

American Minute with Bill Federer

Freedom of Conscience & Religion: Patrick Henry, George Mason, Thomas Jefferson & James Madison

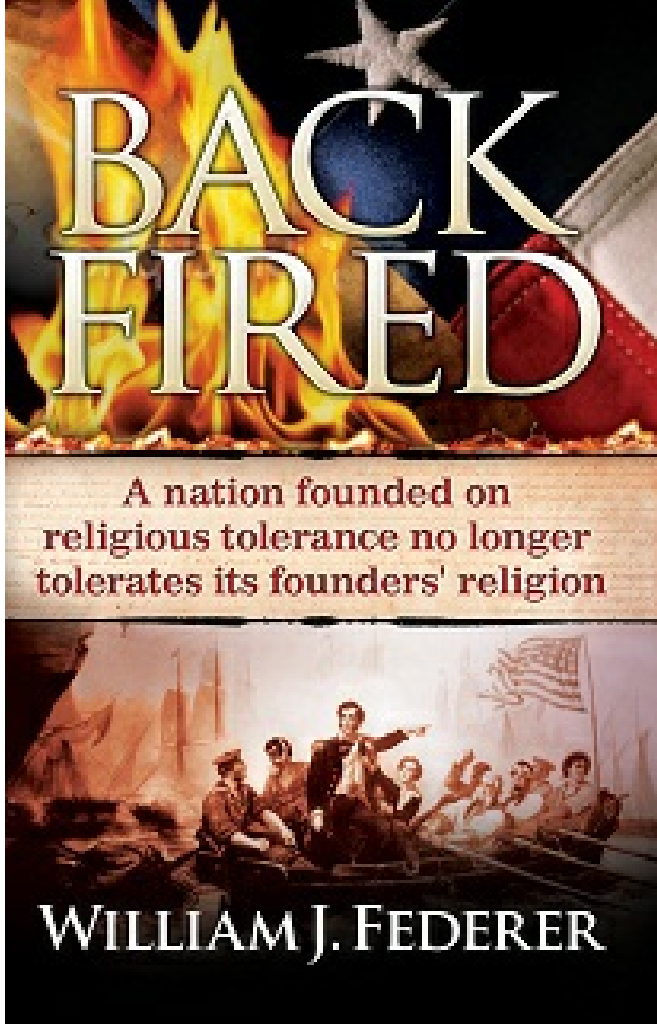
Virginia, the largest state in America in 1788 almost refused to ratify the U.S. Constitution, as it did not contain a Bill of Rights, as Virginia's State Constitution did.



The famous orator and five time governor of Virginia, **Patrick Henry**, argued at the state's convention in Richmond, insisting “**a bill of rights indispensably necessary**” to protect citizens from “**the commands of tyrants.**”

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[BACKFIRED-A Nation Founded for Religious Tolerance No Longer Tolerates the Religion of Its Founders](#)



The tradition of a **bill of rights** dates back to the:

- **Coronation Charter of King Henry I, 1100;**
- **Magna Carta, 1215; and**
- **English Bill of Rights, 1689.**



George Mason drafted the **Virginia Declaration of Rights**, which was adopted by Virginia's



Legislature, June 12, 1776.

James Madison assisted **Mason** in composing **Article 16** of the **Declaration:**

"Religion, or the duty which we owe to our CREATOR, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by

reason and conviction, **not by force or violence;**

and therefore, all men are equally entitled to the **free exercise of religion**, according to the **dictates of conscience,**

and that it is the **mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity,** towards each other."

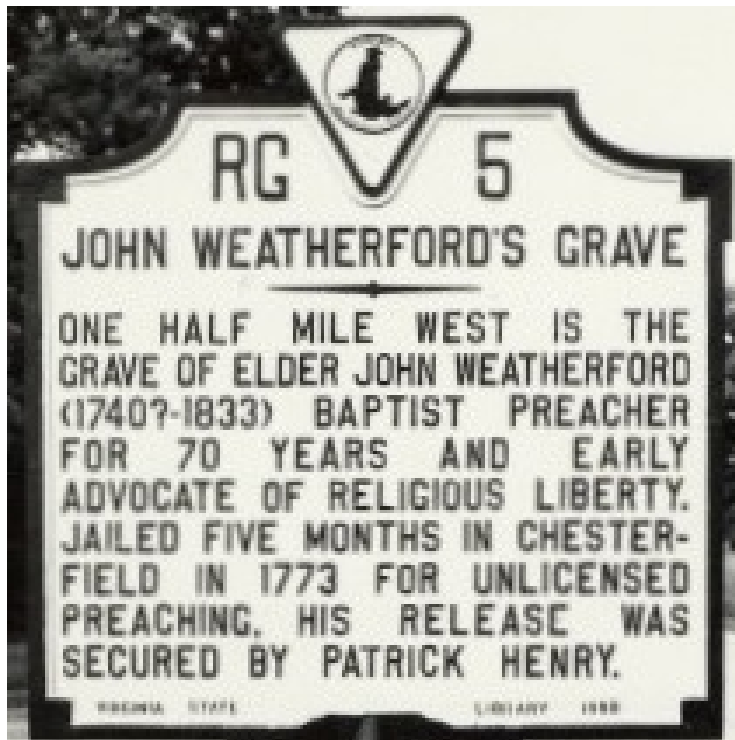
The phrase **"Christian forbearance, love, and charity"** is an appeal for citizens to follow the Biblical Judeo-Christian teachings of **"love your enemies"**; "do unto others as you would have do unto you"; "the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

Beneficiaries of Christian tolerance have become intolerant of Christians who extended tolerance to them!



gentleness, and self-control."

It was unanticipated by the founders that some would take advantage of "**Christian forbearance**" to later bully, intimidate, and spread **intolerance of Christians**, yet nevertheless, this has occurred with aggressive promotion of **secularism, transgenderism, atheistic communism, satanism, "equity,"** and **sharia Islam**.



Religious freedom was prized in Virginia by those who were **not members of the Anglican Church**, which had been the state's **established denomination** from 1607.

Patrick Henry defended

Baptists, as recorded on a Virginia historical marker:

"John Weatherford ... Baptist Preacher ... early advocate for religious liberty ... jailed for five months ... in 1773 for unlicensed preaching. His release was secured by Patrick Henry."

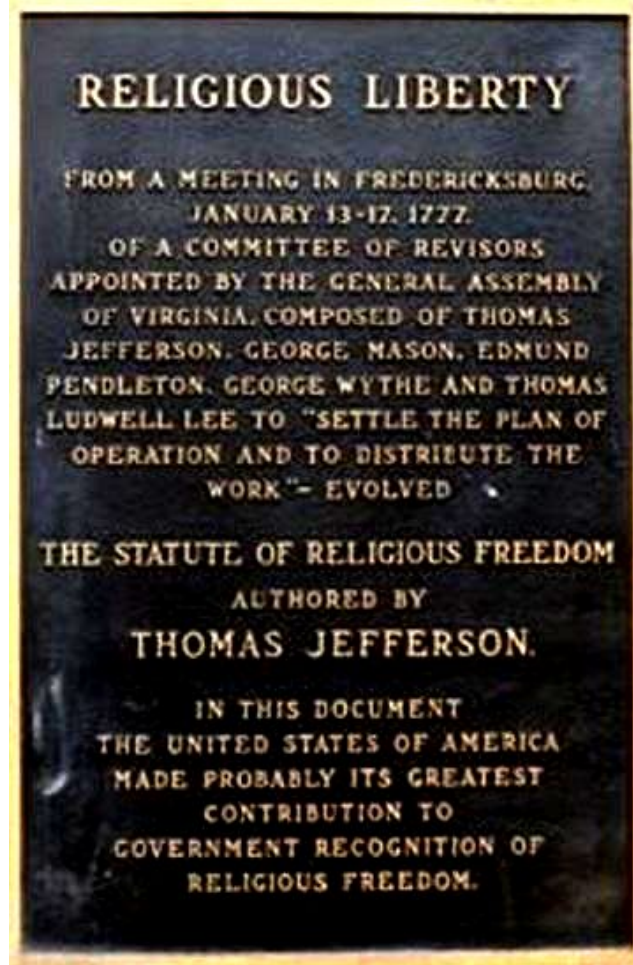
Thomas Jefferson also championed religious freedom.

In 1777, he drafted his **Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom**, which was introduced in the Virginia Legislature

in 1779.

It finally passed in 1786, while **Jefferson** was away in **France** serving as **U.S. Minister**.

This **officially disestablished the Anglican denomination** as the established religion.



In 1787, **Patrick Henry** refused to attend the **Constitutional Convention**, as he did not want to lend legitimacy to a meeting he considered would undermine states' rights.

George Mason did attend as a Virginia delegate, being praised by another Virginia delegate, **Edmund Randolph**, who wrote that of all



the plans proposed for the new American government:

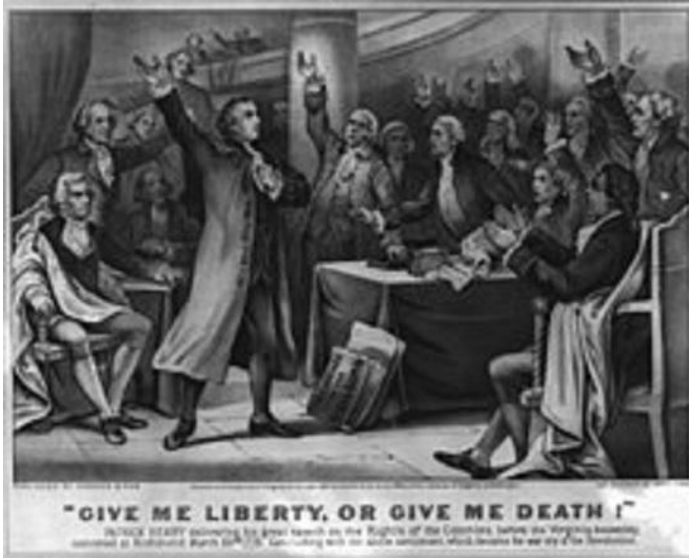
"those proposed by George Mason swallowed up all the rest."

Mason refused to sign the U.S. Constitution because it did not put enough **limits on the new Federal Government,** stating:



"There is **no declaration of rights**, and the laws of the general government being paramount to the laws and constitution of the several states, the **declarations of rights** in the separate states are no security."

In 1788, **Virginia's Ratifying Convention** met just



a few blocks away from St. John's Church, where **13 years earlier**, **Patrick Henry** gave his thunderous cry, "**Give me liberty, or give me death!**"

Henry stated June 16, 1788:

"The necessity of a **bill of rights** appears to me to be greater in this government than ever it was in any government before."

He added:

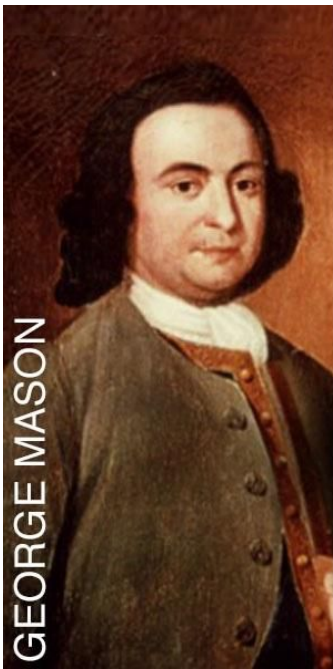
"I dread that **our rights** are about to be given away," and "My mind will not be quieted till I see something substantial come forth in the shape of a **bill of rights.**"

Henry warned:

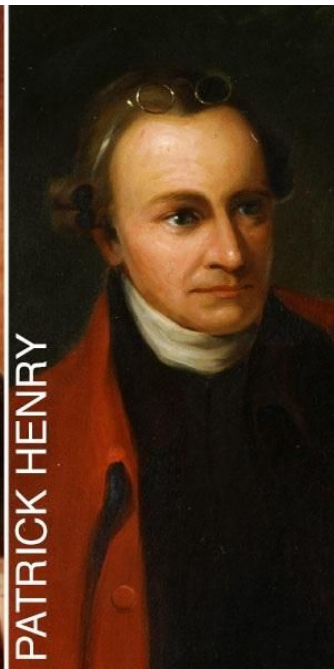
"The **rights of conscience, trial by jury, liberty of the press, all your immunities and franchises, all**



pretensions to **human rights** and **privileges**, are rendered **insecure**, if not **lost** by this change in government.”



GEORGE MASON



PATRICK HENRY

Mason echoed Henry's fears that the **Federal government** "might **swallow up all our rights.**"

He worked with **Patrick Henry** on the **proposed list of Amendments** to handcuff the new Federal government's power.

This gave rise to **Mason** being referred to as "**Father of the Bill of Rights.**"

They proposed **40 articles** to be **added to the Constitution** to protect such rights as the:

- freedom of



- speech,
- the right to keep and bear arms,
- no excessive bail or cruel and unusual punishment,
- a “sacred and inviolable” jury system, and
- **freedom of assembly and religion.**

James Madison felt the **Constitution** was sufficient as it was.



He aligned with **George Washington's** urgent concerns that the Constitution was needed:

- to **pay off war debts**,
- establish national credit to **open trade with Europe**, and
- to **prevent anarchy** between the states.

In order to garner enough votes to ratify the Constitution, **Madison promised Virginians** that if it passed, **amendments would be added to it.**

It worked. On June 25, 1788, **Virginia** became the **10th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.**

Patrick Henry was so opposed to the new Federal government that he refused participation, **turning down** offers by Washington to be **Secretary of State** or **Supreme Court Justice.**

Madison campaigned to be one of the first two **U.S. Senators** from Virginia, but **Henry** had him

defeated,
arranging instead
for Virginia to elect
the **only two Anti-
Federalist
Senators** in the
first session of
Congress.

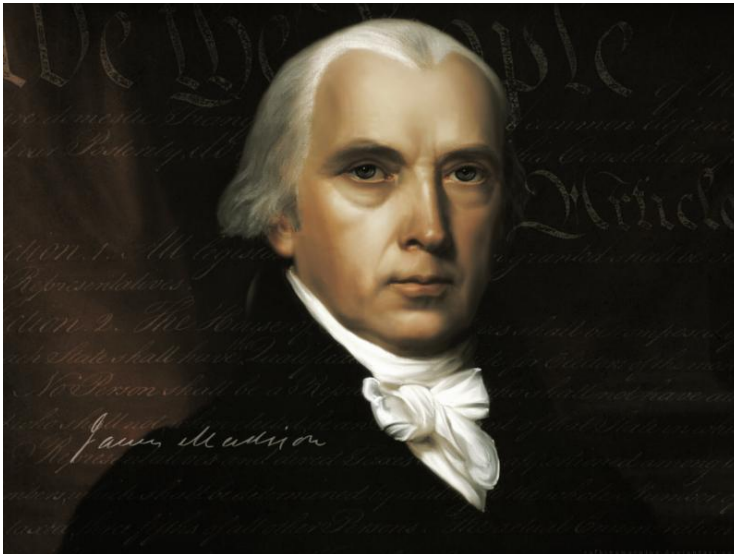


**William
Grayson**



**Richard H.
Lee**

Madison then ran
for Congress,
reassuring
Virginians of his
promise, that if elected as a **Representative**, he would
immediately propose a bill of rights in the first session,
especially to **limit the Federal government** from
interfering with the freedom of religion and the **rights
of conscience**.



Madison wrote to
Edward Everett,
1823:

"That there has
been an **increase
of religious
instruction** since
the revolution can
admit of no
question.

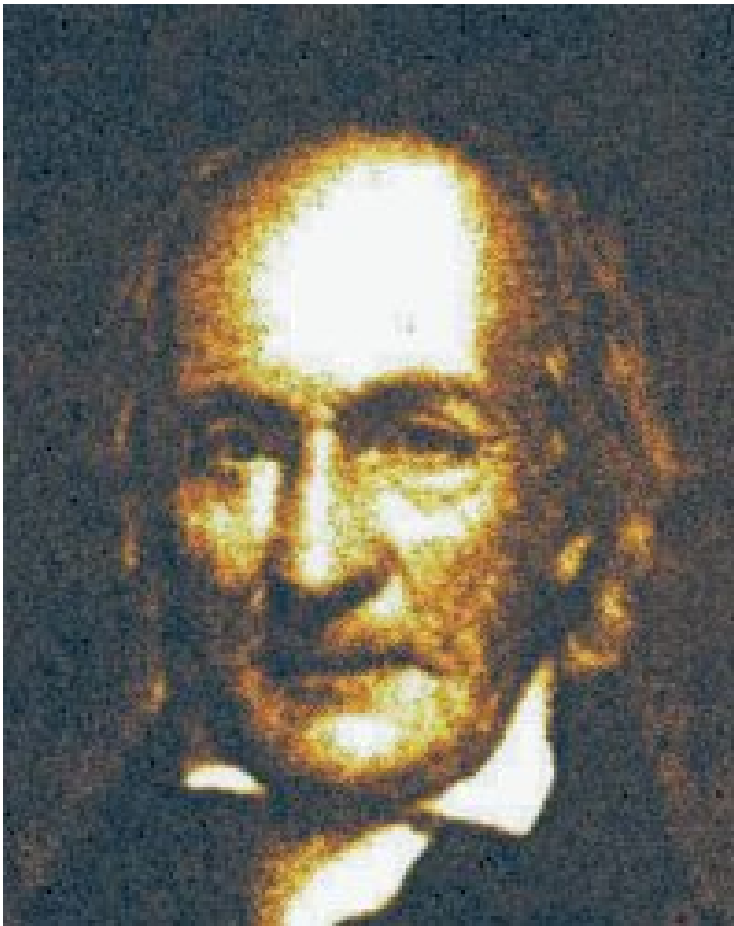
The **English Church** was **originally the established
religion ...**

Of other sects there were but few adherents, except the
Presbyterians who predominated on the west side of the
Blue Mountains. A little time previous to the
Revolutionary struggle, the **Baptists** sprang up, and
made very rapid progress."

In 1788, **Madison** reportedly met with **Baptist preacher John Leland** in Orange County, Virginia.



Leland had considered running for Congress, but when **Madison** promised to introduce an **amendment protecting religious liberty**, **Leland** persuaded **Baptists** to support him.



John Leland wrote in ***Rights of Conscience Inalienable***, 1791:

"Every man must **give account of himself to God**, and therefore **every man ought to be at liberty to serve God** in a way that he can best reconcile to his **conscience**."

If government can answer for

individuals at the day of judgment, let men be controlled by it in **religious matters; otherwise, let men be free.**"

Explaining how the different Christian denominations or "sects" were to be

treated equally
before the law,
Madison
continued:

"Among the early
acts of the
Republican
Legislature, were
those **abolishing
the religious**

**establishment, and putting all sects at full liberty and
on a perfect level.**



At present the population is divided, with small
exceptions, among the **Protestant Episcopalians, the
Presbyterians, the Baptists and the Methodists ...**

I conjecture the **Presbyterians and Baptists** to form
each about a third, and the two other sects together of
which the **Methodists** are much the smallest, to make up
the remaining third ...

Among the other sects, **Meeting Houses have
multiplied and continue to multiply ... Religious
instruction** is now diffused throughout the Community by
Preachers of every sect with almost equal zeal."



George Mason
suggested wording
for what would
eventually become
the **First
Amendment:**

"That **Religion** or
the **Duty** which
we owe to our
Creator, and the

manner of discharging it, can be directed only by **Reason and Conviction**, not by Force or violence,

and therefore all men have an equal, natural, and unalienable **Right to the free Exercise of Religion** according to the **Dictates of Conscience**,

and that **no particular religious Sect or Society of Christians** ought to be favored or established by Law in preference to others."

The consensus at that time was to have **tolerance among the different Christian sects and denominations**, as **Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens** admitted in *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 1985:



"At one time it was thought that this **right** merely **proscribed (prohibited) the preference of one Christian sect over another**, but would not require **equal respect for the conscience of the infidel, the atheist, or the adherent of a non-Christian faith.**"

Jefferson acknowledged **George Mason's** role in composing the **Bill of Rights**, writing April 3,



1825:

"The fact is unquestionable, that **the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of Virginia**, were drawn originally by **George Mason**, one of our greatest

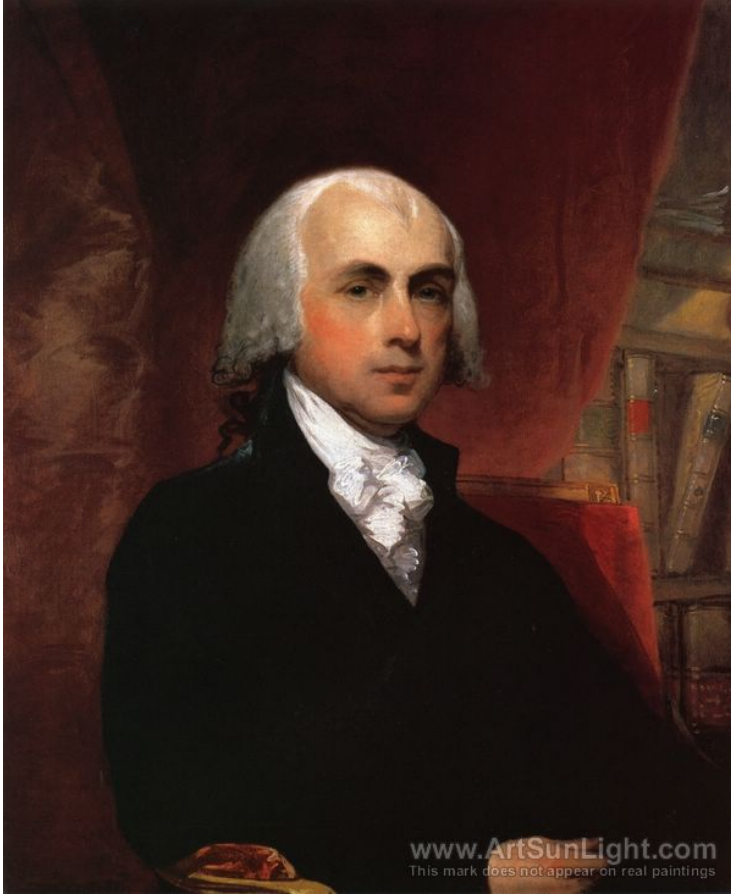
men, and of the first order of greatness."

With inspiration from **George Mason**, **Congressman James Madison** introduced his wording for the **First Amendment**, June 7, 1789:



"The Civil Rights of none shall be abridged on account of **religious belief or worship**, nor shall any national religion be established, nor shall the **full and equal rights of conscience** be in any manner, nor on any pretext **infringed.**"

The **First Amendment** was intended to **limit the Federal Government's jurisdiction**, as

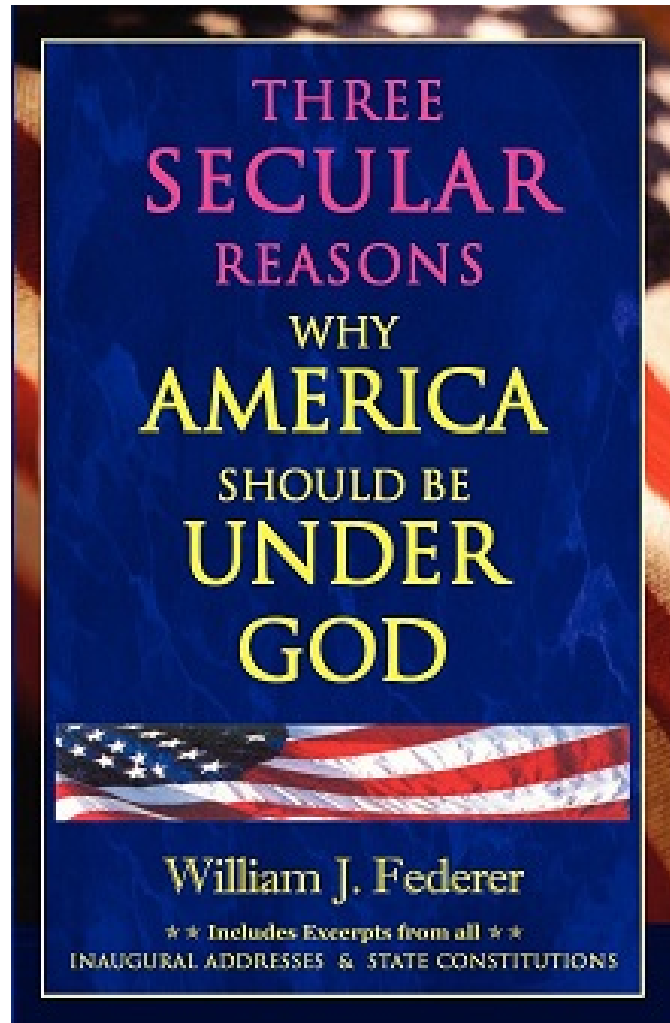


James Madison entered in his journal, June 12, 1788:

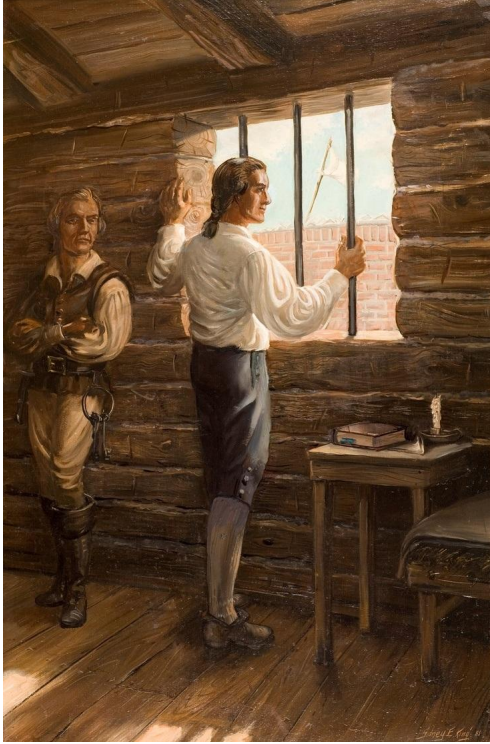
"There is not a shadow of right in the **general government to inter-meddle with religion** ... The subject is, for the honor of America, perfectly free and unshackled. The **government has no jurisdiction**

over it."

[Three Secular Reasons Why America Should Be Under God](#)



James Madison's support for



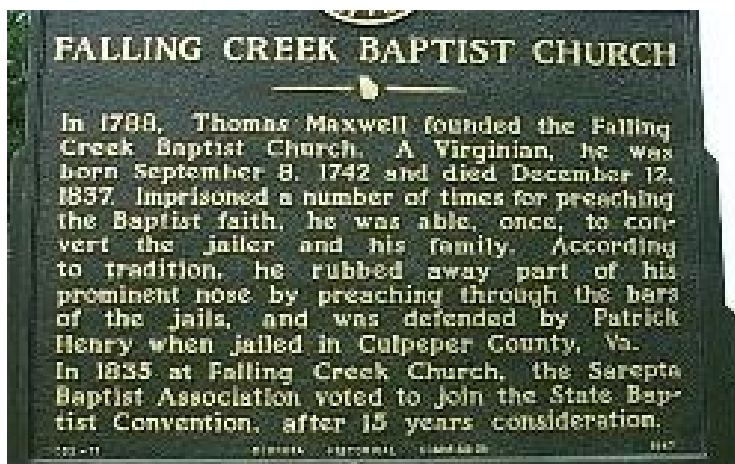
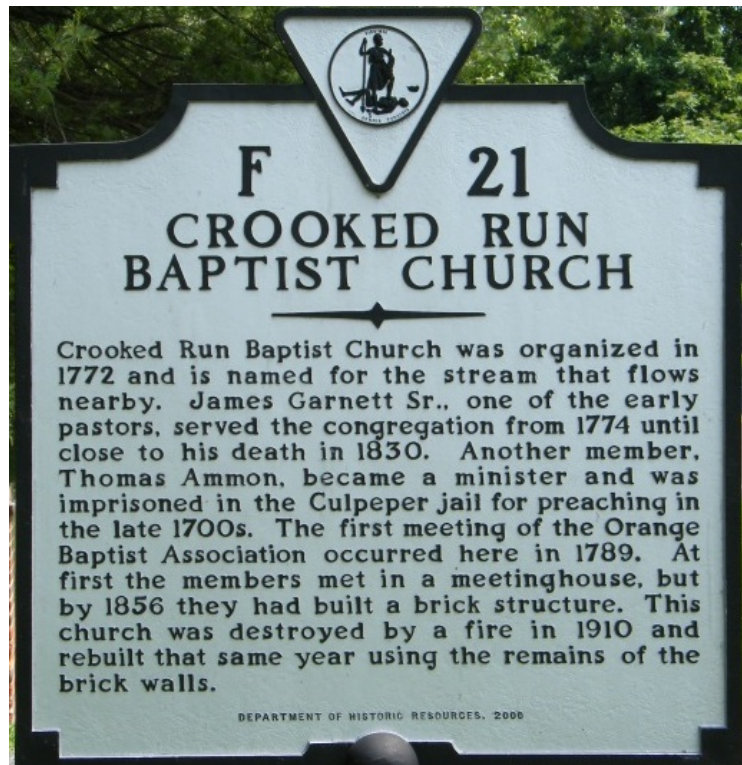
religious freedom began as a young man, as he recalled standing with his father outside a jail in the village of Orange and hearing **Baptists preach from their cell windows.**

What was their crime?

They were **"unlicensed"-- preaching religious opinions not approved by the King's Anglican government.**

A historical marker reads:

"Crooked Run Baptist Church ... **Thomas Ammon** became a **minister** and was **imprisoned in the Culpeper jail for preaching.**"



James Madison wrote to William Bradford, **JANUARY 24, 1774**, about the **fate of Baptist ministers:**

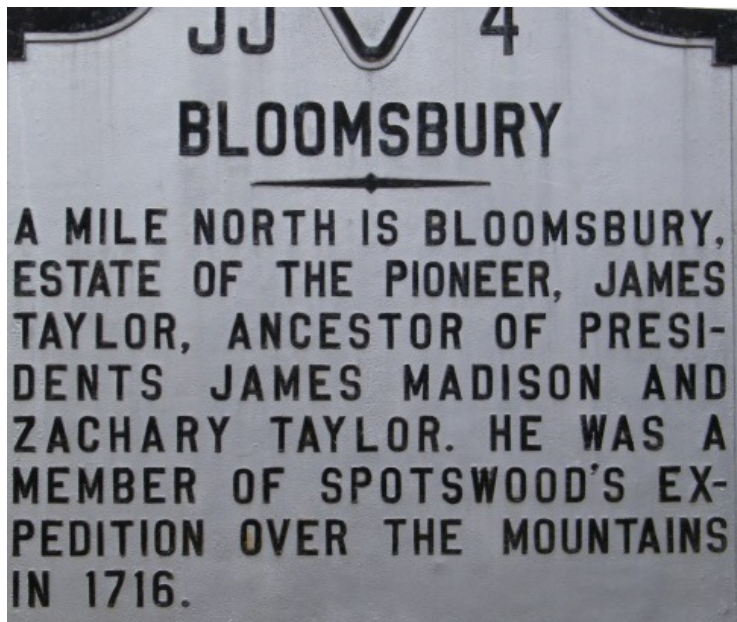
"There are at this time in the adjacent Culpeper County not less than 5 or 6

well meaning men in jail for publishing their **religious sentiments** which in the main **are very orthodox.**"

James Madison had **Presbyterian ministers** preach at his **Montpelier estate**, such as **Samuel Stanhope Smith** and **Nathaniel Irwin**, of whom he wrote:



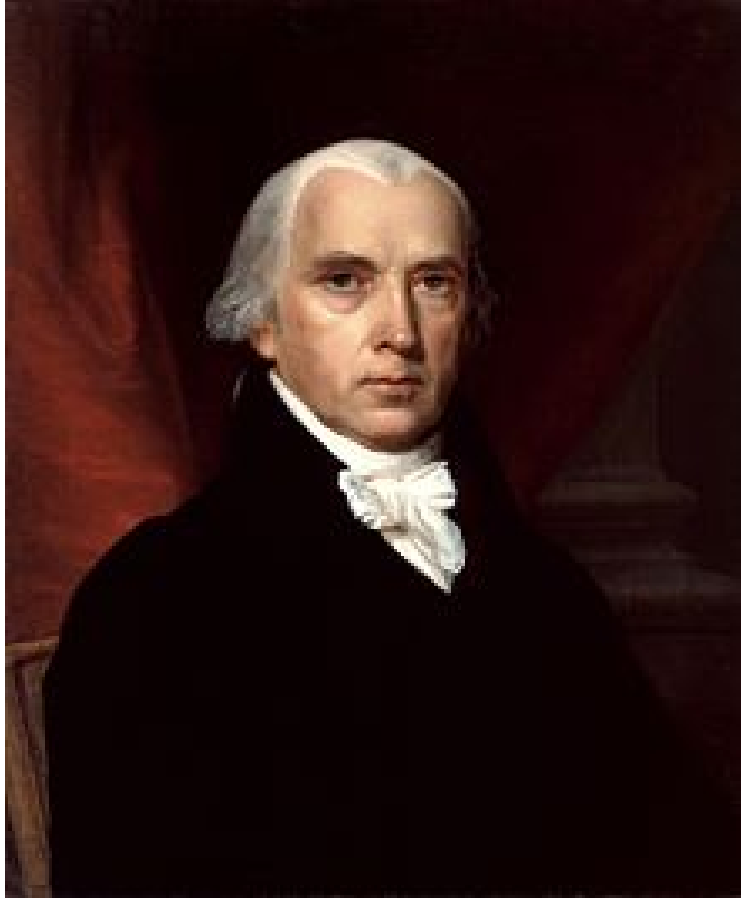
"Praise is in every man's mouth here for an excellent discourse he this day preached to us."



St. Thomas Anglican Church was built with help from **Colonel James Taylor II**, the **great-grandfather** of both **President Zachary Taylor** and **President James Madison**.

When **Rev. James Waddell** spoke at **St. Thomas Anglican Church** **James Madison** wrote praising his sermons:

"He has spoiled me for all other preaching."



**Presbyterian
Rev. James
Waddell** preached
in Charlottesville,
Virginia, as
attorney William
Wirt wrote in 1795:

**"Every heart in
the assembly
trembled in
unison.** His
peculiar phrases
that force of
description that
the original scene
appeared to be, at
that moment,
acting before our
eyes ...

The effect was inconceivable. **The whole house**

resounded with the mingled groans, and sobs, and shrieks of the congregation."

Madison wrote:

"The **qualifications of the Preachers**, too among the **new sects** where there is the greatest deficiency, are understood to be **improving**.

On a general comparison of the present and former times, the balance is certainly and vastly on the side of the present, as to **the number of religious teachers** the zeal which actuates them, the purity of their lives and the **attendance of the people on their instructions**."



Bishop William Meade, whose father had been an aide-de-camp to George Washington's aides during the Revolution, wrote in ***Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia***

**Old churches,
ministers and
families of
Virginia : in two
volumes (1861)**

William Meade

(Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1857, Vol. II, p. 99-100):

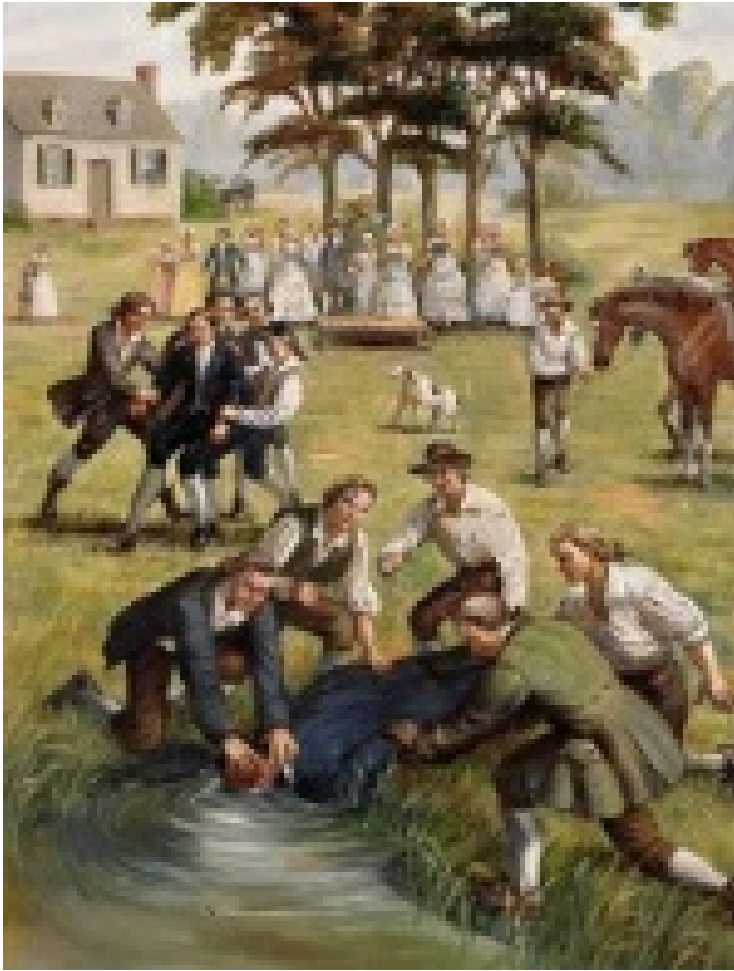
"Madison on the subject of **religion** ... was never known to declare any hostility to it. **He always treated it with respect, attended public worship** in his neighborhood, invited **ministers of religion to his house**, had **family prayers** on such occasions."

James Madison sought **George Mason's** advice in working for the **rights of conscience** and **freedom of religion**, as he commented to **Jefferson** in 1783:

"I took **Colonel Mason** in my way and had an evening's conversation with him ... on the **article of convention for revising our form of government**, he was sound and ripe and I think



would not decline participation in such a work."

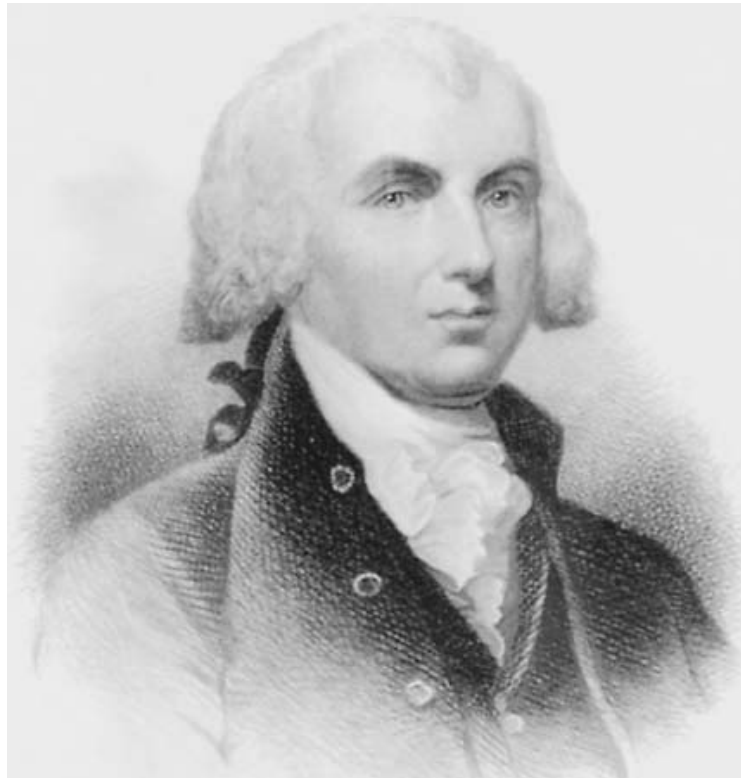


On October 31, 1785, **James Madison** introduced in the Virginia Legislature a **Bill for Punishing Disturbers of Religious Worship**, passed 1789.

Contrary to de-emphasizing the role of religion, he wanted to make it **more genuine** by having it be **voluntary**.

James Madison wrote in *Religious Freedom -A Memorial and Remonstrance*, June 20, 1785:

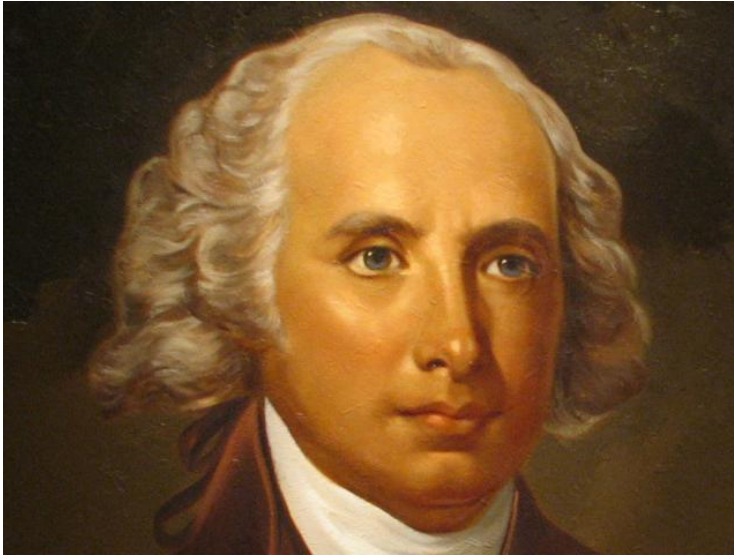
"It is the **duty** of every man to render to the **Creator** such homage, and such only, as **he believes to be acceptable to Him ...**



Much more must **every man who becomes a member**

of any particular civil society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign.

We maintain therefore that **in matters of Religion**, no man's **right** is abridged by the institution of civil society, and that Religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance."



Madison condemned the **forcing of one's conscience**, as is the case in religions which kill infidel unbelievers and behead those who leave their communities.

Madison continued his **Memorial and Remonstrance**:

"Whilst we assert for ourselves a **freedom to embrace, to profess, and to observe the Religion which we believe to be of divine origin**, we cannot deny an equal freedom to those whose **minds have not yet yielded** to the evidence which has convinced us.

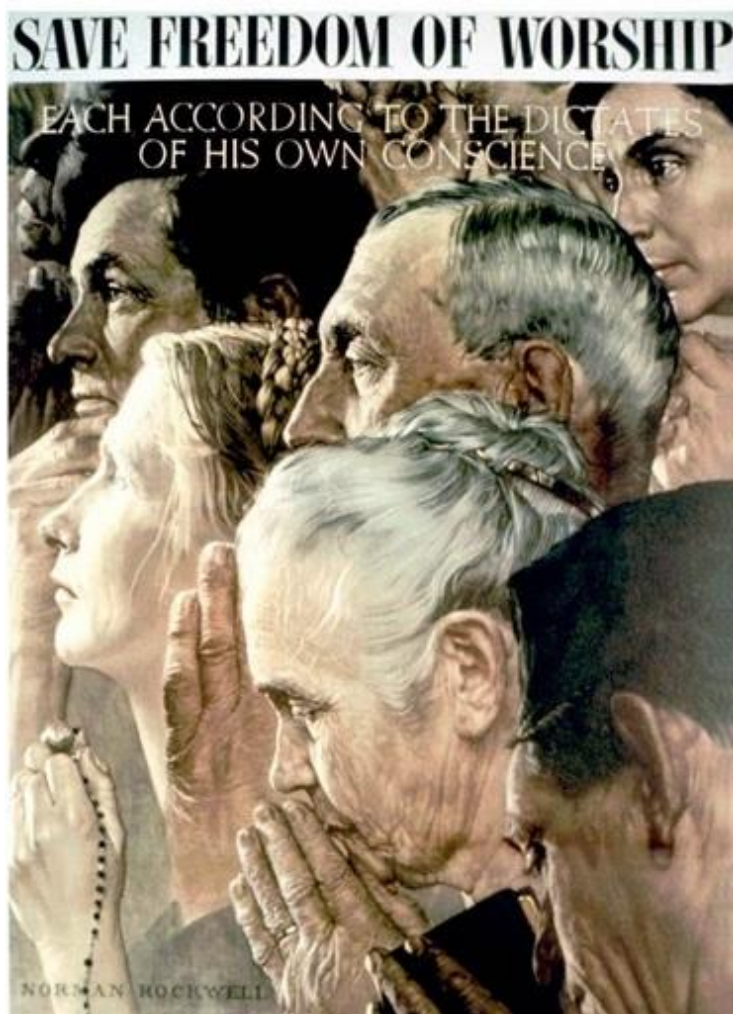
If this freedom be abused, it is an offense against God, not against man: To God, therefore, not to man, must an account of it be rendered ...

'The equal right of every citizen to the **free exercise of his religion** according to the **dictates of his conscience** is held by the same tenure with all our other rights."

The phrase "**dictates of conscience**" is based on the understanding that **love is love only if**

it is freely given.

God seeketh those who will love and worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23).



California Tries to Force Little Sisters of the Poor to Fund Abortion Pills

STATE MICAIAH BILGER JAN 4, 2018 | 6:16PM SACRAMENTO, CA



The issue of "**free exercise of religion**" and "**dictates of conscience**" are of critical concern as **government coercion** increases, as is seen in the forcing of individuals who believe abortion is murder to have to

fund it, or who believe in natural marriage to have to participate in gay wedding ceremonies.

President Donald Trump stated January 16, 2018:

"Our Constitution and laws **guarantee Americans the right not just to believe as they see fit, but to freely exercise their religion.**



Unfortunately, not all have recognized the importance of **religious freedom**, whether by **threatening tax consequences** for particular forms of **religious speech**, or **forcing people to comply with laws that violate their core religious beliefs** without sufficient justification ...

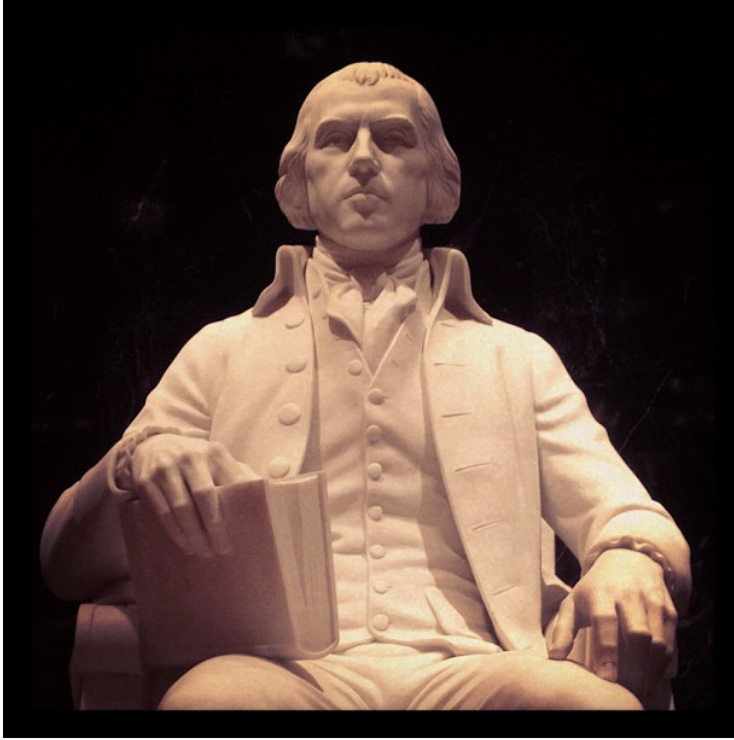
No American - whether a **nun, nurse, baker, or business owner** - should be forced to choose between the **tenets of faith** or adherence to the law."

Trump noted January 22, 2018:

"Medical providers who, often at the risk of their livelihood, **conscientiously** refuse to participate in abortions."

James Madison stated in his First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1809:

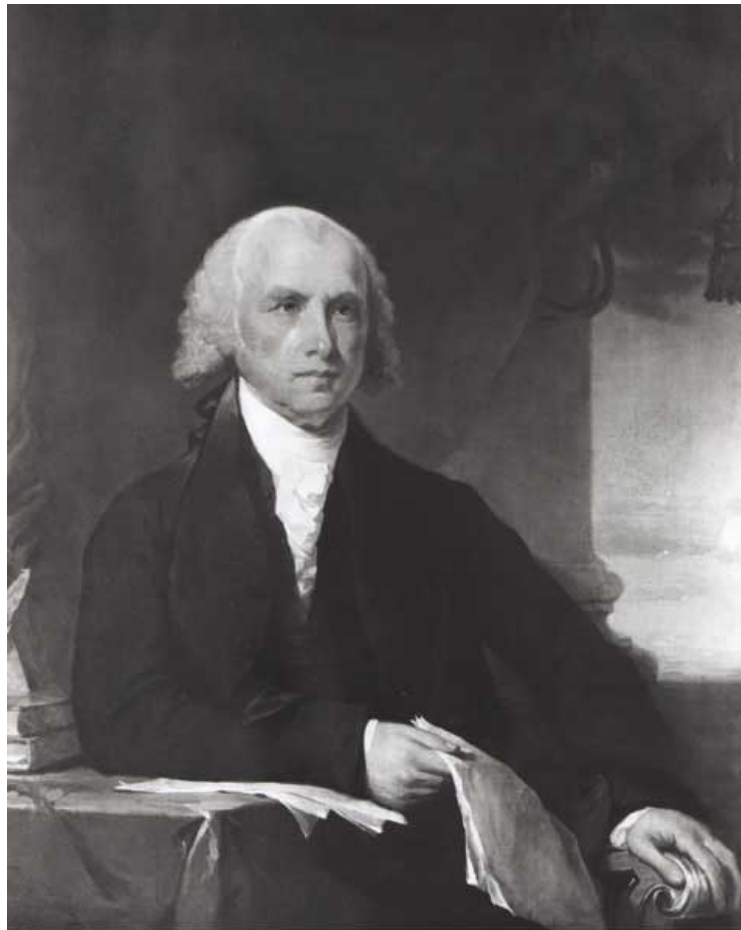
"To avoid the slightest interference with the **rights of conscience** or the function of **religion**, so wisely



exempted from
civil jurisdiction."

In proclaiming the U.S. should take possession of the land east of the Mississippi River and south of the Mississippi Territory extending to Perdido River, **President Madison** wrote, October 27, 1810:

"The good people inhabiting the same are ... under full assurance that they will be **protected in the enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion.**"



When the **United States** was formed, trade with other countries



was hindered by **U.S. currency being unstable.**

To remedy this, **Alexander Hamilton** helped

form the **Bank of the United States**, but over time, **two-thirds of the Bank's stock was held by British interests.**

Critics succeeded in **preventing a renewal of the Bank's charter** in 1811 and it went out of business. Shortly after, **Britain** began the **War of 1812** against the **U.S.**

James Madison proclaimed a **National Day of Public Humiliation and Prayer**, July 9, 1812:



"I ... recommend the third Thursday of August ... for ... rendering the

Sovereign of the Universe ... public homage ... that He would inspire all ...with a reverence for the **unerring precept of our holy religion, to do to others as they would require that others should do to them.**"

After the British burned the U.S. Capitol, **Madison** proclaimed a **National Day of Fasting**, November 16, 1814:



"I ... recommend ... a day on which all may have an opportunity of **voluntarily** offering ... their humble adoration to the **Great Sovereign of the Universe**, of **confessing their sins and transgressions**, and of strengthening their

vows of repentance."

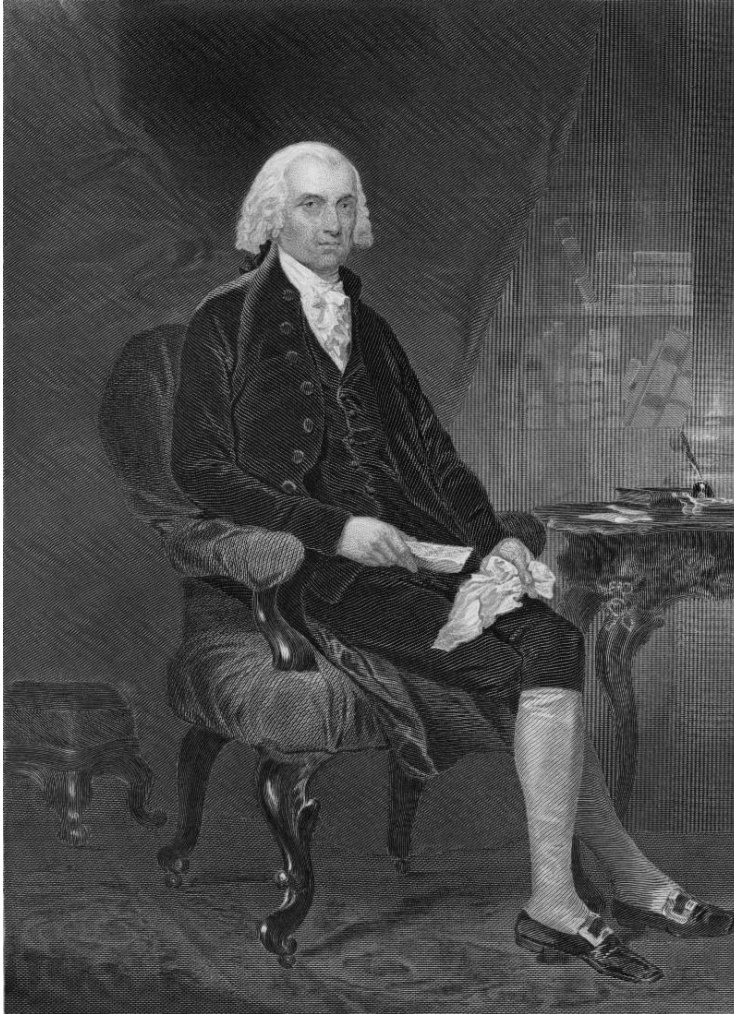
When the War of 1812 ended, **Madison** proclaimed a **National Day of Thanksgiving**, March 4, 1815:



"To the same **Divine Author of Every Good and Perfect Gift** we are indebted for all those privileges and advantages, **religious** as well as civil ...

I now recommend ... the people of every religious denomination ... unite their hearts and their voices in a **freewill offering** to their **Heavenly Benefactor** of their homage ... and of their **songs of praise."**

Madison ended his 7th Annual Message,

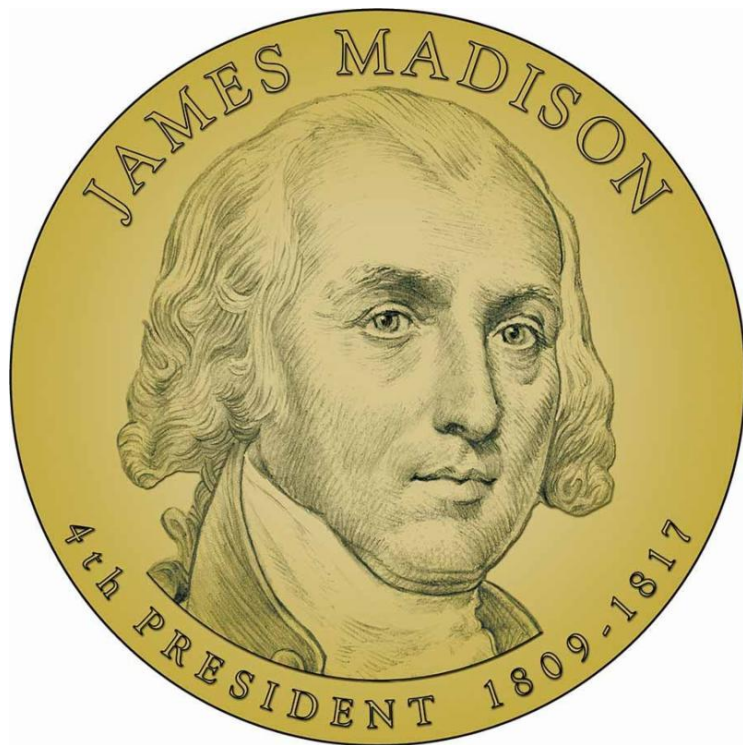


December 5,
1815:

"... to the goodness of a **superintending Providence**, to which we are indebted ... to cherish institutions which guarantee their safety and their **liberties**, civil and **religious**."

He wrote to
Frederick Beasley,
November 20,
1825:

"The belief in a **God All Powerful wise and good**, is so essential to the moral order of the **World** and to the **happiness of man**, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources."



Far from banning biblical faith, as pushed by radical



secularists, sharia Islamists or the transgendered agenda, **Madison** simply wanted biblical faith to be more sincere:

- that a Supreme Being did exist;
- that He was to be given public homage and worship; and
- that worship was only acceptable to Him if it was freely given and not coerced by fear of government prosecution or physical violence.

Madison affirmed this understanding in his **National Proclamation of Public Humiliation and Prayer**, July 23, 1813, where he described religion as "**that gift of Heaven for the good of man**":



"If the **public homage** of a people can ever be worthy of the favorable regard of the **Holy and Omniscient Being** to whom it is addressed,

it must be ... **guided only by their free choice**, by the **impulse of their hearts** and the **dictates of their consciences** ...

proving that **religion**, that **gift of Heaven for the good of man**, is freed from all coercive edicts."

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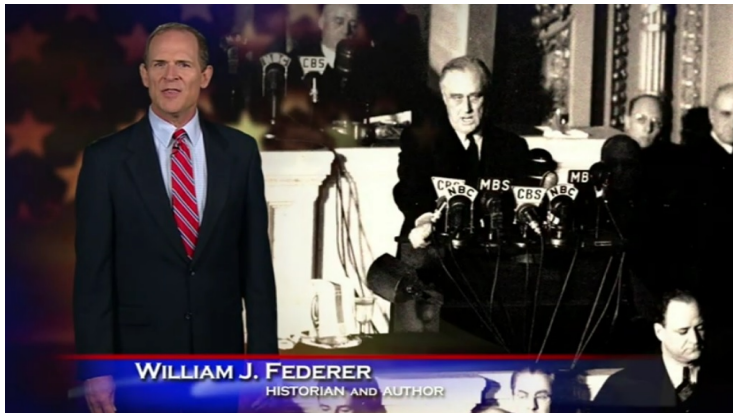
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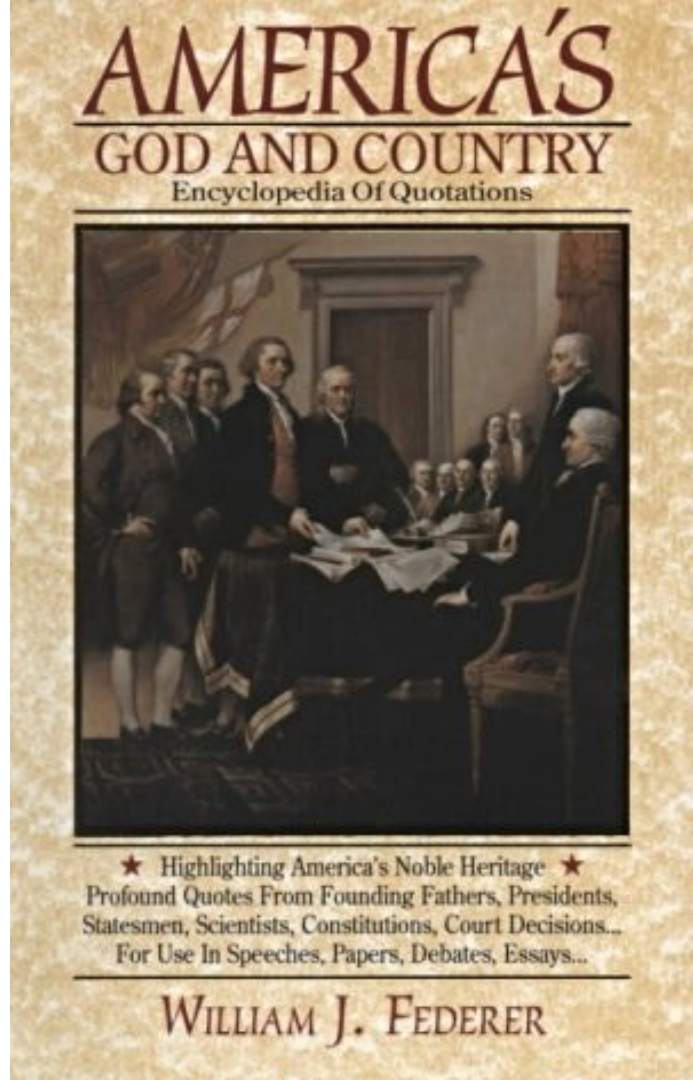
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CBN "Liberty" Special

Today's Bible reading

