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Reformed Political Theory in the American Founding (Chapter Two of Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic)

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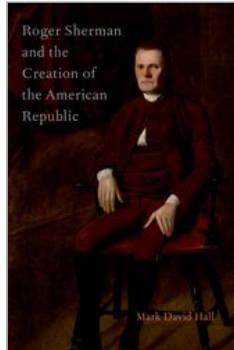
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Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter provides an overview of the Calvinist world into which Sherman was born and raised. It offers an introduction to Reformed political theory, and sketches its transmission from Europe to America. It considers and rejects the possibility that the founders were significantly influenced by a secularized Lockean liberalism. It concludes by demonstrating, contrary to assertions by many scholars, that Sherman was a serious Calvinist.

Keywords: Reformed, Calvinist, political theory, John Calvin, Puritans, New England, John Locke, church attendance

IN *ORIGINAL MEANINGS*, Jack Rakove observes that the “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—has been the subject of extensive analysis.” It is noteworthy that he does not mention religion in this context. Historians are better than political scientists and law professors at recognizing that faith mattered to many Americans in the founding era, but even they have a tendency to treat America's founders as deists who embraced a rationalist approach to politics and who produced secular documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. Although there are important exceptions, scholars are still prone to neglect the significant influence of Christianity, generally, and the Reformed tradition, specifically, on many of America's founders.¹

One reason Calvinism is overlooked is that students of the founding often view the era through the eyes of southern Anglican gentlemen: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington; men born outside America: Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Paine; and the cosmopolitan Benjamin Franklin, who lived most of the last thirty-five years of his life in Europe. As adults, Franklin and Hamilton were nominal Anglicans, which means five of the seven famous founders (71%) were Episcopalians (compared to 16% of all Americans in that era). The only member of a Congregational or Presbyterian church among the famous founders is John Adams, but like a few of his fellow Congregationalists (primarily in and around Boston) he was moving rapidly toward Unitarianism. These men were brilliant and influential, but they are not representative of the many American leaders who were firmly rooted in the Reformed tradition.²

(p.13) Even with respect to Sherman, scholars have not paid sufficient attention to the significance of his faith. In some instances, this neglect is a result of the questions scholars bring to their subjects. However, because of the Reformed tradition's influence in eighteenth-century America (dominant in New England and significant elsewhere), scholars like John Murrin who contend that “by virtually any standard of doctrinal orthodoxy” hardly any of the founders were

orthodox, and that “[q]uite possibly not a single delegate [to the Constitutional Convention] accepted Calvinist orthodoxy on original sin” miss an important piece of the story.³

Reformed Political Theory

Reformed political theory is a branch of Christian political theory, so it is not surprising to find significant overlap between how Calvinists and other Christians view politics. General Christian propositions with implications for politics include the ideas 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 civil governments and civil magistrates are ordained by God and that there is a biblical obligation to obey them, but that the obligation is not absolute. Although generalizations are always dangerous, it is fair to say that between Constantine and the Protestant Reformation many 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.⁴

Reformed political theory broke in significant ways from previous Christian views. Of course Reformed thinkers borrowed from earlier thinkers, and the tradition developed over time. However, in the same way that scholars are comfortable speaking of a “liberal tradition” that includes John Locke, John Stuart Mill, 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, John Winthrop, Thomas Hooker, and Roger Sherman.⁵ Because some readers, even sophisticated students of the American founding, may be unfamiliar with this tradition, I offer a brief introduction in this chapter. Obviously, a few pages on a tradition that spans **(p. 14)** centuries and involves a contentious and wordy people cannot do it justice, but it allows me to introduce ideas that had a significant impact in the era.

The Protestant Reformation was a wide-ranging movement opposed to perceived 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 Wittenberg castle church door. For our purposes, the work of John Calvin (1509-64), whose followers comprise 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 between 1536-1538 and 1541-1564. In 1536 he published the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a volume that he revised several times until its final 1559 edition. The work, along with his voluminous biblical commentaries, has proven enormously influential among his followers, who were represented most prominently in America by the Puritans.⁶

Calvin's work echoed the great battle cries of the Reformation such as *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, and it reinforced the seminal notion of the priesthood of all believers. Reformers rejected the ideas that the church and its priests were necessary intermediaries between common persons and God, and that the church as an institution possessed the authority to speak for Him. 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 the vernacular.⁷ These views and practices helped undermine existing hierarchies and paved the way for the growth of self-government. Although ecclesiastical structures varied, Reformed churches leaned heavily toward democratic forms of government; nowhere was this truer than among the Calvinists who immigrated to America. New England Calvinists debated the relative merits of pure congregationalism versus more presbyterian forms of church governance, but under both models church members played critical roles in governing themselves.⁸

Particularly significant within the Reformed tradition is the insistence that God is sovereign over all of creation. Reformers attempted to apply their faith to all elements of life, including are as such as raising children, conducting business, and participating in politics. This "sanctification" of every part of human existence contributed to the tremendous economic and social development that marked most Protestant countries.⁹ From their earliest days in power, Calvinists were concerned

with creating Christian political institutions and practices. Yet they were not theocrats, **(p.15)** and they even expanded distinctions between church and state. Reformers believed that both institutions were divinely mandated and that the two should work closely together to create a Christian society. Because only God is sovereign, and because of their commitment to the doctrine of total depravity, they insisted that both ecclesiastical and civil authority be limited. As well, they remained committed to the traditional Christian idea that governments should promote the common good.¹⁰

Calvinist movements sprang up throughout Europe and were particularly successful in Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and England. In these and other countries—notably France, where the Huguenots were a persecuted 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. Calvin, one of the most politically conservative of the Reformers, contended that in some cases inferior magistrates might resist an ungodly ruler.¹¹ 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 argued that inferior magistrates must resist unjust rulers and even permitted or *required* citizens to do so.¹²

Among the most famous pieces of resistance literature is Stephanus Junius Brutus's *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos* (1579). Written by a Huguenot, probably Philippe du Plessis Mornay (1549–1623) or Hubert Languet (1518–1581), the *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 obey God. If either the king or the people turn from God and so violate 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. When the people resist ungodly or unjust rulers, they are “procuring that which is their natural right [*droit naturel*].”¹³

(p.16) For Reformers, families, churches, and civil governments should be grounded in agreements between humans that are witnessed and enforced by God. Of course, they did not invent covenants, but they significantly emphasized their use and significance, particularly with respect to civil and ecclesiastical authorities. 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 God's plan to bring about His kingdom on earth. Failure to keep these covenants, clergy routinely warned in sermons known as jeremiads, would result in divine punishment. The rights and responsibilities associated with such covenants would have an important influence in America.¹⁴

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.¹⁵ As a matter of the genealogy of ideas this may be the case, but what is critical for the purposes of this book is that these ideas were most extensively developed, defended, and applied within the Reformed tradition. Within a generation of Calvin, virtually every Reformed civil and ecclesiastical leader was convinced that the Bible taught that governments should be limited, that they should be based on the consent of the governed, that rulers should promote the common good and the Christian faith, and that unjust or ungodly rulers should be resisted or even overthrown. These ideas are not unique to Calvinists, but the Reformed tradition became a major means by which they became a part of American political culture.¹⁶

Reformed Political Theory in Early New England
Protestantism's progress began inauspiciously 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 this church. Some Separatists eventually gave up hope for reformation of the English church and, facing increasing persecution in their homeland, fled to Holland in 1608 and then to America in 1620. Before they disembarked from the *Mayflower*, 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 **(p.17)** "the Glory of God, and the Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country." Its legitimacy stemmed from the consent of the forty-one men heading households on the *Mayflower*, and it required rulers to govern justly.¹⁷

The Mayflower Compact is the most famous early civil covenant made in America, but it is not unique. As David A. Weir illustrates 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.¹⁸ Each of these covenants reinforced the idea that governments are legitimate and binding because they were established by the consent of the governed. This view is reflected well by Henry Wolcott's notes of a 1638 election sermon by one of Connecticut's founders, Thomas Hooker:

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.¹⁹

Not only did the people consent to the original form of government, but most men could also participate in town meetings and freemen could be elected representatives of the General Court. Of course there was an expectation that citizens would elect and defer to godly, talented magistrates. John Winthrop famously lectured Massachusetts Bay's General Court on this point in 1645, and thirty-five years later Connecticut's Samuel Willis reiterated the sentiment with a greater emphasis on class when he declared that "[t]he making of rulers of the lower sort of people will issue in contempt, let their opinion be what it will." Such statements have led some scholars to overemphasize the importance of social class in the era, but others, such as Joy and Robert Gilsdorf, have persuasively argued that eighteenth-century Connecticut citizens were more concerned with competence (and, I would add, godliness) than social standing or **(p.18)** wealth. Moreover, the colonies clearly grew more democratic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Connecticut and Rhode Island were always the most democratic colonies in North America.²⁰

Early Puritan societies are often described as theocracies, and their founders and leaders wanted to create thoroughly Christian social and political institutions. This mission is illustrated well by the 1672 declaration by the Connecticut General Court: "We have endeavoured not only to ground our capital laws upon the Word of God, but also all other laws upon the justice and equity held forth in that Word, which is a most perfect rule." However, within these societies the institutions of church and state were kept separate and distinct. In early Massachusetts, clergy could not hold political offices or otherwise serve in a civil capacity (this restriction was eventually lifted), and the Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641) specifically banned European practices such as ecclesiastical courts and made it clear that sanctions such as excommunication have no impact upon holding civil office. Civil magistrates were to be "nursing fathers" 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 vice. Protestant dissenters in the region were tolerated if they remained quiet and did not disturb the public order. However, vocal and disorderly dissenters such as the Quakers and perceived troublemakers including Roger Williams (1636) and Anne Hutchinson (1638) were banned, exiled, or, on rare occasions, hanged.²¹

The Puritan conviction that rulers should promote true religion might suggest a powerful state, but this possibility was tempered by the view that civil power should be strictly limited. Fear of arbitrary power exercised by fallen human actors led the Puritans to devise and adopt a variety of democratic institution and checks on rulers. Among the most significant innovations was the 1641 Massachusetts Body of Liberties. These statutes contained many protections later found in the American Bill of Rights, including prohibitions against double jeopardy, torture, and “in-humane Barbarous or cruell” bodily punishments. Seven years later these laws were revised and published as *The Book of the General Lawes and Liberties Concerning the Inhabitants of Massachusetts*. This was one of the first times a legal code had ever been printed in the western world—a practice that made it possible to distribute the laws more widely than if they were copied by hand.²²

(p.19) More broadly, Puritans believed the power of the state was also constrained by what John Davenport called in 1669 the “Law of Nature” which is “God's law.”²³ Rulers who violate natural law may legitimately be resisted. A striking expression of this idea is found in a 1678 sermon by Massachusetts's Samuel Nowell entitled “Abraham in Arms,” where 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.”²⁴ Puritans were less likely to make natural rights arguments than later Calvinists, but the essential elements for such arguments were all present in earlier Reformed political theory.²⁵

Long before the War for Independence, Reformed Americans had experience resisting tyrannical political power. New England Puritans supported Parliament against abuses of the British Crown during the English Civil War, and John Cotton even preached a sermon defending the execution of Charles I. After the Restoration, England attempted to “improve” the governance of New England by combining all of the colonies into a single entity known as the Dominion of New England (1686–89). The first governor of the new entity, Sir Edmund Andros, immediately made himself unpopular by demanding that a Congregational meeting house in Boston be made available for Anglican services and by restricting town meetings. On April 18, 1689, shortly after news of the Glorious Revolution reached Boston, colonial leaders arrested Andros and returned him to England for trial. The new monarchs and Lords of Trade wisely abandoned the Dominion, but the new Massachusetts charter did require toleration of other Protestants.²⁶

Like their descendants, Puritans were concerned with “liberty,” but it is critical to recognize that they never understood the concept to include the excessively individualistic idea that men and women are free to do anything except physically harm others. They distinguished between liberty and personal license. Puritans were primarily interested with freedom from sin, but they also understood liberty as the ability of a people to govern themselves and to do what God requires of them. They came closest to embracing modern notions of liberty with respect to freedom of conscience, but even here religiously motivated *actions* judged to be disruptive by the community could still be restricted. As Barry Alan Shain has demonstrated, this constrained understanding of liberty remained dominant in America until well into the eighteenth century.²⁷

(p.20) David D. Hall argues in *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* that Calvinists in seventeenth-century New England had greater freedom to reform ecclesiastical and civil governments than they did elsewhere. He makes a persuasive case that they created political institutions that were far more democratic than any the world had ever seen and that they strictly limited civic leaders by law. Notably, he points out that these Calvinists had an “animus against ‘tyranny’ and ‘arbitrary’ power that pervaded virtually every sermon and

political statement.” Of course, Puritan New England was hardly a modern, liberal democracy, but many of the ideas scholars associate with liberalism were prevalent there. To be sure, civic authorities continued to play an important role in supporting Christianity and Christian morality, but in that era, they were hardly alone in doing so.²⁸

Few scholars question the influence of the Reformed tradition on the early Puritans, but some have argued it declined rapidly.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, the Great Awakening, and the Seven Years’ War. In spite of a variety of significant changes, leaders in the Reformed tradition remained committed to the political principles discussed above, and many became more convinced that America had a special role to play God's advancing kingdom.³⁰ The Great Awakening, it is true, introduced unwanted seeds of discord into Congregational and Presbyterian churches, but in many cases, advocates of the Awakening were more concerned about orthodoxy and piety than those who opposed it. Moreover, well into the eighteenth century, Reformed ministers in New England remained the best educated and the most influential members of their communities. Their influence began to decline toward the end of the century, and there were 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 Reformed political theory.³¹

What about John Locke?

Tracing intellectual influence is difficult, and it is certainly possible that even if late eighteenth-century Calvinists remained committed to their faith that their political views were shaped by other traditions. A variety of political ideas were available to the founders, but it does not follow that all **(p.21)** ideas were equally influential. An important argument of this volume is that Sherman and other Calvinists in the era were heavily influenced by the Reformed political tradition. Yet many scholars argue that the founders were motivated by a version of John Locke's political philosophy that is at odds with this tradition.

In his 1922 book on the Declaration of Independence, Carl L. Becker famously remarked that most revolutionary era Americans “had absorbed Locke's works as a kind of political gospel.” Almost seventy years later, Isaac Kramnick echoed Becker's conclusion that “Locke lurks behind its [the Declaration's] every phrase.” More recently, Scott Gerber has argued that the primary purpose of the U.S. Constitution is to protect a Lockean understanding of natural rights, and Barbara McGraw has asserted that “Lockean fundamentals ... shaped the conscience of the American founders” with respect to the role of religion in public life. Numerous scholars, writers, and activists have made similar arguments.³²

In many instance, academics making claims about Locke's influence simply attribute any reference by the founders to individual rights, government by consent, and the right to resist tyrannical authority to Locke, apparently unaware that Reformed thinkers had been making similar arguments long before Locke wrote his *Second Treatise*. In doing so, they ignore the possibility that Locke's political philosophy is best understood as a logical extension of Protestant resistance literature rather than as a radical departure from it. Obviously, if this interpretation is correct (and I am very sympathetic to it), any amount of influence Locke had on Reformed founders would be unproblematic for the thesis of this book. Locke's influence would be cooperative with the influence of the Reformed tradition rather than competing with it.³³

However, a number of prominent scholars have argued that Locke is a secular political thinker who grounded his theory of politics on the natural rights of individuals.³⁴ In the context of the American founding, for instance, Michael Zuckert has contended that key documents like the Declaration of Independence must be understood in light of this secularized Lockean liberalism. In *The Natural Rights Republic*, he supports this position by showing that Jefferson's political ideas were different from those held by the Puritans. In doing so, he virtually ignores the development consent, natural rights, religious toleration, and resistance within the Reformed tradition.³⁵ As well, it is not self-evident that the Declaration of Independence should be understood in light of Jefferson's views, particularly as Jefferson claimed that he was “[n]ot to find out new (p.22) principles, or new arguments” but that

all "its authority rests on the harmonizing sentiments of the day."³⁶

Zuckert may be correct in his observation that Jefferson, in the Declaration, traced "rights to the creator, that is, nature." However, there is little reason to think that Sherman or other Reformed signers of the Declaration, such as Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, William Ellery, William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, John Hart, Abraham Clark, James Smith, James Wilson, Thomas McKean, and Lyman Hall, thought the Declaration's "Creator" was anything other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.³⁷ And they certainly did not think they were signing a document that "mandates" a "secular politics" or affirms that "governments exists for the sake of securing rights and only for that." As Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia remarked in a different context, the Constitution cannot be interpreted according to "secret or technical meanings that would not have been known to ordinary citizens in the founding generation."³⁸

Assuming for the sake of argument that there is a significant difference between Reformed political theory and Locke's political ideas, the question remains, how influential was Locke in early America? With very few exceptions, Locke's works were not available in America until 1714, when bulky three-volume editions of his writings began appearing in university libraries. Even then, American elites 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.³⁹ The first American edition of one of Locke's works was published by the senior class at Yale in 1742. This group 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 General Assembly to be more accepting of New Light Calvinists (who were more theologically conservative than the Old Lights). This essay was used with some regularity by dissenters seeking greater religious liberty.⁴⁰

By the 1760s and 1770s, American patriots cited Locke with some regularity to support American resistance to Great Britain. Yet, as Donald S. Lutz has shown, the Bible was

referenced far more often than Locke's works—indeed, more often than the works of all Enlightenment thinkers combined (34% to 22%). Moreover, only 2.9% of the citations to individual authors between 1760–1805 were to Locke (by contrast, 8.3% were to **(p.23)** Montesquieu). That Americans' interest in Locke was not boundless is suggested as well by the facts that the *Second Treatise* was not published in America until 1773 and that it was not republished in the United States until 1937.⁴¹

If Locke's works were late to arrive on America's shores, the Bible was virtually omnipresent from the first days of the 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 referenced it regularly in their public and private speeches and writings. This reality is often overlooked because founders 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.⁴²

In addition to the Bible, books containing the essential elements of Reformed political thought were accessible to political and ecclesiastical elites from the colonies' inception. A thorough and systematic study of which Reformed books were available at what time has yet to be attempted, but Herbert D. Foster has documented the availability of classic texts by John Calvin, John Knox, Theodore Beza, Stephanus Junius Brutus, Peter Martyr, and others.⁴³ The respect early 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.” 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.”⁴⁴ 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 Reformed literature. **(p.24)** It is not surprising that Princeton President John Witherspoon owned Calvin's *Institutes*, Beza's *Rights of Magistrates* (1757), and Buchanan's *The Law of Scottish Kingship* (1579). More intriguing is that the Unitarian-leaning John Adams declared 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.” He also noted the significance of *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*.⁴⁵ Similarly, late in life, Adams wrote, “I love and revere the memories of Huss Wickliff Luther Calvin Zwinglius Melancton and all the other reformers how muchsoever I may differ from them all in many theological metaphysical & philosophical points. As you justly observe, without their great exertions & severe sufferings, the USA had never existed.”⁴⁶

Unlike his cousin John but like Roger Sherman, Samuel Adams was a latter-day Puritan. In 1740, well before the *Second Treatise* was popular in America, he returned to Harvard to defend the thesis that “it is lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate, if the Commonwealth cannot be otherwise preserved” in order to receive his master's degree. Twenty-eight years later, he wrote three essays for the *Boston Gazette* under the pseudonym of “a Puritan.” In them, he urged Americans to guard their rights carefully and to beware of British attempts to appoint a Bishop for America lest the nation be subjected to “Popery.” The following year, the famous political cartoon “An Attempt to Land a Bishop in America” was published in *The Political Register*. It represented a bishop who is not allowed to disembark in America because of a rioting mob wielding works by Locke and Sidney. Notably, the bishop is about to be struck in the head by a copy of *Calvin's Works*, which had apparently been thrown at him by a member of the mob (see figure 2.1). In 1766, George Buchanan's *De Jure Regni: Or the Due Right of Government* was reprinted in Philadelphia—seven years before the *Second Treatise* was printed in America. Finally, at the Constitutional Convention, Luther Martin (who, in spite of his

name, was hardly an exemplar of the Protestant Reformation), read passages from “Locke & Vattel, and also Rutherford [presumably *Lex, Rex*]” to show that states, like people, are equal. There is no shortage of evidence that civic leaders in the founding era were aware of Reformed political thinkers and their major doctrines.⁴⁷

As suggested by the examples in the preceding paragraph, by the 1760s, American leaders were familiar with Locke, but few thought his political philosophy was at odds with traditional Christian or Calvinist political ideas. This is indicated by the willingness of Reformed clergy **(p.25)**



figure 2.1 “An Attempt to Land a Bishop in America.” *Political Register*, September 1768. Boston Athenaeum.

(p.26) to appeal to him as an authority in sermons and pamphlets. For example, in his 1776 election day sermon to the Connecticut General Assembly, Judah Champion urged state leaders to resist British oppression. The vast majority of his sermon relied on biblical and theological arguments, such as when he contended that “liberty and freedom” belong “to us, not merely as men, originally created in God's image, holding a distinguished rank in his creation, but also as christians redeemed by the Blood of CHRIST.” Yet this indisputably orthodox Congregationalist did not hesitate to cite Locke's *Second Treatise* on the origin of government.⁴⁸

Michael Zuckert suggests that the clergy's use of Locke is evidence of “a Lockean conquest, or at least assimilation, of Puritan political thought.”⁴⁹ However, if one recognizes that Calvinists had long advocated political ideas similar to those later articulated by Locke, and that most New England ministers were by any measure orthodox Christians, it is 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. Most Reformed ministers in this era were well-educated and sensitive (perhaps too sensitive) to any hint of theological heterodoxy.⁵⁰ If Lockean and Reformed political theories 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?⁵¹

By comparing Lockean and Reformed political theories, I do not mean to suggest that these are the only intellectual traditions present in the founding era. I make the comparison because a secularized version of Locke's ideas is most obviously 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 clearly informed by or compatible with Reformed thought.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.”⁵³ Similarly, 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 more readily explained by Christian commitments.⁵⁴ Many founders read, learned from, and admired the classics, but this is a far cry

from embracing their values and ideas.⁵⁵ And, of course, they were motivated, to one degree or another, by political, economic, and other interests.

(p.27) This is not the place to provide a critique of the many works arguing for different intellectual influences on America's founders. My central concern here 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 have shown that simplistically assigning all references to natural rights, consent, limited government, and a right to rebel to the influence of John Locke is problematic. 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. A similar case can be made for Calvinists in other parts of the nation. To be sure, it is unlikely that many citizens read Reformed political thinkers directly, but neither did they read Locke, Rousseau, or Blackstone. However, in New England approximately 85% of them attended churches where they at least occasionally heard Calvinist political ideas from their well-educated ministers. Moreover, many political leaders throughout the nation graduated from Harvard, Yale, or Princeton—which in that era were Reformed institutions.⁵⁶

Calvinism in the American Founding

In 1781, François de Marbois, the secretary of the French legation in Philadelphia, sent a set of queries to a variety of American civic leaders. Only Thomas Jefferson responded with a book-length manuscript (known today as *Notes on Virginia*). Sherman, like the rest of his colleagues who wrote to Marbois, offered shorter answers. Of particular relevance for this book is his description of religion in Connecticut:

The Religion professed by the people in General is in matters of Faith the same as the Presbyterians, in Scotland, as to Church Govt. & Discipline they are congregational. [O]f these some are consociated & some Independents. There are also a number of Episcopal Churches the same as in England & some anabaptists and a very few Quakers.

By “anabaptists” Sherman meant Baptists, who at that time were, with few exceptions, Calvinists. Although he does not

offer statistics, he paints a portrait of a state populated by citizens in the Reformed tradition. This image has been reinforced by modern scholarship.⁵⁷

Sydney Ahlstrom, in his magisterial history of religion in America, estimates that the Reformed tradition was “the religious heritage of **(p.28)** three-fourths of the American people in 1776.” Similarly, Yale historian Harry Stout states that prior to the War for Independence “three out of four colonists were connected with Reformed denominations (mostly Congregational and Presbyterian).” These figures may be high—neither scholar explains or defends them—but a plethora of studies make it clear that Calvinist churches dominated New England and were well represented throughout the rest of the nation.⁵⁸ In 1776, 63% of New England churches were Congregationalist, 15.3% were Baptist, and 5.5% were Presbyterian. Thus 84% of the region's churches were in the Reformed tradition, and these tended to have larger and more influential congregations. This estimate corresponds well with the 1790 U.S. Census Bureau's finding that only 20% of Connecticut citizens were dissenters (most of whom were Anglicans or Baptists).⁵⁹

Among Congregational churches, 95% of ministers were college graduates—usually from Harvard or Yale—and they were among the most educated and influential members of their communities.⁶⁰ Within these churches, congregants would gather twice on Sunday to hear theologically and exegetically rich sermons lasting about one-and-a-half hours and to engage in other acts of worship. As well, they would regularly meet on Thursday evening for an additional sermon or “lecture.” Harry S. Stout calculates that 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!”⁶¹

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 founding era Americans. In recent years, the most important advocates of this position are sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, who claim that on

“the eve of the Revolution only about 17 percent of Americans were churched.” 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.” 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.⁶²

(p.29) James Hutson, chief of the 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 calculations of the American population in 1776. Most significantly, by relying on church-membership rates in an era and for denominations where it was exceedingly 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 much of Finke and Stark's data comes from decades after the era about which they write and that fledgling denominations, such as Methodists, were included.⁶³ 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 Baptist, Anglican, or other churches.⁶⁴ Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt similarly conclude 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.”⁶⁵

Outside of New England, Calvinism was less dominant, but by 1776, Reformed congregations accounted for 51% and 58% of the churches in the middle and southern colonies respectively. Particularly noteworthy in these regions were Scottish and Scotch-Irish immigrants, most of whom were Presbyterian. In Pennsylvania, for instance, Presbyterians accounted for 30% of the population by 1790 and held 44% of the seats in the state legislature by the late 1770s. In the South, most political elites were Anglicans, but in the late eighteenth century,

Presbyterianism was the fastest growing faith in the region, and its adherents were rapidly becoming a significant factor in state politics. J. C. D. Clark points out that well over a majority of the leaders of North Carolina's militia were Presbyterian elders and that Presbyterians dominated the proceedings that produced the famous Mecklenburg Resolves, which reportedly declared that "all Laws and Commissions confirmed by, or derived from the Authority of the King or Parliament, are annulled and vacated" more than a year before the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress.⁶⁶

Not only were more than a majority of all Americans in the founding era associated with Calvinist churches, adherents to the tradition exercised significant influence through a variety of venues. New England was the intellectual and cultural center of America until well into the nineteenth **(p.30)** century. Literally millions of Americans learned to read using the explicitly Calvinist *The New-England Primer* (more than two million copies were printed in the eighteenth century alone, and, in spite of its name, the text was used throughout America).⁶⁷ As well, many pedagogues throughout the nation were members of Reformed faiths. For instance, James Madison was educated by the Scottish Presbyterian minister Donald Robertson (about whom he later said, "all that I have been in life I owe largely to that man"); the Anglican rector Thomas Martin (a graduate of the Presbyterian College of New Jersey); and the Presbyterian minister John Witherspoon. Under President Witherspoon, the College of New Jersey produced "five delegates to the Constitutional Convention; one U.S. President (Madison); a vice president (the notorious Aaron Burr), forty-nine U.S. representatives; twenty-eight U.S. senators; three Supreme Court Justices; eight U.S. district judges; one secretary of state; three attorneys general; and two foreign ministers." It is noteworthy that only two of the 178 students who studied under Witherspoon between 1769 and 1775 became Loyalists.⁶⁸

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 pressures. However, there are good reasons to believe that many Calvinists in the era were quite serious about their faith. This is especially evident in the close partnership between Reformed churches and civil governments throughout New

England. Particularly relevant for this study is the close connection between church and state in Sherman's adopted state of 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 Wethersfield and agreed to the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, the primary purpose of which was to establish a government to “mayntayne and prsearue the liberty and purity of the gospell of our Lord Jesus wch we now prfesse, as also the discipline of the Churches, wch according to the truth of the said gospel is now practiced amongst us.” Over the next century, the relationship between church and state changed as a result of internal and external pressures, but when Sherman was first elected to the General Assembly in 1755, Connecticut remained a society dominated by Reformed Christians who drew heavily from a long tradition of Calvinist political ideas and practices.⁶⁹

The primary church-state dispute in Connecticut in 1755 was not whether the state should support the Congregational church, but whether **(p.31)** it should support more than one such church in the same geographic area. The colony was divided into different districts, called societies, each responsible for taxing its residents to support the local Congregational church. However, during the Great Awakening, some Congregationalists rejected the Half-Way Covenant, which allowed baptized but unconverted parents to bring their infants forward for baptism. Persons baptized in this manner were considered to have partial church membership, but a conversion experience was still required for full church membership and participation in the Lord's Supper. New Lights, on the other hand, insisted that only infants of full church members should be baptized. Although “New” implies “progressive,” in this case it meant embracing a stricter and more enthusiastic version of Calvinism. By 1754, New Lights had obtained majorities in all but two of Connecticut's associations and consociations (regional groups of Congregational churches).⁷⁰

If the “established” Congregational church in a town was controlled by Old Lights, New Lights often formed separate churches. Initially, they were harassed, and severe limits were

placed on ministers' ability to preach the gospel unless they gained approval from the established society. As the New Lights gained strength, the more repressive measures were repealed, and dissenters were given permission to tax their own members to support their new church. However, the established Congregational society retained the ability to tax all citizens who were not members of approved churches. Because of Parliament's 1689 Act of Toleration, 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. Prior to 1818, 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 would remind civil leaders that men are sinful, that civil 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. On election night, legislators would attend a dinner paid for by the state to which every Standing Order minister in the state—but no dissenters—was invited.⁷¹

(p.32) 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 illegal as well. 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*.

Connecticut required families to own Bibles, and it demanded that towns have schools so that citizens would be able to read them. The colony, like the rest of New England, had one of the highest literacy rates the world had ever seen. Moreover, the General Assembly provided significant support for the Congregationalist Yale College. The primary mission of this school was to supply well-educated Congregational ministers for the state.⁷²

Church and state cooperated closely in eighteenth-century Connecticut. Of course, there were significant arguments about how they should work together, and political leaders were motivated by a variety of concerns—from the frivolous to the noble. Nevertheless, the basic political theory of Connecticut's leaders, such as Roger Sherman, Eliphalet Dyer, Oliver Ellsworth, Matthew Griswold, Benjamin Huntington, Samuel Huntington, Richard Law, Tapping Reeve, Jesse Root, Ezra Stiles, Jonathan Trumbull, William Williams, and Oliver Wolcott, differed little. In each instance they were influenced significantly by Reformed political ideas.⁷³

(p.33) Sherman's Faith

Throughout this chapter, I have written much about Calvinism and Calvinist political theory, but I have spent little time on Sherman. No one denies that he was a Congregationalist, but most scholars who have written about him at any length have dismissed the significance of his religious beliefs. Christopher Collier, for instance, contends that Sherman “was more than anything else an ambitious man, but second only to that quality, his unemotional, concise rationality is most striking.” Although he mentions Sherman's religious views in passing, he does not consider them in detail until a brief section in the last chapter of his biography where he writes, “one of Roger Sherman's most prominent characteristics was his compromising temper. Indeed, expedience is a hallmark of his political career. His lapses from flexibility were few. Perhaps, however, it is to be expected that a man over seventy would develop some rigidities, especially in religion, and Sherman's part in the New Divinity fracas that rumbled through Connecticut in the late eighties and nineties is most uncharacteristic.” Similarly, John Rommel contends that Sherman joined a New Light church for political rather than theological reasons, and James D. German describes him as an “[a]mbitious, acquisitive, avaricious,” man who “shifted his own opinions to suit those of his constituents.”⁷⁴

Collier may have concluded that Sherman did not take theology seriously until the end of his life because the most extensive documents he penned on the subject were written after 1789. Relatively few of Sherman's early papers have survived, but there is enough evidence to indicate that he was concerned with theological matters throughout his life. Moreover, careful consideration of the corpus of his writings, in addition to his life and actions, provides abundant support for the conclusion of Ezra Stiles, president of Yale and Sherman's neighbor, that he was “an exemplary for Piety & serious Religion.”⁷⁵

Sherman was raised in a Congregational church in Stoughton, Massachusetts. His modern biographers all mention that he was likely educated, at least to some extent, by its minister, Samuel Dunbar. However, they neglect the implications of this possibility or the significance of Dunbar's ministerial influence on Sherman's spiritual and intellectual formation. Dunbar (1704-1783), a protégé of Cotton Mather and a 1723 graduate of Harvard, was fluent in Latin and Greek, and, like many

ministers in that era, he likely supplemented his income by teaching. He arrived in Stoughton to pastor the Congregational church in 1727, and he remained there until his death. Because the town's first school was not (p.34) established until 1735, by which time Sherman was fourteen years old, it is probable that he was educated, at least in part, by Dunbar.⁷⁶ This would help explain how a cobbler had the educational foundation to teach himself surveying, publishing, and law; and eventually rise to be one of the founding era's most significant statesmen.

Even if Dunbar did not serve as Sherman's schoolmaster, he was his minister, and, in an eighteenth-century Congregational church, this role included a great deal of teaching. George F. Piper noted that a sermon written by Dunbar in the forty-ninth year of his ministry is numbered 8,059, which suggests he composed an average of 164 sermons a year, or more than three a week. If this figure is accurate, before he moved to New Milford, Sherman could have heard as many as 2,460 of Dunbar's sermons.⁷⁷

But what sort of man was Dunbar? According to Jason Haven, who preached his funeral sermon, Dunbar was

a zealous defender of what he took to be "the faith once delivered to the saints." He treated much on what have been called the peculiar doctrines of grace; these he considered as doctrines according to godliness. ... He was, on proper occasions, a *Son of Thunder*, endeavoring, by these terrors of the law, to awaken secure and hardened sinners, to point out to them the dreadful danger of a course of sin and impenitency. But he knew how happily to change his voice, and to become a Son of Consolation, and by the soft winning charms of the gospel to lead weary souls to Christ for rest and to comfort those that are cast down.

Dunbar's surviving sermons demonstrate that he was a conservative Calvinist who emphasized the sovereignty of God and the sinfulness of man. He opposed the revivalism of the Great Awakening because he thought it put too much emphasis on human agency. Like all Calvinists of the era, he believed ministers should provide guidance on political matters. He served as chaplain for a regiment in the Seven

Years' War in 1755, and he quickly joined American opposition to what he deemed tyrannical British actions in the 1770s.⁷⁸

Dunbar, like most Congregationalist clergy, was serious about his faith, embraced Reformed theology, and was extremely sensitive about the possibility of ungodly rulers infringing upon colonial liberties. Of course, one cannot simply impute the views of a pastor/teacher onto a parishioner/student, but, at a minimum, Dunbar's ministry shines light on the **(p.35)** environment in which Sherman was raised. Moreover, in the context of the pattern of evidence described later, it is reasonable to attribute at least part of Sherman's commitment to a Reformed understanding of Christianity and politics to his early minister and teacher.

A few months after joining Dunbar's church, Sherman moved to New Milford, Connecticut, and transferred his church membership to the local Congregational church. Joining a Congregational church in the mid-eighteenth century was not simply a formality, and church members made every effort to elect only pious men to be church leaders (unlike Anglican churches in the South, where local gentry were routinely appointed to be church leaders regardless of their devotion to the faith). Sherman was by all appearances an active member of the church and a godly man. He was chosen "Deacon upon trial" in 1755 and "was established Deacon" in 1757. He was regularly elected clerk of the ecclesiastical society and served on the school and other committees.⁷⁹

After moving to New Haven in 1761, Sherman transferred his church membership to White Haven, a New Light Congregational church, where he was "by the vote of the Church received to full communion in Gospel Ordinances and Privileges." Jonathan Edwards Jr. was chosen as minister of this church in 1768. Like his more famous father, Edwards's emphasis on theology and concern for piety had a tendency to drive away parishioners. Ezra Stiles estimated that White Haven had 480 members in 1772, but by 1789 the congregation had shrunk to "nineteen men and their families." Edwards's biographer contends that "the major reason he was not dismissed in the late 1780's or early 1790's was the fact that he received strong support from Roger Sherman." Among other things, Sherman wrote several letters defending Edwards's theological positions and his conduct.⁸⁰

As in Connecticut's churches, divisions between New and Old Lights were prominent at Yale College in the 1760s. After President Thomas Clap switched allegiances to the New Lights, he appointed Roger Sherman to be Yale's treasurer. Sherman served in this position from 1765 to 1776. Like other officers of the college, Sherman presumably had to subscribe to the Westminster Catechism, the Saybrook Confession of Faith, and, particularly, "give Satisfaction to them [the trustees] of the Soundness of their Faith in opposition to Armenian [*sic*] and prelatical Corruptions or any other Dangerous Consequence to the Purity and Peace of our Churches." According to Ezra Stiles, Yale's president from 1778-1795, Sherman was "ever a Friend to its [Yale's] Interests, & to its being & **(p.36)** continuing in the Hands of the Clergy, whom he judged the most proper to have the Superintendend^y of a *religious* as well as a *scientific* College." Sherman's last public act was presiding over laying a foundation stone for a new building at Yale on April 15, 1793.⁸¹

In addition to his active involvement in churches and Yale, Sherman's writings give no reason to doubt his commitment to orthodox Christianity or, more specifically, the Reformed tradition. Of course, many of these writings are not explicitly religious. For instance, among Sherman's earliest surviving publications are his almanacs.⁸² These primarily contain mathematical charts concerning agriculture and the weather, but, like other almanacs, they also have a healthy dose of proverbs—many with moral and/or religious overtones. Sherman borrowed most of these from elsewhere, although he may have composed some himself. Examples include:

The Times wherein we live are very bad:

Let's every one mend our Ways, and we shall soon see better Days. (1751)

A faithful man in public is a Pillar in a Nation. (1751)

Self Interest will turn some mens opinions as certainly as the wind will a weather cock. (1753)

Profaness Intemperance & Injustice presage Calamitous Times. (1753)

A timely Reformation,

Wo'd save our Land & Nation. (1758)

All seek Happiness; but many take wrong Courses to
obtain it. (1761)⁸³

Sherman's last almanac was published in 1761, and many of his surviving writings between that date and 1789 concern political topics. A careful reading of these texts reveals the influence of his faith on his political ideas and actions. This is not to say, however, that all of Sherman's early writings lack an interest in theology proper. For example, in 1772 he wrote a letter to theologian Joseph Bellamy criticizing his view that "the covenant between a Minister & People" lasts only at the "people[']s pleasure." Instead, Sherman argued on legal, scriptural, and moral grounds that the covenant between a minister and his congregation cannot be broken except by mutual consent, unless the minister is unable to fulfill his duties or for reasons of "*Apostasy, Heresy, and Immorality.*" Similarly, a later exchange of letters with Princeton **(p.37)** President John Witherspoon demonstrates that Sherman had a covenantal rather than a contractual view of marriage.⁸⁴

Notwithstanding Sherman's letter to Bellamy, it is the case that Sherman's later writings are more explicitly theological than his early ones. Most significant among these are his 1789 "A Short Sermon on the Duty of Self Examination, *Preparatory to Receiving the Lord's Supper*," his 1791 letter to Dr. Nathan Williams on infant baptism and church membership, and his 1790 debate with Samuel Hopkins. Sherman's sermon, which according to President Stiles was published but never preached, addressed the question of how a believer should examine himself or herself before receiving the communion. He made five major points, which he summarized in a passage worth quoting at length:

If upon a careful examination we find, that we have a competent understanding of the gospel way of life by Jesus Christ, and of the nature, use and design of this holy institution of the supper:—If we do heartily repent of all our sins, bewailing them before God, with a deep rooted hatred of, and turning from them to the Lord, and the practice of his commandments: If we sincerely acknowledge Jesus Christ to be our Lord and master,

believing him to be an all sufficient and infinitely suitable Saviour, as well as unspeakably willing even for us, and do [constantly?] desire as be interested in, and devoted to him upon the terms of the gospel: with a cheerful confidence in his power and grace for salvation.—If we have reason to think we have that love to God and Christ which is a spring of charity and obedience and at the same time are of [two illegible words] obliging disposition toward our fellow-men and especially our fellow christians; if we are conscious that we use our honest endeavors to live in obedience to all God's commands; and if we have any due sense of our spiritual wants, that we are in ourselves, poor and miserable, wretched and blind and naked. I say, if we can answer such enquiries as these in the affirmative ... we ought to come and eat of this bread and drink of this wine.⁸⁵

In this passage, and throughout the thirteen-page sermon, Sherman's commitment to Reformed Christianity is clear. He leaves no doubt that he believed humans are in “a state of depravity, guilt and misery, exposed to the eternal curse of the law;—dead in trespass and sins;—by nature prone to evil and adverse to good, and unable to deliver ourselves.” He contended **(p.38)** that the only hope humans have for deliverance is “faith in Jesus,” by which he meant that “we receive it for an undoubted truth that Jesus Christ was made an atoning sacrifice for sin.” Christians are required to act in a moral manner, but their ability to do so is a result of having been redeemed by Christ's work; it is not a cause of their salvation. Like Jonathan Edwards Sr., he discussed morality in terms of a “love of benevolence” that “is due to all mankind, but in an especial manner” to Christian brothers and sisters.⁸⁶

Sherman attached to his sermon extracts from the *Works* of the English Puritan Richard Baxter (1615–1691). In these excerpts Baxter argued that infant baptism makes one a member of the church, but that it is necessary for adults to make a profession of faith in order to receive communion.⁸⁷ Dr. Nathan Williams wrote a nineteen-page letter to Sherman objecting to a number of elements in these excerpts, but, most significantly, to the necessity of adults making a profession of faith in order to be admitted to the Lord's Supper and other privileges of adult members of the church.⁸⁸ Sherman responded that “Dr. Witherspoon, Dr. Stiles, Dr. Wales and several other Ministers” had raised no concern about the

extracts, and that they are in accord with “the general usage of the Congregational Churches in New England.” He proceeded to argue that Baxter fleshed out his argument significantly but stipulated that “I do not think that his, or any other man's opinion is of any authority in the case, unless supported by the word of God.” He then spent three-and-a-half single-spaced pages making scriptural arguments to support Baxter's claims. The details of these arguments need not concern us; the significant point is that Sherman, like all good Reformed Christians, relied on the Bible which is, as he noted in an earlier letter, “the only rule of faith in matters of religion.”⁸⁹

The most sophisticated theological discussion in which Sherman participated was with Jonathan Edwards's disciple Samuel Hopkins, founder of the school of theology that bears his name, but perhaps better known as the elderly minister in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing* (1859). In 1790, Sherman wrote Hopkins a letter dissenting from two points in his *An Inquiry into the Nature of True Holiness* (1773). Notably, he disagreed with Hopkins's characterization of self-love and his proposition that “it is the duty of a person to be *willing* to give up his eternal interest for the Glory of God.” In his criticisms, Sherman demonstrated the ability to engage one of America's most prominent theologians in a sophisticated debate about nuances of Reformed theology. This assertion is best supported by reading the exchange in full, but it is illustrated by the following passage from one of Sherman's letters:

You do not here distinguish between *occasion and positive cause* though you make a material distinction between them in your sermons on “Sin the *occasion* of great good.” President Edwards I think has illustrated this point in his answer to Dr. Taylor on original sin, and in a sermon published with this life, on the enquiry, why natural men are enemies to God. He supposes original righteousness in man was a supernatural principle which was withdrawn on his first transgression, and his natural principles of agency remaining, were exercised wrong, and his affections set on wrong objects in consequence of such withdrawment.⁹⁰

This brief excerpt reveals that Sherman was familiar with key analytical distinctions in Edwards's and Hopkins's works, and that he was interested in theology proper (not just religious ideas or scriptural exegesis; although he was concerned with these as well). His interest in these subjects is illustrated by the list of books contained in his library at the time of his death, of which about a third (about fifty books) consists of Bibles, concordances, catechisms, confessions of faith, volumes of sermons, and works by prominent Reformed theologians (notably, Jonathan Edwards). Although Sherman was not an academic theologian, he demonstrated, in the words of Sydney Ahlstrom, "theological maturity." It seems highly unlikely that Sherman developed this grasp of scripture and theology merely in his waning days. Moreover, glimpses of his life recorded by others suggest that he made a lifelong effort to live by his convictions.⁹¹

Sherman's faith affected his political ideas and actions in significant ways, and it influenced his day-to-day life in ways that may seem quaint today. For instance, in 1774, Silas Deane, Sherman's fellow delegate to the Continental Congress, observed, much to his annoyance, that Sherman "is against sending our carriages over the ferry this evening, because it is Sunday; so we shall have a scorching sun to drive forty miles in to-morrow." Similarly, Benjamin Rush recorded that Sherman "once objected to a motion for Congress sitting on a Sunday upon an occasion which he thought did not require it, and gave as a reason for his objection, a regard of the commands of his Maker." Rush also recalled what seems to be an attempt at biblical humor by Sherman: "Upon hearing of the defeat of the American army on Long Island, where they were entrenched and fortified **(p.40)** by a chain of hills, he said to me in coming out of Congress 'Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains' (Jeremiah xii, 23)."⁹²

In summary, Sherman was born into a pious Congregational family in which two of the four sons grew up to be ministers. He came of age under the tutelage of the Reverend Samuel Dunbar, a solid, Old Light Calvinist. He was elected to be an elder in his church and was appointed treasurer of Congregationalist Yale College. He engaged ministers and theologians in sophisticated theological debates, and he remained supportive of Jonathan Edwards Jr. after most of his church abandoned him. There is little reason to conclude that

Sherman simply turned to religion as an old man. Far more accurate is Yale President Timothy Dwight's view, penned in 1811:

As a man, as a patriot, and as a Christian, Mr. Sherman left behind him an unspotted name. Profoundly versed in Theology, he held firmly to the doctrines of the Reformation. Few men understood them so well; and few were equally able to defend them. What he believed, he practiced. It can excite no wonder, therefore, that he died with bright hopes of a glorious immortality.⁹³

Notes:

(1.) Jack Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 7, 18; Hall, "Faith and the Founders of the American Republic."

(2.) Like Franklin, Jefferson and Adams lived for extended periods of time in Europe. Franklin was raised in the Reformed tradition but rejected it at an early age. For details on the religious views of these founders see Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark D. Hall, and Jeffry H. Morrison, eds., *The Founders on God and Government* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004) (containing essays on Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Franklin); and Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life* (containing essays on Paine and Hamilton).

(3.) John M. Murrin, "Religion and Politics in America from the First Settlements to the Civil War," in *Religion and American Politics*, ed., Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford, 1990), 29, 31.

(4.) See, for instance, George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), especially 180–328; W. M. Spellman, *Monarchies 1000–2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 10–23; 147–187. Of course, some Christians eventually came to reject doctrines like original sin, but they were virtually nonexistent in America prior to the nineteenth century.

(5.) The analogy is not perfect because by definition liberal political thinkers all embrace liberalism whereas some

Reformed Christians embraced or embrace political views at odds with what I earlier described.

(6.) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1960). An excellent overview of Calvin's thought is William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

(7.) Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 98. Lockridge calculates 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. Particularly relevant for this study, Christopher Collier states that “virtually every” Connecticut voter in 1787 could read. Collier, *All Politics Is Local*, 83.

(8.) 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).

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

(10.) John Witte Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–80. There is a debate among students of Reformed thought concerning the extent to which early Reformers believed civic government could be redeemed. David VanDrunen provides an excellent overview of this literature and makes a good, but in my mind not persuasive, case that early Reformed leaders adhered to the

two kingdom doctrine of Augustine and Luther in *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

(11.) Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) is one of the few Reformed thinkers who was more conservative than Calvin with respect to resisting ungodly rulers. See Robert M. Kingdon, *The Political Thought of Peter Martyr Vermigli: Selected Texts and Commentary* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1980), 9–11, 99–100.

(12.) The development of Protestant resistance theory is told in concise form by Quentin Skinner in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2: *The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), especially chapters 7–9. See also Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, 204–213; Richard L. Greaves, *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation: Studies in the Thought of John Knox* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1980); and his “The Nature and Intellectual Milieu of the Political Principles in the Geneva Bible Marginalia,” *Journal of Church and State*, 22 (Spring 1980): 233–249; Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); and Stephen E. Lucas, “The *Plakkat van Verlatinge*: A Neglected Model for the American Declaration of Independence,” in *Connecting Cultures: The Netherlands in Five Centuries of Transatlantic Exchange*, ed. Rosemarijn Hoefte and Johanna C. Kardux (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 1994), 187–207.

(13.) Stephanus Junius Brutus, *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos*, ed. George Garnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149, 92, 37–40, 129–131; Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2: 329 (quoting Brutus). David VanDrunen emphasizes that a mixture of biblical and natural law arguments was very common in Reformed resistance literature after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572. *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 119–148.

(14.) The exact nature of these covenants was hotly contested among New England ministers. See generally Miller, “From Covenant to Revival”; Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) and *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Christopher Grasso, *A Speaking Aristocracy*:

Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth Century Connecticut (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 24–85; Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19–83; and Glenn A. Moots, *Politics Reformed: The Anglo-American Legacy of Covenant Theology* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2010).

(15.) Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2: 321. But see Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints*. George Garnett argues that Roman law is critical to Brutus's argument. See "Editor's Introduction," Garnett, *Vindiciae*, xix–liv. But see Anne McLaren, "Rethinking Republicanism: *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos* in Context," *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006): 23–52; and the response by George Garnett, "Law in the *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos*: A Vindication," *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006): 877–891.

(16.) Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). The extent to which later Calvinists were faithful to the teachings of John Calvin and/or the Bible are questions that goes beyond the scope of this book.

(17.) Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall, eds., *The Sacred Rights of Conscience: Selected Readings on Religious Liberty and Church-State Relations in the American Founding* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 2009), 86. For further discussion see Kendall and Carey, *Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition*, 30–42.

(18.) Weir, *Early New England*. See also Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Commonwealth: From Christian Separation through the Protestant Reformation* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1996); Elazar, *Covenant & Constitutionalism*; and Moots, *Politics Reformed*.

(19.) Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 89. See also Baldwin, *New England Clergy*, 26–27; and Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690–1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 154–159. Not all Puritan colonies

were grounded on the consent of the governed. See, for instance, Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630–1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

(20.) John Winthrop, “Speech to the General Court,” (1645), in Miller, *The American Puritans*, 90–93; Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee*, 12; Joy B. Gilsdorf and Robert R. Gilsdorf, “Elites and Electorates: Some Plain Truths for Historians of Colonial America,” in *Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History*, ed. David D. Hall, John M. Murrin, and Thad W. Tate (New York: W. W. Norton: 1984), 207–244; Collier, *All Politics Is Local*, 13–15, 163; 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, Dedham, Massachusetts* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970); David D. Hall, *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 90; and Perry Miller, “Hooker and Connecticut Democracy,” in *Errand Into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 16–47. Jonathan Edwards emphasized the necessity of civic authorities having ability and wisdom in his 1748 sermon, “God’s Awful Judgment in the Breaking and Withering of Strong Rods of Community,” in *The Works of President Edwards* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1879), 3: 604–614. Bruce C. Daniels notes that “society committees” assigned pews based on three criteria: “estate, age, and usefulness to the community.” Daniels, *The Connecticut Town: Growth and Development, 1635–1790* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), 115. J. S. Maloy argues persuasively modern notions of democratic accountability can be traced to colonial New England, and that Calvinist ecclesiology encouraged the development of democratic political institutions and practices. Maloy, *The Colonial American Origins of Modern Democratic Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. 86–170.

(21.) *The Public Records of Connecticut* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood and Brainard, 1894), 2: 568 [hereafter *PRC*]; Dreisbach and Hall, *Sacred Rights*, 83-213; Edmund S. Morgan, *Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), xiii-xlvii. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639) stipulated that the governor be a member of "some approved congregation," and required all magistrates to take an explicitly religious oath of office. Bruce Frohnen, *The American Republic* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 2002), 13-14.

In *Myth of American Individualism*, Shain highlights the communal nature of founding era political theory and emphasizes that community goals were defined by 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.

(22.) Frohnen, *American Republic*, 15-22; Hall, *A Reforming People*, 107, 148, and passim; *The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts* (1648; reprint, San Marino: Huntington Library, 1998), 46, 50. For a brief overview of rights in early Connecticut see Christopher Collier, "The Connecticut Declaration of Rights Before the Constitution of 1818: A Victim of Revolutionary Redefinition," *Connecticut Law Review*, 15 (1982-1983): 87-98.

(23.) John Davenport, "A Sermon Preach'd at The Election of the Governour" (Boston, 1670), 4. See generally Baldwin, *New England Clergy*, 13-21. Similarly, two years earlier Jonathan Mitchel 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.

(24.) 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 most of his fellow ministers, but there was widespread agreement among these clergy on basic political principles. On the latter point see Baldwin, *New England Clergy*; and Martha Louise Counts, "The Political Views of the Eighteenth Century New England Clergy as Expressed in Their Election Sermons" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1956).

Some scholars consider any hint of a right of self-preservation to be evidence of the influence of Thomas Hobbes and/or John Locke. However, the right to protect oneself had long been a part of the natural law tradition, and it is clearly present in Reformed works written well before Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

(25.) Scholars differ as to the origins of subjective natural rights. John Witte provides a brief overview of this literature in his introduction to *Reformation of Rights*. It should be evident that I agree with him that subjective natural rights existed well before Hobbes and Locke, and that Calvinists contributed significantly to their development. For further discussion 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*.

Christopher Wolfe demonstrates that natural law is compatible with core principles of liberalism such as human equality, consent, the centrality of rights, limited government, and the rule of law. He recognizes that many of these concepts can be traced to Christian political thought (and in some cases pre-Christian thought), but does not consider their development within the Reformed tradition. Nevertheless, his work offers a useful response to academics who argue that a commitment to universal moral standards is incompatible with a classical liberalism. Wolfe, *Natural Law Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

(26.) Francis J. Bremer, "In Defense of Regicide: John Cotton on the Execution of Charles I," *William and Mary Quarterly* 37 (1980): 103–124; John Cotton, *The Keyes to the Kingdom of Heaven ...* (London 1644; reprint Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1843), 97–100; Richard Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees: The*

Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717 (1962; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 30-36, 229-257.

(27.) Shain, *Myth of American Individualism*, esp. 155-288; C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), esp. 111-132.

(28.) Hall, *A Reforming People*, 193 and passim.

(29.) 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 *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.

(30.) Excellent works on American providentialism include Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty*. Richard Dunn offers an excellent account of late seventeenth-century New England in *Puritans and Yankees*.

(31.) Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), passim; Mary Latimer Gambrell, *Ministerial Training in Eighteenth-Century New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937). On the continued influence of clergy in New England into the early nineteenth century see Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness*, 1-83.

(32.) Carl Becker, *The Declaration of Independence*, 27; Isaac Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 293; Scott Douglas Gerber, *To Secure These Rights: The Declaration of Independence and Constitutional Interpretation* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 199–200; 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), xv, 23–24, 61–66. See also Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*; Michael Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 15–27; Nathan Tarcov, *Locke's Education for Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1. Barry Shain argues persuasively that political scientists and law professors are especially prone to view the American founding in profoundly individualistic terms in *Myth of American Individualism*, 3–18.

The emphasis on Locke is even more pronounced in many textbooks. William Ebenstein, for instance, in his popular political theory text, wrote that the “Declaration [of Independence] is pure Locke, and the main elements of the America constitutional system—limited government, inalienable individual rights, inviolability of property—are all directly traceable to Locke.” *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 400.

(33.) See, for instance, Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in Locke's Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Joshua Foa Dienstag, "Serving God and Mammon: The Lockean Sympathy in Early American Political Thought," *American Political Science Review*, 90 (September 1996): 497-511; Richard L. Greaves, "Radicals, Rights, and Revolution: British Nonconformity and Roots of the American Experience," *Church History*, 61 (June 1992): 151-168; 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 *Calvinism and the Political Order*, ed. George L. Hunt and John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 108-129; Morgan, *Puritan Political Ideas*, xli; J. N. Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 113-115; Herbert D. Foster, "International Calvinism through Locke and the Revolution of 1688," *American Historical Review*, 32 (April 1927): 475-499.

There are indisputably tensions between Locke's theological views and Calvinism. See, for instance, W. M. Spellman, *John Locke and the Problem of Depravity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). The broader literature on Locke and Christianity is far too extensive to review here, but a good overview of it and an excellent account of how religion and politics are related in Locke's thought may be found in Greg Forster, *John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

(34.) 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, *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, although others recognize that he may have been some sort of Christian.

(35.) Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, passim. Zuckert also offers a close reading of the text of the Declaration, and on occasion he refers to a few other founders, but he focuses disproportionately on the sage of Monticello. Engeman and Zuckert, *Protestantism and the American Founding* contains a restatement of Zuckert's thesis, essays criticizing it, and a response to those essays by Zuckert.

Like Zuckert, Steven K. Green believes that "[t]he 'Nature's God' of Jefferson's declaration was thus not a Calvinist God but a deistic god of natural religion discovered through reason." He contends that America's founding documents were heavily influenced by the Enlightenment, as evidenced by their statements that government must be based on consent and that people have rights. Green, *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 54, 32, and, generally, 3-77. Perhaps the most extreme example of an attempt to understand the Declaration almost solely in light of Jefferson's views is Alan Dershowitz's *Blasphemy: How the Religious Right is Hijacking Our Declaration of Independence* (Hoboken: John Wiley, 2007).

(36.) Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 1-89; Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825, in *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Adrienne Koch and William Peden (1944, reprint, New York: Random House, 1993), 656-657. Pauline Maier argues effectively that "Jefferson had been appointed not as an author in the modern sense but as a draftsman," in *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 124 and generally 97-153.

(37.) Bruce P. Stark, *Connecticut Signer: William Williams* (Hartford: American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1975); Larry R. Gerlach, *Connecticut Congressman: Samuel Huntington* (Hartford: American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1976), esp. 13, 88; and Frederick Calvin Norton, "Biographies of the Governors of Connecticut," *Connecticut Magazine*, 7 (March-April 1901): 175-177.

Of course, some of the founders listed earlier (and in the following lists) were better Calvinists than others—e.g., John Adams was a lifelong Congregationalist, but privately he came

to embrace Unitarian theology. On the other hand, he specifically claimed to be heavily influenced by Reformed political theory (see pp. 24 of this chapter). As well, some joined other denominations late in life (e.g., Wilson eventually became an Anglican). And of course delegates may have had other ideological concerns, to say nothing of practical interests. Nevertheless, there is little reason to believe any of the Reformed founders listed here would share Zuckert's views regarding the Declaration.

(38.) Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 76, 141. *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 128 S. Ct. 645 (2008), at 648.

Richard Hughes argues that Jefferson wrote a deistic Declaration of Independence and that “it took some time for the Calvinists—and other orthodox Christians as well—to discern the fundamental differences between themselves and the author of the Declaration.” Hughes, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God*, 113.

I find Zuckert's interpretation of Jefferson to be plausible, if not fully persuasive. However, anyone trying to understand the Declaration (or any public document), should, in addition to carefully reading the text in question, consult the views of those who drafted, amended, and, critically, approved it. For example, if scholars are interested in the scope of right to “liberty” proclaimed by the Declaration, they should not simply look very hard at Jefferson's views, but consider his views alongside the other fifty-five men who signed the document. Of course, scholars might go beyond this group to explore how the concept was generally understood at the time, how the Declaration's readers interpreted it, how state legislators received it, etc. 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. Cf. H. Jefferson Powell, “The Original Understanding of Original Intent,” *Harvard Law Review*, 98 (March 1985): 935-937.

(39.) John Dunn, “The Politics of Locke in England and America in the Eighteenth Century,” in *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives: A Collection of New Essays*, ed. John Yolton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 45-80, see 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).

(40.) Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic: The Origin of the American Tradition of Political Liberty* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953), 491, note 111; John Locke, *A Letter on Toleration*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Rogers and Fowle, 1743); M. Louise Greene, *The Development of Religious Liberty in Connecticut* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905), 121; Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, October, 1701–May, 1745* (New York: Henry Holt, 1885), 698–722. Of course Lockean ideas could be transmitted through other means, but the relative inaccessibility of his works on politics must be taken into account when assessing his influence on the American founding.

(41.) Donald S. Lutz, “The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought,” *American Political Science Review*, 78 (1984): 189–197, esp. 192–193; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1773); J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 26. There are a variety of problems with relying on citations, and accounts of which books were available at what time are woefully incomplete. Responses to scholars questioning the availability of Locke's works and his influence in colonial America include Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism*, 18–25; and Dworetz, *Unvarnished Doctrine*.

(42.) Daniel L. Dreisbach, "The Bible and the Political Culture of the American Founding" in *Faith and the Founders of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Cooper, May 15, 1781, in *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. John Bigelow (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 423-424. Similarly, Joyce Appleby writes that the "most important source of meaning for eighteenth-century Americans was the Bible." "The American Heritage—The Heirs and the Disinherited," *Journal of American History*, 74 (1987): 809. Compare with, for example, Wilson Carey McWilliams, "The Bible in the American Political Tradition," in *Religion and Politics*, ed. Myron J. Aronoff (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1984), 11-45 ("the founding generation rejected or deemphasized the Bible and biblical rhetoric," 21).

In 1842, a ninety-one-year-old veteran of the War for Independence was asked if he had "been reading Harington or Sidney and Locke about the eternal principles of liberty?" He responded, "Never heard of 'em. We read only the Bible, the Catechism, Watts' Psalms and Hymns, and the Almanac." The veteran went on to insist that the patriots' primary motivation was self-government. Quoted in Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 212-213.

(43.) 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* 28 (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* 28 (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1935), 361-437. David W. Hall points out numerous similarities between classic Reformed works and texts written by 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 Genevan Reformation*, 285–446.

(44.) Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford: Silas Andrus and Son, 1885), 1: 274; Miller, *The New England Mind*, 1: 93.

(45.) Morrison, *John Witherspoon*, 81; *Works of John Adams*, 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's brief discussion, but I reference it to help show that works of Reformed political theory were read and discussed by American elites, and that at least one prominent founder clearly articulated the position that Reformed ideas had a significant impact on Locke's political theory.

(46.) John Adams to F. C. Schaeffer, November 25, 1821, in *The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations*, ed. James H. Hutson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15–16. See also John Adams, “A Dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law,” in *The Political Writings of John Adams*, ed. George A. Peek (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 3–21.

(47.) Gary Scott Smith, “Samuel Adams: America's Puritan Revolutionary,” in Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, *Forgotten Founders*, 40–64; Stoll, *Samuel Adams*, 23; *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, ed. Harry Alonzo Cushing (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 1: 201–212; Bell, *War of Religion*, 100–101; George Buchanan, *De Jure Regnie: Or the Due Right of Government* (Philadelphia, 1766); Farrand, *Records of the Federal Convention*, 1: 438.

(48.) Judah Champion, “Christian and Civil Liberties” (Hartford: E. Watson, 1776), 6, 8. See also Foster, “International Calvinism through Locke,” 475. One of the earliest and most famous examples of a cleric's use of Locke is found in Elisha Williams's sermon, “The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants” (1744), in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730–1805*, ed. Ellis Sandoz, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 1998), 1: 55–65.

(49.) 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), 3: 10.

(50.) Of course, some clergy from Reformed denominations moved toward deism anyway, (e.g., Ebenezer Gay, Charles Chauncy, Jonathan Mayhew, and Elihu Palmer), but there is little reason to doubt that the vast majority of clergy in the era were anything other than orthodox Christians. Noll, *America's God*, 138–145. Scholars who argue that deism flourished in this era are often misled by contemporary critics of deism lamenting its perceived rise. See, for instance, Kerry S. Walters, *Rational Infidels: The American Deists* (Durango: Longwood Academic, 1992). In their study of the availability of European Enlightenment works in America, David Lundberg and Henry F. May note that “[t]he Deists, who appear relatively seldom in this or any period [between 1700 and 1813], were apparently known more through anti-Deist tracts and sermons than directly.” Lundberg and May, “The Enlightened Reader in America,” *American Quarterly*, 28 (Summer 1976): 286, 267. Moreover, liberal Congregationalists such as Chauncy and Mayhew seem to have been heavily influenced by Reformed *political* ideas.

(51.) Steven Dworetz makes a similar point about the American clergy's use of Locke in *Unvarnished Doctrine*, 32–34, 135–183.

This is not to say that Locke and the patriots were never criticized from a Christian or biblical perspective. See, for instance, Jonathan Boucher, “On Civil Liberty, Passive Obedience, and Non-resistance” (1775) in Frohnen, *American Republic*, 159–178. Boucher was an Anglican Loyalist who was born in England. Shortly after preaching this sermon in a Maryland parish he returned to the land of his birth. For an account of an Anglican Loyalist from Connecticut, see Sheldon S. Cohen, *Connecticut's Loyalist Gadfly: The Reverend Samuel Andrew Peters* (Hartford: American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1976). On the education of ministers in the era, see Gambrell, *Ministerial Training in Eighteenth-Century New England*. With the exception of the Swiss born Presbyterian John Joachim Zubly and a few Old Lights, I have found very few Reformed ministers in America who opposed the War for Independence. Randall M. Miller, ed., “A Warm and Zealous Spirit”: *John J. Zubly and the American Revolution* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1982); Adrian C. Leiby, *The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley: The Jersey Dutch and the Neutral Ground, 1775–1783* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962), esp. 20–25; and Mark A. Noll, *Christians in the American Revolution* (Washington, DC: Christian University Press, 1977), 120–121. This is not to say that all patriots who were members of Reformed congregations were motivated by religion or Calvinist political thought. Ethnicity, interests, and other factors wholly unrelated to the Reformed tradition undoubtedly played a role with some individuals and groups. For further discussion see chapter 3 of this volume.

Unlike Calvinist clergy, Anglican ministers in America were more equally divided. Among those in America from 1775 to 1783, 128 were Loyalists, 130 were patriots, 71 fled, and the opinions of 59 are unknown. One might expect these men to be loyal to the king, who was, after all, the head of their church. Their country of origin may also have been a significant factor. In 1775, 141 Anglican ministers were born in America, 134 were born outside of what became the United States (primarily England and Scotland), and the birthplace of

36 is unknown. James B. Bell, *A War of Religion: Dissenters, Anglicans, and the American Revolution* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 240, 244.

(52.) Scholars who argue for the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment include Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Garden City: Doubleday, 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 version of Scottish moral sense theory that was most influential in America is compatible with orthodox Christian convictions, if not Reformed theology per se.

(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 rarely describes it as an intellectual influence (e.g., 134-136, 244-246, and 504). However, in an interview with the *Claremont Review of Books*, he remarked that "I do think that religion is supremely important, and I wouldn't limit it just to the period of the Revolution. I think that at least up to the Civil War and perhaps after, you can understand American history only if you have an understanding of American religion. It's like trying to understand the 20th century without some understanding of economics. This is a terribly rough equation, but Calvin is to the 17th and maybe the 18th century what John Maynard Keynes is to the 20th century." "Is America Still a Glorious Cause? A Conversation with Historian Robert Middlekauff," *Claremont Review of Books*, 2 (December 1983): 10.

(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).

(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 other Strausseans, he defends this view by paying disproportionate attention to founders like Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton, and virtually ignoring statesmen such as Sherman, Ellsworth, Huntington, Trumbull, Williams, and Wolcott.

(56.) James Cooper notes that Congregational “ministers frequently addressed questions of church government in their sermons.” James F. Cooper, *The Tenaciousness of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 31. It is somewhat ironic given my argument in this paragraph that Sherman read Jean-Jacque Rousseau's *Social Contract* sometime between 1775–1780, and he even copied select passages into an account book. Most of the excerpts concerned the social contract, the importance of consent, and popular sovereignty. “Papers of Roger Sherman,” Account Book, n.d., The Library of Congress.

(57.) Roger Sherman to François de Marbois, November 18, 1782, in Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society. The text is a copy or draft of the letter sent to Marbois written in Sherman's hand. On Marbois's project and the responses to it, see Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 247–265; Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, in Koch and Peden, *Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 173–267.

(58.) Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 1: 426; Harry S. Stout, "Preaching the Insurrection," *Christian History*, 15 (1996): 17. Presumably both figures are for white Americans. See also William Hutchison, *Religious Pluralism in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 21 (who writes that "the colonists [were] at least 85 percent English-speaking Protestants"). According to Charles O. Paullin, 56% of churches in America in 1776 were in the Reformed tradition. Paullin, *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the United States* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution, 1932), 50. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark rely heavily on his study when they discuss denominations in the era in *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 25. According to Edwin Gaustad and Philip Barlow, 63% of the churches in 1780 were in the Reformed tradition. Gaustad and Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8. The two estimates for 1776 (56% and 75%) are not necessarily contradictory if Reformed churches had larger congregations than non-Reformed churches. If one counts Anglicans as being in the Reformed tradition (a disputable but plausible assessment), then 75% of America's churches in 1776 were Reformed. Although Lutherans are closely related to Calvinists on many theological matters, they are not usually considered to be a part of the Reformed tradition.

(59.) Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 29; Grasso, *A Speaking Aristocracy*, 105, 349. Christopher Collier reports that of the delegates to Connecticut's ratification convention whose religious affiliation is known, 92 percent of the Federalists and 95 percent of the anti-Federalists were Congregationalists. Collier, *All Politics Is Local*, 99. This is not to deny that toward the end of the eighteenth century a small minority of New Englanders embraced strange and heterodox beliefs and practices. See especially Stephen Marini, *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

(60.) Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 45; Frederick Lewis Weis, *The Colonial Clergy and the Colonial Churches of New England* (Lancaster: Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy, 1936); Gambrell, *Ministerial Training*.

(61.) Harry S. Stout, "Preaching the Insurrection," *Christian History*, 15 (1996): 12. On the orthodoxy of these Congregational clergy see Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), passim. On the significance and influence of Reformed clergy in southern New England between 1783-1799, see Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness*, 1-83.

(62.) William Warren Sweet, "The American Colonial Environment and Religious Liberty," *Church History*, 4 (March 1935): 43-56. Sidney E. Mead offered a similar figure in "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism," *Church History*, 25 (1956): 317-337. However, both of these estimates are simply based upon conjecture. Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 15. Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 17.

(63.) James Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," in his *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 laments about the lack of denominational commitments among Americans or jeremiads decrying what was perceived to be insufficient attention to religious and moral concerns. See, for instance, Ezra Stiles's analysis of Connecticut's 1794 election returns, where he concluded that only thirty of the eighty-five men earning more than one hundred votes were "religious Characters." Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, ed. Franklin Bowditch Dexter (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 3: 546. The point applies with equal force to claims by Calvinists that other ministers, university professors, or parishioners were embracing "Arminianism" or "Arianism." Of course, some of these laments were accurate, but often they were overstated. For further discussion of these issues and an excellent overview of Christianity in eighteenth-century America see Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 1-127.

(64.) Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," 118. Hutson also provides an excellent critique of historian Jon Butler's work, which purports to build upon and offer additional evidence for Finke and Stark's figures (120-125). See Jon Butler, "Why Revolutionary America Wasn't a 'Christian Nation,'" in *Religion and the New Republic*, ed. James H. Hutson (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 187-202; and *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

(65.) 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.

(66.) Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 29; David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 431, 606, 608; Howard Miller, "The Grammar of Liberty: Presbyterians and the First American Constitutions," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 54 (1976): 151-152; Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, 351-363; Tiedemann, "Presbyterianism and the American Revolution"; Fred J. Hood, *Reformed America: The Middle and Southern States, 1783-1837* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1980); and G. S. Rowe, *Thomas McKean: The Shaping of an American Republicanism* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1978), esp. 61-63; Archibald Henderson, "The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 5 (September 1918): 207-215.

An Anglican minister wrote to London that "after a strict inquiry" he could find no Presbyterian minister "who did not, by preaching and every effort in their power, promote all the measures of the Congress, however extravagant." Quoted in Leiby, *The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley*, 228. However, some southern Presbyterians may have been exceptions to this rule, as indicated by the July 10, 1775, letter from four Presbyterian ministers in Philadelphia (Francis Alison, James Sprout, George Duffield, and Robert Davidson) to their co-religionists in North Carolina urging them to join the patriot cause. Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, 123.

(67.) A few scholars have contended that *The New England Primer* became significantly less Calvinist as the eighteenth century progressed. However, Stephanie Schnorbus argues

persuasively that although some versions of the primer printed after 1780 shifted in a Lockean direction, that they all “remained secure in Calvinist orthodoxy.” Stephanie Schnorbus, “Calvin and Locke: Dueling Epistemologies in *The New England Primer, 1720–1790*,” *Early American Studies*, 8 (Spring 2010): 250–287, 287; *The New-England Primer*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (1727; reprint, New York: Dodd, Mead, 1897).

(68.) Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1971), 17–50; Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic*, 4; Joseph S. Tiedemann, “Presbyterianism and the American Revolution in the Middle Colonies,” *Church History*, 74 (June 2005): 339; Gideon Mailer, “Anglo-Scottish Union and John Witherspoon's American Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 67 (October 2010): 709–746.

(69.) Frohnen, *American Republic*, 12. 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: University Press of New England, 1976).

(70.) There is a voluminous literature on the New Light-Old Light controversy, but works particularly relevant to this book include Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*; Valeri, *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England*; and Samuel Harrison Rankin, Jr., “Conservatism and the Problem of Change in the Congregational Churches of Connecticut, 1660–1760” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 1971), 296 (arguing for New Light majorities by 1754). Christopher Grasso points out that Old Lights in Connecticut were generally “conservative Calvinists trying to preserve church order and political power,” whereas those in Massachusetts are “usually characterized as Boston ‘liberals’ straying from Calvinist orthodoxy.” Grasso, *A Speaking Aristocracy*, 106.

(71.) Bernard C. Steiner claimed that Connecticut election sermons may be traced to the formation of the colony, but the first recorded sermon is from 1674. Steiner, “Statistics of the

Connecticut Election Sermons," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 46 (1892): 123; Baldwin, *New England Clergy*; Counts, *The Political Views of the Eighteenth Century New England Clergy*; William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent: 1630-1883: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2: 915-1062, 1018-1019. McLoughlin provides an excellent account of the demise of the Standing Order.

(72.) *Acts and Laws of His Majesties Colony of Connecticut in New-England* (New London, 1715), 207. For the 1784 version of this statute, see Cushing, *First Laws*, 258. For a more extensive list of Connecticut laws reflecting the influence of Christianity, see chapter 6. Collier, *All Politics Is Local*, 83.

(73.) This list emphasizes Connecticut leaders closest to Sherman; it is not exclusive. See Michael Toth, *Founding Federalist: The Life of Oliver Ellsworth* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2011); William F. Willingham, *Connecticut Revolutionary: Eliphalet Dyer* (Hartford: American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1976); Casto, *Oliver Ellsworth*; W. D. McCracken, *The Huntington Letters* (New York: Appleton, 1905); David M. Roth, *Connecticut's War Governor: Jonathan Trumbull* (Chester: Pequot Press, 1974); Morgan, *Gentle Puritan: A Life of Ezra Stiles*; Louis Leonard Tucker, *Connecticut's Seminary of Sedition: Yale College* (Hartford: American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1974); Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness* (on Stiles, Dwight, and other clergy); and Grasso, *A Speaking Aristocracy*, esp. 24-26, 84-85, 230-278 (on Griswold and Stiles).

(74.) Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 75, 323-324, 31-37; Rommel, *Connecticut's Yankee Patriot*, 12; and James D. German, "The Social Utility of Wicked Self-Love: Calvinism, Capitalism, and Public Policy in Revolutionary New England," *Journal of American History*, 82 (December 1995): 966. German concedes that Sherman took elements of Christianity seriously but contends that he was able to reconcile his faith with "the frankest pursuit of self interest" (973-974, 970). Bushman makes a similar claim in *From Puritan to Yankee*, 255. Other scholars, relying on these earlier accounts, have repeated them. See, for instance, Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 167; and Murrin, "Religion and Politics in America from the First Settlements to the Civil War," 31, 41.

(75.) Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 3: 500.

(76.) Daniel T. V. Huntoon, *History of the Town of Canton* (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, 1893), 134–135.

(77.) Ibid., 188–189.

(78.) Ibid., 192–194; Sandoz, *Political Sermons*, 1: 208–232; Samuel Dunbar, “Righteousness by the Law Subversive of Christianity,” (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1751).

(79.) Records of New Milford/First Congregational Church, Connecticut Church Records, reel #582, 5, Connecticut State Library.

The Massachusetts Historical Society has a copy of the important Old Light “Resolves of the General Consociation Convened at Guilford, November 24th, 1741,” that was written in Sherman's handwriting in 1746. In 1742, Connecticut's General Assembly responded to the Resolves by passing anti-itinerancy laws that remained in place until 1750. Both documents are in Stephen Nissenbaum, ed., *The Great Awakening at Yale College* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1972), 128–132, 136–139. That Sherman would copy this eight-page document in 1746 suggests an interest in the proper scope of religious liberty, but it is unclear whether he supported or opposed the Resolves. General Consociation of Connecticut Churches Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

(80.) Records of the Congregational Church at White Haven, Connecticut Church Records, reel #577, 24, Connecticut State Library; Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 3: 344; Robert L. Ferm, *Jonathan Edwards the Younger: 1745–1801: Colonial Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 139. See especially Roger Sherman to David Austin, March 1, 1790, Roger Sherman Collection, box I, folder 12, Yale University.

(81.) Brooks Mather Kelly, *Yale: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 34, 61; Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 3: 500, 490–491.

(82.) Exact titles of each almanac varied, but all concerned “the year of our Lord Christ.”

(83.) Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 11. All aphorisms taken from Victor Hugo Paltsits, *The Almanacs of Roger Sherman: 1750-1761* (Worcester: Davis Press, 1907), 40-48.

(84.) Roger Sherman to Joseph Bellamy, July 23, 1772, Jonathan Edwards Collection, Gen. mss. 151, box 28, folder 1538, Beinecke Library, Yale University. Roger Sherman to John Witherspoon, July 10, 1788 and John Witherspoon to Roger Sherman, July 25, 1788, Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society.

(85.) Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 3: 500; Roger Sherman, "A Short Sermon on the Duty of Self Examination, *Preparatory to Receiving the Lord's Supper*," (New Haven: Abel Morse, 1789), 10-11.

(86.) Sherman, "Short Sermon," 5, 8. Cf. Jonathan Edwards, *On the Nature of True Virtue* (1765).

(87.) Sherman, "Short Sermon," 16-17.

(88.) Dr. Nathan Williams to Roger Sherman, September 23, 1791, Sherman Collection, box 1, folder 14, Yale University.

(89.) Roger Sherman to Dr. Nathan Williams, December 17, 1791, Society Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Roger Sherman to Samuel Hopkins, June 28, 1790, in *Correspondence Between Roger Sherman and Samuel Hopkins*, ed. Andrew P. Peabody (Worcester: Press of Charles Hamilton, 1889), 10. Sherman's language here is similar to that of the answer to Question 3 of the Westminster Larger Catechism, which refers to the Old and New Testaments as "the only rule of faith and obedience."

(90.) Roger Sherman to Samuel Hopkins, June 28, 1790 and October 1790, in Peabody, *Correspondence*, 8, 24.

(91.) No theologian was better represented in Sherman's library than Jonathan Edwards, Sr. His collection included (using the short citations used in the inventories): *Life [of David Brainerd?]*, *On the Will*, *History of Redemption*, *Religious Affections*, *Edwards Against Chauncey*, and *15 Sermons by President Edwards*. "Division of the Books belonging to the Estate of Roger Sherman Esq. Made November 14, 1794," photostatic copy in the Sherman Collection, box 1, folder 16, Yale University. There is also an

"Inventory of Pamphlets belonging to the Estate of the Late Roger Sherman, Esq. Including bound Book[s]," in Sherman Papers, Library of Congress. Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 1: 492.

See also Justus Mitchell to Roger Sherman, January 26, 1790; Roger Sherman to Justus Mitchell, February 8, 1790; and Justus Mitchell to Roger Sherman, March 17, 1790, in Roger Sherman Papers, Library of Congress. Mitchell (1752–1806) was Sherman's brother-in-law and a Congregational minister in New Canaan, Connecticut. In the letters, the two discussed, among other things, the nature of human depravity and moral obligation.

(92.) Quoted in Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 93; Benjamin Rush, *Autobiography*, ed. George W. Corner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 146. The reference is actually to Jeremiah 3:23, not 12:23.

(93.) Dwight, "A Statistical Account," 77.