subsist for ages, and be better or worse under a good or bad prince, but a republic once equally poised, must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty."xcix [99] It was religion, and especially the virtues that flow from true religion, that gave vigor to the republic.

Let us endeavour to bring into, and keep in credit and reputation, everything that may serve to give vigour to an equal republican constitution. Let us cherish a love of piety, order, industry, frugality. Let us check every disposition to luxury, effeminacy, and the pleasures of a dissipated life. . . . And in our families let us do the best by religious instruction, to sow the seeds which may bear fruit in the next generation. We are one of the body of confederated States. For many reasons I shall avoid making any comparisons at present, but may venture to predict, that whatsoever State among us shall continue to make piety and virtue the standard of public honour, will enjoy the greatest inward peace, the greatest national happiness, and in every outward conflict will discover the greatest constitutional strength.c [100]

"Piety, order, industry, frugality": here is a long-hand version of what has been called, ever since Max Weber, the Protestant work ethic.ci [101] But Witherspoon was not playing a lone hand among the founders when he linked these virtues together. John Adams, who was heir to a

long line of Puritans and continued to adhere to the Protestant social ethic despite his own move toward Unitarianism, proposed the following thought experiment. "Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law-book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged, in conscience, to temperance and frugality and industry; to justice and kindness and charity toward his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence, towards Almighty God. In this commonwealth, no man would impair his health by gluttony, drunkenness, or lust; no man would sacrifice his most precious time to cards or any other trifling and mean amusement.❖cii [102] Like Adams and so many other founders, Witherspoon's formulation of the relationship between religion and republicanism reduced to this truism: no republic without liberty, no liberty without virtue, and no virtue without religion.

By insisting that religion was a necessary condition for healthy republican government, Witherspoon was swimming in the mainstream of eighteenth-century American political thought. We can again turn to John Adams for support. "Statesmen,❖ he wrote, "may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is religion and morality alone, which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free constitution is pure virtue.❖ciii [103] George Washington was more explicit still in connecting virtue to religion. In a familiar section of the Farewell Address, Washington said: "[o]f all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion.❖civ [104] (Historian Fred Hood has even written that an "amazing similarity❖ of language between Hamilton's draft of the Farewell Address and Witherspoon's Lectures on Moral Philosophy makes the influence of the Lectures on that address "immediately apparent.❖cv [105] In this regard Witherspoon was

typical of not only the political founders but of American Presbyterians as well. The Presbytery of Hanover, Virginia acknowledged in 1784 that "it is absolutely necessary to the existence and welfare of every political combination of men in society, to have the support of religion and its solemn institutions, as affecting the conduct of rational beings more than human laws can possibly do. On this account it is wise policy in legislators to seek its alliance and solicit aid in a civil view, because of its happy influence upon the morality of its citizens.❖cvi [106] The Continental Congress itself thought it was appropriate "humbly to approach the throne of Almighty God❖ to ask "that he would establish the independence of these United States upon the basis of religion and virtue.❖cvii [107] Still, by insisting that "true religion❖ meant orthodox Christianity, Witherspoon was nearer the right bank of the mainstream, to push that watery metaphor a bit further, than American political elites like Adams and Washington.

Religion was not only a necessary support of republican government, for Witherspoon it, or at least its reputation, was more important even than acts of the legislature. The public credit of religion was "more powerful than the most sanguinary laws.❖cviii [108] Moreover, he accepted the Reformed position that "[m]agistrates . . . are called to use their authority and influ❖ence for the glory of God and the good of others.❖cix [109] Those public officials who "would have their authority both respected and useful, should begin at the source, and reform or restrain that impiety towards God, which is the true and proper cause of every disorder among men.❖cx [110] In fact, so important was religion in Witherspoon's estimation that he could say, "[w]hoever is an avowed enemy to God, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country.❖cxi [111] Such a conclusion shocks the modern ear, but it is logical given the premise with which Witherspoon began, namely that religion is a necessary support of republican government. Even George Washington came to a similar conclusion in his Farewell Address,

warning "[i]n vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness [religion and morality], these firmest props of the duties of Men and citizens.❖cxii [112] Little wonder then that Witherspoon was willing to grant civil authorities a hand in promoting piety or preventing impiety.

This was his conclusion in the fourteenth of his Lectures on Moral Philosophy, on "Jurisprudence,❖ in which he took up the thorny issue of church-state interaction.

Witherspoon's first preliminary remark on jurisprudence was that "a constitution is ex❖cellent, when the spirit of the civil laws is such as to have a ten❖dency to prevent offences and make men good, as much as to punish them when they do evil.❖ This in turn begs the question "what can be done by law to make the people of any state virtuous?❖ (Here is one instance in which Witherspoon sounded a clear note from the ancient political theorists, who, as Rousseau reminds us, "spoke incessantly about mores and virtue.❖)cxiii [113] Since "virtue and piety are inseparably connected, then to promote true religion is the best and most effectual way of mak❖ing a virtuous and regular people,❖ Witherspoon said. "Love to God, and love to man, is the substance of religion; when these prevail, civil laws will have little to do.❖

But this is too easy: it sidesteps "a very important disquisition, how far the magistrate ought to interfere in matters of religion.❖ That disquisition is supremely important because "[r]eligious sen❖timents are very various -- and we have given it as one of the perfect rights in natural liberty, and which ought not to be alienated even in society, that every one should judge for himself in matters of religion.❖cxiv [114] Like the authors of the Westminster Confession before him, and James Madison after him,cxv [115] Witherspoon always argued that the conscience must be left free. The Westminster divines had written that "God alone is Lord of the

conscience,❖cxvi [116] and Witherspoon reproduced that language when he drafted the Introduction to the Form of the Government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The Form of the Government (1788) read as follows: "The Synod of New-York and Philadelphia are unanimously of opinion[:] I. That ❖God alone is Lord of the conscience; and' . . . they consider the rights of private judgement, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and alienable [sic]: They do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and, at the same time, equal and common to all others.❖cxvii [117] Witherspoon had no desire to see any particular Christian denomination, even his own, formally established as an official religion because such an establishment would violate dissenter's rights of conscience. He did not take this to mean, however, that the state could play *no role whatever* in promoting true religion.

Non-establishment and liberty of conscience still left room for civil magistrates to promote religion and even to "make public provision for the worship of God.❖ There were three "particulars❖ that civil magistrates were free to do without violating the conscience. "(1.) The magistrate (or ruling part of any society) ought to en❖courage piety by his own example, and by endeavoring to make it an object of public esteem. . . . Magistrates may promote and encourage men of piety and virtue, and they may dis❖countenance those whom it would be improper to punish. (2.) The magistrate ought to defend the rights of conscience, and tolerate all in their religious sentiments that are not injurious to their neighbors.❖ As if to underscore the point, Witherspoon even argued for toleration of a sect (like Catholics) that was thought to hold "tenets subversive of society and inconsistent with the rights of others❖ because such sects perhaps "are never dangerous, but when they are oppressed.❖cxviii [118] But freedom of

conscience did not mean that sects or individuals were free to *act* any way they pleased. "(3.) The magistrate may enact laws for the punishment of acts of profanity and impiety. The different sentiments of men in religion, ought not by any means to encourage or give a sanction to such acts as any of them count profane.❖ Then, smuggled in between two enumerated points about toleration, came the most accommodationist statement Witherspoon ever made, though even this was rather mild.

Many are of opinion, that besides all this, the magistrate ought to make public provision for the worship of God, in such manner as is agreeable to the great body of the society; though at the same time all who dissent from it are fully tolerated. And indeed there seems to be a good deal of reason for it, that so [sic] instruction may be provided for the bulk of common people, who would, many of them, neither support nor employ teachers, unless they were obliged. The magistrate[❖]s right in this case seems to be something like that of a parent, they have a right to instruct, but not to constrain.cxix [119]

This was a subtle position, neither wholly separationist nor wholly accommodationist. For Witherspoon the relationship between civil government and religious piety was crucial, and the two could be balanced so that the demands of public order and individual conscience could both be satisfied without doing violence to either. His stress on the importance of piety helps explain why Witherspoon objected so vigorously to John Adams's nomination of Thomas Paine for secretary of the congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1777. Witherspoon, a member of the Committee, accused Paine, who had mocked original sin and other commonly held Christian doctrines in Common Sense, of having "bad character❖ and questionable patriotism. But this was not just prejudice from a sanctimonious cleric. Paine had in fact struck

out several pro-colonial passages from Witherspoon's political essays when he was editor of the Pennsylvania Magazine, claiming they were "too free.❖ And Witherspoon had, despite its anti-Christian passages, defended the political arguments of Common Sense, showing that he, for one, knew how to separate his religious from his political opinions.cxx [120] (Besides, by 1805 Adams had come round to Witherspoon's opinion of Paine with a vengeance: "Tom Paine . . . such a mongrel between pig and puppy, begotten by a wild boar on a bitch wolf, never before in any age of the world was suffered by the poltroonery of mankind, to run through such a career of mischief.❖)cxxi [121]

But for all of his recommendations that magistrates "use their authority for the glory of God❖ and "reform and restrain impiety,❖ Witherspoon was no theocrat. Nor does his talk of making "public provision for the worship of God❖ prove that he advocated "active state support of Protestant Christianity,❖ as one commentator has claimed,cxxii [122] let alone any sort of establishment. To begin with the obvious, Witherspoon did not stipulate "Protestant Christianity,❖ only public worship that was agreeable to the "great body of the people.❖ Presumably this could have meant Roman Catholicism in Maryland, or other traditions at more local levels such as counties or townships. Furthermore, "public provision for the worship of God❖ could admit of any number of government actions, all short of promoting Protestantism, sectarian Christianity, or even what are called today "Judeo-Christian❖ values. After all, Witherspoon himself wrote three recommendations for days of prayer and thanksgiving on behalf of the Continental Congress that were so general that they did not mention Christ at all. This sort of public provision for worship through religious proclamations is a far cry from establishment, and in fact was engaged in by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison at the state level, and by Madison at the federal level.cxxiii [123]

Witherspoon, as we have seen, held the axiomatic view of his day that republican government and civil liberty (as he said in the Thanksgiving Day Sermon) relied on religion for their very existence. But then he turned the proposition back on itself and argued that religion relied on civil liberty as well. The two had in fact been so closely related throughout history that they were nearly inseparable. "The knowledge of God and his truths have from the beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely, confined to those parts of the earth where some degree of liberty and political justice were to be seen . . . There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire.❖cxxiv [124] When we examine history, Witherspoon insisted, we find that "knowledge of divine truth . . . has been spread by liberty.❖cxxv [125] The two liberties, in other words, are not so easy to separate in practice as they may be in theory. That is why Witherspoon ended "The Dominion of Providence❖ with a prayer that "God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable, and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both.❖cxxvi [126] To Witherspoon, religious and civil liberty were theoretically distinct but practically indistinguishable. Put slightly differently, civil and religious liberty were to be treated as formally distinct but informally indistinguishable.

For Witherspoon religion was most powerful as a pre-political, or more properly, a sub-political force. Although sub-political and informal, true religion was more powerful than either the laws or the form of government, or what is the same thing, than the constitution. True religion was to act as a sort of leaven, working its healthy influence throughout the political body without benefit of formal establishment but with equitable aid and protection from the state. Witherspoon's devotion to the American Revolution, in which he was far in advance of the rest of New Jersey's leadership, becomes easier to understand once this close relationship in his mind

between civil and religious liberty is noted. To Witherspoon, independence was a sort of "sacred cause because nothing less than the interest of the gospel was at stake. "If therefore we yield up our temporal property," he argued, "we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage. cxxvii [127] And all history seemed to teach that the progress of the gospel and true religion would be slow indeed if the conscience were so bound. On the other hand, in an environment of civil and religious liberty like America's, the gospel could progress relatively unimpeded.

Conclusion

John Witherspoon had a clearly defined and not uncharacteristic view of public religion during the founding, which in considerable measure was derived from Reformed resistance theory and political theology. It also fitted nicely with the latter religious references in the Declaration of Independence. Witherspoon was of course more explicit than the Congress had been in the Declaration. To him orthodox Christianity was a necessary condition for successful republican government, and civil and religious liberty were mutually dependent. Religion was not only compatible with liberal principles or with what the founders called a "republican form of government," it was literally indispensable to them. Yet for all this, Witherspoon was not a theocrat: church and state were to be kept separate to the extent that no particular denomination was to be established by law, and the state could have no power over any ecclesiastical body. However, he proposed a modified Reformed position: civil magistrates could encourage religion by their own example, by religious proclamations, and could punish profanity and impiety. Although civil liberty and religious liberty could be separated conceptually, in reality the

interests of the one were bound to the interests of the other. During the Revolutionary period Witherspoon adopted the positions and language of Protestant resistance literature, and after the Revolution hoped to see religion reinforce the structure of the civil state short of an actual establishment. For him there was, to use Jefferson's well-worn phrase, a "wall of separation" between church and state, but for Witherspoon that wall was not "high and impregnable" as the Supreme Court has since held,^{cxxviii} [128] but low and permeable. In short, Witherspoon subscribed to a sort of Protestant political-theological creed in which there could be no civic happiness without holiness, and according to which there was, as he put it, a very definite "public interest of religion."^{cxxix} [129]

Notes

i [1] Portions of this paper were published as "John Witherspoon's Revolutionary Religion, ♦ in The Founders on God and Government, ed. Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark D. Hall and Jeffry H. Morrison, 117-46 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), and in the author's John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

ii [2] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence, ♦ in Selected Writings, 140-41.

iii [3] Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J. P. Mayer (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 45.

iv [4] Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 3 vols. (New York: Modern Library, n.d. [1776-88]), Chap. III, 1:52-53.

v [5] *Ibid.*, 1:53n.

vi [6] An example of a fighting parson of the "Black Regiment ♦ was Rev. John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg who eventually rose to the rank of Major General in the Continental Army. See Edward Frank Humphrey, Nationalism and Religion in America, 1774-1789 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 114-15; and James H. Hutson, Religion and the Founding of the American Republic (Washington: Library of Congress, 1998), 44-45.

vii [7] John Adams, diary entry of August 27, 1774, in The Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, ed. Lyman H. Butterfield, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 2:112.

viii [8] Hutson, Religion and the Founding of the American Republic, 47. The best biography of Witherspoon remains Varnum Lansing Collins's President Witherspoon: A Biography, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969).

ix [9] Ralph Ketcham, "James Madison's Religion," in James Madison on Religious Liberty, ed. Robert S. Alley (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1985), 179.

x [10] Witherspoon earned an M.A. and studied divinity at Edinburgh, and was awarded an honorary Doctor in Divinity from St. Andrews and an honorary Doctor of Laws from Yale College. (St. Andrews and Yale conferred honorary degrees on another American patriot, Benjamin Franklin.)

xi [11] See generally L. H. Butterfield, ed., John Witherspoon Comes to America: A Documentary Account Based Largely on New Materials (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 1953); Collins, President Witherspoon: A Biography, 1:98; and Iain H. Murray, Revival and Revivalism (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 41-42.

xii [12] For stylistic reasons the term "Continental Congress" will be used to designate the Congress from 1781-1782, even though the Second Continental Congress technically became the Confederation Congress after the adoption of the Articles of Confederation in 1781.

xiii [13] On or about the first of July 1776, Witherspoon apparently argued down the conservative party in Congress led by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, who claimed that the colonies were not yet ripe for independence. Witherspoon shot back that in his judgment they were not only ripe but "in danger of becoming rotten for the want of it." See Ashbel Green, The Life of the Revd. John Witherspoon, ed. Henry Lyttleton Savage (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 159-60.

xiv [14] Witherspoon signed the Form of Ratification of the Constitution on behalf of Somerset County, New Jersey on December 18, 1787.

xv [15] "After graduating from the College of New Jersey in 1771, Madison spent an extra year at Princeton studying Hebrew under President John Witherspoon, a commitment that suggests he was contemplating the ministry. ♦ John Murrin, "Religion and Politics in America from the First Settlements to the Civil War, ♦ in Mark A. Noll, ed., Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 41-42n.

xvi [16] See generally, James McLachlan et al., eds., Princetonians: A Biographical Dictionary, 5 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976-91). Past scholarship has always undercounted the number of Witherspoon's graduates in public affairs.

xvii [17] Garry Wills, Explaining America: The Federalist (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 18.

xviii [18] See Collins, President Witherspoon, 1:139; and Humphrey, Nationalism and Religion in America, 1774-1789, 446-47.

xix [19] Collins, President Witherspoon, 1:138, 155. Yale conferred an honorary Doctor of Laws on Witherspoon in 1785 just as Princeton had on Stiles the prior year. See *ibid.*, 2:145.

xx [20] For the text and commentaries on the sermon, see William Safire, ed., Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), 425-30 (abridged); Ellis Sandoz, ed., Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805 (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991), 529-58; Witherspoon, The Selected Writings of John Witherspoon, ed. Thomas Miller (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 126-47 [hereinafter Selected Writings]; and Witherspoon, Works, 5:176-236.

xxi [21] Witherspoon, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men," in Works, 5:176 [emphasis in original]. Witherspoon had an honorary degree conferred on Hancock at the Princeton commencement of 1769.

xxii [22] On Puritan sermons in the "plain style," see Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The Colonial Experience (New York: Random House, 1958), 11.

xxiii [23] Journals of the Continental Congress, 6:1022.

xxiv [24] Hutson, Religion and the Founding of the American Republic, 53.

xxv [25] Fast Day Proclamation of December 11, 1776, in Journals of the Continental Congress, 6:1022.

xxvi [26] Thanksgiving Day Proclamation of October 26, 1781, in *ibid.*, 21:1076.

xxvii [27] Aitken (1734-1802), an elder in the Presbyterian church, had published Witherspoon's "Dominion of Providence" in the spring of 1776.

xxviii [28] Journals of the Continental Congress, 19:118. A copy of the draft of the resolution in Witherspoon's handwriting is part of the Witherspoon Collection, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books & Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

xxix [29] Hutson, Religion and the Founding of the American Republic, 57.

xxx [30] Fast Day Proclamation of March 19, 1782, in Journals of the Continental Congress, 22:138. (This proclamation was not written by Witherspoon.)

xxxii [31] In Works, 5:237-70. This sermon was preached in late 1782, not on April 19, 1783 as V. L. Collins and the editor of Witherspoon's Works thought. Internal and external evidence points to November 28, 1782, declared by Congress a day of fasting and thanksgiving in a proclamation written by Witherspoon himself, as the date of delivery. For a fuller discussion, see my "John Witherspoon and ♦The Public Interest of Religion," ♦ Journal of Church and State 41 (Summer 1999): 557-58n.

xxxiii [32] Thanksgiving Day Proclamation of October 11, 1782, in Journals of the Continental Congress, 23:647. Although it was preached in Scotland in 1758, readers might wish to consult Witherspoon's sermon, a "Prayer for National Prosperity, and for the Revival of Religion, Inseparably Connected," ♦ in Works, 5:57-89.

xxxiv [33] Witherspoon, "Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving After Peace," ♦ in Works, 5:237, 265.

xxxv [34] Ashbel Green records that Witherspoon would never "consent, as some other clerical members of Congress did, to change, in any particular, the dress which distinguished his order." ♦ See Green, Life of the Revd. John Witherspoon, 161.

xxxvi [35] Article I, Section 18 of the proposed Georgia constitution of 1789. In William F. Swindler, ed., Sources and Documents of United States Constitutions, 10 vols. (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1973-79), 2:453.

xxxvii [36] "All its [the Declaration's] authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristo♦tle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, &c." ♦ Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825, in Thomas Jefferson: Writings, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 1501.

xxxvii [37] See Julian H. Franklin, ed., "Introduction," in Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century: Three Treatises by Hotman, Beza, and Mornay (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 11-12.

xxxviii [38] See Calvin, "Commentary on Genesis 39:2," in Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 2:1494n.

xxxix [39] Institutes, Book IV, Chap. XX, 2:1519.

xl [40] See Benjamin Rush, "Travels Through Life," in The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His "Travels Through Life," Together with His Commonplace Book for 1789-1813, ed. George W. Corner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 147.

xli [41] Collins, President Witherspoon, 1:219.

xlii [42] Witherspoon, "Letters on Education" (1775), in Works, 8:170.

xliii [43] Witherspoon, "Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving" (1782), in Works, 5:254-55.

xliv [44] Witherspoon, "Pastoral Letter" (1775), in Works 5:171-73.

xlv [45] "On the Contest Between Great Britain and America," Witherspoon to unnamed correspondent, September 3, 1778, in Works, 9:169-70.

xlvi [46] "On the Affairs of the United States," Witherspoon to unnamed Scottish correspondent, March 20, 1780, in Works, 9:174-75.

xlvii [47] Witherspoon, "Thoughts on American Liberty" (1774), in Works, 9:73-74.

xlviii [48] Gibbon noted that "Buchanan is the earliest, or at least the most celebrated, of the reformers, who has justified the theory of resistance. See his *Dialoge de Jure Regni apud Scotos*, tom. ii. p. 28, 30, edit. fol. Ruddiman.❖ In Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. XX, 3 vols. (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 1:641n.

xlx [49] See Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century: Three Treatises by Hotman, Beza, and Mornay*; Harold J. Laski, ed., *A Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants: A Translation of the Vindiciae contra Tyrannos by Junius Brutus* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1924) (note that the authorship of the *Vindiciae* is debated and only attributed to Mornay); George Buchanan, *De jure regni apud Scotos, or, A Dialogue Concerning the Due Privilege of Government* (Philadelphia: Andrew Steuart, 1766); and Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex, or, The Law and the Prince* (London: John Field, 1644; reprint ed., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1982).

i [50] See Jack Scott, ed., "Appendix 2: John Witherspoon's Personal Library in 1794,❖ in *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, 192-203.

ii [51] Herbert D. Foster, "International Calvinism through Locke and the Revolution of 1688,❖ *American Historical Review* 32 (April 1927): 487.

iii [52] John Neville Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 114n. For a discussion of the *Vindiciae*, see Harold J. Laski, ed., "Introduction,❖ in *A Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants: A Translation of the Vindiciae contra Tyrannos by Junius Brutus* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1924). The *Vindiciae* is arranged in four questions: "I. Whether Subjects are bound and ought to obey Princes, if they command that which is against the Law of God❖; "II. Whether it be lawful to resist a Prince which doth infringe the Law of God, or ruine [sic] the Church, by whom, how, and how far it is lawful❖; "III. Whether it be lawful to resist a Prince which doth oppress or ruine a

publick State, and how far such resistance may be extended, by whom, how, and by what right or law it is permitted❖; "IV. Whether neighbour Princes or States may be, or are, bound by Law to give succour to the subjects of other Princes, afflicted for the cause of True Religion, or oppressed by manifest Tyranny.❖ See Laski, Defence, 61.

liii [53] See Laski, editor's "Introduction,❖ in Defence, 54.

liv [54] In Foster, "International Calvinism,❖ 475.

lv [55] In Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, 2:277.

lvi [56] Ibid.

lvii [57] See Peter Laslett, ed., "Appendix B: Sources of ❖Two Treatises' in Locke's Reading,❖ in Two Treatises of Civil Government: A Critical Edition, rev. ed., (New York: Mentor, 1965), 151, 156. Locke listed the Vindiciae among his "A Catalogue of my Books at Oxford❖ which appears in his journal between the entries for July 14 and 19, 1681 (see pp. 148, 151). But it is Laslett's thesis that Locke actually wrote the Two Treatises in the late 1670s, not after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, in which case the fact that Locke had the Vindiciae by 1681 loses some of its force. (Locke could still have owned the Vindiciae before 1681 and not recorded it--his list might not be exhaustive--or he could have read it without owning it.) However: Laslett also records that the Vindiciae was printed in the 1643 Latin edition of Machiavelli's Prince, which Locke owned, although we do not know when it came into his possession (see p. 156). Thus it is entirely possible that Locke had read Brutus's Vindiciae before composing his Two Treatises, even if Laslett's supposition about the earlier date of composition is correct.

^{lviii [58]} See Winthrop S. Hudson, "John Locke: Heir of Puritan Political Theorists," in George L. Hunt and John T. McNeill, eds., Calvinism and the Political Order (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 108-29.

^{lix [59]} The elder John Locke (1606-1663) was a captain of cavalry in the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War, and Locke himself recalled his mother Agnes Keene (1597-1654), who was also descended from Puritan stock, as a "very pious woman." See Maurice William Cranston, John Locke: A Biography (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 13; see also Thomas I. Cook, ed., "Introduction," in John Locke, Two Treatises of Government (New York: Hafner Press, 1947), vii. At this point we should also recall that the English Civil War was called by many contemporaries the "Puritan Rebellion," just as non-Americans during the Revolution referred to it as a "Presbyterian rebellion." In England Zachary Gray was convinced that "[t]he presbyterians . . . preached the people into rebellion [in 1649], and one Rev. Dr. South reminded his flock that "[i]t was the [Presbyterian] pulpit that supplied the field with swordsmen, and the parliament-house with incendiaries." See J. A. St. John, ed., The Prose Works of John Milton, 4 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1889), 2:3n. Edmund Burke had made a similar distinction between rebellion, revolution and reformation. In his 1777 "Address to the British Colonists in North America," Burke said "[w]e do not call you rebels and traitors" because the Americans were in his view fighting to uphold the principles of "the fair [English] constitution." In Michael Freeman, Edmund Burke and the Critique of Political Radicalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 174.

^{lx [60]} Concerning the influence of his Puritan ancestors, one of whom had been judge at the Salem witch trials, Hawthorne wrote, "either of these stern and black-browed Puritans would have thought it quite a sufficient retribution for his sins, that, after so long a lapse of years, the old trunk of the family tree . . . should have borne, as its topmost bow, an idler like myself. . . . And yet, let them scorn me as they will, strong traits of their nature have intertwined themselves with mine." Nathaniel

Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, in E. Digby Baltzell, Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 52. In one of his best-known short stories, Hawthorne describes a "settlement of Puritans, most dismal wretches, who, when "they met in conclave, it was never to keep up the old English mirth, but to hear sermons three hours long, or to proclaim bounties on the heads of wolves and the scalps of Indians." Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Maypole of Merry Mount," in Major Writers of America, Shorter Edition, ed. Perry Miller (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 380.

lxi [61] Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chap. XX, Sect. III, 2 vols. (New York: Modern Library, 1932), 1:651.

lxii [62] Foster, "International Calvinism," 476. Foster may exaggerate the Calvinism of his group, but his larger point remains valid.

lxiii [63] "Locke became, in terms of his own medical profession, a 'carrier' of Calvinism from the Reformation to the revolutions of 1688 and 1776." Foster, "International Calvinism," 485.

lxiv [64] See Selected Writings, 126-47; Ellis Sandoz, ed., Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805 (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991), 529-58; and Works, 5:176-236.

lxv [65] There is a significant body of literature that follows the line of John Adams and sees the roots of the Revolution sown in the Great Awakening and the climate of religious enthusiasm that preceded the actual fighting. Prominent examples are Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); William G. McLoughlin, "'Enthusiasm for Liberty': The Great Awakening as the Key to the Revolution," in Preachers and Politicians: Two Essays on the Origins of the American Revolution, 47-73 (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1977); and Perry Miller, Nature's Nation (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967).

Miller writes, "[t]hough by now the Revolution has been voluminously, and one might suppose exhaustively, studied, we still do not realize how effective were generations of Protestant preaching in evoking patriotic enthusiasm.❖ See *ibid.*, 97. Jon Butler, on the other hand, suggests that colonial preaching had little to do with revolutionary politics. See Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 203.

lxvi [66] Anonymous Glasgow editor's notes, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men❖ (Glasgow, 1777), in Collins, *President Witherspoon*, 1:227.

lxvii [67] "Dominion of Providence,❖ in *Selected Writings*, 140.

lxviii [68] "Witherspoon's unnamed counsellor was George Whitefield, with whom he conferred before leaving Britain.❖ See Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 41-42.

lxix [69] Rev. Thomas Randall to John Witherspoon, March 4, 1767, in L. H. Butterfield, ed., *John Witherspoon Comes to America: A Documentary Account Based Largely on New Materials* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 29 [emphasis in original]. This was a common sentiment among preachers on both sides of the Atlantic during the revolutionary era. In 1776 the Rev. Samuel West gave a prognosis nearly identical to Randall's and to Witherspoon's: "yet I cannot help hoping, and even believing, that Providence has designed this continent for to be the asylum of liberty and true religion.❖ In Miller, *Nature's Nation*, 106.

lxx [70] Witherspoon to Archibald Wallace, February 28, 1767, in Butterfield, ed., *John Witherspoon Comes to America*, 28.

lxxi [71] "Dominion of Providence,❖ in *Selected Writings*, 140-41; also *Works*, 5:203.

lxxii [72] See Marvin Olasky, Fighting For Liberty and Virtue: Political and Cultural Wars in Eighteenth-Century America (Washington: Regnery, 1996); see also Miller, Nature's Nation, 108.

lxxiii [73] "Ignorance of the British with Respect to America," in Works, 8:306.

lxxiv [74] "Dominion of Providence" (1776), in Selected Writings, 146.

lxxv [75] "On the Contest Between Great Britain and America" (1778), in Works, 9:167.

lxxvi [76] "Thanksgiving Sermon," in Works, 5:261-62.

lxxvii [77] "Some believe the phrase 'with a firm Reliance on the protection of Divine Providence' in the final sentence [of the Declaration] was his [Witherspoon's] contribution." John Eidsmoe, Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of Our Founding Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 86.

lxxviii [78] Papers of Thomas Jefferson, 1:427.

lxxix [79] See the version of the Declaration in Jefferson's "Notes of Proceedings in the Continental Congress," in Papers of Thomas Jefferson, 1:315, 319. At 319 Jefferson represents the "Original Rough Draft" and the congressional additions in parallel columns.

lxxx [80] "The cause [independence] is sacred, and the champions for it ought to be holy." See "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 146.

lxxxi [81] See, for example, "The Nature and Extent of Visible Religion," in Works, 2:323-51.

lxxxii [82] "[B]e not wanting in your endeavours and prayers for the *public interest of religion*, and the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom. Support, by your conduct and conversation, the *public*

credit of religion. What is more powerful over the minds of men and the manners of the age, than public opinion? It is more powerful than the most sanguinary laws.❖ Witherspoon, "On the Religious Education of Children"❖ (1789), in Works, 4:144 [emphasis added]. Witherspoon had been sounding this theme before he ever went to America. See, for example, his "Prayer for National Prosperity"❖ (1758) in Works, 5:57-89, and "Seasonable Advice to Young Persons"❖ (1762), in Works, 5:123, which recommended a concern for "the public interest of religion."❖

lxxxiii [83] Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chap. XX, 3 vols. (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 1:639.

lxxxiv [84] In addition to his congressional Thanksgiving Day Proclamation from October 1782, Witherspoon also used the phrase "true and undefiled religion"❖ in a sermon titled "Christian Magnanimity,"❖ and in "The Dominion of Providence."❖ See "Sermon XXIV: Christian Magnanimity"❖ (1775), in Works, 5:273 ("as magnanimity is an amiable and noble quality, one of the greatest ornaments of our nature, so I affirm that it belongs only to true and undefiled religion, and that every appearance of the one, without the other, is not only defective but false"❖); and "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men"❖ (1776) in Selected Writings, 144 ("he is the best friend to American liberty who is most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind"❖).

lxxxv [85] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence,"❖ in Selected Writings, 137.

lxxxvi [86] *Ibid.*, 147.

lxxxvii [87] In Matthew L. Davis, ed., Memoirs of Aaron Burr, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1836), 1:28.

lxxxviii [88] See Ebenezer Bradford to Joseph Bellamy, April 18, 1772, in Mark A. Noll, Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 44.

lxxxix [89] Joseph Bellamy, "True Religion Delineated" (1750), in The Works of Joseph Bellamy, 2 vols. (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853; repr. New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 1:135.

xc [90] Witherspoon, "Lecture IV," in Lectures on Moral Philosophy, 87.

xc [91] On Whitefield, see Iain H. Murray, Revival and Revivalism (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 41; on the Jansenists, see Witherspoon, "Lectures on Divinity II," in Works, 8:25.

xcii [92] Witherspoon, "Lecture XIV: Jurisprudence," in Lectures on Moral Philosophy, 160.

xciii [93] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 137.

xciv [94] Witherspoon, "Lectures on Divinity I," in Works, 8:12.

xcv [95] "Enlightenment" is a notoriously slippery word, and I am using it here in a non-technical and perhaps simplistic way.

xcvi [96] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 144 [emphasis added].

xcvii [97] *Ibid.*, 144.

xcviii [98] Witherspoon, "Dialogue on Civil Liberty; delivered at a Public Exhibition in Nassau-Hall, January 1776," in Pennsylvania Magazine (April 1776), 165.

xcix [99] Witherspoon, "Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving, ♦ in Works, 5:266.

c [100] *Ibid.*, 5:269-70.

ci [101] See generally, Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: HarperCollins, 1991 [1930]).

cii [102] John Adams, diary entry of February 22, 1756, in The Selected Writings of John and John Quincy Adams, ed. Adrienne Koch and William Peden (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 5.

ciii [103] John Adams to Zabdiel Adams, June 21, 1776, in The Works of John Adams, ed. Charles Francis Adams, 10 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1850-56), 9:401.

civ [104] Washington, Farewell Address, September 19, 1796, in The Writings of George Washington, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 37 vols. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-40), 35:229.

cv [105] See Hood, Reformed America, 10, 17. Hood provides no documentary support for this assertion.

cvi [106] In William Henry Foote, ed., Sketches of Virginia: Historical and Biographical (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1850; repr. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), 337.

cvi [107] Witherspoon, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation of October 20, 1779, in Journals of the Continental Congress, 15:1191-92.

cvi [108] Witherspoon, "On the Religious Education of Children, ♦ in Works, 4:144.

cix [109] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 145.

cx [110] Witherspoon, "Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving After Peace," in Works, 5:269.

cxix [111] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 144.

cxii [112] George Washington, Farewell Address, in Writings of George Washington, 35:229.

cxiii [113] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts [First Discourse]," in Basic Political Writings, trans. & ed. Donald A. Cress. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1987), 12.

cxiv [114] Witherspoon, "Lecture XIV: Jurisprudence," in Lectures on Moral Philosophy, 159-60.

cxv [115] In his famous Memorial and Remonstrance of 1785, Madison wrote that 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." See Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Establishments," Article 1, in James Madison: Writings, ed. Jack N. Rakove (New York: Library of America, 1999), 30.

cxvi [116] The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), Chap. XX, Art. II, in Philip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 3:644.

cxvii [117] "Introduction, The Form of the Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," op. cit., cxxxiii-cxxxiv. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church was drafted in 1787 and ratified in 1788. (The description of liberty of conscience as an "alienable" right is probably a typographical error; the context dictates that it read "inalienable.")

cxviii [118] Witherspoon, "Lecture XIV: Jurisprudence," in Lectures on Moral Philosophy, 160.

cxix [119] Ibid., 161.

cxx [120] See Collins, President Witherspoon, 2:25.

cxxi [121] In Paul Johnson, A History of the American People (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 210.

cxxii [122] "In fact, Witherspoon believed that a policy of toleration could have adverse effects if not offset by active state support of Protestant Christianity." Hood, Reformed America, 18.

cxxiii [123] For example, Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson issued a "Proclamation Appointing a Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer" on November 11, 1779, which appointed a day of "publick and solemn thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God." See The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, ed. Julian P. Boyd et al., 30 vols. to date (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950-), 3:177-79. On October 31, 1785 James Madison introduced "A Bill for Appointing Days of Public Fasting and Thanksgiving" in the Virginia General Assembly that authorized religious proclamations and required ministers to "attend and perform divine service and preach a sermon" on days of public fasting and thanksgiving "on pain of forfeiting fifty pounds for every failure." The bill was endorsed by Jefferson. See Papers of Thomas Jefferson, 2:556. Years later as president, Madison issued religious proclamations that were criticized, according to his own account in the "Detached Memoranda" for "using general terms" and "for not inserting particulars according with the faith of certain Xn sects." See Madison, "Detached Memoranda" (ca. 1819?), in "Madison's Detatched [sic] Memoranda," ed. Elizabeth Fleet, William and Mary Quarterly, 3d. ser., 3 (1946): 560-61.

cxxiv [124] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 140-41.

cxxv [125] Witherspoon, "Dialogue on Civil Liberty," *op. cit.*, 165.

cxxvi [126] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 147.

cxxvii [127] Witherspoon, "Dominion of Providence," in Selected Writings, 141.

cxxviii [128] Everson v. Board of Education, 330 U.S. 1, 18 (1947). For the Court's use of Jefferson's metaphor, see Daniel L. Dreisbach, Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation Between Church and State (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

cxxix [129] James Hutson says that the conviction that "holiness was prerequisite for secular happiness" was a legacy of the Confederation as a whole from 1774 to 1789, which perhaps not coincidentally were the exact years of Witherspoon's political career. See Hutson, Religion and the Founding of the American Republic, 58.