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CHAPTER 5

Were Any of the Founders Deists?

Mark David Hall

“God set the world in motion and then abstained from human affairs”

(Wolfe 2006)

Scholars and popular authors regularly assert that the founders were deists. For instance, historian Frank Lambert asserts that the “significance of the Enlightenment and Deism for the birth of the American republic, and especially the relationship between church and state within it, can hardly be overstated.” Law professor Geoffrey R. Stone similarly contends that “deistic beliefs played a central role in the framing of the American republic ... [and the] founding generation viewed religion, and particularly religion’s relation to government, through an Enlightenment lens that was deeply skeptical of orthodox Christianity.” For a final example, the dean of American historians, Gordon S. Wood, opines that “The Founding Fathers were at most deists – they believed God created the world, then left it alone to run ...”¹

In the eighteenth century, deism referred to an intellectual movement that emphasized the role of reason in discerning religious truth. Deists rejected traditional Christian doctrine such as the incarnation, virgin birth, atonement, resurrection, trinity, divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and miracles. For present purposes, this last point is critical; unlike most Christians, deists did not think that God intervenes in the affairs of men and nations. In Alan Wolfe’s words, they believed that “God set the world in motion and then abstained from human affairs” (Wolfe 2006).

Civic Leaders Who Publicly Embraced Deism

Given the numerous, powerful, and clear claims that that the founders were deists, it is striking that there are few instances of civic leaders in the era openly embracing deism or rejecting orthodox Christian doctrines.² In 1725, during his first English sojourn,

Benjamin Franklin published an essay entitled “A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain” in which he concluded that “Vice and Virtue were empty Distinctions” (Franklin [1725] 1959, 1:57–71). Deists emphasized the importance of morality, so the essay is not evidence of deism. But assuming Franklin was serious (often a dangerous assumption), the work is an example of a founder publicly rejecting a basic tenet of orthodox Christianity. Yet it is noteworthy that even as a young man Franklin rapidly concluded that the essay “might have an ill Tendency.” He destroyed most copies of it before they could be distributed (Franklin [1725] 1959, 1:46).

In his autobiography, begun in 1771 and not published until after his death, Franklin acknowledged that he fell under the influence of deists as a young man. He noted his regret that his religious arguments “perverted” some of his friends, and in his later years he may have moved toward more traditional religious views (Franklin 1986, 45–46). In the Constitutional Convention of 1787, he reflected that “the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – *that God governs the affairs of men*” (Farrand 1987, 1:451, emphasis in original). Three years later he wrote a letter to Yale President Ezra Stiles in which he affirmed many traditional Christian doctrines but admitted that he had “some doubts” about the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth (Franklin [1790] 1987). As with most founders, Franklin’s religious beliefs changed throughout his life. It seems reasonable, however, to classify him as a founder who both publicly and privately rejected or questioned some tenets of orthodox Christianity.

Ethan Allen, leader of the Green Mountain Boys, hero of Fort Ticonderoga, and advocate of statehood for Vermont, published the first American book advocating deism in 1784. *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* sold fewer than 200 copies, and after its publication Allen played no role in American politics. Even modern authors sympathetic to Allen’s views recognize that he was a “disorganized and stylistically clumsy writer” and that the book never achieved great influence (Walters 1992a, xiii, 8, 92; Walters 1992b, 51–105; Jacoby 2004, 18).

A decade later, Thomas Paine published his famous defense of deism, *The Age of Reason*. Paine was born and raised in England and lived only 20 of his 77 years in America, so one can reasonably ask if he should be counted as an *American* founder. *The Age of Reason* was written and first published in Europe. Although the book sold reasonably well in the United States, the reactions of America’s civic leaders to it were almost generally negative. Samuel Adams wrote his old ally a personal letter denouncing it, and John Adams, John Witherspoon, William Paterson, and John Jay each criticized the book. Benjamin Rush called *The Age of Reason* “absurd and impious,” Charles Carroll condemned Paine’s “blasphemous writings against the Christian religion,” and Connecticut jurist Zephaniah Swift wrote that we “cannot sufficiently reprobate the beliefs of Thomas Paine in his attack on Christianity.” Elias Boudinot and Patrick Henry went so far as to write book-length rebuttals of it. When Paine returned to America, he was vilified because of the book. Indeed, with the exception of Jefferson and a few others, he was abandoned by all of his old friends.³

Some founders may have secretly approved of *The Age of Reason* but criticized it for political reasons. Yet the overwhelmingly negative reaction to the work says a great deal about American religious and political culture in the late eighteenth century. Whatever attraction deism may have had for a select few, clearly the American public was not

ready to embrace such teachings or political leaders who advocated them. Franklin, Allen, and Paine may very well be the only civic leaders in the era who clearly and publicly rejected orthodox Christianity or embraced deism. If there are others, those who claim the founders were deists have not identified them.

Civic Leaders Who Privately Embraced Deism

Thomas Jefferson definitely rejected orthodox Christianity, but he went to great lengths to keep his religious views far from the public's eye. Virtually all of the texts that reveal his true beliefs were letters written to family members or close friends; he often asked that they be kept private, and in some cases they were never sent (presumably because he was not sure the recipients could be trusted). An excellent example of this is an 1819 missive from Jefferson to William Short where he rejected doctrines "invented by ultra-Christian sects" such as "the immaculate conception of Jesus, His deification, the creation of the world by Him, His miraculous powers, His resurrection and visible ascension, His corporeal presence in the Eucharist, the Trinity, original sin, atonement, regeneration, election, orders of Hierarchy, etc." (Jefferson [1819] 1993).

Jefferson was a skeptic, but he realized that publicly advocating his religious views would be political suicide. Indeed, relatively minor lapses from his rule of secrecy, such as when he wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) that "it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg," came close to costing him the election of 1800 (Jefferson [1787] 1955, 159).

John Adams was a life-long Congregationalist who believed it appropriate for the state to support and encourage Christianity. He respected the Bible's moral teachings, as indicated by an 1816 letter where he wrote "The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount contain my Religion" (Adams [1816a] 1959). Yet in an 1813 letter to his son, he made it clear that he rejected the divinity of Christ: "An incarnate God!!! An eternal, self-existent, omnipresent omniscient Author of this stupendous Universe suffering on a Cross!!! My Soul starts with horror, at the Idea" (Adams [1816b] 2005). Like Jefferson, Adams kept his religious views extremely private. Indeed, the public's perception that he was a Calvinist who would impose a national church on the American people contributed to his losing the election of 1800. But he nevertheless must be numbered among those founders who privately rejected Christian orthodoxy.

Three other founders are regularly referred to as deists: Washington, Madison, and Hamilton. Yet no author has ever produced a public *or private* journal entry, letter, or essay where these men clearly reject Christianity or embrace deism. The case that they did so is almost entirely negative, resting on some combination of observations that they seldom used familiar biblical appellations for God or Jesus Christ, did not regularly attend church, chose not to become communicants, and/or did not always act in a moral manner.

In the case of George Washington, for instance, authors such as David Holmes argue that he referred to God with "Deistic terms [such] as 'Providence,' 'Heaven,' 'the Deity,' 'the Supreme Being,' 'the Grand Architect,' 'the Author of all Good,' and 'the Great

Ruler of Events” (Holmes 2006, 47, 65). Yet indisputably orthodox Christians regularly used such appellations (a point discussed below). On the surface, Washington’s refusal to take communion suggests that he was not a serious Christian; however, as historian John Fea points out, this “was not uncommon among eighteenth-century Anglicans,” and Washington may have done so because he “did not believe he was worthy to participate in the sacrament” (Fea 2010, 185).

It is impossible to assess and engage every argument in the voluminous literature about Washington’s religious beliefs. Yet it is worth reemphasizing that none of the authors who claim Washington was a deist has cited a text where he rejected a basic tenet of orthodox Christianity. It is the case that a 1791 letter drafted by Jefferson and signed by Washington to the emperor of Morocco includes the sentence: “May that God, whom we both adore, bless your Imperial Majesty with long life, Health and Success, and have you always, great and magnanimous Friend, under his holy keeping” (Washington [1791] 1999, 8:33). Conflating the God of Christianity and the God of Islam is problematic from a traditional Christian perspective, yet given the diplomatic context it seems imprudent to read too much into this missive.

Washington is sometimes accused of having an extramarital affair, and there is no doubt that Alexander Hamilton did so. Some historians cite such actions as evidence that particular founders were not serious or orthodox Christians. But this line of argument neglects the traditional Christian teaching that even saints sin. If the standard of being a Christian is moral perfection, no one has ever been a Christian.

Madison was intensely private about his religious beliefs, so those who assert he was a deist often cite secondhand accounts to support their claims. For instance, an Anglican minister, William Meade, recollected 20 years after Madison’s death that “I was never at Mr. Madison’s but once, and then our conversation took such a turn though not designed on my part as to call forth some expressions and arguments which left the impression on my mind that his creed was not strictly regulated by the Bible.” Such evidence should not be dismissed, but it needs to be treated cautiously. In this case, one should not read too much into an “impression” made by someone who visited Madison’s home only once, and it is not self-evident what Meade meant by Madison’s creed not being “strictly regulated by the Bible” (Meade 1857, 2:99–101).

Authors arguing that the founders were deists often rely on stories such as those by Bishop Meade, but they tend to ignore or dismiss other secondhand accounts that the founders were pious, orthodox Christians. For instance, John Marshall, the great jurist who served on Washington’s staff during the War for Independence, wrote that the general was a “sincere believer in the Christian faith, and a truly devout man” (Marshall 1832, 2:445). Similarly, a Frenchman who knew Washington said that “[e]very day of the year, he rises at five in the morning; as soon as he is up, he dresses, then prays reverently to God” (quoted in Chinard 1940, 119). There are many similar accounts attesting to Washington’s piety by people who knew him well that are regularly ignored by those who would label him a “cool deist” or a “Lukewarm Episcopalian” (Ellis 2004, 45).

Virtually every author who argues that the founders were deists cites Washington, Madison, and Hamilton as examples of deists in the era. Each of these men wrote a great deal, and scholars have recovered many of their papers. Washington’s collected

papers are projected to fill 90 volumes, Madison's 50, and Hamilton's 32. Yet these writers have not cited a single instance where these founders clearly rejected a basic tenet of orthodox Christianity or embraced deism. Some of their actions or inactions may suggest that, at least at certain points in their lives, they were not pious, orthodox Christians. As well, it is highly unlikely that if Washington were alive today he "would freely associate with the Bible-believing branch of evangelical Christianity that is having such a positive influence upon our nation," as Tim LaHaye has argued (LaHaye 1987, 113). To question whether these founders were deists is not to claim that they were pious, evangelical Christians.⁴ Yet it is a different thing altogether to make the affirmative claim that they were deists. In the absence of more compelling evidence, careful scholars should avoid or at least carefully qualify such assertions.

Other Possibilities

In addition to civic leaders usually discussed by those who claim that the founders were deists, other founders occasionally put forward as deists include Benjamin Rush, Gouverneur Morris, Timothy Pickering, Joel Barlow, James Monroe, George Wythe, and, prior to his 1808 conversion, Noah Webster.⁵ As with Washington, Madison, and Hamilton, the case that these men were deists is usually based upon negative evidence. Given the literally hundreds of men who played important roles in the War for Independence and the creation of America's constitutional order, other possible deists will undoubtedly come to light. But given the numerous, regular, and powerful claims that "most" founders were deists, it is remarkable how little evidence there is that more than a handful of founders merit this distinction.

But Were Even a Handful of Founders Deists?

Thus far it has been demonstrated that there is a lack of evidence that the founders embraced deism or rejected basic tenets of orthodox Christianity. Before proceeding, it should be noted that if deism includes the idea that "God set the world in motion and then abstained from human affairs," then there is reason to believe that only one of these men was a deist. With the exception of Ethan Allen, all of the founders regularly called deists are clearly on record speaking or writing about God's intervention in the affairs of men and nations.⁶

George Washington, for instance, referred to "Providence" at least 270 times in his writings (Lillback 2006, 576). A good example is a 1755 letter to his brother, penned during the French and Indian War:

I have heard since my arrival at this place, a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech. I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you that I have not, as yet, composed the latter. But by the all powerful dispensation of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability; I had 4 bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me yet escaped unhurt although death was leveling my companions on every side me. (Washington [1755] 1983)

His successor, John Adams, routinely invoked Providence as well, such as when he wrote his wife that “I must submit all my Hopes and Fears, to an overruling Providence, in which, unfashionable as the Faith may be, I firmly believe” (quoted in Hutson 2005, 176). Jefferson did not reference God’s intervention in human affairs as often as his two predecessors, but he did so on occasion. His first inaugural address, for instance, included the line: “may that Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity” (Jefferson 1801).

Early in his life Franklin was perhaps more skeptical than any other founder, but by the end he seemed to believe in Providence. In the Constitutional Convention he noted that “[i]n the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger we had daily prayer in this room for the divine protection. – Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered ... the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – *that God governs the affairs of men*” (Farrand 1987, 1:450–52). Franklin was the oldest delegate at the convention, and his proposal to open each day in prayer was seconded by Roger Sherman, an indisputably pious man who was the second oldest member. The delegates did not act on the suggestion, but Madison nevertheless discerned God’s involvement in the proceedings. In *Federalist* No. 37 he wrote: “It is impossible, for the man of pious reflection, not to perceive in [the Constitutional Convention] a finger of that Almighty Hand, which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the critical stages of the revolution” (Carey and McClellan 2001, 185).

Hamilton’s religious views shifted significantly throughout his life, but at least in his early and later years he gave clear evidence of believing that God intervenes in the affairs of men and nations. For instance, shortly before his death he wrote an unknown recipient, encouraging him or her to: “Arraign not the dispensations of Providence – they must be founded in wisdom and goodness; and when they do not suit us, it must be because there is some fault in ourselves which deserves chastisement, or because there is a kind intent to correct in us some vice or failing of which, perhaps, we may not be conscious, or because the general plan requires that we should suffer partial ill” (Hamilton [1804] 1979).

Even the infidel Thomas Paine wrote in *The American Crisis*:

The vast extension of America makes her of too much value in the scale of Providence, to be cast, like a pearl before swine, at the feet of a European island; and of much less consequence would it be that Britain were sunk in the sea than that America should miscarry. There has been such a chain of extraordinary events in the discovery of this country at first, in the peopling and planting it afterwards, in the rearing and nursing it to its present State, and in the protection of it through the present war, that no man can doubt, but Providence hath some nobler end to accomplish than the gratification of the petty Elector of Hanover or the ignorant and insignificant King of Britain. (Paine [1778] 1995, 166)

Of course, some founders wrote or spoke of God intervening in human history more than others, and it is always possible that some did so simply for rhetorical effect. This is likely the case with Tom Paine. Yet it is noteworthy that most authors who claim the

founders were deists ignore these clear statements that God intervenes in the affairs of men and nations. If deism includes the idea that “God set the world in motion and then abstained from human affairs,” then the number of civic leaders in the American founding who were deists may be only one, Ethan Allen; and other than his significant military victory at Fort Ticonderoga, his role in the American founding was minimal.

God Words?

One of America’s most significant founding documents, the Declaration of Independence, affirms the founders’ “reliance on the protection of divine Providence.” The text references God three other times, most critically with the stirring proposition that: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” As well, the Declaration mentions “the laws of nature of nature’s God” and closes by “appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world” (Declaration 1776).

Some scholars have argued that the use of “distant” words for God or “vague and generic God-language” like “Nature’s God,” “Creator,” and “Providence” is evidence that the founders were deists (see e.g., Holmes 2006, 47, 65; Fea 2010, 131–33; Lambert 2003, 167). It may be the case that deists regularly referred to God in this fashion, but so did indisputably orthodox Christians. For instance, the Westminster Standards (a classic Protestant Reformed confession of faith), both in the original 1647 version and the 1788 American revision, refer to the deity as “the Supreme Judge,” “the great Creator of all things,” “the first cause,” “righteous judge,” “God the Creator,” and “the supreme Law and King of all the world.” The Standards also regularly reference God’s providence, and even proclaim that “[t]he light of nature showeth that there is a God ...” Similarly, Isaac Watts, the “father of English Hymnody,” called the deity “nature’s God” in a poem about Psalm 148:10 (Watts 1753, 4:356). Jeffrey H. Morrison has argued persuasively that the Declaration’s references to “‘divine Providence’ and ‘the Supreme Judge of the World’ would have been quite acceptable to Reformed Americans in 1776, and conjured up images of the ‘distinctly biblical God’ when they heard or read the Declaration” (Morrison 2002).⁷ These terms for God may have been selected to appeal to a wide variety of Christian audiences, but there is little reason to believe that they were used because the founders were deists.

It may be objected that Jefferson, the man who drafted the Declaration, was hardly an orthodox Christian, and that is certainly true. But as Jefferson pointed out in an 1825 letter, the object of the Declaration was not to “find out new principles, or new arguments ... it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and to give that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion. All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day ...” (Jefferson [1825] 1998). Even though Jefferson may have believed in a vague, distant deity, when his fellow delegates revised and approved the Declaration virtually all of them understood “Nature’s God,” “Creator,” and “Providence” to refer to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; a God who is active in the affairs of men and nations.

A Representative Sample?

Authors who contend that the founders were deists routinely highlight the views of some combination of seven men: Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, and Paine. If we accept a definition of deism that allows for God's intervention in human events (sometimes called "Providential Deism") and ignore the lack of evidence that Washington, Madison, and Hamilton rejected orthodox Christianity, it is possible to make a plausible case that these founders were deists. Yet if they were not representative of other founders, this finding suggests little with respect to the founding generation.

Consider for a moment the background and experiences of these seven individuals. Washington, Jefferson, and Madison were southern Anglican plantation owners. Hamilton was born and raised in the British West Indies, and Paine, the scion of a Quaker father and Anglican mother, was born and raised in England. In an era where few people traveled internationally, Jefferson and Adams spent significant time in Europe, and Franklin lived *most* of the last 35 years of his life in Britain and France. As adults, Franklin and Hamilton were nominal Anglicans, which means five of these seven founders (71%) were Episcopalians (compared to 16% of all Americans in that era) (Finke and Stark 1992, 55). The only member of a Reformed (Calvinist) church among these famous founders is Adams, but like some of his fellow Congregationalists (primarily in and around Boston) he was moving rapidly toward Unitarianism.⁸

By way of contrast, in his magisterial history of religion in America, Sydney Ahlstrom observed that the Reformed tradition was "the religious heritage of three-fourths of the American people in 1776" (Ahlstrom 1975, 1:426). Similarly, Yale historian Harry Stout states that prior to the War for Independence "the vast majority of colonists were Reformed or Calvinist" (Stout 1996, 17). These figures may be high – neither scholar explains or defends them – but a plethora of studies demonstrate that Calvinist churches dominated New England and were well represented throughout the rest of the nation. With the exception of John Adams, these Americans are unrepresented by the seven famous founders regularly discussed by those who contend the founders were deists. In the social science lexicon, these famous founders constitute an unrepresentative sample.

Adams was not the only member of a Reformed congregation to embrace something approximating deism in the founding era, but an excellent argument can be made that he is quite unrepresentative of civic leaders from the Reformed tradition. There is little reason to doubt, and much evidence to indicate, that the following Reformed founders were traditional Christians: Samuel Adams, Elias Boudinot, Eliphalet Dyer, Oliver Ellsworth, Matthew Griswold, John Hancock, Benjamin Huntington, Samuel Huntington, Thomas McKean, William Paterson, Tapping Reeve, Jesse Root, Roger Sherman, John Treadwell, Jonathan Trumbull, William Williams, James Wilson, John Witherspoon, Oliver Wolcott, and Robert Yates.⁹

One might object that *these* 20 founders do not represent the entire founding generation, which is true, but they are better representatives of the 75% of Americans who might reasonably be classified as Calvinists than the seven founders regularly referenced by those who argue the founders were deists. It is likely that, if one were to focus on elite

Anglicans, one would find more evidence of deism in the era, but (1) there were not many elite Anglicans in America and, (2) one would find pious and traditional believers such as John Jay, Patrick Henry, and Henry Laurens in this group. Because most founders did not leave many letters, diaries, or other documents that shed light on their religious convictions, it is often difficult to discern much more than which church particular founders attended and/or joined. But students of the founding era should be careful not to read too much into this lack of evidence – and they certainly should not extrapolate from the absence of texts to the conclusion that these founders embraced deism. And it obviously violates the most basic rules of social science *and* history to generalize from the views of a few unrepresentative elites to the founding generation as a whole.

Space constraints make it impossible to present evidence that the examples of “orthodox” founders listed above were, in fact, orthodox Christians. Admittedly, the case is stronger for some than others.¹⁰ Yet the argument here is not that most founders were orthodox and pious, but that there is precious little evidence to suggest that most (or even many) of them were deists, at least as that term is popularly and historically understood. Scholars who contend that “most of the American founders embraced some form of Deism, not historically orthodox Christianity” should either find additional evidence to support such assertions or show that Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, and Paine represent the religious views of their fellow founders. If they cannot, they should limit their claims to these men – and, if they are careful scholars, they should, in the absence of more compelling evidence, remove Washington, Madison, and Hamilton from their lists of famous founders who were deists. Moreover, if by “deism” they include the idea that God is a “Creator or First Cause who subsequently stood aside from his creation to allow it to run according to its own rules” (Lambert 2003, 176),¹¹ they must acknowledge that the number of civic leaders in the founding era who were deists may be only one – Ethan Allen.

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Notes

- 1 Lambert (2003, 161); Stone (2008, 7–8); Martin (1996, 376); Wood quoted in Smoler (1992). Other examples include: C. Beard and M. Beard (1930, 449: “When the crisis came, Jefferson, Paine, John Adams, Washington, Franklin, Madison, and many lesser lights were to be reckoned among either Unitarians or Deists. It was not Cotton Mather’s God to whom the authors of the Declaration of Independence appealed; it was to ‘Nature’s God.’”); Gaustad (1993, 1:227: “the founding fathers themselves, largely deists in their orientation and sympathy ...”); Hughes (2003, 50: “most of the American founders embraced some form of Deism, not historically orthodox Christianity.”); Allen (2006, xiii: “the Founding Fathers were ... skeptical men of the Enlightenment who questioned each and every received idea they had been taught.”); Kaye (2005, 108: “[m]any of the nation’s original Founders subscribed to some version of religious rationalism”); and Green (2010, 87: (“Although many of the

- nation's elites privately embraced deism, *The Age of Reason* and other works popularized irreligion among the laboring and working classes").
- 2 For reasons of space, clergy are not discussed in this chapter even though they played an important role in the American founding. Evidence suggests that some ministers, including Ebenezer Gay, Charles Chauncy, Jonathan Mayhew, and Elihu Palmer embraced deism or something akin to it. However, as Mark A. Noll (2005, 138–45) argues in his magisterial *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, there is little reason to doubt that the vast majority of clergy in the era were anything other than orthodox Christians.
 - 3 Part one of *The Age of Reason* was published in 1794, part two in 1795, and an obscure and little-known part three was published in 1807. According to Gary Nash, 17 American editions of *The Age of Reason* appeared from 1794–96 (Nash 1965, 402). See also *The Works of John Adams*, edited by Charles Francis Adams (1850, 3:421, 9:73); "Samuel Adams to Thomas Paine," November 30, 1802 (Adams [1802] 1992, 415); "Rush to John Dickinson," February 16, 1796 (Rush [1796] 1951, 2:770); Charles Carroll, quoted in Birzer (2010, 188); Swift (1796, 2:323–24); Volker (2009, 172, 187–88); Paterson (1798); and "John Jay to Uzal Ogden," February 14, 1796 (Jay [1796] 1833, 2:266).
 - 4 LaHaye (1987, 113); Marshall and Manuel (1977); Eidsmoe (1987); and DeMar (2003).
 - 5 See, for instance, Allen (2006, 29, 158, 160, 102), asserting that Wythe, Morris, and Livingston were deists or otherwise heterodox, but also that Rush was a "devout Christian"; Holmes (2006, 99–107) includes an entire chapter asserting Monroe was an "Episcopalian of Deistic tendencies," yet citing no instance where he rejected any tenet of orthodox Christianity or embraced deism.
 - 6 Of course it is impossible to prove that Allen never spoke of God's intervention. But in *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* he clearly denies the possibility of miracles. See especially chapter six, section four: "Prayer Cannot be Attended with Miraculous Consequences."
 - 7 Westminster Standards, 1:10; 5:1, 2, 6; 19:5; 23:1; 1:1, 7; 5; 21:5; Watts (1753, 4:356); cf. *The Windham Herald*, April 15, 1797, 4. Such examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely; see, e.g., Morrison (2002).
 - 8 Hamilton immigrated to America in 1773 at the age of 18. Jefferson was in France from 1785 to 1789, and Adams was in Europe, with a brief interruption, from 1778 to 1788.
 - 9 Many of these individuals are discussed in Mark David Hall (2013).
 - 10 For discussion of a wider range of founders see Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, eds. (2004), containing essays about George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Witherspoon, Benjamin Franklin, James Wilson, George Mason, and the Carrolls; Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, eds. (2009), containing essays about Abigail Adams, Samuel Adams, Oliver Ellsworth, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry, John Jay, Thomas Paine, Edmund Randolph, Benjamin Rush, Roger Sherman, and Mercy Otis Warren; and Dreisbach and Hall, eds. (2014), which includes eight thematic essays and profiles of John Dickinson, Isaac Backus, John Leland, Elias Boudinot, Gouverneur Morris, and John Hancock. For an extensive documentary history of religious liberty and church–state relations in the founding era, see Dreisbach and Hall, eds. (2009).
 - 11 Lambert (2003, 176), quoting and applying to Americans a deistic conception of God offered by J.C.D. Clark in *English Society, 1688–1832* (1985, 279–80).

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