

The Case for
CHRISTIAN
NATIONALISM

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Introduction: The Great Renewal

I. The Storm

The indignant crowd, waving flags and gripping their weapons, gathered around the barriers and gates, pushing and shouting amidst smoke and furor. The guards of the building—a towering symbol of civil authority and sanctity—struggled to decide what to do, as an insurrection or worse seemed imminent. Suddenly, the mob rushed a courtyard and some began climbing onto buildings. A gate was opened, and the most fanatical of the crowd surged to enter, as if it were a planned assault. The guards shouted at them to leave, but in all the excitement many interpreted the guards' gestures to be welcoming them in. Gunfire broke out and several were killed, including officers. An observer might have heard cries of “liberty” from one side, “equality” from the other, then also “fraternity.” But

another sinister sound could be heard: “or death.” The fighting continued and calls for ceasefire were rejected. The building was taken, and the victors declared, “Thus we take revenge on traitors.” This day changed everything, and we live in its consequences.

One famous writer later called it a “turning-point of modern times.” This day—that is, July 14, 1789, the storming of the Bastille in Paris, France—marked the “secularization of our history and the disincarnation of the Christian God,” as Albert Camus wrote in *The Rebel*. This day sparked the French Revolution, the instigators of which sought to “overthrow the principle of divine right.” Camus continues:

God played a part in history through the medium of kings. But His representative in history has been killed, for there is no longer a king. Therefore, there is nothing but a semblance of God, relegated to the heaven of principles. The revolutionaries may well refer to the Gospel, but in fact, they dealt a terrible blow to Christianity from which it has not yet recovered.¹

The regicide (or tyrannicide) of Louis XVI was a sort of deicide—not that God was killed, of course, but that in the king’s execution the revolutionaries sought to establish political atheism. The *seculum* was secularized, and the recognition of God and his will for man—both the principles and purpose of life—were set aside, relegated to heaven or to religious institutions. The children of the French Revolution, both Christian and non-Christian, are still with us and continue the revolution.

1. Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, trans. Anthony Bower (1956; New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 120.

The explicit absence of God in public life is now normal, and this new normal hardly needs official enforcement. With weakness of will and self-abnegation, Western Christians gaze at the raving of their Western heritage, either blaming themselves or, even worse, reveling in their humiliation. Christians today live in and fully embrace the conditions of deicide. We have not simply tied our own hands; we've handed over, without much fuss, the divine powers ordained for our good. The people of God have become accustomed to a life without them, even learning to love abuse from God-granted authorities that he ordained for their good.

The chief philosopher of the French Revolution, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was wrong in his understanding of Christianity, but he did accurately capture the tendency of Christians to take pleasure in their oppression. His comments are so remarkably recognizable that they are worth quoting in full. He writes,

Christianity as a religion is entirely spiritual, occupied solely with heavenly things; the country of the Christian is not of this world. He does his duty, indeed, but does it with profound indifference to the good or ill success of his cares. Provided he has nothing to reproach himself with, it matters little to him whether things go well or ill here on earth. If the State is prosperous, he hardly dares to share in the public happiness, for fear he may grow proud of his country's glory; if the State is languishing, he blesses the hand of God that is hard upon His people. . . . If the power is abused by him who wields it, it is the scourge wherewith God punishes His children. There would be scruples about driving out the usurper: public tranquility would have to be disturbed, violence would have to be employed, and blood spilt; all this accords ill with

Christian meekness; and after all, in this vale of sorrows, what does it matter whether we are free men or serfs? The essential thing is to get to heaven, and resignation is only an additional means of doing so Christianity preaches only servitude and dependence. Its spirit is so favourable to tyranny that it always profits by such a régime. True Christians are made to be slaves, and they know it and do not much mind: this short life counts for too little in their eyes.²

Sound familiar? You see it daily in Christian think-pieces. Rousseau is indeed right, in a way. Christianity is often used as a coping device for inaction, even when under tyranny and slavery. It is a theological means to psychologically endure one's gnostic unwillingness to struggle against earthly abuse. At its worse, theology is wielded to find pleasure in one's humiliation. Many Christian leaders today are children of Rousseau in this regard, actively undermining Christian political action that opposes political atheism. They advance a sort of Stockholm syndrome theology.

Such Christians—who separate God from public institutions—have even adopted Rousseau's "civil religion," though likely unwittingly. Instead of establishing Christianity, Rousseau called for a "civil profession of faith," consisting of "social sentiments without which a man cannot be a good citizen." Violators are declared to be "anti-social." These "dogmas" must be "few, simple, and exactly worded, without explanation of commentary."³ After the January 6, 2021 riot, Christians leaders expressed dismay that our "democracy,"

2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract and Discourses*, trans. G.D.H. Cole (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1950), 136.

3. *Ibid.*, 139.

which affirms universal “tolerance” and “pluralism,” was attacked by a mob that rampaged through the “sacred halls” of Congress. Their commitment to these modern norms should not surprise us. For decades, theologians have developed theologies that exclude Christianity from public institutions but require Christians to affirm the language of universal dignity, tolerance, human rights, anti-nationalism, anti-nativism, multiculturalism, social justice, and equality, and they ostracize from their own ranks any Christian who deviates from these social dogmas. They’ve effectively Christianized the modern West’s social creed. The Christian leaders most immersed in the modern West’s civil religion are those who loudly denounce the “civil religion” of “Christian nationalism.”

This book challenges the social dogmas of our time—the secularist civil religion—by offering a positive account of Christian nationalism. In addition to justifying the institutionalization of Christianity, I offer reasons and exhortations for Christians to act in confidence for that institutionalization. The problem we face today is not simply the absence of arguments but the lack of *will* for our political objectives. I hope to enliven in the hearts of Christians a sense of home and hearth and a love of people and country out of which springs action for their good.

II. Definition

Past Usage

The term *Christian nationalism* is in our time a word of derision used against groups of white evangelicals and Pentecostals in America. Few agree on what it means, though all agree that whatever it means, it is most certainly bad. Indeed, “it is bad” is ultimately

all that matters for those who use it. It is a “plastic word,” to use Uwe Poerksen’s expression: “The precise meaning of plastic words cannot be discerned. . . . But, through context, an author can be precise about which *connotation* of the word is being used.”⁴ Since anti-nationalism is a social dogma, connecting “Christian” and “nationalism” is effective for wielding social power or the public ire against dissident Christian groups—whether these groups are real or imagined. It is no surprise that “Christian nationalism” is used in the context of the 2021 riot at the Capitol Building in Washington, DC. Associating the term with a widely condemned event gives the accusation of Christian nationalism tremendous weight in rhetoric. The term has socio-rhetorical power. The connotation is far more useful than its possible denotations.

But this negative connotation and lack of denotation is new to the term. Well back into the 19th century, *Christian nationalism* was used almost exclusively in a positive sense. Indeed, there were self-described Christian nationalists. For example, William Henry Fremantle, a well-respected and accomplished Anglican priest, published a lecture in 1885 on Christian nationalism. He affirmed the belief in the “divine character of political rule, and in the unity of the sacred and the secular in the Christian nation.”⁵ Opposing those who wanted “the system of public worship [to] be held apart from the general life,” he argued that

4. Emphasis added. He continues, “In contrast, authors have no powers of definition over plastic words; they are general, autonomous, vague and toneless.” Uwe Poerksen, *Plastic Words: The Tyranny of Modular Language*, trans. Jutta Mason and David Cayley (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 8.

5. W.H. Fremantle, *The World as the Subject of Redemption* (1885; New York: Longmans, Green, 1901), 209.

the whole life of man is essentially religious; and politics, the sphere of just relations between men, especially become religious when conducted in a Christian spirit. Nothing can be more fatal to mankind or to religion itself than to call one set of things or persons religious and another secular, when Christ has redeemed the whole.⁶

Thus, for Fremantle, we should not compartmentalize the “Christian religion” to an instituted church and clergy. All of life, including public life, ought to be Christian. The institutional church simply fulfills “one function of the great community [or nation] which itself, and as a whole, possesses this divine sanction.”⁷ In other words, the institutionalized ministry that ministers to a Christian people springs from the people, which itself originally possesses this ministry.

A few decades later the Chinese theologian, T.C. Chao (1888–1979), wrote in 1927 about Chinese Christians “wanting a Christian nationalism.” He reasons this way:

Chinese Christians are Christians; but they are also citizens of China. According to them, nationalism and Christianity must agree in many things; for if there are no common points between the two, then how can Chinese citizens become Christians and how can Chinese Christians perform the duties of citizens?⁸

6. Ibid., 222–23.

7. Ibid., 220. Being Anglican, Fremantle held to the view that “the principle of Royal Supremacy . . . that the Christian community as a whole, represented by its Sovereign, is to be supreme over all its parts.” His view is consistent with the “national church” ecclesiology in classical Anglican theology.

8. Quoted in Jun Xing Chun Hsing, *Baptized in the Fire of Revolution: The American Social Gospel and the YMCA in China, 1919–1937* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996), 132.

In 1972, Albert Cleage published *Black Christian Nationalism* in which he calls for a redefinition of salvation along black Christian nationalist lines: “Black Christian nationalism . . . calls men to a rejection of individualism, and offers a process of transformation by which the individual may divest himself of individualism and submerge himself in the community life of the group.”⁹

The most recent discourse around Christian nationalism is both negative and almost always ascribed to white Americans. Indeed, it is often called “white Christian nationalism.” Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry recently published *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy*. Their definition is a “constellation of beliefs,”¹⁰ which is technically not a definition, and the unstated point of the book is certainly to secure the term’s negative connotations by associating it with heretical social views. Since it is largely a work of (activist) sociology, its content is mostly irrelevant to the content of this book. They disregard and dismiss the reasons for Christian nationalist beliefs and instead rely on racial explanations, such as “whiteness,” to account for Christian nationalism. My intent here is neither to defend nor reject what they consider Christian nationalism, nor to denounce or distance myself from its alleged connotations. This is a work of Christian political theory, not sociology. If the social scientists wish to critique my book, they must step out of social science, suspend their belief in social dogma, and enter rational inquiry.

9. Albert Cleage, *Black Christian Nationalism: New Directions for the Black Church* (New York: William Morrow, 1972), 73.

10. *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 14.

Definition for This Book

One of the oddest aspects of Christian nationalism discourse is that, despite its “great threat to democracy,” few people in recent years have self-identified as Christian nationalists. Thus, very few have explicitly argued for it in recent years.¹¹ Recent attempts to define the term begin with some idea of the people they want to capture with the term. Hence, they define it by their desired *extension*, that is, based on the things or people they want the term to refer to.

My definition, however, begins, not with the term’s extension, but with the *intension* of the words. That is, I proceed from the meaning or denotation of the words involved, particularly *nation* and *nationalism*, and I then consider nationalism modified by the term *Christian*. Here is my definition:

Christian nationalism is a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs, conducted by a Christian nation as a Christian nation, in order to procure for itself both earthly and heavenly good in Christ.

The purpose of this book is to show that Christian nationalism (as defined) is just, the ideal arrangement for Christians, and something worth pursuing with determination and resolve.¹²

11. While I was in the later stages of editing this book, Andrew Torba and Andrew Isker published *Christian Nationalism: A Biblical Guide for Taking Dominion and Disciplining Nations* (Clarks Summit, PA: Gab AI, 2022).

12. Not all examples of Christian nationalism that meet the definition are desirable, just, or perfect. The central conclusion of this work justifies Christian nationalism in principle. Moreover, my account in the following chapters advances a more Presbyterian form of Christian nationalism, but the definition above has its Anglican and Lutheran forms (and others). I would disagree with features of those forms but still affirm that they are equally Christian nationalist with regard to the definition.

The reader likely had a different definition in mind, but this may not indicate substantive disagreement. Maybe (like Gorski and Perry) you list a set of beliefs—perhaps something about “national obligations to God.” I agree that nations have obligations to God. My intent is to define Christian nationalism according to the denotation of the two words in relation to each other. Whether you like my definition or not is largely irrelevant to the arguments that follow, since I likely affirm at some point what you include in your definition.

Since parts of my definition may be unclear or unexpected, I devote some space in this introduction to explicating the definition. I break this down carefully and in detail because the discussion on Christian nationalism today lacks the sort of precision and care that early generations of Reformed writers brought to Christian political thought. What I say below and in the following chapters might be difficult and complex, but my intent is to continue in (or perhaps help resurrect) the Reformed political tradition’s commitment to complete, analytical, and demonstrative argumentation.

III. Explicating the Definition

Christian nationalism is nationalism modified by Christianity. My definition of Christian nationalism is a Christianized form of nationalism or, put differently, a species of nationalism. Thus, I treat nationalism as a genus, meaning that all that is essential to generic nationalism is true of Christian nationalism. Whatever I ascribe to nationalism in this work is *ipso facto* ascribed to Christian nationalism. My definition of *nationalism* is similar to that of Christian nationalism, though with less content:

Nationalism refers to a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs, conducted by a nation as a nation, in order to procure for itself both earthly and heavenly good.

Absent from this definition is Christianity—the Christian nation and the sole, post-fall means of obtaining heavenly good, namely, in Christ. As we'll see in the following chapters, the addition of these words *in Christ* matters a great deal. Nevertheless, the Gospel does not supersede, abrogate, eliminate, or fundamentally alter generic nationalism; it assumes and completes it.

Modern Christian political theorists often call nationalism an ideology, usually assuming that all ideologies are bad and idolatrous. I see no use in disputing whether it is an ideology. “Ideology” is usually either loosely defined or defined according to its abuse rather than according to what it is. Whether my conclusions classify Christian nationalism under “ideology” has no relevance as to whether those arguments are sound. The reader will also have to keep in mind that I am not necessarily affirming any supposed connotations of nationalism, whatever those might be, and thus they cannot be ascribed to my definition or positions *prima facie*. In other words, the reader should not assume that I'm trying to justify or explain away any historical example of nationalism, or any of the various moral qualities often attributed to nationalism.

“a totality of national action”

A totality of action is not as difficult to comprehend as it might first appear. I'll begin with an example. Though a soccer team wins its match by individual players scoring goals, we say that the *team* won the match, not the individuals who scored the goals.

This is because, although the individual action of scoring is the key to winning, these actions were supported and made possible by the actions of the other team members, including the defensive players. So we say that the *team* won and that winning is a “team effort” because each player has his role with regard to winning. Thus, a *totality of action* can be defined as a set of actions that are interrelated such that their effect (e.g., winning the match) is a product of the whole (e.g., both defensive and offensive actions), not any particular part of the whole.

A totality of *national* action, being the formal cause of Christian nationalism, refers to all the actions that a nation expects of its members for their overall, national good. These range from great acts of sacrifice to mundane, everyday things, like caring for one’s children. It is a “totality” because although each action has a good unique to it, together each strengthens, supports, or makes possible other actions to form an organic whole. A mother nursing her child has the child’s immediate good in mind, but that action—as part of a totality of action in the nation—is also for the national good, for well-nursed children grow up to be healthy, productive, and sacrificial participants in the nation. In this way, the nursing of children is a national action, and the good of nursing is not only the child’s good directly but also the nation’s good. In other words, the good of the mother in nursing her child transcends the immediate good of child nourishment. National action, therefore, is not merely extraordinary or heroic action but also includes the ordinary and mundane. One can hardly expect anything extraordinary in a nation where the ordinary is absent.

These actions are interrelated such that each depends on the others to do them well. One can hardly expect mothers to care well for their

children when they exist in poor conditions, where fatherly affection, productive activity, good civil governance, social discipline, manners, and religion are absent. Thus, national actions compose a totality of action—each relying on the others for its possibility, support, and perfection; and together those actions procure for the nation its national good. Or, to put things simply, you typically cannot do anything well unless conditions are set for you to do it well, and those conditions are established by other actions conducted both by you and others. Subsequently, by this mutual support, a nation achieves its national good.

“ . . . consisting of civil laws and social customs . . . ”

Civil laws and social customs are the material cause, or content, of Christian nationalism. These are rules of action that determine what you ought to do and ought not to do. Civil law commands action explicitly, while social customs implicitly predispose people to action. These rules are often very general, allowing people the freedom to choose among different options (e.g., choosing one’s vocation). Now, since the end of Christian nationalism is the nation’s good (which I discuss in more detail below), rules of action are proper only if they conduce to the nation’s good. Thus, civil law and social customs, when proper, order the Christian nation to their earthly and heavenly good. Being a totality of action, law and custom form an interrelated and oftentimes redundant web of obligation that orders everything ultimately to the national good. For example, tossing trash from cars is illegal in the United States, but it is clear that social opprobrium must assist those laws to keep the streets clean. Furthermore, there are many desired rules of action covered by custom that civil law cannot effectively command.

“... conducted by a Christian nation as a Christian nation ...”

In Christian nationalism, the nation is conscious of itself as a Christian nation and acts for itself as a Christian nation. Christian national consciousness is the ground and animating principle of their action. This is the efficient cause of nationalism, for it speaks of who is acting and also of the impetus of action. It is analogous to a man with faith in Christ who, understanding himself to be a Christian man, acts as a Christian man for the good of body and soul. Or it is like a family of Christians who, seeing themselves as a Christian family, act as such for their earthly and heavenly good (e.g., family worship). Christian nationalism is a Christian people acting for their own good in light of their Christian nationhood.

Viewed as a whole, the Christian nation acts for itself by a three-step process: (1) It achieves a national will for itself; (2) that will is mediated through authorities that the people institute; and (3) the people act according to the dictates of that mediation. That is, the national will for its good establishes civil authority and constructs a social world—both of which prescribe concrete duties and norms—which the people then act on. Thus, the entity that causes Christian nationalism is chiefly the people, not Christian magistrates, though magistrates are necessary to direct the will of the people into concrete action.

“... to procure for itself both earthly and heavenly good in Christ.”

The purpose or final cause of Christian nationalism is to establish the best possible conditions for the procurement of what I call the “complete good”—the goods of this life and of the life to come.

In my generic definition of nationalism, I delineated earthly good and heavenly good. I did this because, as I argue in the next chapter, ordering people to heavenly life is a natural end for even the generic nation. That is, it is neither a new command nor something introduced by the Gospel. Had Adam not fallen, the nations of his progeny would have ordered themselves to heavenly life. Thus, heavenly good is an end of the nation. Since the Gospel is now the sole means to heavenly life, nations ought to order themselves to the Gospel in the interest of their heavenly good. “In Christ” modifies “earthly good” as well. The Gospel adds no new principles of earthy life, but earthly life is restored because of sanctification, which is the infusion of Christ’s holiness in us. Furthermore, all earthly goods ought to be ordered to Christ. Thus, the totality of Christian national action orders the nation to procure the complete good in Christ. The specific difference between generic nationalism and Christian nationalism is that, for the latter, Christ is essential to obtaining the complete good. Pagan and secularist nations are true nations but they are incomplete nations. Only the Christian nation is a complete nation.

I am not saying that a nation *as a nation* can receive eternal life, strictly speaking. Rather, a nation as a nation can act for itself (by social and civil power) so that, *externally*, heavenly goods are made apparent and available to all and so that each person is prepared and encouraged to take them for eternal life. Hence, a Christian nation would, for example, support the spiritual administration of Word and Sacrament. A nation has no power in itself to bring anyone internally to true faith—to realize heavenly good in individuals. But nations have the power to ensure that outwardly the things of salvation—the preaching of the Word and the administration of the

Sacraments—are available to all and that people are encouraged, even culturally expected, to partake and be saved unto eternal life.

As a concise summary, we can think of Christian nationalism as a Christian nation acting as such and for itself in the interest of the nation's complete good.

IV. Method

This is a work of Christian political theory. It is not, overall, a work of political theology. I say this both to manage expectations and to explain my method. There are two main reasons why I consider this a work of political theory.

Assuming the Reformed Tradition

The first is that I assume the Reformed theological tradition, and so I make little effort to exegete biblical text. Some readers will complain that I rarely appeal to Scripture to argue for my positions. I understand the frustration, but allow me to explain: I am neither a theologian nor a biblical scholar. I have no training in moving from scriptural interpretation to theological articulation. Francis Turretin, the great 17th-century Reformed theologian, spoke of “supernatural theology” as “the system of saving doctrine concerning God and divine things *drawn from the Scriptures*.”¹³ In this sense, “theology” can be understood *systematically*, that is, as a systematic articulation of revealed truth taken *from* Scripture (e.g., the doctrine of the Trinity). Instead of drawing from Scripture to prove the Reformed system of doctrine, I’ve chosen to assume this system and work from it. I

13. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology (IET)*, ed. James T. Dennison and trans. George M. Griger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994), 1:1.2.7.

am unable to exegete better than the Reformed exegetical tradition anyway, and I frequently cite theologians whose work, to my mind, demonstrates the soundness of the Reformed system. All arguments have to begin somewhere. To my knowledge, my theological premises throughout this work are consistent with, if not mostly taken directly from, the common affirmations and denials of the Reformed tradition. To be sure, some of my *conclusions* are expressed differently than this tradition. After all, *Christian nationalism* was not used in the 16th through the 18th centuries. But none of my conclusions are, in substance, outside or inconsistent with the broad Reformed tradition. And, of course, I would certainly welcome any work of political theology in favor of Christian nationalism that can stand side-by-side with this work of Christian political theory.¹⁴

If the reader does not have Reformed theological commitments, then I cannot guarantee that you share many of my theological assumptions. This is a work of Reformed Christian political theory, to be more precise. My desire for systematic argumentation led me to pull from a robust tradition within the Christian tradition. But since I pull mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries, in which Reformed

14. The reader is free to cite Scripture against my arguments. This is, of course, a valid method of refutation. In citing Scripture against me, you're seeking to support some proposition that opposes one of my propositions. Again, this is fine. But keep in mind that your theological propositions must fit into a coherent system of doctrine. In affirming any proposition, one affirms also what is logically antecedent and consequent to it: propositions come from and lead logically to other statements. Too often, Christians use Scripture to support theological statements and ethical claims without considering their logical implications in a systematical way (e.g., whether it leads to absurdity or heresy, or contradicts other beliefs). I am not claiming that anyone who disagrees with me is theologically, ethically, or politically incoherent, but I do think that much disagreement could be avoided and the discourse improved if we thought more logically and systematically and with a view to coherence. Even in theology, one cannot affirm a contradiction.

theology was very Thomistic and catholic,¹⁵ many of my theological premises are widely shared among Christians.¹⁶ Furthermore, when I cite non-Protestants (e.g., Francisco Suárez) or pre-Reformation theologians (e.g., Thomas Aquinas), I am not opposing or correcting Reformed Protestantism but recognizing and pulling directly from the catholic sources in the Reformed tradition.¹⁷

Proceeding from Natural Principles

The primary reason that this work is political theory is that I proceed from a foundation of natural principles. While Christian theology assumes natural theology as an ancillary component, Christian political theory treats natural principles as the foundation, origin, and source of political life, even *Christian* political life. The nation, for example, is not merely a necessary component of Christian nationalism; it fuels that nationalism; it enlivens a Christian people for Christian nationalism. Whereas Christian theology considers the Christian mainly in relation to supernatural grace and eternal life, Christian political theory treats man as an earthly being (though bound to a heavenly state) whose political life is fundamentally natural.

15. By “Thomistic,” I mean that Reformed theologians in these centuries were heavily influenced by Thomas Aquinas. This is less evident in Calvin’s work, though clear in the work of Peter Martyr Vermigli in the 16th century and many in the 17th century (e.g., Franciscus Junius and Francis Turretin). I use “catholic” as the Reformers used it—referring to the fundamental articles of faith taught by and since the Church Fathers. See, for example, *A Reformed Catholic* (1597) by William Perkins.

16. One important resource is Thomas Achord and Darrell Dow’s *Who is My Neighbor? An Anthology in Natural Religions* (n.p.: Thomas Achord, 2021).

17. Francisco Suárez, for example, despite being anti-Protestant, was often cited by Protestant thinkers (themselves critical of Roman Catholicism), particularly for his work on law and politics.

I call this a work of *Christian* political theory because I rely on both natural and supernatural propositions—i.e., from what is true from nature and from revelation—and I integrate them in my arguments. My method seeks not to prove the same proposition from reason and revelation separately but to integrate natural and supernatural truth into a systematic political theory. So throughout this work I use *mixed syllogisms*, referring to syllogisms in which one premise is known by reason and the other known only by faith. For example, assuming that *civil leaders ought to order the people to the true God* (a natural principle), we can conclude that *civil leaders ought to order the people to the Triune God*. Why? Because *the Triune God is the true God* (a supernatural truth). I integrate natural principles and supernatural truths such that nature is applied and fulfilled by means of supernatural truth.¹⁸ In this way, revealed theology serves to complete politics, but it is not the foundation of politics.

Complexity

Academically, my world is that of the early modern period (the 16th through the 18th centuries). What I love about this period is that authors made serious attempts to persuade using rational demonstration, and they were deeply conscious of the systemic nature of truth and the necessity of internal coherence. Unfortunately, the expectation for demonstration and coherence is largely absent in the Christian world today, especially in books and articles on politics. Instead, Christians resort to rhetorical devices, tweetable shibboleths, and credibility

18. This method is in stark contrast with much political theology today, since political theologians typically treat Christian political life as if it were, fundamentally speaking, a matter of grace and of supernatural truth. This misunderstands the role of grace and supernatural truth in politics, which I explain thoroughly in the next chapter.

development to assert disparate principles and applications.¹⁹ I've decided to return, as best I can, to an older style, though I am an infant in comparison to their learning and abilities. As a result, my arguments are often not simple. I try to prove my most important conclusions such that if you accept the premises, you would have to accept the conclusion by the force of logic. Whether I succeed in that is up to the reader's determination. In any event, that was my intent. To be sure, at obvious times, I grant myself some liberty to speak freely.

My account of Christian nationalism is a Presbyterian Christian nationalism. It contains all the essential features of Christian nationalism, so it shares much with other forms of it. Thus, even if I cannot convince my readers of Presbyterianism, much of my argument remains applicable to their own tradition. And one might come to agree with the justness of Christian nationalism but not follow me in my Presbyterianism. Given the state of our world today, I will consider that a success.

V. Summary of Argument

General Summary

In this section, I summarize the arguments of the book. The reader should consult the chapters to see my complete arguments, but I want to explain their general structures first. Chapters 1 and 2 show the theological possibility of Christian nationalism through a discussion of theological anthropology (i.e., the study of man in theology) and how it shapes social and political life. The several chapters

19. By "credibility development," I mean that they do not rationally demonstrate their conclusions, but develop their credibility to assert things. They might give their professional credentials (or another's), provide their socio-political identity, personally attack those who would disagree, praise the sort of people who would hold such a position, appeal to common prejudice or sentiment, or create a nice, genuine, and "good faith" persona.

1

Nations Before the Fall: What is Man? Part I: Creation

“‘Tribal behavior’ is what makes human beings human. Take it away from ‘man’ or ‘humankind’ and what you get is not ‘pure man’ or ‘liberated man’ but dehumanization, and from that, tyranny.” —Samuel Francis¹

I. A Rational Animal

The great political theorists in the Western political tradition often began their political thought with an account of human nature. They first asked, “What is man,” and they asked this with good reason.

1. “Christmas And the National Question (2): Thumbs Down on Dionne,” VDARE.com, December 23, 2004, available at https://web.archive.org/web/20110805054136/https://vdare.com/francis/041223_tyranney.htm.

Redeemed Nations: What is Man? Part II: Fall and Redemption

“The Adamic human race perverts the cosmos; the Christian human race renews it.” —Albert Wolters¹

I. State of Sin

Having discussed man in his state of innocence, we now turn to the states of sin and grace. The intent is to identify the theological basis for continuity and discontinuity in social relations between the three states. In other words, what changed and what stayed the same in human society before and after the fall?

1. Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformation Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 69–73.

3

Loving Your Nation: The Nation and Nationalism

“I think love for one’s country means chiefly love for people who have a good deal in common with oneself (language, clothes, institutions) and is in that way like love of one’s family or school: or like love (in a strange place) for anyone who once lived in one’s home town.” —C.S. Lewis¹

I. Method

One of the conclusions from the previous chapter is that neither the fall nor grace destroyed or abrogated human natural relations. The

1. C.S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, ed. Walter Hooper, vol. 3, *Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950–1963* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 119.

4

Perfecting Your Nation: The Christian Nation

“The Christian religion was only ever able and meant to permeate everything.” —Johann Herder¹

We move now from the nation and nationalism to the Christian nation and Christian nationalism. The Christian nation is a species of nation, meaning that the “Christian” qualification does not destroy, eliminate, or preclude the features of the nation described in the previous chapter. Christian nationalism, likewise, is a species of

1. *Another Philosophy of History and Selected Political Writings*, trans. Ioannis D. Evrigenis and Daniel Pellerin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 37.

The Good of Cultural Christianity

“Religion is a way of life, involving customs and ceremonies that validate what matters to us, and which reinforce the attachments by which we live. It is both a faith and a form of membership, in which the destiny of the individual is bound up with that of a community.” —Roger Scruton¹

I. Mode of Religion

The primary mode of religion is found in the instituted church—where the Word and Sacraments are administered by means of a spiritual power to the faithful for eternal life. But in a Christian nation there are two *supplemental* modes of religion: the *civil power* of

1. Roger Scruton, *Our Church: A Personal History of the Church of England* (London: Atlanta Books, 2012), 20.

What Laws Can and Cannot Do: Civil Law

“For when the authority is of God and that in way of an ordinance (Rom. 13:1) and when the administration of it is according to deductions and rules gathered from the word of God and the clear light of nature in civil nations, surely there is no human law that tendeth to [the] common good (according to those principles) but [but what] is mediately a law of God, and that in way of an Ordinance which all are to submit unto and that for conscience sake (Rom. 13:5).” —*The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts* (1647)

I. Law in General

This chapter completes what I’ve identified as the material cause of Christian nationalism, or the content of Christian national action.

The Christian Prince

“There is more true virtue in one politic man, who governeth the commonweal and doth his duty truly, than in many thousands of monks and hermits.” —Henry Bullinger¹

I. Introduction

Having discussed the things (or material cause) of Christian nationalism—social customs and civil law, which compose the totality of national action for the complete good—we now come to the chief agent of Christian nationalism. The national will alone cannot terminate *immediately* into national action. It must terminate upon a *mediator*—upon one who translates that national general will into specific commands of action that lead the nation to its good. In

1. Bullinger, *Decades*, 1:280 [Second Decade, Sermon v], spelling modernized.

The Right to Revolution

“Let us take this affliction from our people, and let us fight for our nation and our religion.” —1 Maccabees 3:43¹

The dire situation of Christianity in the West calls for action. But what kind of action? If the general thrust of this work has been true, then the spheres and powers outside the instituted church and family are important, if not vital, for the Christian life. That is, each of the natural orders of life—civil, familial, ecclesiastical—has its distinct powers for our good, and together they constitute a holistic ordering of man to the complete good. Today, the civil sphere is given a subordinate status in Christian thought, shut off from cognizance of eternal things, and we are conditioned to believe this is normal and

1. Quoted in Bullinger, *Decades*, 1:277 [Second Decade, Sermon v].

Liberty of Conscience

“In the tribunal of conscience the plea is between man and God, whereas in the outward tribunal it is between man and man.” —Thomas Aquinas¹

I. Statement of the Question

One issue that may have nagged the reader is the question of conscience. Doesn't Christian nationalism, as I've presented it, violate the freedom of conscience? Does Christian nationalism recognize the sanctity of conscience? Asking these questions is fair and expected, since I have called for public institutions and culture to be Christian. But, in most cases, these questions arise from serious confusion about classical Protestant political theology and from

1. Aquinas, *ST, Supplement*, 22.1.

The Foundation of American Freedom: Anglo-Protestant Experience

“In the United States the influence of religion is not confined to the manners, but it extends to the intelligence of the people. . . . Christianity, therefore, reigns without any obstacle, by universal consent.” —Alexis de Tocqueville¹

I. Introduction

The theoretical argument of this work being complete, I now turn to my country. Throughout this book I’ve suggested that we must return to the old Protestant principles of our spiritual forefathers and that we must apply them, with prudence and resolve, according

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve (New York: Bantam Dell, 2004), 1:354.

to our own particularity and circumstances. Many American Christians, however, question whether there can be an American Christian nationalism. Does the American political tradition permit a Christian self-conception, Christian governments, and church establishments? One popular narrative is that the American founding was anti-establishment and secularist and reflects the influence of “Enlightenment philosophy.” How can we get Christian nationalism out of that? But that narrative is false, as this chapter shows. This chapter is not, however, an attempt to answer the question, “Is America a Christian nation?” It is evident enough that for most of United States history Americans thought of themselves as a Christian people. Historian John Fea, who himself is no fan of Christian nationalism, said that

[t]hose who believe that the United States is a Christian nation have a good chunk of American history on their side. . . . Christians believed [throughout the 19th and 20th centuries] that they were living in the Christian nation. A close look at the historical record suggests that they were probably right.²

2. John Fea, *Was American Founded as a Christian Nation? A Historical Introduction*, rev. ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 245. He also states that “[t]oday’s Christian nationalists have a good portion of American history on their side . . . ‘Christianity, and particularly Protestant evangelicalism, defined the culture [between 1789 and 1861]’ (4); ‘The idea that the United States was a ‘Christian nation’ was central to American identity in the years between the Revolution and the Civil War” (p. 4); “As the people of the United States entered the twentieth century, they never abandoned their commitment, dating back over one hundred years, to the proposition that the United States was a Christian nation” (42); “Those who argue that the United States is a Christian nation have some strong historical evidence on which to rely” (56); and “When it comes to the individual states [at the time of the founding], today’s defenders of Christian America have a compelling case” (246).

Epilogue: Now What?

“God grant that there may come a reaction, and that the great principles of Anglo-Saxon liberty may be rediscovered before it is too late!” —J. Gresham Machen¹

The reader has likely asked himself, “Okay, but what we do now? How do we recover Christian nationhood? Where do we find this ‘Christian prince’ you speak of? Is any of this feasible in our situation?” These questions and others came to mind repeatedly while writing this book. I will try to give us a way forward, to the extent that I can. But this book is not an action-plan. It is a justification of Christian nationalism, and we are early in recovering the movement. Every movement needs its intellectuals, pamphleteers, strategists, organizers, and

1. Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1924; Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2020), 13.

foot soldiers. This book belongs in the first category, and perhaps in the future I can contribute in other ways. Let each have his role.

However, I feel obligated to speak freely about our situation. Many of these thoughts apply specifically to the place I know best: America. Our problem in the West is fundamentally psychological, and so I focus on patterns of thought and our rhetorical framing of things. The style of this conclusion is different than most. I offer a sort of fragmented conclusion, a series of loosely organized aphorisms. This is only the beginning.

I. The New America

I.

The Christian nationalist project is not “conservative.” Post-WWII conservatism is inadequate for our situation. I have no interest in conserving the liberalism of the 1980s or 1990s or the militaristic adventure-imperialism of the “compassionate” conservatives of the 2000s. American conservatism has operated under the assumption that our institutions are still fundamentally ours—still basically *for us*. But our institutions are not only captured by the left; they have become fundamentally oriented against us. The conservative cannot fathom this. He is an institution man, the sort who lined up against Donald Trump to “protect the institutions.” But what if the meaning of America produced by these institutions—its myths, symbols, monuments, and story—is actually against you, not for you? What if the “America” of these institutions casts you as the villain? What then? Are you going to conserve these institutions to your own destruction?

The left in America are now the true conservatives. This isn’t a compliment but a statement of fact. The institutions are theirs and

they now conserve them; they protect these institutions from the enemies of the New America. *But*, the conservative might say, *they are the “progressives”; they don’t conserve*. What an old and obsolete conservative dichotomy! In our world today, conserving and progressing are *not* opposites; they are complementary. Progressives conserve the institutions that further progress. Progress means that these institutions are working, not failing.

Thus, we are past the time of “conservative principles.” People conserve what they know and love. How can you love institutions that hate you? Why would you want to “conserve” them? The solution is *renewal*, not conservation. What we need is the *instauratio magna*, the Great Renewal.

2.

The American ruling class are true Americans in the New American way. This is understandably hard to stomach for Americans whose hearts lie in an older heritage. According to old conservatism, today’s ruling class is un-American and unpatriotic, and it hates America. There is truth to this; they do indeed hate *that* America and want it obsolete, dead, destroyed.

But eventually, self-identified conservatives will break out of these simplistic frames and see that “America” as they understand it no longer exists. Not the conservative but the progressive in America will look around and see the left’s image reflected in its institutions, monuments, national celebrations, special months, etc. In the New America, the ground of patriotic sentiment is progress away from the Old America. What animates New America is its progress in destroying Old America. Thus, civic holidays, national heroes, memorials, and patriotic events are all colored according to the

grand narrative of progress, and they are considered true, good, and beautiful only to the extent they celebrate that progress.

The grand narrative is not merely a celebration of progress, however. Conservatives love narratives of progress; the “conservative” narrative of America is itself a progressive narrative, as I relate below. But the New American narrative insists that *this is only the beginning*—there is much work to be done. Progress *is* our tradition, they claim. Thus, the narrative of America as embodied in our institutions today is relentlessly hostile to Old America. That means that New America is relentlessly hostile toward *you*. Every step of progress is overcoming *you*. Ask yourself, “What sort of villain does each event of progress have in common?” The straight white male. That is the chief out-group of New America, the embodiment of regression and oppression.

3.

Conservatives say that “education should be patriotic.” This is true in principle. But the conservative thinks that the left disagrees with this: *They want unpatriotic education*, they’ll say. But if America is a narrative of progress, why not ground patriotism in progress? The true patriot *is* the progressive—one who is proud of past acts of resistance, who praises murderous John Brown and celebrates the great struggles against Old America.

The conservative’s patriotic history is also fundamentally a story of progress. It goes something like this: The US was founded on principles of equality, freedom, and individual rights, though we didn’t live up to them. But a promise was made by them, and over time through civil war, labor struggles, immigration, fighting fascists, more immigration, more noble foreign wars, civil rights for blacks, gay rights, more immigration, and so on it was finally

realized. The conservative teacher of US history is the champion of the previous stage of progress, politely asking, "Can we please stop?" But why would it stop? Progress is patriotic. America is progress. Let's fight on for a "more perfect union," both here and abroad.

It is nearly impossible to detach the conservative from his progressivist narrative of US history. In this mind, his country is good because it was founded on good values that became progressively realized over time; and to the conservatives' minds, they were the ones who did it. Yes, the conservatives indeed did it; only they *could* do it. But what was the reward for your blood sweat, and tears? To be called "racists" by the Squad, to be denounced as the source of all bad social outcomes, and to be passed over by the incompetent and neurotic. You fought the fascists abroad and then at home only became the fascists of New America.

4.

I was in the military back when the Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) policy was rescinded by the Obama administration. Prior to the policy change, the military sent teams to military installations to "listen" to concerns of service members. It became clear that the intent was to convince everyone that DADT was a backwards policy. The rhetoric employed for persuasion appealed entirely to progress. After pointing to the inclusion of women and racial integration in the armed forces, the team claimed that ending DADT was just another step in that progress. Logically, the argument doesn't work, but can logic defeat such a compelling American story? The story was not new; it assumed the conservative narrative of progress. These people were clever. They knew that their audience was full of southerners from conservative communities, so they tapped into