

# From John Winthrop to James Madison

The Evolution of Ideas about God and  
Caesar from the Early Colonies until the  
Constitution

# Reminders and Class Goals

- ◉ [GodandCaesar@gmail.com](mailto:GodandCaesar@gmail.com) – can still be used for questions for Tim
- ◉ Class Videos and DVD Request
- ◉ Pop Quiz
- ◉ God and Caesar conflicts in the early settlement of Massachusetts
- ◉ The transition from Early Colonies to the Revolutionary Era
- ◉ The disestablishment of religion in Virginia
- ◉ Religious language in the founding documents
- ◉ To what extent was the United States founded as a Christian Nation?

# For Table Discussions

- ◉ Which of the following laws would you support?
- ◉ What evidence Biblical or otherwise do you have to support your answers?
  - > A provision that only church members can vote and hold public office?
  - > The death penalty for missionaries from a non-approved religion or denomination?
  - > Mandatory church attendance laws?
  - > Tax payer funding for ministers' salaries?

# What About These?

- ◉ Limitations of the profit that businessmen can earn on certain transactions?
- ◉ A ban on the celebration of Christmas?
- ◉ The death penalty for witchcraft?
- ◉ Corporal punishment for refusing to recite the Lord's Prayer in the Public Schools?
- ◉ Only laws with a clear Biblical precedent can be enacted?
- ◉ Time in the stocks for taking the Lord's name in vain or blasphemy?

# John Adams' Dream?

- Suppos a nation in some distant Region, should take the Bible for their only law Book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited. Every member would be obliged in Conscience to temperance and frugality and industry, to justice and kindness and Charity towards his fellow men, and to Piety and Love, and reverence towards almighty God. In this Commonwealth, no man would impair his health by Gluttony, drunkenness, or Lust-no man would sacrifice his most precious time to cards, or any other trifling and mean amusement-no man would steal or lie or any way defraud his neighbour, but would live in peace and good will with all men-no man would blaspheme his maker or prophane his Worship, but a rational and manly, a sincere and unaffected Piety and devotion, would reign in all hearts. What a Eutopa, what a Paradise would this region be. -- John Adams Diary Entry February 22, 1756 (Age 20)

# Remember Henry VIII?

- Henry marries Catherine of Aragon, with a special papal dispensation allowing him to marry his brother's widow.
- He requests an annulment so he can marry Anne Boleyn.
- Pope Clement VII who is a prisoner to Catherine's nephew, Emperor Charles V, who recently sacked Rome, does not grant the annulment.
  - > England officially breaks from Rome and establishes Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the state Church
  - > Essentially an English Catholic Church with no pope
  - > Closed monasteries, giving lands to laymen and universities
- What does this say about God and Caesar?

# The Great Migration

- ◉ 1618 – James I forced Puritan ministers to read in church a statement in favor of Sunday sports
- ◉ 1625 – Charles I comes to the throne appoints Archbishop Laud who begins persecuting Puritan ministers
- ◉ 1629 – The House of Commons denounced Arminianism and unconstitutional taxation (note the linking of religious and political concerns) – Charles begins ruling without Parliament
- ◉ 1630 – Great Puritan Migration begins with the purpose of saving the true church from corruption in England.

# John Winthrop – Governor

## ● A Model of Christian Charity

- > Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then hath He ratified this covenant and sealed our commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it; but if we shall neglect the observation of these articles which are the ends we have propounded, and, dissembling with our God, shall fall to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnal intentions, seeking great things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us, and be revenged of such a people, and make us know the price of the breach of such a covenant.

- Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck, and to provide for our posterity, is to follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as His own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly we have been acquainted with.

- We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "may the Lord make it like that of New England." **For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.** We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God's sake. We shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.

- And to shut this discourse with that exhortation of Moses, that faithful servant of the Lord, in his last farewell to Israel, Deut. 30. "Beloved, there is now set before us life and death, good and evil," in that we are commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another, to walk in his ways and to keep his Commandments and his ordinance and his laws, and the articles of our Covenant with Him, that we may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may bless us in the land whither we go to possess it. **But if our hearts shall turn away, so that we will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worship other Gods, our pleasure and profits, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it. Therefore let us choose life, that we and our seed may live, by obeying His voice and cleaving to Him, for He is our life and our prosperity.**

# Cambridge Platform 1648

- ◉ Church and state are mutually supporting bodies, but. . .
- ◉ State cannot compel church membership or participation in communion.
- ◉ Church membership required for voting.
- ◉ Ministers cannot serve as magistrates
- ◉ “As it is unlawful for church-officers to meddle with the sword of the magistrate, so it is unlawful for the magistrate to meddle with the work proper to church-officers.”

# Cambridge Platform II

- Magistrates could punish - “. . . Idolatry, blasphemy, heresy, venting corrupt and pernicious opinions, that destroy the foundation, open contempt of the Word preached, profanation of the Lords day, disturbing the peaceable administration and exercise of the worship and holy things of God.”
- The state could intervene in churches that were deemed, “schismatical,” out of communion with other churches, or acting “incorrigibly or obstinately.”

# Trouble in Colonial House?

- ◉ Governor Jeff Wyers struggled with how far to enforce colonial laws.
- ◉ Where does his duty as magistrate conflict with his duty as a believer.
- ◉ He decided to become “A City on a Hill.”

# Trouble in Mass Bay?

- ◉ How far are you willing to let the Civil Magistrates dictate religious beliefs and practices?
- ◉ Anne Hutchinson?
- ◉ Roger Williams?
- ◉ Mary Dyer?

# Roger Williams

- “God requireth not a uniformity of religion to be enacted and enforced in any civil state; which enforced uniformity sooner or later is the greatest occasion of civil war, ravishing of conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus in his servants, and of the hypocrisy and destruction of millions of souls.” Roger Williams, “A Plea for Religious Liberty,” 1644.

## *Awash in a Sea of Faith . . .*

- ◉ Virginia – Established Anglican Church
- ◉ Maryland – Catholic Colony with toleration for Trinitarians
- ◉ New Netherlands – Dutch Reformed
- ◉ Pennsylvania – Quaker with broad toleration
- ◉ New Mexico – Spanish Catholic
- ◉ New France – French Catholic
- ◉ Everywhere – Persistent Native American and African religious beliefs

# Remember Cotton Mather

- “Piety begat prosperity and the daughter devoured the mother.”

# From Puritans to Patriots

- ◉ Constant fears of Declension from the original ideals
- ◉ English Civil War
- ◉ Emergence of the Halfway Covenant 1662
- ◉ The Glorious Revolution
- ◉ Transition from Puritans to Yankees
- ◉ Growing Influence of Enlightenment ideas
- ◉ Great Awakening – spreads Evangelical Christianity but causes churches to split and people to question traditional authority and hierarchy

# Religion in the Declaration

- ◉ References to God
- ◉ “. . .laws of nature and of nature’s God”
- ◉ “. . .all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. . .”
- ◉ But also . . .“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” (Romans 13?)
- ◉ “. . .appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions. . .”
- ◉ “. . .with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence. . .”

# Virginia Disestablishment

- ◉ Anglican Established Church
- ◉ Later surge of the Great Awakening
- ◉ Severe persecution of dissenting sects, especially Baptists.
- ◉ Coalition of Enlightenment Deists and Evangelicals against establishment.
- ◉ Rejection of the MA option of reassigning your tax dollars to the church of your choice.

# Madison – Memorial and Remonstrance

- “Because experience witnesseth that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of Religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution. Enquire of the Teachers of Christianity for the ages in which it appeared in its greatest lustre; those of every sect, point to the ages prior to its incorporation with Civil policy. Propose a restoration of this primitive State in which its Teachers depended on the voluntary rewards of their flocks, many of them predict its downfall. On which Side ought their testimony to have greatest weight, when for or when against their interest?”

# Jefferson's Bill for Religious Freedom

- ◉ “. . . Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested his supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint; that all attempts to influence by temporal punishments, or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being lord of both body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either.”

# A Godless Constitution?

- “. . .in the Year of our Lord on thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven. . .”
- No religious tests for office holding
- 1797 Treaty of Tripoli – Unanimously ratified by Senate
  - > **Art. 11.** As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquillity, of Mussulmen; and, as the said States never entered into any war, or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions, shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.

# First Amendment

- Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or restricting the free exercise thereof. . .
- Establishment Clause: Bars the establishment of a national church. It would be too controversial and conflict with state established churches.
- Free Exercise Clause: Congress may not interfere with religious groups acting according to the dictates of their conscience. (But what limits?)

# Jefferson to Danbury Baptists

- Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building **a wall of separation between Church & State**. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.