

A COMPILATION  
OF TEXTS RELATED TO THE  
HISTORY OF  
CHRISTIANITY  
IN AMERICA

*Faith of Freedom:  
A Survey of the History of Christianity in America*

Jan-Feb 2019  
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## INTRODUCTION

The set of texts compiled here are reproduced from original sources, and are presented as a companion to the discussions and lessons in class. The reader should be able to gain insight to the subject and themes of each class by reading the selections. These accounts highlight the beliefs and ideas of numerous Christians throughout America's history from the 1600s to the modern era. The texts come from individuals across various walks of life and different convictions of Christian faith, and are included because of their relevance and significance to the class material. The inclusion of certain texts does not mean that the teachers promote or endorse any of the ideas expressed.

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# CLASS 1: European Reformation & Expansion

## ➤ Opening Statement of the First Charter of the Virginia Company (1606)

*With this document, King James I authorized a group of British entrepreneurs to undertake a settlement in 'The New World' for the purpose of discovery and commercial opportunity. However, the beginning of the charter frames this as a Christian mission.*

We, greatly commending and graciously accepting of their Desires for the Furtherance of so noble a Work, which may, by the Providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the Glory of His Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God, and may in time bring the Infidels and Savages, living in those Parts, to human Civility, and to a settled and quiet Government...

## ➤ Hymn of the Huron Indians, written by French Missionary Jean Brebeuf (1642)

*French settler Jean Brebeuf was among the most successful Catholic missionaries in the early days of European expansion into America. His conciliatory and respectful attitude toward native peoples helped him form a thriving Christian community among the Huron Indians. This hymn about Christ's birth, originally written in the Huron language, incorporates native cultural imagery.*

Within a lodge of broken bark  
The tender babe was found,  
A ragged robe of rabbit skin  
Enwrapp'd His beauty round;  
But as the hunter braves drew night,  
The angel song rang loud and high –  
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,  
In excelsis gloria.

O children of the forest free,  
O sons of Manitou,  
The Holy Child of earth and Heav'n  
Is born today for you.  
Come kneel before the radiant Boy,  
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy –  
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,  
In excelsis gloria.

## CLASS 2: Puritan Life and Faith

- Excerpt from the sermon “A Model of Christian Charity” by John Winthrop, while on board the ship Arbella en route to the Massachusetts Bay Colony (1630)

*Determined to escape the pressures and errors of the Church of England, John Winthrop and the Puritans foresaw the historical significance of their establishment of their colony. Within his moral exhortation to his fellow-travelers is a declaration of a biblical identity - contemporary Israelites crossing over the sea on their way to a land for their possession. The call to be a ‘city upon a hill’ is a lasting image which suggests that present and future generations would judge the validity of their religious claims upon their success as a Christian community.*

...Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck, and to provide for our posterity, is to follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others’ necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others’ conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as His own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly we have been acquainted with. We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, “May the Lord make it like that of New England.” For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God’s sake. We shall shame the faces of many of God’s worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.

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

Therefore let us choose life, that we and our seed may live, by obeying His voice and cleaving to Him, for He is our life and our prosperity.

## CLASS 3: The 'Great Awakening'

- A personal account of hearing a George Whitefield sermon at Middletown, Connecticut, by local farmer Nathan Cole (1740)

*In the early 1700s, Anglican Minister George Whitefield was perhaps the most famous person in America. Known for his dynamic sermons which called his hearers to a personal relationship with God, Whitefield drew enormous crowds on his preaching tours along the eastern seaboard of the American colonies. Two anecdotal, humorous accounts are presented here to highlight the immensity of Whitefield's appeal.*

Now it pleased God to send Mr. Whitefield into this land; and my hearing of his preaching at Philadelphia, like one of the Old apostles, and many thousands flocking to hear him preach the Gospel, and great numbers were converted to Christ; I felt the Spirit of God drawing me by conviction, longed to see and hear him, and wished he would come this way. And I soon heard he was come to New York and the Jerseys and great multitudes flocking after him under great concern for their Souls and many converted which brought on my concern more and more hoping soon to see him but next I heard he was at Long Island, then at Boston, and next at Northampton.

Then one morning all on a Sudden, about 8 or 9 o'clock there came a messenger and said Mr. Whitefield preached at Hartford and Weathersfield yesterday and is to preach at Middletown this morning [October 23, 1740] at ten of the Clock. I was in my field at Work. I dropt my tool that I had in my hand and ran home and run through my house and bade my wife get ready quick to go and hear Mr. Whitefield preach at Middletown, and run to my pasture for my horse with all my might fearing that I should be too late to hear him. I brought my horse home and soon mounted and took my wife up and went forward as fast as I thought the horse could bear, and when my horse began to be out of breath, I would get down and put my wife on the Saddle and bid her ride as fast as she could and not Stop or Slack for me except I bad her, and so I would run until I was much out of breath, and then mount my horse again, and so I did several times to favour my horse, we improved every moment to get along as if we were fleeing for our lives, all the while fearing we should be too late to hear the Sermon, for we had twelve miles to ride double in little more than an hour and we went round by the upper housen parish...

...We went down in the Stream; I heard no man speak a word all the way three miles but every one pressing forward in great haste and when we got to the old meeting house there was a great multitude; it was said to be 3 or 4000 of people assembled together, we got off from our horses and shook off the dust, and the ministers were then coming to the meeting house. I turned and looked towards the great river and saw the ferry boats running swift forward and forward bringing over loads of people; the oars rowed nimble and quick, every thing men horses and boats seemed to be struggling for life; the land and banks over the river looked black with people and horses all along the 12 miles. I saw no man at work in his field, but all seemed to be gone.

When I saw Mr. Whitefield come upon the Scaffold he looked almost angelical, a young, slim slender youth before some thousands of people with a bold undaunted countenance, and my hearing how God was with him every where as he came along it solumnized my mind, and put me into a trembling fear before he began to preach; for he looked as if he was Cloathed with authority from the Great God, and a sweet solemn solemnity sat upon his brow. And my hearing him preach gave me a heart wound; by Gods blessing my old foundation was broken up, and I saw that my righteousness would not save me; then I was convinced of the doctrine of Election and went right to quarrelling with God about it, because all that I could do would not save me; and he had decreed from Eternity who should be saved and who not.

➤ An account of the dramatic effects of Whitfield's Preaching, from the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (1739)

In 1739 arriv'd among us from England the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, who had made himself remarkable there as an itinerant Preacher. He was at first permitted to preach in some of our Churches; but the Clergy taking a Dislike to him, soon refus'd him their Pulpits and he was oblig'd to preach in the Fields. The Multitudes of all Sects and Denominations that attended his Sermons were enormous and it was [a] matter of Speculation to me who was one of the Number, to observe the extraordinary Influence of his Oratory on his Hearers, and how much they admir'd and respected him, notwithstanding his common Abuse of them, by assuring them they were naturally half Beasts and half Devils. It was wonderful to see the Change soon made in the Manners of our Inhabitants; from being thoughtless or indifferent about Religion, it seem'd as if all the World were growing Religious; so that one could not walk thro' the Town in an Evening without Hearing Psalms sung in different Families of every Street.

Mr. Whitefield, in leaving us, went preaching all the Way thro' the Colonies to Georgia. The Settlement of that Province had lately been begun, but instead of being made with hardy industrious Husbandmen accustomed to Labor, the only People fit for such an Enterprise, it was with Families of broken Shopkeepers and other insolvent Debtors, many of indolent and idle habits, taken out of the Jails, who being set down in the Woods, unqualified for clearing Land, and unable to endure the Hardships of a new Settlement, perished in Numbers, leaving many helpless Children unprovided for. The Sight of their miserable Situation inspired the benevolent Heart of Mr. Whitefield with the Idea of building an Orphan House there, in which they might be supported and educated. Returning northward, he preach'd up this Charity, and made large Collections; – for his Eloquence had a wonderful Power over the Hearts and Purses of his Hearers, of which I myself was an Instance...

...I happened soon after to attend one of his Sermons, in the Course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a Collection, and I silently resolv'd he should get nothing from me. I had in my Pocket a Handful of Copper Money, three or four silver Dollars, and five Pistoles [Spanish coins] in Gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the Coppers. Another Stroke of his Oratory made me ashamed of that, and determin'd me to give the Silver; and he finish'd so admirably, that I emptied my Pocket wholly into the Collector's Dish, Gold and all. At this Sermon there was also one of our Club, who being of my Sentiments respecting the Building in Georgia, and suspecting a Collection might be intended, had by Precaution emptied his Pockets before he came from home; towards the Conclusion of the Discourse, however, he felt a strong Desire to give, and apply'd to a Neighbor who stood near him to borrow some Money for the Purpose. The Application was unfortunately to perhaps the only Man in the Company who had the firmness not to be affected by the Preacher. His Answer was, At any other time, Friend Hopkinson, I would lend to thee freely; but not now; for thee seems to be out of thy right Senses.

## CLASS 4: Faith During the American Revolution

- Excerpts from a speech delivered by Patrick Henry to the Virginia House of Burgesses (1775)

*This speech, most famous for its climactic line, came shortly after the British had marched on Concord, and helped to initiate Virginia's entrance into the Revolutionary War. Henry calls for battle using biblical language and on the grounds of a 'God of Nature,' who is on America's side in the fight.*

...There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free, if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained, we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

... Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us [2 Chron 32:8]. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone [Eccl 9:11]; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace but there is no peace [Jer 6:14]. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle?[Matt 20:6] What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

- A letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association, Connecticut (1802)

*This correspondence, which provides Jefferson's commentary on the meaning of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, describes the effect of that statement as creating a 'wall of separation' between the government and established religion.*

Gentlemen,

The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist association, give me the highest satisfaction. My duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, & in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.

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

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection & blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for yourselves & your religious association, assurances of my high respect & esteem.



## CLASS 5: Protestant Growth on the Frontier

- An account of the ‘Cane Ridge’ Revival, from the Autobiography of Methodist minister Peter Cartwright (1856)

*The brief excerpt here, which only just touches on the events and effects of the most famous ‘camp-meeting’ revival in American history, describes the dynamic effect of the revival atmosphere on the western frontier of the United States.*

Somewhere between 1800 and 1801, in the upper part of Kentucky, at a memorable place called “Cane Ridge,” there was appointed a sacramental meeting by some of the Presbyterian ministers, at which meeting, seemingly unexpected by ministers or people, the mighty power of God was displayed in a very extraordinary manner; many were moved to tears, and bitter and loud crying for mercy. The meeting was protracted for weeks. Ministers of almost all denominations flocked in from far and near. The meeting was kept up by night and day. Thousands heard of the mighty work, and came on foot, on horseback, in carriages and wagons. It was supposed that there were in attendance at times during the meeting from twelve to twenty-five thousand people. Hundreds fell prostrate under the mighty power of God, as men slain in battle. Stands were erected in the woods from which preachers of different Churches proclaimed repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and it was supposed, by eye and ear witnesses, that between one and two thousand souls were happily and powerfully converted to God during the meeting. It was not unusual for one, two, three, and four to seven preachers to be addressing the listening thousands at the same time from the different stands erected for the purpose. The heavenly fire spread in almost every direction. It was said, by truthful witnesses, that at times more than one thousand persons broke into loud shouting all at once, and that the shouts could be heard for miles around.

From this camp-meeting, for so it ought to be called, the news spread through all the Churches, and through all the land, and it excited great wonder and surprise; but it kindled a religious flame that spread all over Kentucky and through many other states...

➤ Records from the American Bible Society (1816 / 1865)

*The first of two records here is from the 1816 constitution of the American Bible Society, a voluntary association formed to distribute Bibles to the impoverished Western settlements. The second record is a report on the success of the society's activities in providing Bibles to soldiers during the Civil War.*

1. This society shall be known by the name of the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, of which the sole object shall be, to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scripture without note or comment. The only copies in the English language to be circulated by the Society, shall be of the version now in common use [King James Version].

2. ...The effect of this measure was very great. Steps were immediately taken by Agents and auxiliaries all over the country to supply the soldiers in companies and regiments, at their places of rendezvous, and in their encampments at the seat of war. The demand for books became very large, in one single month being something over 125,000 volumes, and making the entire number in the course of the year far beyond any former issues of this Society...It was the desire of the Board, nobly seconded by the auxiliaries throughout the country, that no soldier willing to receive one should go to the battlefield without a copy of the Word of God.

...the Managers have as far as possible kept an eye upon the books thus distributed, and sought information as to the effects produced. Although some of the books, like the seed which in sowing broadcast falls by the wayside, may return no fruit, yet on the whole, satisfactory evidence has been given that the effect was most salutary. They have been eagerly received, and for the most part carefully preserved and diligently read. Such is the testimony of Agents of this Society, chaplains in the Army, and pious officers who have taken an interest in supplying their men. One Agent writes, that "when in a camp it was known that he had Testaments in a basket to distribute, he was surrounded so that he could scarcely move till they were gone. In a tent, some men, for want of something to do, were playing cards; but as soon as they found that he had Testaments, they ceased reading their books [the cards] and began to read his."...Pious soldiers have persisted in reading their books uniformly and offering prayer on retiring at night, and the example has been blessed to the awakening and conversion of the ungodly messmates. Many soldiers, after reading the Testament during their lives, have died clasping it in their hands, or have sent it home, after being pierced with a ball, as a memento, to their friends. It is the testimony of many that there has been more reading of the Scriptures in the country during the past year than was ever known before, and that many began the practice in camp who had previously been strangers to it.

## CLASS 6: The Restoration Movement

### ➤ Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery (1804)

*The Springfield Presbytery became one of first expressions of the Restoration Movement in the early 1800s. The Presbytery withdrew itself from the Kentucky Synod of the Presbyterian Church in 1803 and in the following document dissolved itself based on principles such as the singularity of Christ's Church, Bible Authority for church governance and practice, and church autonomy.*

The Presbytery of Springfield sitting at Caneridge, in the county of Bourbon, being, through a gracious Providence, in more than ordinary bodily health, growing in strength and size daily; and in perfect soundness and composure of mind; but knowing that it is appointed for all delegated bodies once to die; and considering that the life of every such body is very uncertain, do make and ordain this our last Will and Testament, in manner and form following, viz.:

**Imprimis.** We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

**Item.** We will that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage, and his name one.

**Item.** We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

**Item.** We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world. And let none henceforth take this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

**Item.** We will, that the church of Christ resume her native right of internal government,—try her candidates for the ministry, as to their soundness in the faith, acquaintance with experimental religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but Christ speaking in them. We will, that the church of Christ look up to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; and that she resume her primitive right of trying those who say they are apostles, and are not.

**Item.** We will, that each particular church, as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher, and support him by a free-will offering, without a written call or subscription—admit members—remove offenses; and never henceforth delegate her right of government to any man or set of men whatever.

**Item.** We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell.

**Item.** We will, that preachers and people cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less; and while they behold the signs of the times, look up, and confidently expect that redemption draweth nigh.

**Item.** We will, that our weak brethren, who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king, and wot not what is now become of it, betake themselves to the Rock of Ages, and follow Jesus for the future.

**Item.** We will, that the Synod of Kentucky examine every member who may be suspected of having departed from the Confession of Faith, and suspend every such suspected heretic immediately, in order that the oppressed may go free, and taste the sweets of Gospel liberty.

**Item.** We will, that Ja-----[name omitted], the author of two letters lately published in Lexington, be encouraged in his zeal to destroy partyism. We will, moreover, that our past conduct be examined into by all who may have correct information; but let foreigners beware of speaking evil of things which they know not.

**Item.** Finally we will, that all our sister bodies read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late.

**Witnesses**

ROBERT MARSHALL,  
JOHN THOMPSON,  
RICHARD M'NEMAR,  
JOHN DUNLAVY,  
B. W. STONE &  
DAVID PURVIANCE

## CLASS 7: 'Outsider' Forms of Christianity

### ➤ Excerpts from the Lectures of William Miller (1836)

*William Miller gained national attention and a widespread following of "Millerites" following his stated predictions of the definite time for Christ's Second Coming. In the following excerpt from the introduction of his lectures on the topic in 1836, Miller argues that biblical prophecy is both literal and calculable, and using the biblically recorded visions of Daniel and John (Revelation), predicts a 2,300-year period before the return of Christ. His prediction placed the Second Coming in 1843.*

...There are two important points to which all prophecy seems to centre, like a cluster of grapes upon its stem – the first and second coming of Christ; the first coming to proclaim the gospel, set up his kingdom, suffer for sinners, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. His second coming, to which the ardent faith and pious hope of the tried and tempted child of God centers, is for complete redemption of sin, for the justification and glorification promised to all those who look for his appearing, the destruction of the wicked and mystical Babylon, the abomination of the whole earth.

His first coming was as a man, his human nature being only visible. He comes first, like the "first man of the earth, earthy;" his second coming is "the Lord from heaven." His first coming was literally according to the prophecies. And so we may safely infer will be his second appearance, according to the Scriptures...[W]hy not suppose that all the prophecies concerning his second coming will be as literally accomplished as the former! Can any man show a single reason why it will not? If this be true, we can obtain much light by reading the Scriptures. We are there informed of the manner of his second coming – "suddenly, in the clouds, in like manner as he ascended;" the majesty of his coming – "on a great white throne, with power and great glory, and all his saints with him;" the object of his coming – "as the Ancient of Days, to send his angels into the four winds of heaven, gather his elect, raise the righteous dead, change the righteous living, chain Satan, destroy anti-Christ, the wicked and all those who destroy the earth, judge, justify and glorify his people, cleanse his church, present her to his Father, live and reign with her on the new heavens and new earth," the form of the old having passed away.

The time when these things shall take place is also specified, by some of the prophets, unto 2300 days, (meaning years)...The signs of the times are also given when we may know, he is near, even at the door...

If I have erred in my exposition of the prophecies, the time, being so near at hand, will soon expose my folly; but if I have the truth on the subjects treated on in these pages, how important the era in which we live! What vast and important events must soon be realized! And how necessary that every individual be prepared that that day may not come upon them unawares, while they are surfeited with the cares and riches of this life, and the day overtake them as a thief!

➤ Excerpts from ‘A Plea for the West’ by Lyman Beecher (1835)

*Shortly after becoming President of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, OH, Congregational Church Minister Lyman Beecher wrote this short tract which argued that the ‘religious and political destiny’ of the United States hinged upon the spread of Protestant Christian faith and education in the western territories. The major threat to this divine mandate was the growing population and influence of Catholics. Much of his argument in this text expresses the anti-Catholic views of many Americans during the era.*

...But if this nation is, in the providence of God, destined to lead the way in the moral and political emancipation of the world, it is time she understood her high calling, and were harnessed for the work. For mighty causes, like floods from distant mountains, are rushing with accumulating power, to their consummation of good or evil, and soon our character and destiny will be stereotyped forever.

...For the Spirit of God is with the churches of the West, and pious and talented young men are there in great numbers, willing, desiring, impatient to consecrate themselves to the glorious work. If we possessed the accommodations and the funds, we might easily send out a hundred ministers a year, a thousand ministers in ten years, around each of whom schools would arise, and instructors multiply, and churches spring up, and revivals extend, and all the elements of civil and religious prosperity abound.

...But if, upon examination, it should appear that three-fourths of the foreign emigrants whose accumulating tide is rolling in upon us, are, through the medium of their religion and priesthood, as entirely accessible to the control of the potentates of Europe as if they were an army of soldiers...then indeed should we have just occasion to apprehend danger to our liberties. It would be the union of church and state in the midst of us. The church and the state both in Europe, and the pliant colonial church here...

...There is another point of dissimilarity of still greater importance. The opinions of the Protestant clergy are congenial with liberty, they are chosen by the people who have been educated as freemen, and they are dependent on them for patronage and support. The Catholic system is adverse to liberty, and the clergy to a great extent are dependent on foreigners opposed to the principles of our government, for patronage and support.

...It is to the political claims and character of the Catholic religion, and its church and state alliance with the political and ecclesiastical governments of Europe hostile to liberty, and the tendency upon our republican institutions of flooding the nation suddenly with emigrants of this description...that we call the attention of the people of this nation. Did the Catholics regard themselves only as one of many denominations of Christians, entitled only to equal rights and privileges, there would be no such cause for apprehension while they peaceably sustained themselves by their own arguments and well doing. But if Catholics are taught to believe that their church is the only church of Christ, out of whose inclosure none can be saved, that none may read the Bible but by permission of the priesthood and no one be permitted to understand it and worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, that heresy is a capital offence not to be tolerated, but punished by the civil power with disfranchisement, death and confiscation of goods, that the pope and the councils of the church are infallible, and her rights of ecclesiastical jurisdiction universal...enforced by the civil power, that to the pope belongs the right of interference with the political concerns of nations, enforced by his authority over the consciences of Catholics... if these things are so, is it invidious and is it superfluous to call the attention of the nation to the bearing of such a denomination upon our civil and religious institutions and equal rights? It is the right of SELF-PRESERVATION, and the denial of it is TREASON. Or the INFATUATION OF FOLLY.

## CLASS 8: Churches in the Civil War

- An argument from ‘Scriptural and Statistical Views in Favor of Slavery’, by Virginia Baptist minister Thornton Stringfellow (1856)

*In the years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, many Churches - both individual congregations and larger denominations - were split over the issue of slavery. A major complication of this issue was the attempt for both sides in the debate to invoke the Bible in defense of their position. This passage, and the one that follows, exemplify the competing views of Scripture from both perspectives.*

The very God that said to [the Israelites], they should love him supremely, and their neighbors as themselves (Lev. 19:18) said to them also, “of the heathen that are round about you, thou shalt buy bond-men and bond-women, and they shall be your possession, and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your bond-men forever.” (Lev. 25:44-46) Now, to suppose that Jesus Christ left his disciples to find out, without a revelation, that slavery must be abolished, as a natural consequence from the fact that when God established the relation of master and servant under the law, is...making Jesus to presume largely upon the intensity of their intellect, that they would be able to spy out a discrepancy in the law of Moses, which God himself never saw...

- An argument from ‘The Guilt of Slavery’, by Christian Abolitionist George Cheever (1860)

...It is averred that Christ’s own silence on the subject of this sin gives consent to it. Christ was silent in regard to the sin of sodomy, in regard to infanticide, in regard to idolatry; and by this method of reasoning, not only is the law of God against these crimes abolished, and the crimes themselves made innocent by such silence, but he that speaks against them, when Christ did not, is himself guilty of a presumptuous sin, and may think himself happy if he is not struck with some divine judgment.

Now, dreadful as the blasphemy against the divine inspiration of the Old Testament has been, in asserting that slavery was sanctioned of God there, the blasphemy against Christ is worse, in asserting that the cast off vices under God’s reprobation in the law of Moses and the prophets have been taken up, endorsed, patronized and received to Christian communion and credit in the teachings of Christ and the apostles...

➤ Abraham Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural Address as President of the United States(1865)

*Despite the impending victory of the Union over the Secessionists in the Civil War, the tone of Lincoln's inaugural speech was solemn and subdued. This address, replete with Biblical allusions, is a deep reflection upon the Providence of God in the affairs of men. Contrary to the ideas of both North and South who deemed that God was on their side, Lincoln conceives of the war as God's punishment upon the whole nation.*

Fellow countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.



## CLASS 9: African-American Religious Experience

- Excerpt from a letter on the state of the Goose Creek, SC parish, by Anglican Minister Francis Le Jau (1709)

*Even from the earliest days of colonial America, there were signs of African-American acceptance of Christianity, and willingness by slave-masters to accept them into fellowship. In this letter, one church leader describes his evangelization of Negro slaves, confronting both the spiritual benefit and perceived risk of such action.*

...On Sunday next I design God willing to baptize two very sensible and honest Negro Men whom I have kept upon trial these two Years. Several others have spoken to me also; I do nothing too hastily in that respect. I instruct them and must have the consent of their Masters with a good Testimony and proof of their honest life and sober Conversation: Some Masters in my parish are very well satisfied with my Proceedings in that respect: others do not seem to be so; yet they have given over opposing my design openly; it is to be hoped the good Example of the one will have an influence over the others. I must do the Justice to my Parishioners that tho' many Young Gentlemen are Masters of Great Estates, they and almost all the heads of all our Neighboring families are and Example of Sobriety, honest & Zeal for the Service of the Church to all the Province.

To remove all pretence from the Adult Slaves I shall baptize of their being free on that Account, I have thought it fit to require first their consent to this following declaration *You declare in the Presence of God and before this Congregation that you do not ask for the holy baptism out of any design to free yourself from the Duty and Obedience you owe to your Master while you live, but meerly for the good of Your Soul and to partake of the Graces and Blessings promised to the members of the Church of Jesus Christ.*

➤ Excerpts from 'Letter From Birmingham Jail', by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963)

*Having been jailed for his participation in a non-violent demonstration against segregation, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. also was the subject of a public complaint issued by eight white religious leaders in the region. King's letter of response is considered the seminal expression of African-American Christian faith as the pursuit of God's justice in the world. As part of his response, King calls out white church leaders who have forsaken this sense of divine justice as integral to the message of the Gospel.*

...Beyond this, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the eighth-century prophets left their little villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns; and just as the Apostle Paul left his little village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to practically every hamlet and city of the Greco-Roman world, I too am compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my particular hometown. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider.

...Let me rush on to mention my other disappointment. I have been disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand this past Sunday in welcoming Negroes to your Baptist Church worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Springhill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say that as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say it as a minister of the gospel who loves the church, who was nurtured in its bosom, who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings, and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

I had the strange feeling when I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery several years ago that we would have the support of the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South would be some of our strongest allies. Instead, some few have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams of the past, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and with deep moral concern serve as the channel through which our just grievances could get to the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South call upon their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers say, follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother. In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sidelines and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, "Those are social issues

which the gospel has nothing to do with," and I have watched so many churches commit themselves to a completely otherworldly religion which made a strange distinction between bodies and souls, the sacred and the secular.

There was a time when the church was very powerful. It was during that period that the early Christians rejoiced when they were deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was the thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Wherever the early Christians entered a town the power structure got disturbed and immediately sought to convict them for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But they went on with the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven" and had to obey God rather than man. They were small in number but big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." They brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contest.

Things are different now. The contemporary church is so often a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. It is so often the arch supporter of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's often vocal sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If the church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authentic ring, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. I meet young people every day whose disappointment with the church has risen to outright disgust.

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are presently misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with the destiny of America. Before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson scratched across the pages of history the majestic word of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. For more than two centuries our foreparents labored here without wages; they made cotton king; and they built the homes of their masters in the midst of brutal injustice and shameful humiliation -- and yet out of a bottomless vitality our people continue to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

## CLASS 10: Rise of the Social Gospel Movement

- Excerpt from 'Christianity and the Social Crisis,' by Walter Rauschenbusch (1907)

*Increasing urbanization and industrialization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries led to a dramatic rise in social problems for the working class, such as harsh living conditions and job exploitation. Faced with these issues on a daily basis, some Christians developed new theological ideas that placed a goal not on future hope of a world beyond, but on creating a just society. In the following passage, Baptist Pastor Walter Rauschenbusch argues for this based on Jesus' teaching regarding the Kingdom of God.*

The gospel, to have full power over an age, must be the highest expression of the moral and religious truths held by that age. If it lags behind and deals in outgrown conceptions of life and duty, it will lose power over the ablest minds and the young men first, and gradually over all. In our thought today the social problems irresistibly take the lead. If the Church has no live and bold thought on this dominant question of modern life, its teaching authority on all other questions will dwindle and be despised. It cannot afford to have young men sniff the air as in a stuffy room when they enter the sphere of religious thought. When the world is in travail with a higher ideal of justice, the Church dare not ignore it if it would retain its moral leadership...

...Individualistic Christianity has almost lost sight of the great idea of the kingdom of God, which was the inspiration and centre of the thought of Jesus. Social Christianity would once more enable us to understand, the purpose and thought of Jesus and take the veil from our eyes when we read the synoptic gospels...

Jesus in his teachings alluded with surprising frequency to the use and abuse of intrusted wealth and power. In the parable of the talents and pounds he evidently meant to define all human ability and opportunity as a trust. His description of the head servant who is made confident by the continued absence of his master, tyrannizes over his subordinates, and fattens his paunch on his master's property is meant to show the temptation which besets all in authority to forget the responsibility that goes with power.

➤ Statement of Purpose for the Women's Christian Temperance Movement, by Frances Willard (1883)

*Another major outcome of the incorporation of Christianity into issues of public consciousness was the increased work of women in decrying social ills such as alcoholism.*

But to help forward the coming of Christ into all departments of life is in its last analysis, the purpose and aim of the W.C.T.U. For we believe this correlation in the New Testament religion with philanthropy, and of the church with civilization, is the perpetual miracle which furnishes the only sufficient antidote to current skepticism. Higher toward the zenith climbs the Sun of Righteousness, making circle after circle of human endeavor and achievement warm and radiant with the healing of its beams. First of all, in our gospel temperance work, this heavenly light penetrated the gloom of the individual, tempted heart...illumined its darkness, melted its hardness, made it a sweet and sunny place – a temple filled with the Holy Ghost.

...But the modern temperance movement, born of Christ's gospel and cradled at His alters, is rapidly filling one more circle of influence, wide as the widest zone of earthly weal or woe, and that is government. "The government shall be upon his shoulder," "Unto us a king is given." "He shall reign whose right it is." "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged until he hath set judgement in the earth." "For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." "Thy kingdom come, they will be done, *on earth.*" Christ shall reign, not visibly, but invisibly; not in form, but in fact; not in substance, but in essence, and the day draws nigh; Then surely the traffic in intoxicating liquors as a drink will not longer be protected by the statute book, the lawyer's plea, the affirmation of the witness, and decision of the judge...Upon those who in largest numbers love Him who has filled our hearts with peace and their homes with blessing, slowly dawns the consciousness that they may – nay, better still, *they ought* to – ask for power to help forward the coming of their Lord in government – to throw the safeguard of their prohibition ballots around those who have left the shelter of their arms only to be entrapped by the saloons that bad men legalize and set along the streets.

## CLASS 11: Intellectual Challenges & Fundamentalism

- Transcript from the Examination of W.J. Bryan by Clarence Darrow during ‘The Scopes Trial’ (1925)

*In 1925, Tennessee High School substitute teacher John Scopes was brought to trial for teaching Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection in class, a subject that had been recently outlawed by the state. ‘The Monkey Trial’ (as it came to be known) garnered national attention and was argued by two of the most high-profile legal figures of the day. At one point in the proceedings, Defense Attorney Clarence Darrow examines Prosecuting Attorney William Jennings Bryan regarding his belief in the literal interpretation and inerrancy of the Bible. The content of the interrogation was as bizarre to the courtroom setting then as it would be today.*

**Mr. Darrow**--You have given considerable study to the Bible, haven't you, Mr. Bryan? [...]

**Mr. Bryan**--Yes, I have; I have studied the Bible for about fifty years, or sometime more than that, but, of course, I have studied it more as I have become older than when I was but a boy.

**Q**--You claim that everything in the Bible should be literally interpreted?

**A**--I believe everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is given there: some of the Bible is given illustratively. For instance: "Ye are the salt of the earth." I would not insist that man was actually salt, or that he had flesh of salt, but it is used in the sense of salt as saving God's people.

**Q**--But when you read that Jonah swallowed the whale--or that the whale swallowed Jonah-- excuse me please--how do you literally interpret that?

**A**--When I read that a big fish swallowed Jonah--it does not say whale....That is my recollection of it. A big fish, and I believe it, and I believe in a God who can make a whale and can make a man and make both what He pleases.

**Q**--Now, you say, the big fish swallowed Jonah, and he there remained how long--three days-- and then he spewed him upon the land. You believe that the big fish was made to swallow Jonah?

**A**--I am not prepared to say that; the Bible merely says it was done.

**Q**--You don't know whether it was the ordinary run of fish, or made for that purpose?

**A**--You may guess; you evolutionists guess....

**Q**--You are not prepared to say whether that fish was made especially to swallow a man or not?

**A**--The Bible doesn't say, so I am not prepared to say.

**Q**--But do you believe He made them--that He made such a fish and that it was big enough to swallow Jonah?

**A**--Yes, sir. Let me add: One miracle is just as easy to believe as another

**Q**--Just as hard?

**A**--It is hard to believe for you, but easy for me. A miracle is a thing performed beyond what man can perform. When you get within the realm of miracles; and it is just as easy to believe the miracle of Jonah as any other miracle in the Bible.

**Q**--Perfectly easy to believe that Jonah swallowed the whale?

**A**--If the Bible said so; the Bible doesn't make as extreme statements as evolutionists do....

**Q**--The Bible says Joshua commanded the sun to stand still for the purpose of lengthening the day, doesn't it, and you believe it?

**A**--I do.

**Q**--Do you believe at that time the entire sun went around the earth?

**A**--No, I believe that the earth goes around the sun. [...]

**Gen. Stewart**--I want to object, your honor; it has gone beyond the pale of any issue that could possibly be injected into this lawsuit, except by imagination. I do not think the defendant has a right to conduct the examination any further and I ask your honor to exclude it. [...]

**The Court**--Mr. Bryan is willing to be examined. Go ahead.

**Mr. Darrow**--I read that years ago. Can you answer my question directly? If the day was lengthened by stopping either the earth or the sun, it must have been the earth?

**Mr. Bryan**--Well, I should say so.

**Q**-- Now, Mr. Bryan, have you ever pondered what would have happened to the earth if it had stood still?

**A**--No.

**Q**--You have not?

**A**-- No; the God I believe in could have taken care of that, Mr. Darrow.

**Q**-- I see. Have you ever pondered what would naturally happen to the earth if it stood still suddenly...Don't you know it would have been converted into molten mass of matter?

**A**--You testify to that when you get on the stand, I will give you a chance. [...]

**The Court**--Are you about through, Mr. Darrow? [...]

**Mr. Bryan**--Your honor, they have not asked a question legally and the only reason they have asked any question is for the purpose, as the question about Jonah was asked, for a chance to give this agnostic an opportunity to criticize a believer in the world of God; and I answered the question in order to shut his mouth so that he cannot go out and tell his atheistic friends that I would not answer his questions. That is the only reason, no more reason in the world.

**Gen. Malone**--Your honor on this very subject, I would like to say that I would have asked Mr. Bryan-- and I consider myself as good a Christian as he is--every question that Mr. Darrow has asked him for the purpose of bring out whether or not there is to be taken in this court a literal interpretation of the Bible, or whether, obviously, as these questions indicate, if a general and literal construction cannot be put upon the parts of the Bible which have been covered by Mr. Darrow's questions. I hope for the last time no further attempt will be made by counsel on the other side of the case, or Mr. Bryan, to say the defense is concerned at all with Mr. Darrow's particular religious views or lack of religious views. We are here as lawyers with the same right to our views. I have the same right to mine as a Christian as Mr. Bryan has to his, and we do not intend to have this case charged by Mr. Darrow's agnosticism or Mr. Bryan's brand of Christianity. (A great applause.) [...]

**Mr. Darrow**--Does the statement, "The morning and the evening were the first day," and "The morning and the evening were the second day," mean anything to you?

**Mr. Bryan**-- I do not think it necessarily means a twenty-four-hour day. [...]

**Q**--What do you consider it to be?

**A**--I have not attempted to explain it. If you will take the second chapter--let me have the book. (Examining Bible.) The fourth verse of the second chapter says: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens," the word "day" there in the very next chapter is used to describe a period. I do not see that there is any necessity for construing the words, "the evening and the morning," as meaning necessarily a twenty-four-hour day, "in the day when the Lord made the heaven and the earth."

**Q**--Then, when the Bible said, for instance, "and God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day," that does not necessarily mean twenty-four hours?

**A**--I do not think it necessarily does.

**Q**--Do you think it does or does not?

**A**--I know a great many think so.

**Q**--What do you think?

**A**--I do not think it does.

**Q**--You think those were not literal days?

**A**--I do not think they were twenty-four-hour days.

**Q**--What do you think about it?

**A**--That is my opinion--I do not know that my opinion is better on that subject than those who think it does.

**Q**--You do not think that?

**A**--No. But I think it would be just as easy for the kind of God we believe in to make the earth in six days as in six years or in 6,000,000 years or in 600,000,000 years. I do not think it important whether we believe one or the other.

**Q**--Do you think those were literal days?

**A**--My impression is they were periods, but I would not attempt to argue as against anybody who wanted to believe in literal days.

**Q**--I will read it to you from the Bible: "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." Do you think that is why the serpent is compelled to crawl upon its belly?

**A**--I believe that.

**Q**--Have you any idea how the snake went before that time?

**A**--No, sir.

**Q**--Do you know whether he walked on his tail or not?

**A**--No, sir. I have no way to know. (Laughter in audience).

**Q**--Now, you refer to the cloud that was put in heaven after the flood, the rainbow. Do you believe in that?

**A**--Read it.

**Q**--All right, Mr. Bryan, I will read it for you.

**Bryan**--Your Honor, I think I can shorten this testimony. The only purpose Mr. Darrow has is to slur at the Bible, but I will answer his question. I will answer it all at once, and I have no objection in the world, I want the world to know that this man, who does not believe in a God, is trying to use a court in Tennessee--

**Darrow**--I object to that.

**Bryan**--(Continuing) to slur at it, and while it will require time, I am willing to take it.

**Darrow**--I object to your statement. I am exempting you on your fool ideas that no intelligent Christian on earth believes.

**The Court**--Court is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.



## CLASS 12: The New Christian Right

- Excerpt from the Majority Opinion of the United States Supreme Court in the case of Engel v. Vitale, written by Justice Hugo Black (1962)

*In this Supreme Court case, a prayer written by New York state board of regents for use in schools which acknowledged 'Almighty God' was struck down as unconstitutional. The decision became the later basis for removal of ritual Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer in schools. In the majority opinion, Justice Black argues that the decision is actually consistent with the intentions of the Founding Fathers who endorsed the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment.*

It has been argued that to apply the Constitution in such a way as to prohibit state laws respecting an establishment of religious services in public schools is to indicate a hostility toward religion or toward prayer. Nothing, of course, could be more wrong. The history of man is inseparable from the history of religion. And perhaps it is not too much to say that, since the beginning of that history, many people have devoutly believed that "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." It was doubtless largely due to men who believed this that there grew up a sentiment that caused men to leave the cross-currents of officially established state religions and religious persecution in Europe and come to this country filled with the hope that they could find a place in which they could pray when they pleased to the God of their faith in the language they chose. And there were men of this same faith in the power of prayer who led the fight for adoption of our Constitution and also for our Bill of Rights with the very guarantees of religious freedom that forbid the sort of governmental activity which New York has attempted here. These men knew that the First Amendment, which tried to put an end to governmental control of religion and of prayer, was not written to destroy either. They knew, rather, that it was written to quiet well justified fears which nearly all of them felt arising out of an awareness that governments of the past had shackled men's tongues to make them speak only the religious thoughts that government wanted them to speak and to pray only to the God that government wanted them to pray to. It is neither sacrilegious nor anti-religious to say that each separate government in this country should stay out of the business of writing or sanctioning official prayers and leave that purely religious function to the people themselves and to those the people choose to look to for religious guidance.

➤ Excerpt from Listen, America!, by Jerry Falwell (1980)

*Based on what he saw was a rapid decline in biblically-based morality in American society, Baptist minister Jerry Falwell became a prominent political activist, founding 'The Moral Majority' as a powerful force which allied itself to conservative Republican policy and candidates. The following statements from the introduction to his book call on American citizens to express their moral values through voting and political involvement.*

We must reverse the trend America finds herself in today. Young people between the ages of twenty-five and forty have been born and reared in a different world than Americans of years past. The television set has been their primary baby-sitter. From the television set they have learned situation ethics and immorality—they have learned a loss of respect for human life. They have learned to disrespect the family as God has established it. They have been educated in a public-school system that is permeated with secular humanism. They have been taught that the Bible is just another book of literature. They have been taught that there are no absolutes in our world today. They have been introduced to the drug culture. They have been reared by the family and the public school in a society that is greatly void of discipline and character-building. These same young people have been reared under the influence of a government that has taught them socialism and welfarism. They have been taught to believe that the world owes them a living whether they work or not...

Every American who looks at the facts must share a deep concern and burden for our country. We are not unduly concerned when we say that there are some very dark clouds on America's horizon. I am not a pessimist, but it is indeed a time for truth. If Americans will face the truth, our nation can be turned around and can be saved from the evils and the destruction that have fallen upon every other nation that has turned its back on God.

There is no excuse for what is happening in our country. We must, from the highest office in the land right down to the shoe shine boy in the airport, have a return to biblical basics. If the Congress of our United States will take its stand on that which is right and wrong, and if our President, our judiciary system, and our state and local leaders will take their stand on holy living, we can turn this country around.

My responsibility as a preacher of the Gospel is one of influence, not of control, and that is the responsibility of each individual citizen. Through the ballot box Americans must provide for strong moral leadership at every level. If our country will get back on the track in sensibility and moral sanity, the crises that I have herein mentioned will work out in the course of time and with God's blessings. It is now time to take a stand on certain moral issues, and we can only stand if we have leaders. We must stand against the Equal Rights Amendment, the feminist revolution, and the homosexual revolution. We must have a revival in this country...

Americans have been silent much too long. We have stood by and watched as American power and influence have been systematically weakened in every sphere of the world. We are not a perfect nation, but we are still a free nation because we have the blessing of God upon us. We must continue to follow in a path that will ensure that blessing. . . .

The hope of reversing the trends of decay in our republic now lies with the Christian public in America. We cannot expect help from the liberals. They certainly are not going to call our nation back to righteousness and neither are the pornographers, the smut peddlers, and those who are corrupting our youth. Moral Americans must be willing to put their reputations, their fortunes, and their very lives on the line for this great nation of ours. Would that we had the courage of our forefathers who knew the great responsibility that freedom carries with it. Our Founding Fathers separated church and state in function, but never intended to establish a government void of God. As is evidenced by our Constitution, good people in America must exert an influence and provide a conscience and climate of morality in which it is difficult to go wrong, not difficult for people to go right in America.