

CHAPTER 58 : THE SPIRIT OF '76 AND THE BIRTH OF THE SECULARIST STATE

1776 was a momentous year in the history of the Enlightenment. For over a century the movement had been attracting support and winning the hearts of men. But the social structures created during the Protestant Reformation did not easily give way to structures more consistent with the tenets of the Enlightenment. The nations of Christendom were constitutionally tied to Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, or Eastern Orthodoxy, and constitutional structures do not readily change. A secularist state, untied to some religious faith, was almost unheard of in the history of mankind. It would have been unthinkable in nations with long histories – such as existed in Europe – to experiment in something so novel as a secularist state with no established (i.e., state) church. If it were going to happen, it would have to happen in a place adapted to social experimentation, such as existed in the New World of the Americas.

But even in the Americas such a social experiment was not generally likely. In the Roman Catholic colonies controlled by Spain, France, and Portugal, religious dissent was strongly suppressed by the state. (Officially, the Roman Catholic Church forbade membership in freemasonry, though in point of fact there were some Roman Catholic freemasons.) These were not circumstances to foster a bold social experiment in secularist government.

The English-speaking colonies of North America were the logical place to erect such a state. Some of the colonies already upheld tolerationist policies and proto-secularist political structures. English philosopher and statesman Francis Bacon in the early seventeenth century had sketched a blueprint for America in his book *New Atlantis*, named after Plato's Atlantis. It would be a society governed according to "scientific enlightenment" rather than "religious dogma". Men like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson embraced this vision for a new order of society in America. They, and others like them, would serve as the intellectual leaders for a new type of nation.

Enlightenment philosophy provided the political means to arrive at such a secularist state, governed according to the principles of scientific empiricism. Enlightenment philosophers like Locke and Rousseau justified popular political revolution when the government did not reflect the will of the "people" and stood in the way of an "enlightened" state.

But for such a revolution to succeed, it would require more resources and more people than could be supplied by the devotees of the Enlightenment. The American colonists by and large were strongly attached to Biblical Protestantism. Nor were they especially eager to become detached from Protestant Great Britain. A revolutionary movement would have to somehow garner support from within conservative Protestant ranks, or it would have no chance of success. Furthermore, it would require economic and military resources to match that of mighty England. These factors necessitated a diverse coalition of parties to work together.

The coalition included freemasons and other partisans of the Enlightenment movement in the colonies; Roman Catholic colonists; powerful Roman Catholic countries like France and Spain (no doubt with the blessing and encouragement of the Vatican); colonial merchants and planters who saw economic advantage in being independent of Great Britain; Presbyterians influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment; Cameronian Presbyterians who resented the English monarchy since the days of King Charles II of England; and Baptists, Anabaptists, Quakers, and other sectarians opposed to church establishment, desiring a state disconnected from denominational affiliation. Let's consider the nature of each of these parties, and how each contributed to the American Revolution.

In a previous chapter we listed some of the famous freemasons that lived in 1776 and played a prominent role in the American Revolution. George Washington was a freemason, and most of Washington's Generals were freemasons. They sought to bring their Masonic ideals of a brotherhood of man transcending religious differences into fruition in a new country, crafted and built with humanistic tools. To the list of freemasons could be added other partisans of Enlightenment ideals, who for whatever reasons did not choose to join freemasonry (at least that we know of).

One such figure is Thomas Paine, the son of an English Quaker. In 1774 he met Benjamin Franklin in London, who helped him emigrate to Philadelphia. His career turned to journalism while in Philadelphia, and suddenly, Thomas Paine became very important. In 1776, he published *Common Sense*, a strong defense of American Independence from England. The plain language that Paine used spoke to the common people of America and was the first work to openly ask for independence from Great Britain, an idea that before would have astonished most Americans. It was pivotal in generating support for the Revolutionary War. Paine later in life wrote *Rights of Man*, a defense of the French Revolution, and *The Age of Reason*, an uncompromising attack on the Bible from a Deistic perspective.

Another figure is Thomas Jefferson. As with other Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire, Franklin and Paine, Thomas Jefferson was a Deist. He abhorred the Establishment Principle, asserting: "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical." (What this really meant, of course, is that secular humanist propaganda would be tax funded, while reformed Christian teaching would not be.) He published a "Jefferson Bible", free from what he regarded as superstitious elements, and consistent with his own "natural theology", supposedly based in reason. He was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence issued on July 4, 1776. He served for a time as ambassador to one of America's chief allies in the Revolutionary War, France. Jefferson became President of the United States in 1800, and founded the University of Virginia. The University of Virginia was a model for other secularist, publicly funded universities.

And many more names could be added to these. They include names like Samuel Adams, John Adams, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Aaron Burr. These men were just as enthralled by Enlightenment ideals as the revolutionaries who were freemasons, yet for whatever reasons they chose not to join freemasonry, even though they worked closely alongside freemasons to achieve common objectives.

Roman Catholic colonists, though few in numbers, had special reasons to desire the American Revolution. They detested the established Protestantism of Great Britain (whereby they could neither vote nor hold public office in Britain or the American colonies, and were disadvantaged in other ways as well), and they yearned for a secularist state (where they would not be disadvantaged). They adopted the old Romanist strategy of seeking pluralism and tolerationism in Protestant countries, even though in Roman Catholic countries there was not such pluralism and tolerationism extended to Protestants.

One prominent Roman Catholic family dominated the Revolutionary cause: the Carrolls of Maryland. Descended from the Calvert proprietors of Maryland, they were among the wealthiest extended families in the English colonies. Charles Carroll, Daniel Carroll, and John Carroll were especially influential in the revolution and in the formation of the new nation.

Charles Carroll began his formal education at the age of eight, when he was packed off to France to attend a Jesuit College at St. Omer. He graduated the College of Louis the Grande at age seventeen and continued practical studies in Europe until, at the age of twenty eight, he returned to his home, ready to assist Romanist and French goals and subvert Protestantism in the colonies. Charles Carroll identified with the radical cause at once upon entry into America, and he proceeded to work in the circles of revolutionaries. In 1772 he anonymously engaged the secretary of the colony of Maryland in a series of newspaper articles protesting the right of the British government to tax the colonies without representation.

Carroll was an early advocate for armed resistance with the object of separation from Great Britain. However, his native colony of Maryland – with a Protestant majority and an established Anglican church- was less certain in this matter and did not even send a representative to the first Continental Congress. Carroll served on the first Committee of Safety, at Annapolis, in 1775, and also in the Provincial Congress. He visited the Continental Congress in 1776, and was enlisted in a diplomatic mission to Canada, along with Franklin, Chase, and his cousin John Carroll. They at least succeeded in getting Quebec not to support the British forces, even if Quebec did not actively assist the Revolution. Shortly after his return, the Maryland Convention decided to join in support for the Revolution. Carroll was elected to represent Maryland on July 4, 1776, and though he was too late to vote for the Declaration of Independence, he did sign it. He returned to Maryland in 1778 to help in writing a constitution and forming a state government which removed Protestant establishment and set up secular humanism in its place. Needless to say, the Roman Catholic Carrolls would be quite influential in this new state. He represented Maryland in the US senate as well as the Maryland state

senate.

Daniel Carroll was a cousin of Charles Carroll. Daniel too attended the Jesuit College at St. Omer, after which he toured much of Europe. Not only was Daniel Carroll a Roman Catholic, he was also a freemason. This gave him a special tie with other freemason Revolutionaries like Franklin. Although the Roman Catholic Church ostensibly forbade membership in freemasonry, this did not stop the Roman Catholic Church from using Roman Catholic freemasons to do its bidding. The first Freemasons' Hall in London was erected in 1776 when Lord Petre, who was looked upon as the leading layman in the Roman Catholic Community in England, was the Grand Master of Masons. Earlier than that, in 1730 Thomas Howard, the Eighth Duke of Norfolk, a Roman Catholic, was Grand Master, and during his term presented to the Grand Lodge its Sword of State, which is still in use. Howard also installed the first Masonic Grand Master in the American colonies.

Daniel Carroll was an active partisan of the Revolution. He was a signatory for Maryland of the Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation combined the colonies of the American Revolutionary War into a loose confederation. The second Continental Congress adopted the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union in 1777. He served as a member from Maryland of the old Colonial Congress (1780-1784). He also was a signatory for Maryland of the US Constitution. This gave the federal government far more power than the Articles of Confederation had. It forbade Protestant religious test oaths at the federal level, as well as Protestant church establishment at the federal level. It set the federal government on an explicitly secularist course. (The strategy was a shrewd one: turn Protestant nations secularist, and keep Roman Catholic nations Roman Catholic.)

Daniel Carroll achieved his objectives even further though. In 1790, President George Washington appointed Carroll to head a commission of three men to select land for the "federal city" called for in the Constitution. Of all places, the commission chose land owned by Daniel Carroll in Maryland. The U.S. capitol was built on the land transferred to the Government by Carroll. (Interestingly, in 1663 this whole section of country belonged to a man named Pope, who called it Rome.) This was a signal triumph in various respects. First, it placed the US capital right next to a Jesuit college (Georgetown) which Daniel Carroll's brother, John, had "coincidentally" founded there a few years before. This meant the Jesuit institution could readily influence the new seat of government of the new nation. Also, it meant prominent Roman Catholics, like the Carroll family, were well situated to lobby the new government and obtain favors from it.

In 1791, Carroll and David Stuart, as the official commissioners of Congress, laid the Masonic corner-stone of the District of Columbia at Jones's Point near Alexandria, Virginia, along with George Washington. When the Congress met in Washington for the first time, in November, 1800, Carroll and Notley Young owned the only two really comfortable and imposing houses within the bounds of the city. Young's name is among those assisting as collectors of subscriptions (1787) for the founding of Jesuit Georgetown College.

Daniel's older brother was John Carroll, a Jesuit and the first Roman Catholic bishop in the United States. At the age of thirteen, he began studies at St. Omer, a Jesuit college, and entered the Society of Jesus following his graduation. Soon after, he began intensive studies in philosophy and theology in what is now Belgium. Fourteen years later, at the age of thirty-four, John Carroll was ordained a priest. He dedicated the next four years of his life to teaching philosophy and theology in Belgium, and then returned to America in 1774, right before the American Revolution. He joined Charles Carroll, his cousin and a Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Benjamin Franklin, his good friend, in a diplomatic mission to Canada.

John Carroll was held in high esteem by many important Revolutionary leaders of his time, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. He was well respected among them, and his opinion was valued and influential. John Carroll began the American custom of public prayer for governmental leaders, and drafted a now famous prayer for national leaders in 1791. He was particularly close to George Washington. With George Washington's aid, Bishop Carroll secured federal funds for Catholic missionaries to the Indians of the west. And when Washington died in 1799 Carroll delivered a tribute to his friend. The stepson of George Washington assisted at an early Georgetown commencement.

As Carroll helped to politically influence the young and struggling republic, he also helped to engender a spirit of religious unity. As a strong Catholic leader, he assisted in gaining acceptance for Catholics in America. In addition, Rome gave him the task of organizing the Catholic Church in the new nation. In November of 1789, he was named Bishop of Baltimore by Pope Pius VI, thus becoming the first American Bishop. Carroll's new position enabled him to establish many Jesuit schools in the nation, including Georgetown College (University), St. Mary's College for Boys (which became Loyola), and Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg. He was also a major supporter of the establishment of many parochial schools, Catholic academies, and religious orders.

In 1791, Carroll called the first national synod, an assembly of Catholic Church delegates to discuss various matters facing the churches to which they belonged. The synod created many guidelines for the Catholic Church in the United States and was a pivotal event in the history of American Catholicism. These guidelines became the first canon law for the nation and were a great unifying force for the Church as it grew in America. Through this synod and his ministry as bishop, John Carroll was instrumental in organizing the Church's life in the new nation, under the control of the Jesuits. By 1810 there were five separate dioceses in the United States, and Carroll was appointed the nation's first Catholic Archbishop. It is doubtful any of this could have happened without the American Revolution, for Roman Catholicism was suppressed during the Protestant colonial era.

No doubt it was more than friendship which allowed the Roman Catholics to achieve so much in the American Revolution and the formation of the United States. Roman Catholic support, and specifically the support of Roman Catholic France and Spain, were crucial to the success of the Revolution. Repeatedly in the long years of weakness and distress, George Washington declared that unless aid came from France, the army would dissolve and resistance cease. "Unless a capital change takes place soon," he writes in 1781, "it will be impossible for me to maintain our posts and keep the army from dispersing." The Vatican depended upon Roman Catholic powers like France and Spain to use their muscle for Romish causes, which France and Spain did by helping the American Revolution.

Of course, France and Spain had something to gain from the American Revolution, just as much as the Vatican. By supporting the American Revolution, they weakened their old Protestant nemesis, Great Britain. The debate between Spain and France was whether their resources would be better employed helping the Roman Catholic independence movement in Ireland or the independence movement in America. Both Ireland and America, of course, were under the British Crown. Spain leaned towards helping the Irish effort, which she, like France, had done in the past. The Spanish ambassador wrote to the French government in February, 1776 that with the help of the Irish, who would be ready, Ireland could be freed from English rule and England would be no longer a power to fear (*Memoire sur la Maniere dont la France,* etc.; *Euvres de Turgot*, ii, 551.) But France leaned towards especially assisting the American cause.

As a result of these deliberations the two nations at last decided upon the policy which, for the time being, they would adopt in reference to the American colonies. Both Spain and France would aid the American rebellion, if to achieve nothing else than the reduction in power of both Protestant England and Protestant America. As one of the government ministers noted: "Certainly it is for our advantage that the revolt of these people should continue; we must wish that they and the English should exhaust each other." (3 *Doniol*, i, 370.) The French government gave the aid secretly at first. On May 2, 1776, King Louis XVI of France authorized an advance of a million livres, which was to be entrusted to Beaumarchais for the use of the rebellious colonists. It was the first direct aid given by France to the American rebellion, and was the beginning of the interference of that country in the American Revolution, which at last led to an open alliance and war with England. Though such a result was contemplated as possible, no decision had yet been reached, and the French ministers were desirous to avoid doing anything which would necessarily involve their country in war. For this reason the action now taken was enveloped in mystery. The Spanish were asked to take similar action, and to this they agreed. Grimaldi sent to Paris a letter of credit for a million livres, to be used for the insurgents in the same manner as the million advanced by France. (*Doniol*, i, 485.) This moderate sum represented almost the entire direct assistance which the Americans received from Spain, and it was not given in order to secure their success, but in the hope that the contest would be prolonged until both sides were exhausted. However, the guns and supplies bought with the money advanced by Spain were just as useful.

The importance of the relationship with France is reflected in who were chosen to serve as commissioners in France by the Americans. They included none other than Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson.

France, for its part, was churning up support for the American Revolution, and soliciting volunteers. The American commissioners described this support as follows: "The desire that military officers here of all ranks have of going into the service of the United States is so general and so strong as to be quite amazing. We are hourly fatigued with their applications and offers, which we are obliged to refuse, and with hundreds of letters which we cannot possibly answer to their satisfaction." (Commissioners to Committee, March 12, 1777; *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Sparks's ed., i, 202.) One American commissioner wrote in November 1776: "The rage, as I may say, for entering into the American service increases and the consequence is that I am crowded with offers and proposals, many of them from persons in the first rank and eminence." (Deane to Committee, Nov. 6, 1776; *Deane Papers*, i, 342.) Of the French who wished to enlist in the American cause, the freemason La Fayette proved the most useful, and was among the most illustrious in rank. But there were others whose military reputation far exceeded his, and who had already won name and fame in the world. The Comte de Broglie was perhaps the most conspicuous of these would-be recruits. Both in manpower and in money French support proved critical.

Of course, besides philosophical and political motives, economic motives were a factor for some to seek American independence from Britain. This is illustrated in the infamous Boston Tea Party. In 1773, Britain's East India Company was sitting on large stocks of tea that it could not sell in England. It was on the verge of bankruptcy. In an effort to save it, the government passed the Tea Act of 1773, which gave the company the right to export its merchandise directly to the colonies without paying any of the regular taxes that were imposed on the colonial merchants, who had traditionally served as the middlemen in such transactions. With these privileges, the company could undersell American merchants and monopolize the colonial tea trade. The act proved inflammatory for several reasons. First, it angered influential colonial merchants, who feared being replaced and bankrupted by a powerful monopoly. The East India Company's decision to grant franchises to certain American merchants for the sale of their tea created further resentments among those excluded from this lucrative trade. More important, however, the Tea Act revived American passions about the issue of taxation without representation. Various colonies made plans to prevent the East India Company from landing its cargoes in colonial ports. In ports other than Boston, agents of the company were "persuaded" to resign, and new shipments of tea were either returned to England or warehoused. In Boston, the agents refused to resign and, with the support of the royal governor, preparations were made to land incoming cargoes regardless of opposition. After failing to turn back the three ships in the harbor, the Boston Tea Party was planned at the Green Dragon Tavern, also known as the Freemasons' Arms, and "the Headquarters of the Revolution." On the evening of December 16, 1773, three companies of fifty men each, masquerading as Mohawk Indians, passed through a tremendous crowd of spectators, went aboard the three ships, broke open the tea chests, and heaved them into the harbor. When the Bostonians refused to pay for the property they had destroyed, King George III

and Lord North decided on employing the Coercive Acts, to be applied only against Massachusetts. This increased resentment more. Clearly, economic factors played some role in the Revolution.

Perhaps most sadly, Presbyterians in large numbers joined the independence movement. Especially the Presbyterian leadership had been influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment. Foremost among these Presbyterians was John Witherspoon, who immigrated to America from Scotland. Before Witherspoon had even set foot on American soil, New Side Presbyterianism had significantly triumphed (in human terms) over Old Side Presbyterianism, and with it some important connections to the historic reformed faith were loosened. But Witherspoon severed the previously loosened cord, and in so doing turned American Presbyterianism in a definitively Romish direction on certain foundational issues. And so significant was his impact on this new soil that *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes (1907–21)* rightly points out: “Despite the multitude of sects, the Scottish common-sense philosophy introduced at the end of the eighteenth century at Princeton by President Witherspoon, spread until it formed almost the sole basis of philosophic instruction.” Having persuaded Old Side Presbyterians to join with the New Side, John Witherspoon released the united body from some of Presbyterian’s important anchors. And with the Old Side vanquished, little opposition remained to this course.

John Witherspoon’s philosophy was not original to him, but rather was an adaptation of Thomas Reid’s common sense realism. Reid, a Scottish Enlightenment philosopher and Moderate clergyman, argued that the ultimate validator of truth is naive common sense. This "sixth sense," he said, was a faculty of reason, a source of principles, a capacity for certain original and intuitive judgments that may be used as foundations for deductive reasoning. Reid claimed, on questionable Biblical grounds, that God guaranteed these "instinctive presuppositions" and gave them a certain revelatory character by structuring them right into man's intellectual constitution. Reid thus found the ultimate source of his epistemology not in the scriptures or the redemptive work of Christ, but in the philosophical golden calf of his own making: "Let my soul dwell with Common Sense." For Reid and the Moderates of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, common sense replaced God's Law and Spirit as the foundations for human knowledge. Witherspoon imbibed Reid’s Enlightenment philosophy, for he was a product of Scotland's leading university in an age when the Scottish universities were gradually adopting humanistic philosophy. Within a few generations, common sense philosophy had penetrated the very heart of American Protestantism.

John Witherspoon, the president of Princeton (1747), introduced common sense philosophy to his divinity students, and appealed to "certain first principles or dictates of common sense" as "the foundations of all reasoning." He subscribed to John Locke's view of the role of sensory perception in the development of the mind, but vigorously rejected all esoteric interpretations of that view. He saw no conflict between faith and reason; instead, he encouraged his students to test their faith by the rule of experience. He was much inclined to apply the test of common sense to any proposition, and to reduce it to its simplest terms. In lecturing on rhetoric he advised his students of the multiple

components into which a discourse traditionally had been divided, and then suggested that it was enough to say that every discourse or composition "must have a beginning, a middle, and an end." His name is rightly identified with certain attitudes and assumptions, considered to be of importance in the development of our national life, that are associated with what is known as the Common Sense Philosophy. In his support of the American cause there is no occasion for surprise. He subscribed to John Locke's political philosophy as wholeheartedly as to his psychology, and brought from Scotland a strong sense of "British liberty," which he came to see as greatly endangered by the course of British policy. When John Adams stopped over in Princeton on his way to the first meeting of the Continental Congress in 1774, he met Witherspoon and pronounced him 'as high a Son of Liberty, as any Man in America.' Princeton's synthesis of Biblical doctrine and common sense epistemology bore bitter fruit.

Common sense philosophy essentially capitulated epistemology and anthropology to Romish presuppositions. Human rationality – consisting in something Reid labeled "common sense" – was made the starting point of knowledge. Thus, human rationality took the place of God and His word as final arbiter of truth. This is just where the Jesuits and the whole Romish Church wanted knowledge to start. Jesuit-trained Descartes - the 'father of modern philosophy' - had a remarkable impact in Protestant nations as an advocate of such humanistic philosophy based upon humanistic foundations. Any philosophical system with a human rather than a divine foundation can never ultimately sustain Biblical Christianity. Rather, humanistic foundations inevitably lead to humanistic conclusions. And such humanistic philosophies are always beset by a flawed anthropology. They fail to take proper account of man's total depravity in his fallen condition, and consequently the thoroughly perverted nature of his reason and "common sense."

And it should really come as no surprise that Witherspoon adopted the Jesuit Bellarmine's political philosophy of revolution, having already adopted many other aspects of humanistic Romish ideology. If man is the foundation of knowledge, then surely man has the right to self-expression, and any ruler must have his consent to rule. And if man's conscience is supreme, then 'liberty of conscience' (so called but not Biblically defined) must surely be inviolable. And if man's common sense is so rational, truth must surely be its end. And if all men have such common sense, then surely all men are qualified to vote, and therein to rule. It thus buys into every necessary pre-supposition of liberation theology and revolution. "There is not a single instance in history," he stated, "in which civil liberty was lost and religious liberty preserved." Starting in May 1776, he began arguing for independence from the pulpit, earning him the Tory title, 'Doctor Silverspoon, Preacher of Sedition in America.'"

Witherspoon not only encouraged the American Revolution, he was active in its establishment as a secularist state. He was a member of the ratifying convention of the Constitution of the United States. This Constitution forbade religious test oaths to hold office at the federal level, and it forbade church establishment.

Witherspoon also contributed greatly to the organization of a newly independent and American Presbyterian Church and in 1789 opened its first General Assembly with a sermon and presided until the election of the first moderator. This main Presbyterian Church in the USA amended the Westminster Confession, removing its Establishment Principle clause. It also allowed a looser subscriptionism to the Confession, making it quasi-congregationalist in church organization.

Another group of Presbyterians which largely joined in the American Revolution were the dissenting Cameronians. These Scottish descendants embraced some of the more extreme tenets of Richard Cameron, including disavowal of the British Monarch and the right of revolution to attain independence. They had dissented from the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland in the aftermath of the “Glorious Revolution”. Due to their strong antipathy of the British Monarchy, they could be counted on to join the coalition opposing it and seeking independent status. They naively imagined that once free from Britain, America would become Covenanter in constitution. But as someone has noted, “In 1787, with the establishment of a new, and innovating, written Constitution, the Covenanters found that they had been miserably betrayed.”

To the above list of revolutionaries, a varied assortment of other groups could be added. For example, Baptists, Anabaptists, Quakers, and other sectarians opposed to church establishment typically were in favor of the independence movement. They desired a state disconnected from denominational affiliation. These groups grew in numbers during the revolutionary era and afterwards, even as the numbers in the old established Protestant denominations declined.

Yet even with this diverse array of parties, the coalition constituted only about a third of the population in the English colonies. Another third were Loyalists to the British Crown, leaving roughly a third of the population undecided. The political and tactical errors of the English Crown forces, combined with some pivotal successes of the revolutionaries, combined to persuade the undecided third of the population at least to accept the revolution.

It must be said too that King George III and his Prime Ministers authorized some immoral actions by British forces in the colonies. But these errors on the part of the Crown hardly justified the political revolution that took place. Furthermore, for reformed Christians to join in a coalition with such wicked parties as it did, is simply inexcusable. Given the nature of that coalition, Christians should have realized they would be creating a secularist state, detached from Biblical Protestantism.

Here then, briefly, is an outline of the events of the American Revolution and the formation of the United States of America. The United States became the world's first modern secularist democracy after its break with Great Britain with a Declaration of Independence in 1776. The original political structure was a confederation in 1777, ratified in 1781 as the Articles of Confederation.

This was supplanted by the Constitution of a more centralized federal government in 1789. The US Constitution forbade church establishment by the federal government, and it forbade religious test oaths for federal public officials. Yale Seminary President Timothy Dwight rightly pointed out in his address on July 23, 1812: "We formed our Constitution without any acknowledgment of GOD; without any recognition of his mercies to us, as a people, of his government, or even of his existence. The Convention, by which it was formed, never asked, even once, his direction, or his blessing upon their labors. Thus we commenced our national existence under the present system, without GOD." The states in the Union quickly followed this pattern. They removed their religious test oaths which had limited voting to Protestants.

As church establishment was disappearing in the nation, immediately at the federal level, and gradually at the state level, this significantly impacted the mainline Protestant churches. The Episcopal Church's influence especially waned. Prior to the American Revolutionary War, the Episcopal Church was part of the Church of England and the established church in the southern colonies, but after the revolution she became independent. When the clergy of Connecticut elected Samuel Seabury as their bishop, he came to Scotland, where the Scottish bishops (at the time being suppressed by Scotland) consecrated him in Aberdeen in 1784, the first Anglican bishop outside the British Isles. The American bishops thus descend from the bishops of Scotland, and to this day the nine crosses which symbolise the nine provinces in the arms of the American Episcopal Church form a St Andrew's cross, commemorating the Scottish link. In Scotland, the Episcopal Church is so known because unlike the national state Church of Scotland (which was Presbyterian, i.e. governed by Elders), it is governed by bishops (in Latin *episcopi*). The word "Anglican" comes from the Latin word *Anglicana* which literally means English. Stripped of her established status, the Episcopal Church lost considerable numbers of members to other denominations.

We have previously noted the significant influence of the Congregationalist churches, which were the established churches of New England in the colonial era. The first colleges and universities in America, including Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Williams, Bowdoin, Middlebury and Amherst, all had been founded by the Congregationalists. Without higher courts to ensure doctrinal uniformity among the congregations, Congregationalists were more diverse than other Reformed churches. Despite the efforts of Calvinists to maintain the dominance of their system, the Congregationalist churches, especially in New England, gradually gave way to the influences of Arminianism, unitarianism, and transcendentalism. The clear evidence of the liberal drift came in 1805 when Unitarian minister Henry Ware received the chair of professor of divinity at Harvard, the leading Congregationalist school. This showed that the liberal party were now in control of the college, and the fact was soon further emphasized by the appointment of a liberal president and several liberal professors. The doctrinal defections led to church schisms among the Congregationalist churches.

The Presbyterian church did not fare as poorly. Indeed, its influence in some measure grew before the Civil War, and it did not lapse into heterodoxy so rapidly. But the mainline Presbyterian church was still a doctrinally corrupted version of Presbyterianism.

The Presbyterian Church at the time was strongest in Pennsylvania, but her influence spread from there. Many of the early Presbyterians in America had come from England, Scotland and Ireland, and many of these had settled in Pennsylvania and along the frontier. The first American Presbytery was organized at Philadelphia in 1706. The first General Assembly was held in the same city in 1789. The Assembly was convened by the Rev. John Witherspoon, the only Christian minister to sign the Declaration of Independence. In 1787 the Presbyterian Church moderated by Witherspoon altered the Westminster Confession of Faith, to bring it more into line with certain Enlightenment tenets regarding political philosophy. The other smaller Presbyterian bodies in America generally did the same. Common sense realism became an underlying philosophy of these denominations. As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, it bore bitter fruit long term.

These mainline Protestant denominations would inevitably decline in power. Even after their revolutionary adjustments, they were still too attached to the age of Protestant Reformation for a "free" people. The denominations that would eventually prevail in numbers in America were the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptists and Anabaptists, the Arminian Methodists and their offshoots, and sundry other heretical sects, along with numerous apostate sects (Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.). American culture and society were quite contrary to sound religion.

The USA would serve as a worldwide model of a secularist state, and the revolution which effected it would serve as a model for how to attain such a state. Here is how US President Franklin Roosevelt – a freemason himself – explained the birth of the USA:

“On the Great Seal of the United States, which, for a century and a half, has reposed in the loving care of a long line of Secretaries of the State, appears these words: "Novus Ordo Seclorum" which means: "A New Order of the Ages."

But in the scheme of civilization from which ours descends, I suppose we can properly recognize that in 2500 years there have been only a few "New Orders" in the development of human living under a thing called government.

Without question, the philosophy of orderly government, in which the governed had some voice in civilized society, goes back to the days of ancient Greece...

We come to the Age of Rome – an age of a strange admixture of elections and laws and military conquest and personal dictatorship... It was an age which extended the civilization of the period to the greater part of the then known world. It was an age which forced its own conception of laws and way of life on millions of less civilized people, who previously had lived under tribal custom of centralized direction.

With Rome's collapse and the overrunning of Europe by vast population movements from farther east, orderly progress deteriorated, and the sword drove learning into hiding.

That dark period could hardly be called an Age, because it was an interim between Ages...the appearance of tiny movements in tiny places, led by tiny people, forecast the next vast step forward – the era of 1776 – the Age in which, thank God, we still live. Those beginnings originated, it is true, in the old world – among the philosophers, among the seekers of many kinds of freedom forbidden by those who governed.

There, by processes of trial and error, democracy as it has since been accepted in so many lands, had its birth and its training. We must accept that as fact because, fundamentally, nothing like it had ever existed before.

There came into being the first far-flung government in all the world whose cardinal principle was democracy – the United States of America.

With the gaining of our political freedom came ... Thomas Jefferson, an advocate of government by representatives of the people, an advocate of the universal right of free thought, free personal living, free religion, free expression of opinion and, above all, the right of free universal suffrage.

The New Order spread into almost every part of the civilized world. It spread in many forms – and over the next century almost all peoples had acquired some form of popular expression of opinion, some form of elections, of franchises, of the right to be heard...”

Roosevelt’s evaluation of the United States, with its seat of power in Washington, DC, is in many respects quite accurate. The United States stands as the successor to Rome, Greece, and Babylon- a humanistic regime dominating world politics and philosophy. “Freedom” (falsely so called, because true freedom only comes through Christ and truth) became its motto. And it has served as the paradigm to be variously copied by civil regimes across the world. 1776 marked the birth of a new Rome and a new Babylon in world history, and one which the Roman Catholic Church herself played no small role in birthing, in order to undermine Biblical Protestantism.

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CHAPTER 58 : THE SPIRIT OF '76 AND THE BIRTH OF THE SECULARIST STATE

This second volume in a two-part series on church history is primarily an edited version of the following works on church history and Biblical interpretation:

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The on-line resources of Historicism Research Foundation at <http://www.historicism.net/> also proved invaluable for my understanding of Biblical prophecy. Biblical prophecy concerning Christian church history, especially as revealed in the book of Revelation, serves as the foundation upon which all church histories should be based.

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