

Declarations and Evidences of Christian Faith
in America's
Colonial Charters,
State Constitutions,
and other Historical Documents
during over 375 years of American History:
1606 to 1982

All Scripture quotations below are from the Kings James Version Bible, with Deity capitalized.

“Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face.”
Psalm 89:14

“... there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”

“For he [the civil ruler] is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Romans 13:1,4 [God's intention for proper role of government]

“... governors,... sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.”
1 Peter 2:14 [God's intended purpose for properly functioning civil government]

“... righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.” Psalm 97:2

“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” 2 Samuel 23:2 [true for all men, for all nations, for all time]

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” Proverb 14:34

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Psalm 9:17

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD;...” Psalm 33:12

Presented in four periods of American History:

- 1. Pre-Revolutionary War (1606 to 1775)**
- 2. Revolutionary War to signing of U.S. Constitution (1775 to 1787)**
- 3. U.S. Constitution to War Between the States (1787 to 1865)**
- 4. Post-War Between the States (1865 to 1982)**

Declarations and Evidences of Christian Faith in America's
Colonial Charters, State Constitutions, and other Historical Documents
during over 375 years of American History: 1606 to 1982

Compiled by Steve Lefemine

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All excerpts below are taken from *America's God and Country Encyclopedia Of Quotations*,
by William J. Federer, 1994 (page numbers listed in brackets at end of excerpt), except as noted.

Declarations and Evidences of Christian Faith in America's Colonial Charters, State Constitutions, and other Historical Documents during over 375 years of American History: 1606 to 1982

Let any man that will, who foolishly claims that America's historical record is not replete with evidence that the constituting of civil government in America was founded principally upon the Rock of Jesus Christ, take the time to read the excerpts below, and thereby become convinced of the errancy of his former historically unsustainable prejudice.

It has oft been said, almost at times like some vacuous incantation, "Politics is the art of compromise." Perhaps so for the worldly pursuit of "Politics." However, "Christian statesmanship" on the other hand, is the God-ordained ministry and holy undertaking, of establishing justice in the gate."

"Justice and judgment are the habitation [foundation] of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." Psalm 89:14

Steve Lefemine
Columbia, SC
Memorial Day - May 31, 2004

"... there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." "For he [the civil ruler] is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Romans 13:1,4 [God's intention for proper role of government]

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1. Pre-Revolutionary War (1606 to 1775)
5. Revolutionary War to signing of U.S. Constitution (1775 to 1787)
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Arkansas Supreme Court (1905), was quoted by Supreme Court Justice David J. Brewer in his lecture, entitled, "The United States a Christian Nation."

Congress of the United States of America (March 3, 1931), adopted *The Star Spangled Banner* as our National Anthem

Congress of the United States of America (July 20, 1956), official national motto of the U.S.

Congress of the United States of America (October 4, 1982), declared 1983 the *Year of the Bible*

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1. Pre-Revolutionary War (1606 to 1775)

First Charter of Virginia (April 10, 1606), was granted by King James I to those who would endeavor to settle “Jamestown Colony” in Virginia:

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... [p.624]

Second Charter of Virginia (May 23, 1609), granted by King James I, stated:

Because the principal Effect which we can expect or desire of this Action is the Conversion and reduction of the people in those parts unto the true worship of God and the Christian Religion. [pp.625-626]

Mayflower Compact (November 11, 1620), was America’s first great governmental document, signed by the Pilgrims before they disembarked their ship, the *Mayflower*. This covenant was so revolutionary, that it has influenced all other constitutional instruments in America since. It reads:

In ye name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten,... having undertaken, for ye glorie of God, and advancemente of ye Christian faith, and honour of our king, & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye Northerne parts of Virginia,

doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid;

and by vertue hearof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for ye generall goodof ye Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witness wherof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap-Codd ye 11. of November, in ye year of ye raigne of our soveraigne lord, King James, of England, France, & Ireland ye eighteenth, and by Scotland ye fiftie fourth, Ano:Dom. 1620. [pp.435-436]

First Charter of Massachusetts (March 4, 1629) granted by King Charles I, stated:

For the directing, ruling, and disposing of all other Matters and Things, whereby our said People... maie be soe religiously, peaceable, and civilly governed, as their good life and orderlie Conversation, maie wynn and incite the Natives of the Country to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth, which, in our Royall Intention, and the Adventurers free profession, is the principall Ende of this Plantation...” [p.424]

Fundamental Orders (Constitution) of Connecticut (January 14, 1639), was the first constitution written in America, instituting a provisional government and later serving as the model for the United States Constitution. It was penned by Roger Ludlow in 1638, after hearing a sermon by Thomas Hooker, the famous Puritan minister, who, along with his congregation, help to found Connecticut. So important was this work that Connecticut became known as “The Constitution State.”

The committee convened to frame the orders was charged to make the laws:

As near the law of God as they can be.

The Connecticut towns of Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor adopted the constitution, January 14, 1639, which stated in its Preamble:

Forasmuch as it has pleased the Almighty God by the wise disposition of His divine providence so to order and dispose of things that we the inhabitants and residents of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield and now cohabiting and dwelling in and upon the River Connecticut and the lands thereunto adjoining;

and well knowing when a people are gathered together the Word of God requires, that to meinteine the peace and union of such a people, there should bee an orderly and decent government established according to God, to order and dispose of the affairs of all the people at all seasons as occasion shall require;

do therefore associate and conjoin ourselves to be as one public State or Commonwealth, and do, for ourselves and our successors and such as shall be adjoined to us at any time hereafter, enter into Combination and Confederation together, to meinteine and presearve the libberty and purity of the Gospell of our Lord Jesus which we now professe...

Which, according to the truth of the said Gospell, is now practised amongst us; as allso, in our civill affaires to be guided and governed according to such laws, rules, orders, and decrees.

Fundamental Agreement, or Original Constitution of the Colony of New Haven (June 4, 1639) was adopted June 4, 1639 by means of a series of questions adopted in the affirmative by the assembled meeting, including:

Query I. WHETHER the scriptures do hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in all duties which they are to perform to GOD and men, as well in families and commonwealth, as in matters of the church ?

(Agreed to unanimously by holding up of hands, no man dissenting).

Query II. WHEREAS ... as in matters that concern the gathering and ordering of a church, so likewise in all public offices which concern civil order, as choice of magistrates and officers, making and repealing laws, dividing allotments of inheritance, and all things of like nature, we would all of us be ordered by those rules which the scripture holds forth to [us]; this covenant was called a plantation [civil] covenant, to distinguish it from a church covenant.

(Agreed to unanimously by holding up of hands, no man dissenting). [excerpt, edited]

Fundamental Agreement, or Original Constitution of the Colony of New Haven, June 4, 1639
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ct01.asp

Exeter, New Hampshire (August 4, 1639), the colonists defined the purpose of government, stating:

Considering with ourselves the holy will of God and our own necessity, that we should not live without wholesome laws and civil government among us, of which we are altogether destitute, do, in the name of Christ and in the sight of God, combine ourselves together to erect and set up among us such governments as shall be, to our best discerning, agreeable to the will of God... [p.468]

Constitution of the New England Confederation (May 19, 1643), as covenanted together by the colonists of New Plymouth, New Haven, Massachusetts & Connecticut, stated:

The Articles of Confederation between the plantations under the government of Massachusetts,

the plantations under the government of New Plymouth, the plantations under the government of Connecticut, and the government of New Haven with the plantations in combination therewith:

Whereas we all came to these parts of America with the same end and aim, namely, to advance the Kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to injoy the liberties of the Gospell thereof with purities and peace, and for preserving and propagating the truth and liberties of the gospell.” [p.466]

New Haven Colony Charter (April 3, 1644), adopted the rules for governing the courts of the New Haven Colony, stating:

The judicial laws of God, as they were delivered by Moses... [are to] be a rule to all the courts in this jurisdiction... [p.472]

Charter of Carolina (1663), was granted by King Charles II to Sir William Berkeley and the seven other lord proprietors (initially granted by King Charles I to Sir Robert Heath in 1629). The Charter stated:

Being excited with a laudable and pious zeal for the propagation of the Christian faith... [they] have humbly besought leave of us... to transport and make an ample colony... unto a certain country... in the parts of America not yet cultivated or planted, and only inhabited by some barbarous people, who have no knowledge of Almighty God. [p.481]

Charter of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations (July 8, 1663), was granted by King Charles II to Roger Williams. In 1636, Williams left Massachusetts with his followers, for the purpose of religious freedom, and founded Providence Plantation. It was there they established the First Baptist Church in America in 1639. The colonial patent of 1644 was confirmed by the Royal Charter of 1663, which read:

We submit our persons, lives, and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His given us in His Holy Word.

That they, pursueing, with peaceable and loyall mindes, sober, serious and religious intentions, of godlie edifieing themselves, and one another, in the holie Christian ffaith and worshipp... together with the gaineing over and conversione of the poore ignorant Indian natives... a most flourishing civill state may stand and best bee maintained... grounded upon gospell principles. [p.532]

Charter of Pennsylvania (1681), granted to William Penn by King Charles II of England, consisted of all the land between Maryland and New York. Added to this the following year was the area of Delaware, which was given by the Duke of York. William Penn had named it “Sylvania” meaning “woodland,” but King Charles changed it to “Pennsylvania.” The goal of the plantation, as stated in the Charter, was:

To reduce the savage natives by gentle and just manners to the Love of Civil Societe and Christian Religion. [p.502]

Fundamental Constitutions of Pennsylvania (1682), written by William Penn, formulated the government of the colony, stating:

I Constitution.

Considering that it is impossible that any People or Government should ever prosper, where men render not unto God, that which is God’s, as well as to Caesar, that which is Caesar’s;

and also perceiving that disorders and Mischiefs that attend those places where force is used in matters of faith and worship, and seriously reflecting upon the tenure of the new and Spiritual Government, and that both Christ did not use force and that he did expressly forbid it in his holy Religion, as also that the Testimony of his blessed Messengers was, that the weapons of the Christian warfare were not Carnall but Spiritual...

Therefore, in reverence to God the Father of lights and spirits, the Author as well as object of all divine knowledge, faith and worship, I do hereby declare for me and myn and establish it for the first fundamental of the Government of my Country;

that every Person that does or shall reside therein shall have and enjoy the Free Possession of his or her faith and exercise of worship towards God; in such way and manner as every Person shall in Conscience believe is most acceptable to God and so long as every such Person useth not this Christian liberty to Licentiousness, that is to say to speak loosely and prophainly of God, Christ or Religion, or to Committ any evil in their Conversation [lifestyle], he or she shall be protected in the enjoyment of the aforesaid Christian liberty by the civill Magistrate... [pp.502-503]

Great Law of Pennsylvania (April 25, 1682), was the first legislative act of Pennsylvania. It proclaimed:

Whereas the glory of Almighty God and the good of mankind is the reason and the end of government, and, therefore government itself is a venerable ordinance of God... [there shall be established] laws as shall best preserve true Christian and civil liberty, in opposition to all unchristian, licentious, and unjust practices, whereby God may have his due, and Caesar his due, and the people their due, from tyranny and oppression. [p.503]

Charter of Privileges of Pennsylvania (1701), granted by William Penn to the province of Pennsylvania, stated:

Almighty God being the only Lord of Conscience... and Author as well as object of all Divine Knowledge, faith and worship, who only doth enlighten the minds and persuade and convince the understandings of people, I do hereby grant and declare: that no person or persons, inhabiting in this province or territory who shall confess and acknowledge our Almighty God and Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the world; and profess him or themselves obliged to live quietly under civil government, shall in any case molested or prejudiced in his or her person or estate...

And that all persons who also profess to believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World, shall be capable to serve this government in any capacity, both legislatively or executively.

No people can be truly happy, though under the greatest enjoyment of civil liberties, if abridged of... their religious profession and worship... [p.503]

The Committees of Correspondence... began sounding the cry across the Colonies (ca. 1774):

No King but King Jesus! [pp.58-59]

Continental Congress (September 1774), passed the Articles of Association, as recorded by the Secretary of Congress, Charles Thomson, in the *Journals of Congress*. It stated:

Article X. That the late Act of Parliament for establishing... the French Laws in that extensive country now called Quebec, is dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant Religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America; and therefore as men and protestant Christians, we are indispensably obliged to take all proper measures for our security. [p.139]

2. Revolutionary War to signing of U.S. Constitution (1775 to 1787)

North Carolina: Mecklenburg County Resolutions (May 20, 1775), reads:

We hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; are, and of a right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing association, under control of no power other than that of our God and the general government of Congress. [p.482]

The Declaration of Independence: July 2, 1776, Resolution of America's independence from Great Britain adopted; July 4, 1776 Declaration adopted by Continental Congress. On July 8, 1776, the Declaration was read in public for the first time, outside Independence Hall, Philadelphia, accompanied by the ringing of the Liberty Bell. Only July 19, Congress ordered it engrossed in script on parchment, and on August 2, 1776, the members of Congress signed the parchment copy:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitles them...

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain [u]nalienable Rights, that among these are Life...

We, Therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions...

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of [d]ivine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

As the parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence was being signed by the members of the Continental Congress, August 2, 1776, Samuel Adams declared:

We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come. [pp.200-201]

[Additional source: The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 2002, pp.514, 527, 528]

The 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence paid a tremendous price for our freedoms: 5 were arrested by the British as traitors, 12 had their homes looted and burned by the enemy, 17 lost their fortunes, 2 lost sons in the Continental Army and 9 fought and died during the Revolutionary War. [p.144]

Note: The Declaration of Independence is part of the Organic Law of the United States of America, **United States Code**

<http://uscode.house.gov/>

(click on "Front Matter", then "Organic Laws", then "Declaration of Independence")

Constitution of the State of North Carolina (1776), stated:

There shall be no establishment of any one religious church or denomination in this State in preference to any other.

Article XXXII That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State. (**until 1876**)

In **1835** the word "Protestant" was changed to "Christian." [p.482]

Constitution of the State of Maryland (August 14, 1776), stated:

Article XXXV That no other test or qualification ought to be required, on admission to any office of trust or profit, than such oath of support and fidelity to this State and such oath of office, as shall be directed by this Convention, or the Legislature of this State, and a declaration of a belief in the Christian religion.”

That, as it is the duty of every man to worship God in such a manner as he thinks most acceptable to him; all persons professing the Christian religion, are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty;

wherefore no person ought by any law to be molested... on account of his religious practice; unless, under the color [pretense] of religion, any man shall disturb the good order, peace or safety of the State, or shall infringe the laws of morality... yet the Legislature may, in their discretion, lay a general and equal tax, for the support of the Christian religion. (until 1851) [pp.420-421]

Articles of Confederation (November 15, 1777), were proposed and signed. They constituted the government in America during the period between the end of the Revolutionary War and the writing of the Constitution. The Articles were finally ratified by the states on March 1, 1781:

... on the fifteenth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy seven.

And whereas it has pleased the Great Governor of the world to incline the hearts of the Legislatures we respectively represent in Congress, to approve of, and to authorize us to ratify the said articles of confederation and perpetual union. [p.29]

Constitution of the State of South Carolina (1778), stated:

Article XXXVIII. That all persons and religious societies who acknowledge that there is one God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, and that God is publicly to be worshipped, shall be freely tolerated... That all denominations of Christian[s]... in this State, demeaning themselves peaceably and faithfully, shall enjoy equal religious and civil privileges. [p.568]

The Constitution of the State of Massachusetts (1780) stated:

The Governor shall be chosen annually; and no person shall be eligible to this office, unless, at the time of his election... he shall declare himself to be of the Christian religion.

Chapter VI, Article I [All persons elected to State office or to the Legislature must] make and subscribe the following declaration, viz. “I, _____, do declare, that I believe the Christian religion, and have firm persuasion of its truth.”

Part I, Article III And every denomination of Christians, demeaning themselves peaceably, and as good subjects of the commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law: and no subordination of any sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law.” [p.429]

Continental Congress (September 10, 1782), in response to the need for Bibles which again arose, granted universal approval to print “a neat edition of the Holy Scriptures for the use of schools.” ... This edition has come to be known as the Bible of the Revolution. The following Endorsement of Congress was printed on its front page:

Whereupon, Resolved, That the United States in Congress assembled... recommended this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize [Robert Aitken] to publish this recommendation in the manner he shall think proper. [pp.148-149]

Continental Congress (1783), ratified a peace treaty with Great Britain at the close of the Revolutionary War. The treaty began:

In the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. It having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the hearts of the most serene and most potent Prince George the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith... and of the United States of America, to forget all past misunderstandings and differences... [p.149]

Constitution of the State of New Hampshire (1784,1792), required senators and representatives to be of the:

Protestant religion. (in force until 1877)

The Constitution stipulated:

Article I, Section VI. And every denomination of Christians demeaning themselves quietly, and as good citizens of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the laws. And no subordination of any one sect of denomination to another, shall ever be established by law. [p.469]

Constitution of the State of Vermont (1786), stated:

Frame of Government, *Section 9.* And each member [of the Legislature], before he takes his seat, shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz: "I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked. And I do acknowledge the Scripture of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration, and own and profess the [Christian] religion. And no further or other religious test shall ever, hereafter, be required of any civil officer or magistrate in this State." [p.623]

The Constitution of the United States (September 17, 1787), reads:

Article I, Section 7, Paragraph 2: If any bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted)...

Done in Convention, by the unanimous consent of the States present, the seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven.

[Of note is the fact that virtually every one of the 55 writers and signers of the United States Constitution of 1787, were members of Christian denominations: 29 were Anglicans, 16 to 18 were Calvinists, 2 were Methodists, 2 were Lutherans, ... [and] 1 lapsed Quaker and sometimes Anglican.] [p. 180]

Note: There were also two who were Roman Catholic, and one was an open Deist – Dr. Benjamin Franklin who attended every kind of Christian worship, called for public prayer, and contributed to all denominations.

What did the Constitution mean in 1787 by "no religious test" ? (Steve Lefemine)

The very last sentence of the last substantive article (Article VI.) of the Constitution states:

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

- 1) The US Constitution went into effect June 21, 1788 as New Hampshire became the ninth State to ratify, as required by Article VII.
- 2) The first ten Amendments (the Bill of Rights) were ratified effective December 15, 1791.
- 3) As can be seen by study of the numerous state constitutions which contained statements requiring governors, legislators, and others appointed or elected to public office to make declarations as to their belief in Protestant Christianity, the divine inspiration of both the Old and New Testaments, and / or a future state of rewards and punishments, some after 1791 and into the 1800's, the last sentence of Article VI. of the US Constitution did not preclude such required declarations of belief in general Christianity by officials of civil government in the states.
- 4) The term "religion" in 1787 meant "the Duty which we owe our Creator, and the Manner of discharging it..." It was to "be directed only by Reason and Convictions, not by Force or Violence; and therefore all Men [were] equally entitled to the free exercise of Religion, according to the Dictates of Conscience; and [it was] "the mutual Duty of all to practice Christian Forbearance, Love, and Charity towards each other." (Virginia Bill of Rights, June 12, 1776) [pp.627-628]).
- 5) The Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty (January 16, 1786) stated: "Well aware that Almighty God hath created the mind free; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations... are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion." [emphasis added] [p.628]
- 6) In 1787, the term "**religion**" included the various forms of Christianity expressed by the different Christian denominations. The phrase, "**no religious test**" in 1787 meant there would be "**no denominational test**," as we would understand it today in 2004; no test as to whether a man was a Presbyterian, Baptist, or Anglican; however, "**no religious test**" **did not mean** any exclusion of a required declaration of Christian beliefs for men aspiring to office in civil government, as can be seen by examination of the early state constitutions.
- 7) David Barton states, "Our current understanding of what constitutes a religious test was considerably different from that of early Americans, as demonstrated by this excerpt from the 1796 Tennessee constitution:"

Article VIII, Section II. *No person who denies the being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this State.*

Article XI, Section IV. *That no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under this state.*

"A fixed set of religious beliefs for an office holder is prescribed in Article VIII, and then a religious test is prohibited in Article XI. Obviously, in their view, requiring a belief in God and in future rewards and punishments was not a religious test.

"... Prescribing a requirement professing 'I, _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration [DELAWARE, 1776]' was not considered a religious test."

[The Myth of Separation, David Barton, Wallbuilder Press, 1991]

3. U.S. Constitution to War Between the States (1787 to 1865)

Constitution of the State of New Hampshire (1784,1792), required senators and representatives to be of the:

Protestant religion. (in force until 1877)

The Constitution stipulated:

Article I, Section VI. And every denomination of Christians demeaning themselves quietly, and as good citizens of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the laws. And no subordination of any one sect of denomination to another, shall ever be established by law. [p.469]

The Constitution of the State of Delaware (until 1792) stated:

Article XXII Every person who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust... shall... make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: "I, _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forevermore; I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration." [p.203]

Constitution of the State of Tennessee (1796), stated:

Article VIII, Section II. No person who denies the being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this State. [pp.580-581]

John Jay (1745-1829), was the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, having been appointed by President George Washington. He was a Founding Father, a member of the First and Second Continental Congresses... He was very instrumental in causing the Constitution to be ratified by writing the Federalist Papers, along with James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.

On October 12, 1816, John Jay admonished:

Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of **our Christian nation** to select and prefer **Christians for their rulers.** [p.318] [emphasis added]

Constitution of the State of Mississippi (1817), stated:

No person who denies the being of God or a future state of rewards and punishments shall hold any office in the civil department of the State. [p.451]

The Constitution of the State of Connecticut (until 1818), contained the wording:

The People of this State... by the Providence of God... hath the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves as a free, sovereign, and independent State... and forasmuch as the free fruition of such liberties and privileges as humanity, civility, and Christianity call for, as is due to every man in his place and proportion... hath ever been, and will be the tranquility and stability of Churches and Commonwealth; and the denial thereof, the disturbances, if not the ruin of both. [p.179]

Congress of the United States of America (1822), ratified in both the House and Senate of the United States, along with Great Britain and Ireland, the Convention for Indemnity under Award of Emperor of Russia as to the True Construction of the First Article of the Treaty of December 24, 1814. It begins with these words:

In the name of the Most Holy and Indivisible Trinity. [pp.167-168]

Definition of RELIGION.

RELIGION. Includes a belief in the being and perfections of God, in the revelation of his will to man, and in man's obligation to obey his commands, in a state of reward and punishment, and in man's accountableness to God; and also true godliness or piety of life, with the practice of all moral duties... the practice of moral duties without a belief in a divine lawgiver, and without reference to his will or commands, is not religion. [Webster's 1828 Dictionary]

Note: David Barton states, "Our current understanding of what constitutes a religious test was considerably different from that of early Americans, as demonstrated by this excerpt from the 1796 Tennessee constitution:"

Article VIII, Section II. *No person who denies the being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this State.*

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"... Prescribing a requirement professing '*I, _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration* [DELAWARE, 1776]' was not considered a religious test."

[The Myth of Separation, David Barton, Wallbuilder Press, 1991]

Constitution of the State of North Carolina (1776), stated:

There shall be no establishment of any one religious church or denomination in this State in preference to any other.

Article XXXII That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State. **(until 1876)**

In **1835** the word "Protestant" was changed to "Christian." [p.482]

Congress of the United States of America (January 19, 1853), as part of a Congressional investigation, records the report of Mr. Badger of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

The [First Amendment] clause speaks of "an establishment of religion." What is meant by that expression? It referred, without doubt, to that establishment which existed in the mother-country...

endowment at the public expense, peculiar privileges to its members, or disadvantages or penalties upon those who should reject its doctrines or belong to other communities,-- such law would be a “law respecting an establishment of religion...”

They intended, by this amendment, to prohibit “an establishment of religion” such as the English Church presented, or any thing like it. But they had no fear or jealousy of religion itself, nor did they wish to see us an irreligious people...

They did not intend to spread over all the public authorities and the whole public action of the nation the dead and revolting spectacle of atheistic apathy. Not so had the battles of the Revolution been fought and the deliberations of the Revolutionary Congress been conducted.

In the law, Sunday is a “dies non,”... The executive departments, the public establishments, are all closed on Sundays; on that day neither House of Congress sits...

Sunday, the Christian Sabbath [*sic*], recognized and respected by all the departments of the Government...

Here is a recognition by law, and by universal usage, not only of a Sabbath, but of the Christian Sabbath [*sic*], in exclusion of the Jewish or Mohammedan Sabbath... the recognition of the Christian Sabbath [*sic*] [by the Constitution] is complete and perfect.

We are a Christian people... not because the law demands it, not to gain exclusive benefits or to avoid legal disabilities, but from choice and education; and in a land thus universally Christian, what is to be expected, what desired, but that we shall pay due regard to Christianity. [pp.168-169]

Congress of the United States of America (March 27, 1854), receives the report of Mr. Meacham of the House Committee on the Judiciary:

What is an establishment of religion? It must have a creed, defining what a man must believe; it must have rites and ordinances, which believers must observe; it must have ministers of defined qualification, to teach the doctrines and administer the rites; it must have tests for the submissive and penalties for the non-conformist. There never was as established religion without all these...

At the adoption of the Constitution... every State... provided as regularly for the support of the Church as for the support of the Government... [emphasis added]

Down to the Revolution, every colony did sustain religion in some form. It was deemed peculiarly proper that the religion of liberty should be upheld by a free people.

Had the people, during the Revolution, had a suspicion of any attempt to war against Christianity, that Revolution would have been strangled in its cradle. [emphasis added]

At the time of the adoption of the Constitution and the amendments, the universal sentiment was that Christianity should be encouraged, not any one sect [denomination]. Any attempt to level and discard all religion would have been viewed with universal indignation. The object was not to substitute Judaism or Mohammedism, or infidelity, but to prevent rivalry among the [Christian] sects to the exclusion of others. [emphasis added]

It [Christianity] must be considered as the foundation on which the whole structure rests. Laws will not have permanence or power without the sanction of religious sentiment, -- without a firm belief that there is a Power above us that will reward our virtues and punish our vices. [emphasis added]

In this age there can be no substitute for **Christianity**; that, in its general principles, is the great conservative element on which we must rely for the purity and permanence of free institutions. **That was the religion of the founders of the republic**, and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants. **There is a great and very prevalent error on this subject in the opinion that those who organized this Government did not legislate on religion.** [pp.169-170] [emphasis added]

Congress of the United States of America (May 1854), passed a resolution in the House which declared:

The great vital and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of **the gospel of Jesus Christ.** [p.170] [emphasis added]

The Constitution of the State of Massachusetts (through 1862) included:

The right of the people of this commonwealth to... invest their Legislature with power to authorize and require, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies-politic or religious societies to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of God and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntary. [pp.429-430]

Congress of the United States of America (March 3, 1863), passed this resolution in the United States Senate:

Resolved, That devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and nations, and sincerely believing that no people, however great in numbers and resources, or however strong in the justness of their cause, can prosper without His favor, and at the same time deploring the national offenses which have provoked His righteous judgment, yet encouraged in this day of trouble by the assurance of His Word, to seek Him for succor according to His appointed way, through Jesus Christ, the Senate of the United States does hereby request the President of the United States, by his proclamation, to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation.

On March 30, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a historic *Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day*:

Whereas, the Senate of the United States devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation:

And whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize **the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history: that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord:**

And, insomuch as we know that, **by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisement in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?**

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated by unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request and fully concurring in the view of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer.

And I do hereby request all the people to abstain on that day from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, **in keeping the day holy to the Lord** and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

All this being done, in sincerity and truth, **let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high and answered with blessing no less than the pardon of our national sins and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace.**

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed. By the President: Abraham Lincoln. [pp.170-172] [emphasis added]

Congress of the United States of America (October 3, 1863), as proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln, passed an Act of Congress designating an annual *National Day of Thanksgiving*:

I do, therefore, invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States... to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens... [it is] **announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord...** [emphasis added] It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. [p.172] [emphasis added]

Congress of the United States of America (March 3, 1865), approved Salmon Portland Chase's instruction to the U.S. mint. As the Secretary of the Treasury under Abraham Lincoln, Chase instructed the mint to prepare a "device" to inscribe U.S. coins with the motto:

In God We Trust [p.172]

4. Post-War Between the States (1865 to 1982)

Constitution of the State of North Carolina (1776), stated:

There shall be no establishment of any one religious church or denomination in this State in preference to any other.

Article XXXII That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State. **(until 1876)**

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Constitution of the State of New Hampshire (1784,1792), required senators and representatives to be of the:

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The Constitution stipulated:

Article I, Section VI. And every denomination of Christians demeaning themselves quietly, and as good citizens of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the laws. And no subordination of any one sect of denomination to another, shall ever be established by law. [p.469]

Illinois Supreme Court (1883), *Richmond v. Moore*, 107 Ill. 429, 1883 WL 10319 (Ill.), 47 Am.Rep. 445 (Ill. 1883):

“... our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. And in this sense and to this extent, our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian, ...” [47 Am.Rep. 449]

47 American Reports 445 (Ill. 1883)

<http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.cases/amrpts0047&collection=cases&id=481&startid=481&endid=489>

Scan posted with permission: <http://christianlifeandliberty.net/2017-02-17-Richmond-v-Moore-Illinois-Supreme-Court-1883.pdf>

United States Supreme Court (February 29, 1892), *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, 143 U.S. 457, 12 S.Ct. 511, 36 L.Ed. 226, Justice Josiah Brewer wrote the Supreme Court’s Opinion:

Edited from: Cornell School Law website - <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/143/457>
- Capitalization conforms with *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, 143 U.S. 457 [print].

“... no purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state or national, because this is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation.

The commission to Christopher Columbus, ... recites that 'it is hoped that by God's assistance some of the continents and islands in the ocean will be discovered,' etc.

The first colonial grant, that made to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1584, ... ; and the grant authorizing him to enact statutes of the government of the proposed colony provided that 'they be not against the true Christian faith now professed in the Church of England.'

The first charter of Virginia, granted by King James I. in 1606, ... , commenced the grant in these words: '... , in propagating of Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God, ...'

Language of similar import may be found in the subsequent charters of that colony, from the same king, in 1609 and 1611; and the same is true of the various charters granted to the other colonies. In language more or less emphatic is the establishment of the Christian religion declared to be one of the purposes of the grant. The celebrated compact made by the Pilgrims in the Mayflower, 1620, recites: 'Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the northern Parts of Virginia; Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually, in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid.'

The fundamental orders of Connecticut, under which a provisional government was instituted in 1638-39, commence with this declaration: 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased the Almighty God by the wise disposition of his diuine prudence so to Order and dispose of things ... ; And well knowing where a people are gathered together the word of God requires that to mayntayne the peace and vnion of such a people there should be an orderly and decent Gouerment established according to God, to order and dispose of the affayres of the people at all seasons as occation shall require; doe therefore assotiate and conioyne our selues to be as one Publike State or Comonwelth; and doe, for our selues and our Successors and such as shall be adioyned to vs att any tyme hereafter, enter into Combination and Confederation togather, to mayntayne and presearue the liberty and purity of the gospell of our Lord Jesus wch we now prfesse, as also the disciplyne of the Churches, wch according to the truth of the said gospell is now practised amongst vs.'

In the charter of privileges granted by William Penn to the province of Pennsylvania, in 1701, it is recited: 'Because no People can be truly happy, though under the greatest Enjoyment of Civil Liberties, if abridged of the Freedom of their Consciences, as to their Religious Profession and Worship; And Almighty God being the only Lord of Conscience, Father of Lights and Spirits; and the Author as well as Object of all diuine Knowledge, Faith, and Worship, who only doth enlighten the Minds, and persuade and convince the Understandings of People, ...'

Coming nearer to the present time, the Declaration of Independence recognizes the presence of the Divine in human affairs in these words: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.' 'We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare,' etc.; 'And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.'

If we examine the constitutions of the various states, we find in them a constant recognition of religious obligations. Every constitution of every one of the forty-four States contains language which, either directly or by clear implication, recognizes a profound reverence for religion, and an assumption that its influence in all human affairs is essential to the well being of the community.

This recognition may be in the preamble, such as is found in the constitution of Illinois, 1870: 'We, the people of the State of Illinois, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political, and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing upon our endeavors to secure and transmit the same unimpaired to succeeding generations,' etc.

It may be only in the familiar requisition that all officers shall take an oath closing with the declaration, 'so help me God.' It may be in clauses like that of the constitution of Indiana, 1816,

Article XI, section 4: 'The manner of administering an oath or affirmation shall be such as is most consistent with the conscience of the deponent, and shall be esteemed the most solemn appeal to God.'

...

Or like that in Articles 2 and 3, of Part 1st, of the Constitution of Massachusetts, 1780: 'It is the right as well as the duty of all men in society publicly, and at stated seasons, to worship the Supreme Being, the great Creator and Preserver of the universe. * * * As the happiness of a people and the good order and preservation of civil government essentially depend upon piety, religion, and morality, and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community but by the institution of the public worship of God and of public instructions in piety, religion, and morality: Therefore, to promote their happiness, and to secure the good order and preservation of their government, the people of this commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require, and the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic or religious societies to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of God and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily.'

Or, as in sections 5 and 14 of Article 7 of the constitution of Mississippi, 1832: 'No person who denies the being of a God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this State. * * * Religion morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government, the preservation of liberty, and the happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education, shall forever be encouraged in this State.'

Or by Article 22 of the constitution of Delaware, 1776, which required all officers, besides an oath of allegiance, to make and subscribe the following declaration: 'I, A. B., do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.'

Even the Constitution of the United States, which is supposed to have little touch upon the private life of the individual, contains in the First Amendment a declaration common to the constitutions of all the States, as follows: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' etc., and also provides in Article 1, section 7, (a provision common to many constitutions,) that the Executive shall have ten days (Sundays excepted) within which to determine whether he will approve or veto a bill.

There is no dissonance in these declarations. There is a universal language pervading them all, having one meaning. They affirm and reaffirm that this is a religious nation. These are not individual sayings, declarations of private persons. They are organic utterances. They speak the voice of the entire people.

While because of a general recognition of this truth the question has seldom been presented to the courts, **yet we find that in *Updegraph v. The Commonwealth*, 11 S. & R. 394, 400, it was decided that, 'Christianity, general Christianity, is, and always has been, a part of the common law of Pennsylvania; * * * not Christianity with an established church and tithes and spiritual courts; but Christianity with liberty of conscience to all men.'**

And in *The People v. Ruggles*, 8 Johns. 290, 294, 295, Chancellor Kent, the great commentator on American law, speaking as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York, said: 'The people of this State, in common with the people of this country, profess the general doctrines of Christianity as the rule of their faith and practice; and to scandalize the author of these doctrines is not only, in a religious point of view, extremely impious, but, even in respect to the obligations due to society, is a gross violation of decency and good order. * * * The free, equal, and undisturbed enjoyment of religious opinion, whatever it may be, and free and decent discussions on any religious subject, is granted

and secured; but to revile, with malicious and blasphemous contempt, the religion professed by almost the whole community is an abuse of that right. Nor are we bound by any expressions in the Constitution, as some have strangely supposed, either not to punish at all, or to punish indiscriminately the like attacks upon the religion of *Mahomet* or of the *Grand Lama*; and for this plain reason; that the case assumes that **we are a Christian people, and the morality of the country is deeply ingrafted upon Christianity, and not upon the doctrines or worship of those impostors.**'

And in the famous case of *Vidal v. Girard's Executors*, 2 How. 127, 198, this court, ... , observed: 'It is also said, and truly, that the Christian religion is a part of the common law of Pennsylvania.'

If we pass beyond these matters to a view of American life, as expressed by its laws, its business, its customs, and its society, we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth. Among other matters note the following: The form of oath universally prevailing, concluding with an appeal to the Almighty; the custom of opening sessions of all deliberative bodies and most conventions with prayer; the prefatory words of all wills, 'In the name of God, amen;' the laws respecting the observance of the Sabbath, with the general cessation of all secular business, and the closing of courts, legislatures, and other similar public assemblies on that day; the churches and church organizations which abound in every city, town, and hamlet; the multitude of charitable organizations existing everywhere under Christian auspices; the gigantic missionary associations, with general support, and aiming to establish Christian missions in every quarter of the globe. **These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.**"

Arkansas Supreme Court (1905), was quoted by Supreme Court Justice David J. Brewer in his lecture, entitled, "The United States a Christian Nation." The opinion they rendered in the case of *Shover v. The State*, 10 English, 263, included:

This system of religion (Christianity) is recognized as constituting a part and parcel of the common law. [p.28]

Congress of the United States of America (March 3, 1931), adopted *The Star Spangled Banner* as our National Anthem (36 U.S.C. Sec. 170). Written by Francis Scott Key, September 14, 1814, at the Battle of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. The fourth verse is as follows:

O! thus be it ever when free men shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just;
And this be our motto, "In God is our trust!"
And the star spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Congress of the United States of America (July 20, 1956), by Joint Resolution, adopted Rep. Charles E. Bennett's (FL) bill providing that the official national motto of the United States of America be:

In God We Trust [p.175]

Congress of the United States of America (October 4, 1982), by a Joint Resolution of both the Senate and House of Representatives of the 97th Congress, declared 1983 the Year of the Bible:

Public Law 97-280. Whereas that renewing our knowledge of and faith in God through Holy Scripture can strengthen us as a nation and a people... The Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution in shaping the United States as a distinctive and blessed nation... Deeply held religious convictions springing from the Holy Scriptures led to the early settlement of our Nation... Biblical teaching inspired concepts of civil government that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. [p.175]

Date Unknown

Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania stated:

Frame of Government, Section 10. And each member [of the legislature], before he takes his seat, shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz: "I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governour of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked, and I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration." [p.504]
