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Chapter 1 : Political Sermons Of The American Founding Era, -- By: Ellis Sandoz | Galaxie Software

The early political culture of the American republic was deeply influenced by the religious consciousness of the New England preachers. Indeed, it was often through the political sermon—the "pulpit of the American Revolution"—that the political rhetoric of the period was formed, refined, and transmitted.

What had passed for pamphlets in my reading of excerpted eighteenth-century American material often turned out to be published sermons. The rule of this collection has been to reprint unannotated editions of complete sermons that would permit their authors to speak fully for themselves. The genre is the political sermon, broadly construed so as to include a few pieces never preached that are sermonic in sense and tone—that is, hortatory and relating politics to convictions about eternal verities. The chief criterion for selection of the various pieces was their intellectual interest. An effort was made to diversify viewpoints denominationally, theologically, politically, geographically, and even nationally. Since only previously published materials have been selected—that is, nothing from manuscript sources has been included—a limitation resided in the fact that the publication of sermons in America in the eighteenth century was a specialty, if not a monopoly, of New Englanders. To permit the religious perspective concerning the rise of American nationhood to have representative expression is important because a steady attention to the pulpit from to unveils a distinctive Edition: Preachers interpreted pragmatic events in terms of a political theology imbued with philosophical and revelatory learning. Their sermons also demonstrate the existence and effectiveness of a popular political culture that constantly assimilated the currently urgent political and constitutional issues to the profound insights of the Western spiritual and philosophical traditions. Religion gave birth to America, Tocqueville observed long ago. And while the role of the clergy as the philosophers of the American founding has not received great attention from students of political theory, it was abundantly clear to contemporaries. Perhaps the best insight into the role of the ministry was expressed by a participant, Edition: They oppose arbitrary rule in civil concerns from the love of freedom, as well as from a desire of guarding against its introduction into religious matters. The clergy of this colony are as virtuous, sensible and learned a set of men, as will probably be found in any part of the globe of equal size and equally populous. You have frequently remarked that though the partisans of arbitrary power will freely censure that preacher, who speaks boldly for the liberties of the people, they will admire as an excellent divine, the parson whose discourse is wholly in the opposite, and teaches, that magistrates have a divine right for doing wrong, and are to be implicitly obeyed; men professing Christianity, as if the religion of the blessed Jesus bound them tamely to part with their natural and social rights, and slavishly to bow their neck to any tyrant. Whatever the differences among them, all the sermon authors take as their reality the still familiar biblical image of Creator and creation, of fallen and sinful men, striving in a mysteriously ordered existence toward a personal salvation and an eschatological fulfillment. The relationships are variously symbolized by personal and corporate reciprocal covenants ordering individual lives, church communities, and all of society in Edition: The varieties of spiritual belief fundamental to the writers represented herein cannot be explored here, but some background can be indicated. For though our concern is with political sermons—and thus exceptional expressions of the faith of a people who looked to the eternal beyond for the perfect fulfillment of their pilgrimage through time in partnership with God—the spiritual root of that collaborative enterprise directed by Providence requires a word or two of clarification. Of course, the political background is the direct movement of disparate British colonial societies toward independent nationhood, federally organized under a Constitution that preserves the essentials of English liberty under law. It was a passage of history that involved the concerted effort of military force evinced in the Revolution and the articulation of the principles of free government; these principles inspired creation of a national community and became the grounds of a political orthodoxy called republican and constitutional government. Momentous developments crescendoed with British adoption of the Stamp Act of 1765, leading in little more than a decade to the decision for independence in 1776, which demanded eight years of fighting and

formally ended with the signing of the peace treaty in Paris in 1763. The Federal Convention in 1787 provided a barely accepted Constitution, one immediately embellished by a Bill of Rights, that became the supreme law of the land in 1789. But another strand of history accompanies, interacts with, and gives roots to this familiar progress, one that is less known and lacks the direct line of development just rehearsed. It is called the Great Awakening. There is reason to suppose that the two lines of development are intimately, even decisively, connected. Narrowly construed as occurring in the years 1730 to 1790, the Great Awakening designates the outburst of religious revival that swept the colonies in those years. Since the earthquake of 1755 Benjamin Colman alludes to in his sermon, however, there had been a quickening of religious impulses. American events could be seen as part of the general rise of religious sentiment traceable in Europe between 1700 and 1800, particularly in England, where the catalysts were the itinerant Anglican priests John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, and their compatriot George Whitefield. The great political events of the American founding, thus, have a backdrop of resurgent religion whose calls for repentance and faith plainly complement the calls to resist tyranny and constitutional corruption. Edition: James Downey has written: The theme of his preaching is that of evangelicals in every age: Its special appeal for eighteenth-century audiences lay partly in the fact that it answered an emotional need the established Church had for too long tried to ignore, and partly in the charismatic personality of the man who revived it. For each seeks to find the responsive Edition: The great cry of the awakeners was for a converted ministry, one able to revive religious communities lacking vitality and zeal, so as to make the presence of God with his people a palpable reality. Such hortatory preaching and intent were the hallmarks of the so-called New Light, or New Side, clergy, as contrasted with their opposites Old Light, Old Side ministers, who eschewed emotion and experimental religion. Many of the former, like Whitefield himself, had no church of their own but traveled the country preaching in homes and pastures or wherever they could four and five times in a day that often began before dawn. They were not always treated as welcome visitors by the established clergy, with whom serious conflict sometimes arose. It is against the experiential background of such preaching that the political teaching of the ministers of the eighteenth century is to be seen as it was powerfully displayed in crisis and revolution. From their biblical perspective, it can be said that man is a moral agent living freely in a reality that is good, coming from the hand of God: Among the chief hindrances to this life of true liberty is the oppression of men, who in service to evil deceive with untruth and impose falsehood in its place, proclaiming it to be true. Man, blessed with liberty, reason, and a Edition: The growth of virtue and perfection of being depends upon free choice, in response to divine invitation and help, in a cooperative relationship. The correlate of responsibility, liberty is most truly exercised by living in accordance with truth. Our preachers, however, understood that this gift of freedom to do right and live truly carries another possibility, rebellion and rejection, as well. This, in turn, leads to the necessity of government to coerce a degree of right living and justice from a mankind fallen from the high road of willing obedience to the loving Father. Unfortunately, coercive law can be inflicted in ways that are not merely just and conducive to truth, righteousness, and union with God, but not infrequently to their very opposites. This biblical understanding of the human condition is reflected in the most famous passage of The Federalist no. 10. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been, and ever will be pursued, until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit. The Sunday service might typically open with a prayer that lasted an hour as measured by a glass on the pulpit; it would then be turned twice during the course of the sermon. A short break for lunch would be taken, and then the preaching would continue in the afternoon. The form of Puritan Edition: The principle basic to his approach was, following Augustine and Calvin, that the Bible is reflexive in the sense of providing its own explanation of its meaning in a consistent whole. This literal meaning is to be found through use of the three methods of circumstance, collation, and application. The result of this, because of the emphases in Romans, will be a stress on justification, sanctification, and true faith. The steps in writing and delivering the sermon begin with the reading of the divine text, considered as the holy Word of God and superior to or outside of the remainder of the presentation. To read the Text distinctly out of the canonically Scripture. To give the sense and understanding of it being read by the Scripture itself. To collect a few and profitable points

of doctrine out of the naturall sense. To applie if he have the gift the doctrines rightly collected to the manners of men in a simple and plain speech. These were sermons preached annually to the governor and legislature after the election of officers. It is at least arguable that a published sermon is a mark of its excellence to begin with, whatever the occasion of its utterance. In the screening of several thousand items, the intention has been that only leading clergymen putting their best foot forward on important political matters are here represented. One index of quality is suggested by the fact that very few of the sermons preached ever were published; thus Samuel Dunbar, an Old Light minister from Stoughton, Massachusetts, Edition: Besides the election sermon, the artillery sermon was also an annual affair in Massachusetts and dealt with civic and military matters. The Thursday or Fifth-day Lecture was begun by the Reverend John Cotton in Boston in and was practiced for years; it was a popular event and was combined with Market Day for gathering and discussing matters of social and political interest. Election sermons were sometimes then repeated for a different audience. Convention sermons also were political in nature and grew out of election-day ceremonies. There were many other opportunities for political discourse, such as the annual observation of January 30 as the execution day of the king-turned-tyrant, Charles I. The century sermon of Elhanan Winchester is included here no. Days of prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving were proclaimed for particular occasions throughout the eighteenth century and even earlier. The end of the war brought a great outpouring of praise and gratitude, and four sermons, nos. The Fourth of July regularly occasioned political sermons as well as orations. The death of Washington evoked a universal grief and countless sermons extolling the character of the American Joseph; an example is that of Henry Holcombe, a Baptist, who preached in Savannah, Georgia no. Not only was such preaching widely attended, repeated, and published as tracts, but it was often reprinted in the newspapers as well. This rhetorical form expressed the philosophical mean that free government is based on liberty, and liberty is founded in truth and justice as framed by eternal laws. Republicanism and virtue were far from split apart by James Madison and his colleagues at the Federal Convention, as the clergy understood our constitutional system. For these preachers and their flocks, the two remained essentially bound together. Huntington Library of San Marino, California, for the remaining forty-eight items in the book. Personal thanks go to Marcus A. Because of two extended stays and a number of shorter visits at the Huntington Library, I owe many more debts of gratitude than I can repay here. But special thanks go to Robert Middlekauff then director and his wife Beverly for good counsel, assistance, and warm hospitality; also my gratitude is extended to Martin Ridge, who is director of research, and to Mary Wright, who supervises the Rare Book Reading Room. Among all the other helpful members of the Huntington staff, I especially thank Alan Jutzi, curator of rare books, and Tom Langen, who saw to the copying of over 4, pages of material from the rare book collection and who prepared the title-page photographs reproduced herein, except for those to nos. There can hardly be finer places to work than the Huntington Library and the American Antiquarian Society. Ritcheson, director of the Doheny Library, and his staff were helpful on more than one occasion with my work on this book. I wish also to thank several institutions for financial support of my work on this book: Liberty Fund is thanked for having the courage to undertake this large publication project and to see it through to completion. Individuals too numerous to be named here deserve thanks for rendering help great and small, but I must mention Dr. Russell, my graduate assistant during much of the preparation period for the work and later my colleague, who was of great assistance with the details. A similar word of thanks also is due my current graduate assistant, Manuel Brieske. Not least of all I hail all the librarians, those unsung heroes of a book such as this one, and most especially the cataloguers and bibliographers, for their wonderful, anonymous labors: Lastly, my family is again thanked for continuing to tolerate my strange habits and for helping me look up this or that and to read proof as time allowed and as I could catch them: My wife Alverne showed hitherto unsuspected skill as bibliographer and chief assistant in organizing a mass of material. My appreciation of them rises far above mere gratitude. I hope all these benefactors and collaborators, having helped me with this project, will cherish the book and find their expectations for it at least partly fulfilled. The only other substantive addition to the original is a note identifying the seventeenth-century provenance of Item 24, entitled Defensive Arms

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Vindicated at pages 16, herein. Demand for the book has been steady over the years since first publication in 1965. This is gratifying to the editor, and doubtlessly reflects the importance of the subject matter and intrinsic interest of the material itself.

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Chapter 2 : Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: " | Liberty Fund

A collection of scholarly works about individual liberty and free markets. A project of Liberty Fund, Inc. A two volume collection of sermons written between by people such as Jonathan Mayhew, John Wesley, Moses Mather, John Witherspoon, Richard Price, Jonathan Edwards, and Noah Webster.

More by Kopel on Protestantism and Freedom. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations. The date when the revolution of hearts and minds began was January 30, 1689, and the leader of the incipient revolt was the Congregationalist minister Jonathan Mayhew, who preached what was perhaps the most important sermon in American history. That sermon was only one highlight of a life dedicated to human rights. Like most New Englanders, Mayhew was a Congregationalist, an intellectual descendant of the English puritans. In their view, separation of church and state was critical, in the sense that the church must be free of control by the state. In the rival Church of England, the state church, priests were under the authority of bishops, who were under the authority of the king and Parliament. By contrast, individual Congregational churches were accountable to no higher human power, not even an assembly of their fellow churches. Within a Congregational church there was a careful balance of power between the minister and the congregation, so that neither could dominate the other. The congregants knew the Bible very well, and could discipline ministers who misused it. Three years after graduating from Harvard, the premier training ground for the Congregational clergy, Jonathan Mayhew was called to the pulpit by the congregation of the Old West Church in Boston. Right from the start, he was a theological liberal. Congregationalists had always emphasized the importance of the individual in religion. In "Seven Sermons," preached in and published thereafter, Mayhew took Congregational principles to their logical conclusion, arguing that everyone has the right and duty to make personal judgments in matters of religion and conscience. Calvin agreed with the orthodox Roman Catholic theory of original sin--that man was inherently depraved. Mayhew rejected these Calvinist principles in favor of modern, Enlightenment views. Indeed, he even rejected the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity that the Godhead is composed of three persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He was one of the most influential forerunners of Unitarianism in America. Yet he always considered himself a Congregationalist, as did the members of the Old West Church, which could have dismissed him if they chose. And Harvard was so impressed with Mayhew that he was named a lecturer in 1734. His insistence on the importance of the individual conscience became not only a Unitarian doctrine but also a cornerstone of broader American cultural beliefs about religious freedom. Mayhew is most famous, however, for preaching the principles of political freedom. His preaching appealed to theological conservatives as well as theological liberals--indeed, to persons of all religious persuasions, all over America, and abroad. January 30, 1689, was the centennial of the execution of Charles I of England, condemned by Parliament for treason and other crimes. The New England Congregationalist ministers--whose Puritans ancestors had helped to execute Charles I--generally tried to ignore this topic in their own January 30 sermons. Adams remembered, "It was read by everybody; celebrated by friends, and abused by enemies It spread an universal alarm against the authority of Parliament. It excited a general and just apprehension, that bishops, and dioceses, and churches, and priests, and tithes, were to be imposed on us by Parliament. A tyrannical government was like a father trying to murder his children, and must not be obeyed. Mayhew expounded the natural law theory of government: The Power of this almighty King is limited by law--by the eternal laws of truth, wisdom, and equity, and the everlasting tables of right reason. Therefore, "disobedience is not only lawful but glorious" if it is against rulers who "enjoin things that are inconsistent with the demands of God. Its central idea is that the Christian duty to submit to governments that govern justly creates a correlative duty to resist and overthrow governments that are tyrannical, since unjust government is the very antithesis of true Christian government. Like most other Congregationalist ministers, Mayhew had studied Locke at Harvard, and considered him a Christian intellectual ally. Particularly among adherents of the Church of England, there

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were some Christian authoritarians who warned that a person who resisted tyranny would be damned. To the contrary, Mayhew announced, a people must use the means "which God has put into their power, for mutual and self-defense. And it would be highly criminal in them, not to make use of this means. It would be stupid tameness, and unaccountable folly!" It would "be more rational to suppose that they that did NOT resist, than that they who did, would receive to themselves damnation. To resist tyranny was "self-defense," which was required by God, because tyranny was not real government. This was a premise for revolution. In eighteenth-century America, notable sermons were often printed and sold all over the colonies, and overseas. As Adams recalled, Mayhew "had raised a great reputation both in Europe and America, by the publication of a volume of seven sermons in the reign of King George the Second, , and by many other writings, particularly a sermon in , on the 30th of January. Mayhew! This transcendent genius threw all the weight of his great fame into the scale of his country in , and maintained it there with zeal and ardor till his death. Five years later, he was a staunch advocate for American interests during the Stamp Act crisis. It was then that he coined the phrase "no taxation without representation. As a result, local Anglican churches tended to be controlled by wealthy land-owners, who enjoyed their independence from British oversight. Fears that the King was preparing to send bishops to America, to administer the Anglican church and interfere with other Protestant churches, sent Americans into an ecumenical rage. Adams said that no issue was more important in making common people question the authority of Parliament than the controversy over American bishops. As he explained, "The objection was not merely to the office of a bishop, even though that was to be dreaded, but to the authority of Parliament, on which it could be founded. But the promise had little credibility, because bishops in England exercised extensive temporal power and were plainly agents of the government. A Thanksgiving Discourse Preached at the Desire of the West Church in Boston" that recalled American fears that Stamp Act revenues were "partly intended to maintain a standing army of bishops, and other ecclesiastics. Mayhew borrowed the proto-Second Amendment philosophy to make a point about freedom of religion that would later become part of the First Amendment: A standing army of soldiers and a standing army of bishops threatened liberty in the same way, by centralizing and monopolizing power. It is not a coincidence that the constitutional amendment guaranteeing freedom of religion was placed adjacent to the constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to bear arms. He warned, however, that Americans would always need to be vigilant about their liberties, for "Power is of a grasping, encroaching nature! Power aims at extending itself, and operating according to mere will, where-ever it meets with no balance, check, controul, or opposition of any kind. Because the man had slept, it was impossible to uproot the tares without also uprooting the wheat. To Mayhew, it was obvious that the kingdom of heaven was a kingdom of rights and liberty. He recalled that in his youth he had studied Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero, and other ancients, and among the moderns, had liked Algernon Sidney, John Milton, and John Locke, all advocates of individual freedom. Once more then, Hail! Celestial maid, the daughter of God, and, excepting his Son, the first-born of heaven! American liberties were like an oak tree that grows stronger roots and broader branches after being buffeted by "storms and tempests. He died six weeks later, at the age of 46, an inspired and devoted servant of Liberty. Hatch, "The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Yale University Press, Jonathan Mayhew, "Sermons," ed. Stout, "The New England Soul: Oxford University Press, His website is www. Follow Dave on Twitter. Twice-daily web newspaper collecting articles from Kopel and those whom he follows on Twitter. Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of the Independence Institute or as an attempt to influence any election or legislative action. Please send comments to Independence Institute, East 16th Ave.

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