

Reformed Theology and the American Founding:

The Case of Roger Sherman

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This paper contains portions from drafts of the first three chapters of a book manuscript entitled *The Old Puritan and a New Nation: Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*. Comments are welcome, but please do not quote without permission.

By any measure Roger Sherman was among the most important political leaders in late eighteenth century America . He was the only person to help draft and sign the Declaration and Resolves (1774), the Articles of Association (1774), the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Articles of Confederation (1777, 1778), and the Constitution (1787). He served 1,543 days in the Continental Congress (only four men served longer) and was on the five-man committee that wrote the Declaration of Independence. At the Federal Convention of 1787 he was the most effective advocate of states' rights, limited federal power, and a constrained executive. As a Representative and Senator in the new republic he played significant roles in debates over the Bill of Rights and the assumption of state debts.

Even as he was helping to create and run a new nation, Sherman served simultaneously in a variety of state offices in Connecticut . These included overlapping terms as a member of the General Assembly, judge of the Superior Court, member of the Council of Safety, and mayor

of New Haven . Of particular significance, he and Richard Law revised the entire legal code of Connecticut in 1783. Although not as prolific a writer as some founders, Sherman penned essays and letters defending hard currency, supporting the Articles of Confederation, and urging the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. His letters and a sermon contain some of the most sophisticated theological commentary by an American founder.

In the book manuscript from which this paper is excerpted, I offer the first systematic study of Sherman 's political thought. I explore the development of his ideas over time and show how they impacted his actions at the state and national level. A major theme of the work is that Sherman was heavily influenced by Reformed Christianity. The days of *Locke ex praeterea nihil* should be long gone, but historians and political scientists are still too wont to attribute references to natural rights, religious liberty, consent, limited government, and a right to rebel to the influence of John Locke.ⁱ [1] In doing so, they neglect the reality that these principles (among others) had been accepted in Reformed communities long before Locke wrote his *Second Treatise*. In eighteenth century America --particularly in New England --these ideas were understood to be compatible with, and even required by, Reformed theology. In this paper I present a brief outline of Reformed political theory and explore its influence in early America . I then discuss how these ideas impacted Sherman 's thoughts and actions with respect to the conflicts between the American colonies and Great Britain from 1765 and 1776. Space limitations prevent consideration of their influence on Sherman 's broader contributions to the creation of the American republic.

A Glance at the Literature

More than forty years ago, Alan Heimert complained that the "contribution of eighteenth-century Calvinism to the making of the American public mind has been allowed to remain unappreciated.❖ii [2] In spite of his work, and more recent volumes such as Barry Alan Shain's *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought*, the influence of Calvinism on American political theory in the founding era is still too often neglected or relegated to footnotes.iii [3] For instance, Alan Gibson's wonderful survey of literature on America 's founding has chapters dedicated to progressive, liberal, classical republican, Scottish, multiple traditions, and the politically correct interpretations of America 's founding. He mentions only in passing the possibility that Protestantism may have had an influence on America 's founders.iv [4] Jack Rakove similarly neglects this tradition when he writes of "larger intellectual world within which the Constitution is often located--the Enlightened world of Locke and Montesquieu, Hume and Blackstone, plain whigs and real whigs, common lawyers and Continental jurists.❖v [5]

Of course it is inaccurate to say that Christianity, generally, or even Calvinism, specifically, has been completely ignored by students of the founding. Notably, there are fine works that recognize the influence of Christianity in the era, particularly with respect to the American Revolution.vi [6] As well, scattered books and essays recognize Christianity as one of several strains of thought from which the founders drew.vii [7] Students of individual founders often neglect the significance of their subject's religious commitments, but there are notable exceptions to this rule.viii [8] Finally, there are excellent studies on ministers in this era, although these works seldom attempt to make clear connections between these men and the political theory of civic leaders in the founding era.ix [9] In sum, while there are useful works on the subject, as an intellectual influence on the political theory and actions of America 's

founders Christianity, generally, and Calvinism, more specifically, have not been given sufficient attention.

Reformed Political Theory

As accustomed as students of the American founding are to viewing the era through the eyes of elite Southern gentlemen such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, George Washington; persons born outside America including Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Paine, and James Wilson; and the brilliant but idiosyncratic Benjamin Franklin, it is hard to appreciate how dominant Calvinism was in late eighteenth century America.^x [10] The closest representative of this tradition well known to the public or scholars is John Adams and he, like some of his fellow Bostonians, was moving rapidly toward Unitarianism. However, throughout Massachusetts , Connecticut , New Hampshire , and what became Vermont and Maine , most citizens were Calvinists whose political ideas and actions were heavily influenced by the Reformed tradition.

Reformed political theory is a branch of Christian political theory, and as such we should not be surprised to find significant overlaps between how Calvinists and other Christian traditions approach politics. General Christian propositions with implications for politics include the idea that humans are created in the image of God, that men and women are sinful, and that God has established different institutions for various purposes; notably, the family, church, and state. Virtually all Christian political thinkers recognize that governments are ordained by God and that there is a biblical obligation to obey them; but that this obligation is not absolute. Although generalizations are always dangerous, it is fair to say that between Constantine and the Protestant Reformation that most Christians who thought about politics assumed that monarchy

was the ideal form of government, saw rulers as playing an important role in promoting the common good, and paid little attention to individual rights. While they believed that Christians should refuse to obey an unjust law, virtually none of them contended that the people had a right to revolt against unjust rulers.xi [11]

Reformed political thinkers broke in significant ways from their predecessors. Of course they borrowed from earlier thinkers, and the tradition clearly developed over time. However, in the same way that scholars are comfortable speaking of a "liberal tradition" that includes John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and John Rawls--and, according to numerous scholars, most of the founders--so too is it possible to speak of a Reformed tradition that includes John Calvin, Theodore Beza, John Knox, Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Hooker, John Winthrop, and Roger Sherman. Because some readers--even sophisticated students of American political theory--may be unfamiliar with this tradition, I offer a brief introduction to it below. Obviously a few pages on a tradition that spans centuries and involves a contentious and wordy people cannot do it justice, but it does allow me to introduce key themes that had a significant impact on American political theory.

The Protestant Reformation was a wide ranging movement opposed to what were considered to be abuses by the Roman Catholic Church. It may be conveniently dated to 1517, when Martin Luther (1483-1546) nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of Wittenberg castle. For our purposes, the work of John Calvin (1509-64), whose followers constitute what is considered to be the Reformed tradition, is of particular interest. Calvin was born in France but lived most of his adult life in Geneva, Switzerland, which he helped govern from 1536-1538 and 1541-1564. In 1536 he published the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a volume that he

revised significantly until its final 1559 edition. The work has been influential among his followers, who were represented most prominently in America by the Puritans.

Calvin's work echoed the great battle cries of the Reformation, including *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, and it reinforced the seminal notion of the priesthood of all believers. Reformers uniformly rejected the idea that priests were necessary to stand between common persons and God, and that the Church as an institution possessed the authority to speak for God. Individuals were told that they were responsible for their relationship with God, and that His will for them is most clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This belief led to a heavy emphasis on literacy, and a commitment to translating and printing the Bible in vernacular languages.^{xii} [12] These views and practices helped undermine existing hierarchies and paved the way for the growth of democracy. Although ecclesiastical structures varied, Reformed Churches leaned heavily toward democratic forms of government, and nowhere was this truer than among Calvinists who immigrated to America.^{xiii} [13]

Particularly significant within the Reformed tradition is the insistence that God is sovereign over all of creation. Unwilling to distinguish between the things of God and the things of man, Reformers attempted to apply their faith to all elements of life, including raising children, conducting business, and participating in politics. This "sanctification" of all elements of life contributed to the tremendous economic and social development in Protestant countries.^{xiv} [14] From their earliest days in power Calvinists were concerned with creating thoroughly Christian political institutions and practices. It is important to note, however, that they were not theocrats. They retained and even expanded current distinctions between church and state. Yet they believed that the two should work in close partnership to create a Christian society. As well,

Calvinists remained committed to the traditional Christian idea that governments should promote the "common good."xv [15]

Calvinist movements sprang up throughout Europe, and were particularly successful in Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and England. In these and other countries--to speak nothing of France, where the Huguenots were never more than an embattled minority--they faced hostile regimes. Although the Reformers initially advocated passive obedience, they rapidly developed a resistance ideology unlike anything ever seen on a widespread level in Christendom. For instance, Calvin, the most conservative of the Reformers, contended that in some cases inferior magistrates might resist an ungodly ruler. However, Reformers such as John Knox (1505-72), George Buchanan (1506-82), and Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) of Scotland, Theodore Beza (1519-1605) of France and Switzerland, David Pareus (1548-1622) of Germany, and Christopher Goodman (1520-1603) and John Ponet (1516-1556) of England rapidly developed arguments requiring inferior magistrates to resist unjust rulers, and even permitting or *requiring* citizens to do so.xvi [16]

Among the most famous pieces of resistance literature is Stephen Junius Brutus's *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1579). Written by a Huguenot, probably Philippe du Plessis Mornay (1549-1623) or Hubert Languet (1518-1581), *Vindiciae* contends that men originally exist in a state of natural liberty, and that "the natural law [*ius Naturale*] teaches us to preserve and protect our life and liberty without which life is scarcely life at all against all force and injustice. Humans are "free by nature, impatient of servitude, and they create governments to promote the common good. Legitimate rulers are established only by virtue of a twofold covenant (*duplex foedus*). The first of these, between God, king, and people, commits the people and ruler to God. If either the king or the people turn from God and so violates this covenant, it is void. The second covenant,

which is between the ruler and the people, stipulates that the consent of the people is necessary for government to be legitimate. The people promise to obey the king as long as he rules justly. Rulers who are illegitimate, negligent, unjust, or tyrannical break this covenant and forfeit their right to rule. xvii [17] When the people resist ungodly or unjust rulers, they are "procuring that which is their natural right [*droit nature*].❖xviii [18]

For Reformers, families, churches, and civil governments all come into existence through, and derive their authority from, agreements between humans that are witnessed and enforced by God. Of course Reformers did not invent covenants, but they significantly expanded their use and significance--particularly with respect to churches and civil governments. Moreover, as represented well by Brutus's first covenant, they believed that God makes covenants with peoples, much as he did with the ancient Jews. These covenanted people then have an important role to play in bringing about God's kingdom on earth. The rights and responsibilities associated with this covenant would have an important influence in America .

One might object that nothing in the preceding section is distinctive to the Reformed tradition. Indeed, Quentin Skinner has argued that Protestant resistance literature is not "specifically Calvinist at all,❖ but that these ideas are borrowed from Scholastic authors.xix [19] As a matter of the genealogy of ideas this may be the case, but with respect to the intellectual influences on the American founders it is critical to recognize that almost from the beginning there was widespread agreement among leading Reformed thinkers that governments should be limited, that they should be based on the consent of the governed, that rulers should promote the common good, and that unjust or ungodly rulers should be overthrown. Whether or not these views are inherently

connected to Calvinism, they were almost universally held by Calvinist civil and ecclesiastical leaders who thought them to be required by the Holy Scriptures.

Reformed Political Theory in Early New England

Protestantism's progress began auspiciously in England when Henry VIII severed ties with Rome and created the Church of England in 1534. However, this institution remained too "popish" for many Calvinists, who became known as Puritans for their desire to completely purify the English church. Some Puritans eventually gave up hope for England and fled to Holland in 1608, and then to America in 1620. Before the Separatist Puritans aboard the Mayflower disembarked, they created a covenant that represents important aspects of early Puritan political thought. This agreement, known today as the Mayflower Compact, committed the people and the rulers to "the Glory of God, and the Advancement of the Christian Faith." Its legitimacy stemmed from the consent of the 41 men heading households on the Mayflower, and it required rulers to govern justly.xx [20]

The Mayflower compact is the most famous early civil covenant made in America , but it is not unique. As David A. Weir demonstrates in his exhaustively researched book, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, hundreds of ecclesiastical and civil covenants were created whereby people joined together before the eyes of God to pursue specific ends ultimately aimed at glorifying God.xxi [21] Each of these covenants reinforced the idea that governments are legitimate and binding because they are established by the consent of the governed. This view is reflected well by Henry Wolcott's notes of an election sermon by one of Connecticut 's founders, Thomas Hooker, in 1638:

Doctrine. I. That the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God's own allowance.

II. The privilege of election, which belongs to the people, therefore must not be exercised according to their humors, but according to the blessed will and law of God.

III. They who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power also to set the bounds and limitations of power and place unto which they call them.

Reasons. 1. Because the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people. ♦xxii [22]

Not only did the people consent to the original form of government; throughout New England freemen participated in town meetings or elected representatives for the General Court.xxiii [23]

Early Puritan societies are often described as theocracies, and their founders and leaders were undoubtedly attempting to create thoroughly Christian social and political institutions. However, within these societies the institutions of church and state were kept separate and distinct. For instance, the Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641) prohibited clergy from holding political office, banned European practices such as ecclesiastical courts, and made it clear that ecclesiastical sanctions such as excommunication have no impact upon holding civil office. Yet the state was to be a "nursing father♦ to the church (a phrase taken from Isaiah 49:23), by creating a society that encouraged true Christianity. Throughout New England the Congregational Church was supported financially through taxation, there were religious tests for office holders, and statutes required church attendance and punished vices. Protestant dissenters in New England were tolerated if they remained quiet and did not disturb the public order. However, vocal and disorderly dissenters such as the Quakers and perceived trouble makers such as Anne Hutchinson (1638) and Roger Williams (1636) were banned or exiled from the colony.xxiv [24]

The Puritan conviction that rulers should promote true religion might suggest a powerful state, but this possibility was tempered by their belief that civil power should be limited by law. Early legal codes enumerated rights and judicial procedures, including protection against double jeopardy, torture, and "inhumane Barbarous or cruell[❖] bodily punishments.xxv [25] As well, the power of the state was limited by what John Davenport called in 1669 "the Law of Nature[❖] which is "God's law."[❖]xxvi [26] Moreover, Puritans believed that if rulers violate natural law, they may legitimately be resisted. A striking expression of this idea is found in Massachusetts 's Samuel Nowell's 1678 sermon "Abraham in Arms,[❖] where in addition to biblical arguments he contended that the "Law of nature . . . teachth men self-preservation.[❖] Moreover, he proclaimed that there "is such a thing as Liberty and Property given to us, both by the Laws of God & Men, when these are invaded, we may defend our selves.[❖]xxvii [27]

Prior to 1800, when most Americans--and certainly most Reformed thinkers--referred to "liberty,[❖] it is important to recognize that they never mean the modern, excessively individualistic idea that considers men and women to be free to do anything except physically harm others. As Barry Shain has demonstrated in remarkable detail, in the context of civic government "liberty[❖] refers to either the ability of communities to govern themselves or for individuals to do what is right. Toward the end of the eighteenth century a few elites were beginning to embrace an individualistic notion of liberty, but they were a small minority.xxviii [28]

Even if the early Puritans embraced Reformed political theory, some historians have argued that Reformed influence declined rapidly.xxix [29] Clearly the way New England colonists thought about society and politics changed in response to increased prosperity and

events like the English Civil War, the Restoration, the Glorious Revolution (especially the rule of Governor Edmund Andros), the First Great Awakening, and the English victory in the French and Indian War. In spite of a variety of significant changes, leaders in the Reformed tradition remained committed to the political principles discussed above, and in some respects they became even more convinced that they were part of a significant, flourishing international movement that was being used by God to bring about His kingdom on earth.xxx [30] The Great Awakening, it is true, introduced unwanted seeds of discord into Congregational and Presbyterian churches, but by most scholarly accounts advocates of the Awakening were more concerned about orthodoxy and piety than those who opposed it.xxxi [31] Moreover, well into the eighteenth century Reformed ministers in New England remained the best educated and the most influential members of their communities. Without a doubt their influence began declining toward the end of this century, and there were even a few ministers who were beginning to lean in the direction of Unitarianism. However, even among these ministers--to speak nothing of their more orthodox brothers--there was a firm commitment to traditional Reformed political theory.xxxii [32]

What about John Locke?

Tracing intellectual influence is difficult, and it is certainly possible that late-eighteenth-century New England Calvinists, even if they remained serious Calvinists, were influenced by other intellectual traditions. No one disputes that a variety of political traditions were competing for attention in mid-to-late eighteenth century New England , but it does not follow that all ideas were equally influential. An important argument of my book is that the political theory of founders from New England is best understood as being firmly within the tradition of Reformed

political thought. A prime competitor for influence in the era, particularly with respect to the War for Independence, is the political philosophy of John Locke. It is true that numerous scholars have contended that Locke's political philosophy should be understood as a logical extension of Protestant resistance literature.^{xxxiii} [33] However, so many scholars either ignore or reject this argument that it may be instructive to compare the general case for a secularized Lockean v. Reformed influence on the American founding.

In his 1922 book on the Declaration of Independence, Carl L. Becker famously remarked that Revolutionary era Americans "had absorbed Locke's works as a kind of political gospel."^{xxxiv} [34] Almost seventy years later Isaac Kramnick echoed Becker's conclusion that "Locke lurks behind its [the Declaration's] every phrase,"[?] and numerous scholars have made similar claims.^{xxxv} [35] In many instance, academics simply attribute to Locke any reference to individual rights, government by the consent of the governed, and the right to resist tyrannical authority, apparently unaware that Reformed thinkers had been making similar arguments long before he wrote the *Second Treatise*. Students of the history of political theory are more likely to be familiar with these earlier claims, yet they often contend that a careful reading of Locke's works shows that he departed significantly from traditional, Christian political theory--if not from Christianity itself.^{xxxvi} [36] Notably, they argue that he sought a secular approach to politics grounded on the natural right or natural rights of individuals. Such a view may be compatible some interpretations of Christianity, but it is hard to reconcile with Reformed political theory.

Before exploring the theoretical merits of these competing claims, it is worth considering the practical question of when and how Locke's political works came to America. John Dunn

has demonstrated that they were virtually unknown in America until 1723, when a bulky three volume edition of Locke's writings began appearing in university libraries. Even then, American intellectuals were primarily interested in his *Essay on Human Understanding*, and there is no evidence that Locke's *Second Treatise* was a part of any college curriculum until the War for Independence .xxxvii [37] The first American edition of one of Locke's works was produced by Yale's senior class 1742. This class of seventeen men, ten of whom went on to become ministers in Reformed churches, apparently hoped publication of *A Letter Concerning Toleration* would encourage Connecticut's leaders to be more accepting of New Light Calvinists (who were, it is worth noting, in many respects more conservative than the Old Lights).xxxviii [38]

By the Revolutionary era Locke was known and utilized by ecclesiological and political elites in America . Indeed, he was often referenced approvingly by clergy in New England . For instance, Connecticut Congregationalist Judah Champion appealed to the *Second Treatise* as an authority in his 1776 election sermon.xxxix [39] Donald Lutz has shown that Locke was widely cited in political literature throughout the 1760s and 1770s--although he also revealed that Locke's works were referred to far less often than the Bible.xl [40] Nevertheless, Americans' interest in Locke was not boundless, as suggested by Forrest McDonald's observation that the *Second Treatise* was not published in America until 1774, and that it was not republished in the United States until 1937.xli [41]

The clergies' use of Locke in mid-eighteenth century America has led some scholars to assert, in the words of Michael Zuckert, that there was "a Lockean conquest, or at least assimilation, of Puritan political thought.❖xlii [42] This is particularly noteworthy because Zuckert believes that Locke's political philosophy departs significantly from traditional Christian

political philosophy. Yet Zuckert's characterization of the latter largely ignores the development of arguments for natural rights, religious liberty, consent, limited government, and a right to rebel within the Reformed tradition.^{xliii} [43] If one recognizes that Calvinists had long advocated these ideas, and that most New England ministers were by any measure orthodox Christians, it is far more plausible to conclude that these ministers viewed Locke as an ally to be cited to defend concepts well within the bounds of Reformed Christianity. Reformed ministers in this era were well educated and sensitive (perhaps too sensitive) to any hint of theological heterodoxy. If Locke's ideology and Reformed political theory are really as different as Zuckert suggests, is it not odd that virtually no Reformed minister objected to the use of Locke by his fellow Calvinists?

From a philosophical standpoint Zuckert's interpretation of Locke's political philosophy is plausible. Moreover, his contention that Thomas Jefferson, the one founder examined in detail in *The Natural Rights Republic*, embraced this approach to politics is reasonable. However, the text of the Declaration of Independence (the founding era document with which Zuckert is most concerned) does not demand this interpretation. Moreover, there is no reason to believe Roger Sherman and his Connecticut colleagues William Williams, Samuel Huntington, and Oliver Wolcott thought they were signing a document grounded on secular Lockean ideas. Even if Jefferson embraced such views, it is unreasonable to define this public document in light of his private ideas, particularly when he later claimed that the object of the Declaration was "not to find out new principles or arguments[◆] but that "its authority rests on the harmonizing sentiments of the day.[◆]^{xliv} [44]

If Locke's works were late to arrive on America's shores, the Bible was virtually omnipresent in New England from the first Puritan settlements. As Daniel L. Dreisbach has demonstrated, the Bible retained its cultural dominance well into the founding era. Many founders continued to look to it for moral guidance, and virtually all of them relied on it in their public rhetoric and private papers.^{xlv} [45] This fact is often overlooked by scholars because authors in the era often assumed a familiarity with Scripture and so did not include textual citations. As Benjamin Franklin explained to Samuel Cooper in 1781,

It was not necessary in New England, where every body reads the Bible, and is acquainted with Scripture Phrases, that you should note the Texts from which you took them; but I have observed in England as well as in France, that Verses and Expressions taken from the sacred Writings, and not known to be such, appear very strange and awkward to some Readers; and I shall therefore in my Edition take the Liberty of marking the quoted Texts in the Margin.^{xlvi} [46]

In addition to the Bible, books containing the essential elements of Reformed political thought were available to political and ecclesiastical elites from the colonies' earliest days. Although a thorough and systematic study of which Reformed books were available at what time has yet to be attempted, Herbert D. Foster has documented the availability of classic texts by John Calvin, John Knox, Theodore Beza, Stephen Junius Brutus, Peter Martyr, and others throughout New England.^{xlvii} [47] The respect Puritan leaders had for their European predecessors is reflected well by John Cotton's (1585-1652) statement that "I have read the fathers and the school-men, and Calvin too; but I find that he that has Calvin has them all."^{xlviii} [48] Yet as Perry Miller pointed out "[i]f we were to measure by the number of times a writer is cited and the degrees of familiarity shown with his works, Beza exerted more influence than Calvin, and David Pareus still more than Beza."^{xlix} [49] This is significant for

our purposes because the latter two thinkers had significantly more radical theories of resistance than did John Calvin.

Moving to the founding era, political leaders generally, but particularly those from New England, often owned or referred to Calvinist works. For instance, John Witherspoon, President of Princeton, owned Calvin's *Institutes*, Beza's *Rights of Magistrates* (1757), and Buchanan's *The Law of Scottish Kingship* (1579).¹ [50] In his *Defence of the Constitution*, John Adams wrote that John Poynt's *Short Treatise on Politike Power* (1556) contains "all the essential principles of liberty, which were afterwards dilated on by Sidney and Locke."² He also noted the significance of *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* and works by James Harrington and John Milton.^{li} [51]

By contrasting Lockean and Reformed political theory I do not mean to suggest that these are the only intellectual traditions present in the founding era. I make the comparison because Locke's ideas are *potentially* the most at odds with Reformed political theory. Many aspects of Whig, classical republican, and Scottish Enlightenment thought, to name just three other widely discussed intellectual influences on the founders, seem to be informed by, or at least are more compatible with, Reformed thought.^{lii} [52] For instance, Robert Middlekauff notes that "Radical Whig perceptions of politics attracted widespread support in America because they revived the traditional concerns of a Protestant culture that had always verged on Puritanism."²^{liii} [53] As well, many concerns often attributed to the classical republican tradition, such as fear of corruption and concentrated powers and the belief that the state should promote virtue, seem to be readily explained by a commitment to Christianity.^{liv} [54] Of course

the founders read, learned from, and admired the classics, but this is a far cry from embracing all of their values and ideas.lv [55]

This is not the place to provide a full critique of the many works arguing for different intellectual influences on America 's founders. My central concern in this paper is to provide a sketch of an intellectual tradition that has been too often ignored by students of American political thought. If nothing else, I hope to show the danger of assigning all references to natural rights, religious liberty, consent, limited government, and a right to rebel to the influence of John Locke. Indeed, given the political culture of eighteenth century New England , there is a strong *prima facie* case that such appeals were based on Reformed political theory. To be sure, it is unlikely that many citizens read Reformed political thinkers directly, but neither did they read Locke, Rousseau, or Blackstone. However, 85% of them attended churches where they at least occasionally heard Reformed political ideas from their well educated ministers. Moreover, political leaders in New England, many of whom graduated from the Reformed colleges of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton , were quite familiar with Reformed theology and political thought. Certainly this is the case of most of the leading members of Connecticut 's political class.

Roger Sherman's Connecticut

Most students of the American founding do not deny that Reformed theology and churches were dominant in 17th century America , but they have a tendency to assume that they had lost their influence by the late 18th century. There is truth in this claim, but it should not be overstated. In 1776, 63% of the churches in New England were Congregationalist, 15.3% were Baptist, and 5.5% were Presbyterian. At the time Baptists were Calvinists, so it is reasonable to conclude that at least 84% of New England churches were in the Reformed theological

tradition.lvi [56] Among Congregational churches, 95% of ministers were college graduates--usually from Harvard or Yale--and were among the most educated and influential members of their communities.lvii [57] Within these churches, congregants could gather twice on Sunday to hear theologically and exegetically rich sermons (each lasting about one-and-a-half hours) and to engage in other acts of worship. Where possible, congregations would gather on Thursday as well for an additional sermon. As Harry S. Stout has calculated, the "average 70-year old colonial churchgoer would have listened to some 7,000 sermons in his or her lifetime totaling nearly 10,000 hours of concentrated listening. This is the number of classroom hours it would take to receive ten separate undergraduate degrees in a modern university, without even repeating the same course!❖lviii [58]

But did New Englanders hear these sermons? Ever since W.W. Sweet famously estimated that only 20% of New Englanders in this era took their faith seriously, some scholars have questioned the religiosity of Revolutionary and founding era Americans.lix [59] In recent years, the most important advocates of this position are the sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, who claim that in 1776 "only about 17 percent of Americans were churched.❖lx [60] Such assertions have made their way into polemical literature, as evidenced by Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore's statement that "Americans in the era of the Revolution were a distinctly unchurched people. The highest estimates from the late eighteenth century make only about 10-15 percent of the population church members.❖lxi [61] Although all of these authors acknowledge that "adherence❖ rates varied by region, Finke and Stark still conclude that New England adherence rates were no more than 20% of the total population.

James Hutson, Chief of Manuscripts Division at the Library of Congress, has demonstrated that Finke and Stark make numerous factual, methodological, and historical errors. For instance, they misstate Ezra Stiles's estimate of the population of New England in 1760, and they ignore the best estimates of the American population in 1776. More significantly, by relying on church membership rates in an era and for denominations where it was difficult to formally join a church (particularly in New England), they grossly undercount the number of Americans who were active in their churches. As well, Hutson notes that many of Finke and Stark's data come from decades after the era about which they write, and that some of these involved fledgling denominations such as the Methodists.^{lxii} [62] Using their methodology but the more reliable data offered by Ezra Stiles, Hutson contends that 82% of New Englanders were involved in Congregational churches--and this does not include New Englanders who were active in Baptists, Anglican, or other churches.^{lxiii} [63] His conclusion is similar to that of Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt, who calculate that in late eighteenth-century America "from 56 to 80 percent of the [white] population were churched, with the southern colonies occupying the lower end of the scale and the northern colonies the upper end."^{lxiv} [64]

As in any age, it is difficult to determine the extent to which parishioners took their faith seriously or might have attended church simply because of societal expectations or pressure. However, there are numerous reasons to believe that the vast majority of New Englanders were active participants in churches in the Reformed tradition, and the influence of Reformed Christianity upon New England culture is evidenced in a variety of ways. One manifestation of this influence particularly relevant for this study is the close partnership between Reformed churches and civil governments in Connecticut.

In 1636, Puritan minister Thomas Hooker led part of his congregation from Massachusetts to Connecticut where he founded the town of Hartford . In 1639 representatives from Hartford joined with those from Windsor and Wetherford to form the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut. Over the next century the relationship between church and state changed as a result of internal and external pressure, but when Sherman was first elected to the General Assembly in 1755, Connecticut remained a society heavily influenced by Reformed political theology.lxv [65]

In 1755, the primary church-state dispute in Connecticut was not whether the state should support the Congregational church, but whether it should support more than one such church in the same geographic area. The colony was divided into different districts, called societies, each of which was responsible for taxing its residents to support the local Congregational church. However, during the Great Awakening some Congregationalists came to reject the half-way covenant whereby children of church members were considered to be church members. Instead, these "New Lights" insisted that every church member must be able to articulate his or her own conversion experience. Although "New" implies "progressive," in this case it meant embracing a stricter and more enthusiastic version of Calvinism.

If the "established" Congregational church in a town was controlled by "Old Lights," New Lights often formed separate churches. Initially, they were prosecuted and harassed, and severe limits were placed upon the ability of ministers to preach the gospel without the approval of the established society. As the New Lights gained strength, the more repressive measures were overturned and dissenters were given permission to create their own societies that could tax members for the support of their new church. However, the established Congregational church

retained the ability to tax citizens who were not members of approved churches. Because of the Parliament's Act of Toleration (1689) it was possible for members of approved Anglican, Quaker, and Baptist churches to avoid paying taxes to support Congregational churches, but in practice it was often difficult to take advantage of this right.

Congregationalism's dominance within Connecticut is reflected well by the traditional New England practice of election sermons. From at least 1674 until 1830, Connecticut's General Court invited a minister to preach an election sermon in May, on the first day the legislature met.^{lxvi} [66] Until the nineteenth century, these ministers were always Congregationalists. The sermons, which were attended by the full General Court and other notables, were often printed and distributed at state expense. In them, clergy reminded civil leaders that men are sinful, that government is ordained by God to promote the common good, that the state should promote true Christianity, and that civil government is limited and must not be arbitrary.^{lxvii} [67]

Connecticut laws in this era also reflect the influence of Christianity, generally, and Reformed thought, specifically. Like most legal codes throughout the colonies, a variety of vices were punished as a matter of law, including adultery, drunkenness, card playing, dice throwing, swearing, and cursing. Offenses against God such as blasphemy and Sabbath breaking were likewise punished by civil authorities. On the positive side,

select-men were required "from Time to Time◆ to

make diligent Enquiry of all House-holders, within their respective Towns, how they are Stor'd with Bibles; and if upon such Enquiry, if any such House-holder be found without One Bible at least; then the said Select-men shall warn the said House-holder forthwith to procure One Bible at least, for the Use and Benefit of the said Family . . . and that all

those Families as are numerous, and whose Circumstances will allow thereof, shall be supplied with a considerable number of Bibles, according to the Number of persons in such Families; And they shall see that all such Families be Furnished with suitable Numbers of Orthodox Catechisms, and other good Books of Practical Godliness, viz. Such especially as Treat on, Encourage, and duly Prepare for the right Attendance on that great Duty of the *Lord's Supper*.lxviii [68]

Connecticut required families to own Bibles, and it demanded that towns have schools so that citizens would be able to read them. As noted earlier, the colony, like the rest of New England , had one of the highest literacy rates the world had ever seen. Moreover, the state provided significant support for the Congregationalist Yale College , the primary mission of which was to produce well-educated Congregational ministers.

In 1783 Sherman drafted a religious liberty statute that expanded state protection of, and support for, Protestantism. The state did not end financial support for churches until 1819, but even after this date it continued to encourage piety and enforce Christian morality. By the late eighteenth century a few founders were embracing something resembling a modern conception of the separation of church and state, but with few exceptions Connecticut's political leaders remained committed to the idea that the state should act as a "nursing father" to the church.lxix [69]

Sherman and America 's Move to Independence

Even serious scholars of the founding era often focus on the Declaration of Independence as *the* central justification for American Independence. That document was undoubtedly important, and it has come to play a significant role in the American imagination, but scholars seeking to understand the intellectual influences on American founders should not rely on any

single text. State and local bodies, as well as the Continental Congress, produced numerous public documents defending American rights and laying the groundwork for independence. The Declaration arguably reflects traditional Reformed ideas and concerns, but many of these other public texts do so with greater clarity. Sherman and his like-minded colleagues were intimately involved in drafting and supporting many of these documents.lxx [70]

In 1765 Parliament passed the Stamp Act, which provided for taxes that "fell particularly hard on two categories of men skilled in circulating grievances--publicans (who had to pay a registration fee of £ 1 a year) and newspapers (who had to print on stamped paper.)❖lxxi [71] Sherman , like many patriots, objected to the act because he believed Parliament had no power to tax the colonists. Apparently leading a New Haven town meeting on the issue, he penned instructions to New Haven 's delegates (himself and Samuel Bishop), requiring them to oppose the act. In the General Assembly, Sherman served on a committee that drew up a petition to the king and instructions for Connecticut 's agent in Great Britain that insisted that because they had not forfeited the "sacred and inviolable❖ rights of Englishmen, that they could not justly be taxed without their consent.lxxii [72] All but five members of the General Assembly voted to approve these instructions, a vote that helps illustrate the consensus on this issue among members of the state's political class.lxxiii [73] This agreement apparently went well beyond Connecticut 's leadership, as suggested by G.A. Gilbert's and Oscar Zeichner's estimates that only 8% of adult males in Connecticut were Loyalists--and that most of these were Anglicans who lived in the western part of the state.lxxiv [74]

Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in March 1766, but it passed the Declaratory Act asserting its authority to make laws binding colonists "in all cases whatsoever.❖ Later that year

Parliament passed the Quartering Act and, in 1767, the Townshend Acts. Sherman again helped craft a petition to the king challenging the legality of these laws. As well, on June 25 of the same year he wrote to William Samuel Johnson, noting that no "Colonial Assembly on this continent will ever concede that the Parliament has authority to Tax the colonies . . . ❖lxxv [75]

After nonimportation forced Parliament to largely repeal the Townshend Acts in 1770, some merchants began to waiver in their commitment to nonimportation. Throughout the state meetings were held in towns to encourage merchants to continue to continue the successful policy. A New Haven committee sent a letter to merchants at Weatherfield and Hartford that was signed by Sherman and five other prominent town leaders urging them to recognize that

[t]he time is now come for us to determine whether we will be freemen or slaves, or in other words ❖whether we will tamely coalesce with the measures of our backsliding brethren of New York who by resolving on importation at this juncture have meanly prostituted the common cause to the present sordid prospect of a little pelf; or by a virtuous and manly effort endeavor to heal this breach in the common Union by adhering more firmly than ever to our first agreement. There is no time to lose -- and can we hesitate a moment in choosing whether we will continue our connection with those degenerate imposters, and with the prospect of a little temporary wealth bequeath infamy, poverty and slavery to our posterity; or by discarding them entirely until they shall return to their agreement evince to future ages, God and ourselves, that we are still uncontaminated and free. Let not our present connection with any of them deter us: it is the cause of our country, it is the cause of liberty, it is the cause of all; and our country betrayed, our liberty sold and ourselves enslaved, what have we left?lxxvi [76]

For centuries, Reformed political writers had warned their readers to beware of any infringement upon their liberties. The danger was not the damage that any particular policy might bring, but the principle that governments should not exceed their lawful authority. Drawing from this tradition, Sherman and his colleagues were not concerned about the size of the disputed tariff, but the principle that if Parliament was allowed to act in an arbitrary fashion

that they would be opening the door for a pattern of tyrannical legislation that would result in "slavery.❖

Sherman was convinced from a relatively early date that Parliament's authority extended only to areas represented in the body. In 1772, he wrote to Thomas Cushing that:

It is a fundamental principal in the British Constitution and I think must be in every free State, that no laws bind the people but such as they consent to be governed by, therefore so far as the people of the Colonies are bound by laws made without their consent, they must be in a state of slavery or absolute subjection to the will of others . . . And tho' some general regulations of trade &c. may be necessary for the general interest of the nation, is there any constitutional way to establish such regulations so as to be legally binding upon the people of the several distinct Dominions which compose the British Empire, but by consent of the Legislature of each Government?lxxvii [77]

Since 1765 there had been widespread consensus among American patriots that Parliament could not lay internal or external taxes upon the colonies, but many conceded that it could pass laws regulating external colonial affairs. Sherman denied even this power, insisting that external regulations must be agreed upon by each local legislature. James Wilson, followed by Jefferson and Adams, popularized this argument in 1774.lxxviii [78] While there is no evidence that these founders were influenced by Sherman , he arrived at this position before their prominent essays articulating it. In August of 1774 John Adams, after meeting Sherman for the first time, noted in his diary that he is "a solid, sensible man. He said he Mr. Otis's Rights &c in 1764, and thought that he had conceded away the rights of America . He thought the reverse of the declaratory act was true, namely, that the parliament of Great Britain had authority to make laws for America in no case whatever.❖lxxix [79]

Even more directly tied to Sherman 's Reformed sensibilities was his concern that Parliament and the Crown intended to restrict the colonists' freedom of worship. Notably, Sherman and many of his fellow citizens worried that the Crown planned to appoint a bishop for the American colonies. The Puritans and their descendents had always been in the precarious position of maintaining what was in effect a dissenting establishment. They feared that a bishop would attempt to take over all colonial churches and set up tyrannical ecclesiastical courts. The most recent episode in the long running pamphlet war concerning an American episcopate had erupted in 1763.lxxx [80] Two years later, Parliament passed the Stamp Act, which among other things contained a reference to courts "exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the said colonies.❖lxxxi [81] This was taken by partisans of both sides to imply that a bishop would be sent shortly, and that for the first time ecclesiastical courts would operate in the American colonies.lxxxii [82] Sherman wrote in a 1768 letter to William Samuel Johnson that the problem is

not that we are of intolerant principles, nor do we envy the Episcopalian church of the privileges of a Bishop for the purposes of ordination, confirmation, and inspecting the morals of their clergy, provided they have no kind of superiority over, nor power in any way to affect the civil or religious interest of other denominations, or derive any support from them.lxxxiii [83]

He went on to note that "[m]any of the first inhabitants of these Colonies were obliged to seek an asylum among savages in this wilderness in order to escape the tyranny of Archbishop Laud and others of his stamp . . . We dread the consequences as oft we think of this danger [ecclesiastical tyranny].❖lxxxiv [84]

Sherman's fears may seem excessive today, but to an eighteenth-century Calvinist they made perfect sense. Calvinists had often struggled against unfriendly governments, and New England Puritans had come to America precisely because they were unable to reform completely the Church of England. Throughout the eighteenth century some American Anglicans continued to argue that the Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches were not "true" churches because their ministers had not been ordained by bishops. The extent to which English civic and religious leaders supported the plans of American Anglicans such as Samuel Johnson (father of William Samuel Johnson) has been extensively debated by scholars, but there is little reason to doubt that Reformed Christians in America genuinely feared an Anglican episcopate.^{lxxxv} [85] Moreover, ill-conceived actions by the Church of England such as founding a "mission" in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1759 did little to calm their fears.

Carl Bridenbaugh identified Noah Welles, Noah Hobart, Ezra Stiles and Francis Allison as some of the most significant ministerial opponents of an Anglican episcopate.^{lxxxvi} [86] Sherman likely knew Welles from his time in New Milford, when Welles had been a candidate for a church there. Whether he knew Welles personally or not, in 1767 he paid for the publication of Welles's sermon defending Presbyterian ordination.^{lxxxvii} [87] As well, Sherman was a longtime neighbor to and close friend of Ezra Stiles. That both Welles and Stiles preached election day sermons before the Connecticut Assembly while Sherman served there helps illustrate the close community among Connecticut's leaders.^{lxxxviii} [88] There was little doubt where these men fell on the question of an Anglican episcopate. Concern over the issue was not limited to elites, as suggested by John Adams's recollection that "the apprehension of Episcopacy contributed . . . as much as any other cause, to arouse the attention not only of the

inquiring mind, but of the common people, and urge them to close thinking on the constitutional authority of parliament over the colonies. ♦lxxxix [89]

Sherman was motivated by fear of Anglican aggression rather than bigotry. He got along well with Connecticut Anglicans, a reality evidenced as early as 1750 when, to the consternation of some of his readers, he inserted observable Days of the Church of England into his almanacs. When several customers complained, Sherman responded that while he felt free to not observe such days:

as I take Liberty in these Matters to judge for myself, so I think it reasonable that Others should have the same Liberty; and since my Design in this Performance is to serve the Publick, and the inserting of those observable Days does not croud out any Thing that might be more serviceable, I hope none of my Readers will be displeased with it for the Future.xc [90]

Throughout his life Sherman had good relations with his Anglican colleagues--particularly legal mentor, frequent collaborator, and correspondent William Samuel Johnson. When Parliament's Act of Toleration no longer required Connecticut to tolerate religious minorities, Sherman drafted a statute that protected of rights of Anglicans and other Protestant minorities.

In addition to fearing the appointment of a bishop, Sherman and his colleagues were troubled by the Quebec Act of 1774. From Parliament's perspective, this innocuous piece of legislation simply provided for the efficient governing of territory won from France after the French and Indian War. However, the act extended the colony of Quebec into what is now the American Midwest, permitted the use of French civil law, and allowed Catholics to freely practice their faith and takes oaths without reference to Protestantism. To the New England mind, these steps recognized a significant retreat for the kingdom of God in North America .

Reformed Protestants considered Roman Catholics to be, at best, seriously deceived and, at worst, in league with Satan. Certainly expanding territory controlled by them and admitting them to full civil rights did not bode well for the Protestant interest.xci [91] The seriousness with which Sherman took the Catholic threat is evident from a 1766 letter where he asked "If the Succession according to the present Establishment Should cease for want of an Heir or if the Parliament should alter it and admit a Papist to the Crown[,] would not the Colonies be at Liberty to joyn with Brittain or not?❖xcii [92]

Reformed Christians had long been on their guard against tyrannical rulers who desired to stamp out the true gospel. Indeed, although God was sovereign, there were instances in which evil rulers seemed to succeed--as in the case of the French Huguenots. Where tyrannical rulers had failed it was because Protestants had resisted them with arguments, laws, and even violence. As Sherman and his colleagues in New England began to perceive a pattern of tyranny by Parliament and the Crown, they reacted forcefully against the threat. Regardless of their commitment to "Old Light❖ or "New Light❖ Calvinism, the reality remained that for most New England citizens their Reformed faith was central to their view of the world. They would not sit idly by while their rights were violated by ungodly tyrants.

Sherman in the Continental Congress

In 1774 Sherman was appointed to be one of Connecticut 's delegates to the First Continental Congress. He arrived in Philadelphia on the first of September with his fellow representatives Eliphalet Dyer and Silas Deane. Congress convened four days later, and shortly thereafter he was appointed to a committee to draft a statement of colonial rights. Although the committee reached no agreement and its work was postponed, his fellow committee member

John Adams later recalled that the central debates concerned whether colonists should rely primarily upon constitutional rights, or argue on the basis of natural law as well. In addition, they debated what authority, if any, should be conceded to Parliament.^{xciii} [93] Adams noted that in these discussions Sherman argued that "[t]here is no other legislative over the Colonies but their respective assemblies. The Colonies adopt the common law, not as the common law, but as the highest reason."^{xciv} [94]

On September 17 Paul Revere delivered the Suffolk Resolves to the Continental Congress. Merrill Jensen accurately assessed the significant role this document had in convincing the First Continental Congress to challenge Parliament's legislation and adopt a meaningful statement of colonial rights.^{xcv} [95] In interesting coincidence that illustrates the relatively small world of colonial New England, the Resolves were adopted in Sherman's childhood hometown at a meeting that was opened in prayer by his old pastor, Samuel Dunbar. One contemporary witness recalled that the prayer was "the most extraordinary liberty-prayer that I ever heard. He [Dunbar] appeared to have a most divine, if not prophetic, enthusiasm in favor of our rights. . ."^{xcvi} [96] The Resolves recognized the sovereignty of King George, but challenged the legality of recent acts and practices by the British Parliament. Moreover, the convention proclaimed:

That it is an indispensable duty which we owe to God, our country, ourselves and posterity, by all lawful ways and means in our power to maintain, defend and preserve those civil and religious rights and liberties, for which many of our fathers fought, bled and died, and to hand them down entire to future generations.

As well, it condemned

the late act of parliament for establishing the Roman Catholic religion and the French laws in that extensive country, now called Canada, is dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America; and, therefore, as men and Protestant Christians, we are indispensably obliged to take all proper measures for our security.xcvii [97]

In Jensen's account, the Suffolk Resolves forced Congress to either acquiesce to Parliament's acts or take a stronger stand. Congress was not willing to go as far as Sherman would have liked, but the final version of the Declaration of Rights did condemn Parliament for passing the Intolerable Acts, which were "impolitic, unjust, and cruel, as well as unconstitutional, and most dangerous and destructive of American rights.❖ It went on to assert that

That the inhabitants of the English Colonies in North America, by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters or compacts, have the following Rights:

Resolved N. C. D. 1. That they are entitled to life, liberty, and property, and they have never ceded to any sovereign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent.

Congress also claimed that Parliament has no authority to tax the colonies, although to Sherman's chagrin it conceded that Parliament could regulate them. The declaration protested as well other violations of rights, including denying colonists the right to be "tried by peers of the vicinage,❖ to assemble, and to petition the king. Of particular concern was Parliament's attempt to keep a "Standing Army in these colonies in times a peace❖--a sure sign of tyranny. Reformed members of Congress were undoubtedly supportive of Congress's objection to the act

for establishing the Roman Catholick Religion in the province of Quebec, abolishing the equitable system of English laws, and erecting a tyranny there, to the great danger, from

so total a dissimilarity of Religion, law, and government of the neighbouring British colonies, by the assistance of those whose blood and treasure the said country was conquered from France.xcviii [98]

In addition to declaring their rights and petitioning the king, Congress passed the Articles of Association whereby delegates agreed on behalf of their colonies not to import and consume goods from Great Britain or Ireland , or to export goods to them. The articles provided for the creation of committees in each county, city, and town to enforce the terms of the association.xcix [99] Sherman signed this agreement, and he later moderated New Haven 's town meeting which formed the committee to implement the Articles in the city. He occasionally chaired this body, but was often unable to do so because of his presence in Congress.c [100]

Of particular interest for our purposes is Congress's appeal to the people of Great Britain . This document reiterated many of the arguments in the Declaration of Rights, but expanded on the significance of the Quebec Act. Congress contended that

we think the Legislature of Great-Britain is not authorized by the constitution to establish a religion, fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets, or, to erect an arbitrary form of government, in any quarter of the globe. These rights, we, as well as you, deem sacred. And yet sacred as they are, they have, with many others been repeatedly and flagrantly violated.ci [101]

Of course delegates were not concerned with establishments per se, but with the establishment of a religion "fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets"---i.e. Roman Catholicism. This fear was reiterated several pages later when they declared that by the Quebec Act

the dominion of Canada is to be so extended, modelled, and governed, as that by being disunited from us, detached from our interests, by civil as well as religious prejudices, that by their numbers daily swelling with Catholic emigrants from Europe, and by their

devotion to Administration, so friendly to their religion, they might become formidable to us, and on occasion, be fit instruments in the hands of power, to reduce the ancient free Protestant Colonies to the same state of slavery with themselves.cii [102]

Sherman was returned to Congress in May of 1775 where he continued to advocate American independence. Among other things, he voted for and signed Congress's "Declaration on Taking Arms.❖ Originally drafted by Jefferson for a committee consisting of Jefferson, John Rutledge, William Livingston, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and Thomas Johnson, it was revised significantly by John Dickinson and then accepted by Congress. The document began by laying out the theoretical foundations for independence:

If it was possible for men, who exercise their reason, to believe, that the Divine Author of our existence intended a part of the human race to hold an absolute property in, and an unbounded power over others, marked out by his infinite goodness and wisdom, as the objects of a legal domination never rightfully resistible, however severe and oppressive, the inhabitants of these Colonies might at least require from the parliament of Great Britain some evidence, that this dreadful authority over them, has been granted to that body. But a reverence for our Creator, principles of humanity, and the dictates of common sense, must convince all those who reflect upon the subject, that government was instituted to promote the welfare of mankind, and ought to be administered for the attainment of that end. The legislature of Great Britain, however, stimulated by an inordinate passion for a power not only unjustifiable, but which they know to be peculiarly reprobated by the very constitution of that kingdom, and desperate of success in any mode of contest, where regard should be had to truth, law, or right, have at length, deserting those, attempted to effect their cruel and impolitic purpose of enslaving these Colonies by violence, and have thereby rendered it necessary for us to close with their last appeal from reason to arms. -- Yet, however blinded that assembly may be, by their intemperate rage for unlimited domination, so to sight justice and the opinion of mankind, we esteem ourselves bound by obligations of respect to the rest of the world, to make known the justice of our cause.ciii [103]

This paragraph, drafted by Dickinson , reflects well the basic tenets of Reformed political theory (although Dickinson himself came from a Quaker background). God, the author of freedom, ordains limited governments to promote the common good. Parliament's actions must be

resisted, not because of the particular harm of any one policy, but because their ultimate aim is to enslave the colonies. This introductory paragraph is every bit as theoretically rich as the first paragraphs of the Declaration, but unlike the Declaration there is little deistic-sounding language about "nature's God" or paraphrases of the *Second Treatise*.

Congress's "Declaration on Taking Arms" reiterated arguments patriots had been making since 1765. Congress emphasized Parliament's overreaching claims, particularly its extravagant assertion that it could "make laws to bind us IN ALL CASES WHATSOEVER." After listing a number of specific grievances against Parliament and the King's officials such as the "unprovoked assault" on Lexington and Concord, the burning of Charles-Town, and the instigation of Indian attacks, Congress headed toward a conclusion with the striking claim that:

Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable. -- We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favour towards us, that his Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength, had been previously exercised in warlike operation, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves. With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world, declare, that, exerting the utmost energy of those powers, which our beneficent Creator hath graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverance, employ for the preservation of our liberties; being with our [one] mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves. cv [105]

This declaration, passed a little less than a year before its more famous cousin, is similar to the Declaration of Independence. However, it falls short of requiring separation from Great Britain, concluding instead with the hope "[w]ith an humble confidence in the mercies of the supreme and impartial Judge and Ruler of the Universe, we most devoutly implore his divine goodness to

protect us happily through this great conflict, to dispose our adversaries to reconciliation on reasonable terms, and thereby to relieve the empire from the calamities of civil war.❖cvi [106]

Throughout the 1770s Sherman steadfastly denied that Parliament had any authority whatsoever over the colonies. Their only allegiance was to the King, and in his mind the King had removed the colonists from his protection. When it came time to select a committee to write a declaration of independence, Sherman was a logical candidate. On June 11, 1776, Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, and Robert Sherman to just such a committee. Unfortunately for Sherman's future fame, the very next day he was elected to the committee to draft what became the Articles of Confederation. The following day he was placed on the Board of War.cvii [107] He was the only member of Congress to serve on all three of these critical committees.

According to John Adams, the committee on the declaration "had several meetings, in which were proposed the articles of which the declaration was to consist and minutes made of them. The committee then appointed Mr. Jefferson and me to draw them into form, and clothe them in a proper dress.❖ As Adams recalled the story, he insisted Jefferson write the draft, the committee met to discuss it, and Franklin and Sherman declined to criticize anything because of the press of time. Jefferson's account varies slightly from Adams's, but not significantly with respect to Sherman's participation.cviii [108] Nevertheless, although many of the changes in the draft declarations are made in Jefferson's hand, Julian P. Boyd reasonably asked how "can we be certain whether some of these corrections and changes . . . were not suggested by Adams or Franklin--or even by Roger Sherman, a very wise man, or by Robert R. Livingston, an intelligent youngster?❖cix [109] Unfortunately, certainty often eludes the student of history, but we can say that while there is evidence that Sherman contributed to the committee's initial

discussions, there is little to suggest that he was actively involved in drafting the text of the Declaration. Given his multiple commitments, this is not surprising. Yet there is no reason to suspect that he disagreed with the text's famous statement that

all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

These words reflect arguments long made by patriots in New England , many of whom likely never read Locke and almost all of whom were serious Calvinists. It is true that Jefferson read Locke and was most certainly not a Calvinist. However, it bears repeating that Jefferson himself stated that he was not attempting to "find out new principles, or new arguments,❖ but claimed that the Declaration's authority rests "on the harmonizing sentiments of the day.❖cx [110] Jefferson indisputably borrowed language from Locke, but for Sherman and his New England colleagues the ideas to which he referred predated Locke by years. There is little evidence that Sherman was thinking in secular Lockean terms, and none at all that he understood Jefferson's references to God to be appeals to the god of deism.

As a point of reference, it is instructive to look beyond Congress to the Connecticut General Assembly. On *June 15, 1776*, this body proclaimed that the King and Parliament repeatedly violated colonies' "antient just and constitutional rights,❖ ignored their "frequent humble, decent and dutiful petitions for redress of grievances,❖ and "have declared us out of the

King's protection.❖ The only appropriate response to this pattern of tyrannical behavior was to appeal to God,

who knows the secrets of all hearts for the sincerity of former declarations of our desire to preserve our antient and constitutional relation to that nation, and protesting solemnly against their oppression and injustice, which have driven us from them and compelled us to use such means as God in his providence hath put in our power for our necessary defence and preservation[.]

In practical terms, the General Assembly "resolved unanimously❖ that "the Delegates of this Colony in General Congress, be and they are hereby instructed to pro❖pose to that respectable body, to declare the United American Colonies Free and Independent States, absolved from all allegiance to the King of Great Britain, and to give the assent of this colony to such declaration when they shall judge it expedient and best . . .❖ cxi [111]

Of course Connecticut was not the only state to give such instructions; indeed the General Assembly drew on an earlier resolution from Virginia .cxii [112] The critical point for our purposes is that it is implausible to think Connecticut legislators *unanimously* approved these instructions because of a sudden conversion to a secularized Lockean liberalism. Sherman's old colleagues such as William Williams, Eliphalet Dyer, and Richard Law were staunch Calvinists, and it is far more reasonable to conclude that they were influenced Reformed political theory. Some undoubtedly had read Locke, but like most Americans they considered him to be an ally, not a secular thinker propounding views antithetical to Christianity. Thus, when Jefferson "harmonized the sentiments of the day,❖ if these sentiments include the views of Sherman and his Connecticut colleagues, it makes little sense to understand the Declaration in secular or deistic terms. Certainly the General Assembly did not view the document that way, or there is

no chance they would have approved the Declaration without dissent when it reconvened in

October of 1776.cxiii [113]

Conclusion

In this essay I have attempted to place Sherman 's contributions to the War for American Independence in the broader context of Reformed political tradition. I have not explored Sherman 's theological views in detail, or the impact of these ideas on other political and legal actions. Nor have I been able to consider his New England colleagues in much detail. A fuller treatment of these issues strengthens the case for the influence of Reformed theology on Sherman and his colleagues significantly.cxiv [114]

Historians have long noted that there was an "almost unanimous and persistent critical attitude of the Congregational and Presbyterian ministers toward the British imperial policy.❖cxv [115] Few dispute the significance of "Mr. Otis's black Regiment, *the dissenting Clergy*❖ in fermenting and supporting the War for Independence .cxvi [116] Yet students of American political theory have generally ignored or downplayed Reformed influences. Hopefully this essay has demonstrated that this is a serious mistake, at least for Protestant New England.

i [1] Prominent advocates of this position include Carl L. Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (1922; New York : Vintage Books, 1942) and Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955). More recent and nuanced works in this tradition include Michael P. Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the*

Foundation of the American Political Tradition (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996); Jerome Huyler, *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Steven Dworacz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990); Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Thomas Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

Of course Reformed political theory contains principles in addition to those listed above, but these principles are those most often attributed to Lockean liberalism.

ii [2] Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 15.

iii [3] Barry Alan Shain's *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Other scholarly works that recognize the significance impact of Christianity on America 's founders include Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant & Constitutionalism: The Great Frontier and the Matrix of Federal Democracy* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998); John G. West, Jr. *The Politics of Revelation and Reason: Religion and Civic Life in the New Nation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 1-78; Ellis Sandoz, *A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion, and the American Founding* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Donald Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Willmoore Kendall and George W. Carey, *The Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1970). David W. Hall's *The Genevan Reformation and the American Founding* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003) makes a broad argument for the influence of Reformed political theory in the American founding in a manner unlikely to be persuasive to professional academics.

Of course there are a variety of popular works that assert the significance of Christianity in the founding era. See, for instance, John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987); Tim LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (Brentwood: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1987); John Whitehead, *An American Dream* (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1987).

iv [4] Alan Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding: Guide to the Enduring Debates Over the Origins and Foundations of the American Republic* (Lawrence : University Press of Kansas , 2006), 3.

v [5] Jack Rakove, *Original Meanings* 7, 18. Because of his focus on James Madison, Rakove overemphasizes the significance of the Enlightenment (see, for instance, xvi, 13, 311).

vi [6] See, for instance, Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas,*

Personalities, and Politics: 1689-1775 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962);

Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in*

Colonial America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary*

Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought (New York : Cambridge University

Press, 1985); Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army*

and American Character, 1775-1783 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

1979); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty : Republican Thought and the*

Millenni-um in Revolution-ary New England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977);

Melvin B. Endy, Jr. "Just War, Holy War, and Millennialism in Revolutionary America ,

William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser. 42 (1985), 3-25; Perry Miller, "From Covenant to

the Revival" in Miller, *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966).

vii [7] For example, Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2002); James T. Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," *Journal of American History* 74 (June 1987), 9-33. Thomas S. Engeman and Michael Zuckert's volume *Protestantism and the American Founding* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press , 2004) contains essays debating the relative influence of Protestantism in the founding era.

viii [8] See, for instance, Jeffry H. Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of James Madison* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); and Mark David Hall, *The Political and Legal Philosophy of James Wilson: 1742-1798* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997).

ix [9] For example, Alice M. Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (1928;

Reprint: New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965); Keith L. Griffin, *Revolution and Religion:*

American Revolutionary War and the Reformed Clergy (New York: Paragon House, 1994); Dale

Kuehne, *Massachusetts Congregational Political Thought, 1760-1790* (Columbia: University of

Missouri Press, 1996).

x [10] This is not to say that Calvinism did not have an influence on these founders, but of them only Wilson comes close to being a Reformed thinker, and he eventually became an Anglican. Daniel Dreisbach, Mark Hall, and Jeffry Morrison, *The Founders on God and Government* (Lanham: Roman and Littlefield, 2004), contains essays on each of these founders' religious beliefs except for Paine and Hamilton. Essays on these two may be found in Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark David Hall, and Jeffry H. Morrison, *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, forthcoming).

xi [11] See, for instance, George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* 3rd (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), 180-328. Of course some Christians eventually came to reject doctrines like original sin, but these men and women were virtually non-existent in America prior to the nineteenth century.

xii [12] Kenneth A. Lockridge *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974), 98. Lockridge estimates that 60% of males in New England were literate in 1660, and that this percentage rose to 85% by 1760 (13). For a higher estimate of literacy rates for colonial New England see Samuel Eliot Morison *Puritan Pronaos: The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (New York: New York University Press, 1936), 82-85.

xiii [13] On New England churches and ecclesiology, see especially, James F. Cooper, Jr. *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) and David A. Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2005).

xiv [14] Max Weber famously noted the connection between Protestantism and capitalism in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* 3rd ed., trans. Stephen Kalberg, (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2002). Although his analysis is flawed in important ways, Weber deserves credit for noticing the significant impact Protestantism has on economic growth. See generally W. Stanford Reid., ed. *John Calvin: His Influence in the Western World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

xv [15] John Witte, Jr. *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-80.

xvi [16] The development of Protestant resistance theory is told in a wonderfully concise form by Quentin Skinner in *The foundations of modern political thought: volume two: The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), especially chapters 7-9. See also Richard L. Greaves, *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation: Studies in the Thought of John Knox* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1980); and Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

xvii [17] Stephan Junius Brutus, *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos*, ed. George Garnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149, 92, 37-40, and 129-131.

xviii [18] Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2: 329 (quoting Brutus).

xix [19] *Ibid.*, 321.

xx [20] Bruce Frohnen, *The American Republic* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 2002), 11. For further discussion see Kendall and Carey, *Basic Symbols*, 30-42.

xxi [21] Weir, *Early New England*. See also Daniel Elazar, *Covenant and Commonwealth: From Christian Separation through the Protestant Reformation* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996) and Elazar, *Covenant & Constitutionalism*.

xxii [22] Perry Miller, ed. *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 89. See also, Alice Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution*, 26-27; Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 154-159.

xxiii [23] Robert E. Brown, *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955); Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town : The First Hundred Years* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970).

xxiv [24] See generally, Dreisbach and Hall, *The Sacred Rights of Conscience* (Indianapolis : Liberty Fund Press, forthcoming), _____. In *Myth of American Individualism*, Shain highlights the communal nature of founding era political theory and emphasizes that community goals were directed to Reformed Protestant ends. In his introductory chapter he provides a long list of historians, political scientists, and law professors who believe the overriding concern of America 's founders was to promote individualism.

xxv [25] Massachusetts Body of Liberties, articles 42-46, in Frohnen, *American Republic*, 18.

xxvi [26] John Davenport, "A Sermon Preach'd at The Election of the Governour" (Boston , 1670), 4. See generally Baldwin , 13-21. Two years early, Jonathan Mitchel similarly declared in his election sermon that "the Law of Nature, is part of the Eternal Law of God." Mitchel, "Nehemiah on the wall in troublesome times" (Cambridge , 1671), 11. Note that in these examples (and numerous others could be given) indisputably orthodox clergy appealed to "the law of nature" as a source of authority--and that they did so well before Locke published his *Second Treatise*. For discussion of natural rights and the Reformed tradition see Georg Jellinek, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens: A Contribution to Modern Constitutional History*, Trans. Max Farrand (1901; Reprint: Westport: Hyperion Press, 1979) and Witte, *Reformation of Rights*.

xxvii [27] Samuel Nowell, "Abraham in Arms" (Boston , 1678), 10-11. T.H. Breen ranks this sermon, along with John Wise's "A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches" (1717) and Jonathan Mayhew's "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to Higher Powers" (1750) as among the most important statements of Puritan political theory. Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas in New England, 1630-1730* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 117. Mayhew was theologically more liberal than many of his fellow ministers, but there was widespread agreement on basic political principles. On the latter point see

Baldwin, *New England Clergy*; Martha Louise Counts, *The Political Views of the Eighteenth Century New England as Expressed in Their Election Sermons* (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1956).

xxviii [28] Shain, *Myth of American Individualism*, esp. 155-288. See also Witte, *Reformation of Rights*, 1-37, 277-319; C.S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), esp. 111-132.

xxix [29] Classic arguments for and against the declension thesis include: Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953) and Edmund S. Morgan, "New England Puritanism: Another Approach," *William and May Quarterly* 3rd ser. 18 (1966). Bushman's classic *From Puritan to Yankee* is indispensable on this subject, but he overemphasizes the degree and scope of theological change in eighteenth century Connecticut. See also Weir, *Early New England*, 227 and Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler*, 240, on the persistence of covenant ideals in New England.

xxx [30] See especially Thomas Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty*.

xxxi [31] Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), *passim*.

xxxii [32] Other scholars who see a clear connection between Calvinist thought and American political theory in the Revolutionary and founding eras include Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic: The Origin of the American Tradition of Political Liberty* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953), 40-55; Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 53.

xxxiii [33] See, for instance, Joshua Foa Dienstag, "serving God and Mammon: The Lockean Sympathy in Early American Political Thought," *American Political Science Review* 90 (Sept. 1996), 497-511; John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treatises of Government'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 256; 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; J.N. Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 113-15; Herbert D. Foster, "International Calvinism through Locke and the Revolution of 1688," *American Historical*

Review 32 (April 1927), 475-99. The broader literature on Locke and Christianity is far too extensive to review here, but a good recent overview that also presents a solid argument about Locke's view on the proper relationship between religion and politics may be found in Greg Forster, *John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

xxxiv [34] Carl Becker, *The Declaration of Independence*, 27.

xxxv [35] Isaac Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 293. C. Gregg Singer writes that the influence of Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* in this era "can scarcely be exaggerated," and that he "was the philosophical inspiration for the American Revolution, and, without him, the Declaration of Independence could scarcely have been written." *A Theological Interpretation of American History* 3rd (Greenville: A Press, 1994), 31-32. See generally Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*; Zuckert, *Natural Rights*, 15-27; Scott Douglas Gerber, *To Secure these Rights: The Declaration of Independence and Constitutional Interpretation* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), especially 19-56; Barbara A. McGraw, *Rediscovering America's Sacred Ground, Public Religion and Pursuit of the Good in a Pluralistic America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), esp. 61-66.

xxxvi [36] See, for instance, Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism*; Peter Myers, *Our Only Star and Compass: Locke and the Struggle for Political Rationality* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998); Michael Zuckert, *Launching Liberalism: On Lockean Political Philosophy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002). Some of these scholars understand Locke to be a secret atheist and follower of Thomas Hobbes, although others recognize that he may have been *some* sort of Christian.

xxxvii [37] John Dunn, "The politics of Locke in England and America in the eighteenth century," in John Yolton, ed. *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives: A collection of new essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 45-80, but esp. 69-71. Dunn concludes with respect to the American Revolution, "[f]or the American population at large the revolution may have been about many things, but in a very few cases can it possibly have been thought to have been in any sense about the *Two Treatises of Government* of John Locke" (80).

xxxviii [38] Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic*, 491, note 111; M. Louise Green, *The Development of Religious Liberty in Connecticut* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1905), 121; Franklin Bowditch Dexter *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, October, 1701-May, 1745* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1885), 698-722

xxxix [39] Judah Champion, "Christian and Civil Liberties," (Hartford : E. Watson, 1776), 8. See also Foster, "International Calvinism through Locke," 475. On the use of Locke by mid-eighteenth century American clergy, see Dworatz, *Unvarnished Doctrine*, 135-183. One of the earliest and most famous examples of a clerical use of Locke is in Elisha Williams' sermon, "The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants" (1744), in Sandoz, *Political Sermons*, 55-65.

xl [40] Donald Lutz, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," *American Political Science Review* (1984), 189-197, esp. 192-193.

xli [41] Forrest McDonald and Ellen Shapiro McDonald, *Requiem: Variations on Eighteenth Century Themes* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 16.

xlii [42] Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 172. Cf. Paul A. Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 10.

xliii [43] *Ibid.*, 118-201.

xliv [44] *Ibid.*, 1-89; Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825, in Koch and Peden, ed. *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*. Helpful here is J.G.A. Pocock's distinction between "the history of authorship" and the "history of readership" in his introduction to Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), ix. See also Justice Antonin Scalia's remark with respect to the Constitution that the text cannot be interpreted according to "secret or technical meanings that would not have been known to ordinary citizens in the founding generation." *District of Columbia v. Heller*, slip opinion, (2008), 3. Cf. H. Jefferson Powell, "The Original Understanding of Original Intent," *Harvard Law Review* 98 (March 1985), 935-37.

xl v [45] Daniel L. Dreisbach, *The Bible and the Political Literature of the American Founding*, manuscript in the possession of the author.

xlvi [46] Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Cooper, May 15, 1781 [need full cite].

xlvi [47] Herbert D. Foster, *Collected Papers of Herbert D. Foster: Historical and Biographical Studies* (Privately Printed, 1929), 77-105. See also, Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939; Reprint Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 89-108; Charles F. Robinson and Robin Robinson, "Three Early Massachusetts Libraries" ♦ *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* XXVIII (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1935), 107-185; Arthur Orlo Norton, "Harvard Text-Books and Reference Books of the Seventeenth Century," ♦ *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* XXVIII (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1935), 361-437. David W. Hall points out numerous similarities between classic texts of Reformed political thought and colonial and founding era political and ecclesiastical leaders. Although similarities in and of themselves do not constitute proof of intellectual influence, given the context in which New England elites were raised they are at least suggestive. See Hall, *The Geneva Reformation*, 285-446.

xlvi [48] Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford: Silas Andrus and Son, 1885), 1: 274.

xlix [49] Miller, *The New England Mind*, 1: 93.

l [50] Morrison, *John Witherspoon*, 81.

li [51] John Adams, *Collected Works of John Adams* ed. Henry Adams (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press), 6: 4. In the same discussion Adams also refers to "Machiavel," ♦ "the great restorer of the true politics," ♦ and other thinkers. One should not read too much into Adams' brief discussion, but I cite it to help show that works of Reformed political theory were read and discussed by American elites and at least one prominent founder believed Reformed ideas had a significant impact on Locke's political theory.

lii [52] Scholars who argue for the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment include Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co. 1978); Allen Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy, and Theology* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), and Jean Yarbrough, *American Virtues: Thomas Jefferson and the Character of a Free People* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998). In *The Political and Legal Philosophy of James Wilson* I show that the versions of Scottish moral sense theory that were most influential in America are compatible with orthodox Christian convictions--if not Reformed theology per se.

liii [53] Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution: 1763-1789* rev. ed. (New York : Oxford University Press, 2005), 52. Middlekauff repeatedly refers to the cultural influence of Christianity, but is less willing to consider it as an intellectual influence (e.g., 134-36, 244-46, 504).

liv [54] On the classical republican tradition see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969; and J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

lv [55] In his magisterial volume, *Republics Ancient and Modern*, Rahe demonstrates that eighteenth century republicanism is far different from classical republicanism, but he overestimates the influence of a modern, secularized Locke in the founding era. Like many Strausseans, he is able to defend this view only by paying disproportionate influence to founders like Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton, and virtually ignoring founders such as Sherman, Ellsworth, Williams, Huntington, Wolcott, and Trumbull.

lvi [56] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America , 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 29.

lvii [57] Ibid., 45; Frederick Lewis Weis, *The Colonial Clergy and the Colonial Churches of New England* (Lancaster, MA: Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy, 1936).

lviii [58] Harry S. Stout, "Preaching the Insurrection," *Christian History* 15 (1996), 12. See generally Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

lix [59] William Warren Sweet, "The American Colonial Environment and Religious Liberty," *Church History*, 4 (March 1935), 43-56. A similar estimate was made by Sidney E. Mead, "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism," *Church History* XXV (1956), 317-337. However, both of these estimates are simply based upon conjecture.

lx [60] Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America* , 15.

Ixi [61] *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* (New York: W.S. Norton & Co., 1996), 17.

Ixii [62] James Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," in James Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding: The Recovery of Religious Themes in the Early American Republic* (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2003), 111-132.

Scholars who argue for a lack of religiosity among Americans in the founding era are also led astray by lament about the lack of denominational commitments among Americans or by jeremiads by religious Americans decrying what they perceive to be sufficient attention to religious and moral concerns. For further discussion of this point, and an excellent overview of Christianity in eighteenth century America, see Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 1-127

Ixiii [63] Hutson also provides an excellent critique of Jon Butler's work, which purports to build upon and further offer additional evidence for Finke and Stark's figures. Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," 120-125.

Ixiv [64] Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt, "Church Adherence in the Eighteenth Century British Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 39 (April 1982), 275.

Ixv [65] Paul Lucas demonstrates that Congregationalists in the Connecticut Valley had significant and acrimonious disputes even in the seventeenth century. However, as an intellectual matter, disagreements were clearly within the bounds of Reformed theology--particularly with respect to political theory and church-state relations. See Paul R. Lucas, *Valley of Discord: Church and Society along the Connecticut River, 1636-1725* (Hanover: The University Press of New England, 1976).

Ixvi [66] Bernard C. Steiner claimed that Connecticut election sermons may be traced to the formation of the colony, but the first printed sermon is from 1674. Steiner, "Statistics of the Connecticut Election Sermons," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 46 (1892), 123.

Ixvii [67] Baldwin, *New England Clergy and the American Revolution*; Martha Louise Counts, *The Political Views of the Eighteenth Century New England as Expressed in Their Election Sermons* (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1956).

lxviii [68] *Acts and Laws Of His Majesties Colony of Connecticut in New-England* (New London , 1715), 207. For the 1784 version of this statute, see CT laws, 1784, 258.

lxix [69] I explore Sherman 's theological convictions and views of religious liberty and church-state relations in an essay on Sherman in *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life*.

lxx [70] In my book manuscript I argue that Sherman 's political views are similar to those held by many civic and religious leaders from New England . To help demonstrate this, I discuss documents that he was not intimately involved in drafting or approving. Of course my argument with respect to Sherman 's views rests on documents he drafted or actions he was significantly involved in orchestrating.

lxxi [71] Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 133.

lxxii [72] *PRC*, 12: 422, 425.

lxxiii [73] While firmly opposing the act, Sherman did not approve of the most radical proposals and actions for resisting Parliament. See Roger Sherman to Matthew Griswold, January 11, 1766, in Boardman, 91-92.

lxxiv [74] G.A. Gilbert, "The Connecticut Loyalists," *The American Historical Review* 4 (January 1899), 276-79; Oscar Zeichner, "The Rehabilitation of Loyalists in Connecticut," *The New England Quarterly* 11 (June 1938), 308-309; Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee*, 281.

lxxv [75] Roger Sherman to William Samuel Johnson, June 25, 1768. CHS, "Johnson Papers."

lxxvi [76] Quoted in Boutell, 58.

lxxvii [77] Roger Sherman to Thomas Cushing, April 30, 1772, in Boutell, 62.

lxxviii [78] Wilson, "Consideration on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament, in *Collected Works of James Wilson*, 2 vols. Ed. Kermit L. Hall and Mark David Hall (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 2007), 1: 3-31. Jefferson and Adams published similar essays several months later.

lxxix [79] *Works of John Adams*, 2: 343.

lxxx [80] Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 207-287.

lxxxi [81] Frohnen, *American Republic* 110.

lxxxii [82] Joseph J. Ellis, *The New England Mind in Transition: Samuel Johnson of Connecticut, 1696-1772* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 249; Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 256.

lxxxiii [83] Roger Sherman to William Samuel Johnson, 1768. In Boutell, *The Life of Roger Sherman*, 65.

lxxxiv [84] Ibid., 66. The specter of Archbishop Laud periodically arose throughout the Revolutionary era to illustrate the dangers of tyranny. For instance, in 1764, the *Newport Mercury* reprinted the commission Charles I gave to Archbishop Laud giving him the power to revoke colonial charters. See Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 102. See also Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 235

lxxxv [85] Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 95-96; Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, 351-52; Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*. William M. Hogue contends that Bridenbaugh overstates the interest of Church of England leaders in establishing an American episcopate and the impact the issue had on the American Revolution. See Hogue, "The Religious Conspiracy Theory of the American Revolution: Anglican Motive," *Church History* 45 (1976), 277-92. Hogue is likely correct that the threat of an episcopate was never as serious as some Americans thought, but the fact remains that in the minds of many Americans--particularly those who worshiped in Reformed churches--it was a very real threat. Although this issue alone would not have led to Revolution, it was seen by New England patriots as an important part of the pattern of tyrannical activity by Great Britain against the colonies.

lxxxvi [86] Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 194 and *en passim*.

lxxxvii [87] Noah Welles, "A Vindication of the validity and Divine Right of Presbyterian Ordination as set forth in Dr. Chauncy's Sermon at the Dudleian Lectures; and Mr. Welles Discourse upon the same subject in Answer to the Exceptions of Mr. Jeremiah Leaming contained in his late Defense of the Episcopal gov't of the church" (New Haven: Samuel Green, 1767). See Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 308-311.

lxxxviii [88] Welles in 1764 and Stiles in 1783. Noah Hobart preached the election day sermon in 1750, but this was before Sherman had been elected to office. Ashbell Woodbridge's 1752 election day sermon

warned of the day when Anglicans would become a majority in Connecticut and "commit our invaluable Privileges to the Flames. ♦ Quoted in Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 72.

lxxxix [89] John Adams to Jedediah Morse, Dec. 2, 1815, Adams, *Works*, 10: 185; Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, especially 256-259.

xc [90] Roger Sherman, *Almanack* (1758), quoted in Paltsits, *The Almanacs of Roger Sherman*, 1907, 14-15.

xc i [91] Kidd, *The Protestant Interest*; Martin I. J. Griffin, *Catholics and the American Revolution* (Rideley Park, PA: self-published, 1907), 1: 1-40; 3: 384-92 (containing a variety of excerpts from newspaper articles, pamphlets, and the *JCC* associating British tyranny with Roman Catholicism). Of course official anti-Catholic rhetoric was quickly suppressed as American leaders attempted to win the support of French Roman Catholics and then France.

xc ii [92] Roger Sherman to William Samuel Johnson, December 1766. Quoted in Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 59

xc iii [93] *Works of John Adams*, 2: 370-77.

xc iv [94] *Ibid.*, 371.

xc v [95] *Works of John Adams*, 2: 16; Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation: An Interpretation of the social-constitutional history of the American Revolution, 1774-1781* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), 61-62. Jensen generally neglected the influence of religion, so it is telling that he highlights the significance of the Suffolk Resolves.

xc vi [96] Benjamin Kent to Samuel Adams, August 20, 1774. In Richard Frothingham, *Life and Times of Joseph Warren* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1865), 342.

xc vii [97] *Journal of the Continental Congress*, 1: 33-35 [hereinafter *JCC*].

xc viii [98] *Ibid.*, 66, 67, 68-69, 69-70, 72.

xc ix [99] *Ibid.*, 75-80.

c [100] Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 100-101.

ci [101] *JCC*, 1: 83.

cii [102] *Ibid.*, 87-88. See also Congress's letter to the inhabitants of the colonies, *Ibid.*, 99.

ciii [103] *JCC*, 2: 140-141.

civ [104] *Ibid.*, 146.

cv [105] *Ibid.*, 150-154, 154-155.

cvi [106] *Ibid.*, 157.

cvii [107] *Ibid.*, 5: 431, 433, 438.

cviii [108] John Adams, *Autobiography*, and John Adams to Timothy Pickering, August 6, 1822, both in *Works of John Adams*, 2: 512-14. Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Aug. 30, 1823 [full cite].

cix [109] Julian P. Boyd, *The Declaration of Independence : The Evolution of the Text* rev. ed. Gerard W. Gawalt (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), 30.

cx [110] Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825, in Adrienne Koch and William Peden, *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Modern Library, 1944), 719.

cx i [111] *PRC*, 15: 414-15.

cx ii [112] Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 125.

cx iii [113] *PRSC*, 1: 3-4, 367-70.

cx iv [114] For further discussion of Sherman 's theological convictions and views of religious liberty and church-state relations see my essay in *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life*. I consider the impact of Reformed theology on the whole of Sherman 's political and legal career in *The Old Puritan and the New Republic: Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic* (under contract, University of Notre Dame Press).

cxv [115] Baldwin, *New England Clergy*, 91.

cxvi [116] Peter Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion*, in Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 334.

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