

American Minute with Bill Federer Was the U.S. Constitution ratified by "Christian" States?

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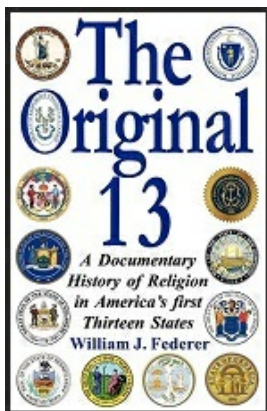
George Washington dictated a "talk" to the Cherokee Nation, August 29, 1796:



“Beloved
Cherokees, The
**wise men of the
United States meet together once a year**, to consider
what will be for the good of all their people ... I have
thought that **a meeting of your wise men once or twice
a year would be alike useful to you ...**

I now send my best wishes to the Cherokees, and pray
the Great Spirit to preserve them" ... **continue
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Delegates of original states **met together** at the:

- **First Continental Congress**, September 5, 1774, to October 26, 1774;
- **Second Continental Congress**, May 10, 1775, to March 1, 1781;
- **Congress of the Confederation**, March 1, 1781, to March 3, 1789.

The original government of the United States operated under the **Articles of Confederation** which were written in 1777, and ratified until March 1, 1781.

This arrangement proved inadequate, especially after **Shays Rebellion of 1786**.

New Hampshire Governor John Langdon called for a **Day of Fasting**, February 21, 1786, to pray for America's government:

"That He would be pleased to bless the great Council of the United States of America and **direct their deliberations ...**

that he would **rain down righteousness upon the earth**, revive **religion**, and spread abroad the knowledge of **the true God, the Saviour of man.**"

On May 25, 1787, **delegates** from the **original states**, with the **exception of Rhode Island**, met together to **rewrite the Articles of Confederation**.

Instead they drafted the **U.S. Constitution**.

George Washington opened the **Constitutional Convention**, stating: "The event is in the hand of **God**."

The **55 delegates** who **wrote the U.S. Constitution** belonged to the following denominations:

- 26 Episcopalian,
- 11 Presbyterian,
- 7 Congregationalist,
- 2 Lutheran,
- 2 Dutch Reformed,
- 2 Methodist,
- 2 Quaker,
- 2 Roman Catholic,
- and **Dr. Franklin**, who **called for prayer** at the Constitutional Convention, June 28, 1787, stating:

"In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had **daily prayer** in this room for the **divine protection**.

Our prayers, Sir, were heard and they were graciously answered.

All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of **a superintending providence in our favor ...**"

He continued:

"I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth -- that **God Governs in the affairs of men**.

And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? ..."

Franklin concluded:

"We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that **'except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it'** ...

I also believe that without **His concurring aid** we shall succeed in this political building no better than the

Builders of Babel ...

I therefore beg leave to move -- that henceforth **prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven**, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business."

The Federal Constitution needed **nine states to ratify it** in order for it to go into effect.

Eight states had ratified it, and **New Hampshire was in line to be the ninth.**

On February 13, 1788, **New Hampshire** convened the first session of its **ratifying convention**, but **disagreements** caused it to be **adjourned** on February 22, 1788.

Like many states, **New Hampshire had an annual Day of Fasting.**

The Governor set date for its observance on April 10, 1788:

"to be observed and kept as a **day of fasting of humiliation and prayer.**"

After the Day of Fasting, **New Hampshire** reconvened its **ratifying convention** in June of 1788.

Harvard President Rev. Samuel Langdon addressed the New Hampshire delegates with a message titled **"The Republic of the Israelites an example to the American States":**

"Instead of the **twelve tribes of ISRAEL**, we may substitute the **thirteen states of the American union**, and see this application plainly ...

The **Israelites** may be considered as a **pattern to the**

world in all ages ... **Government ... on republican principles**, required **laws**; without which it must have degenerated immediately into ... absolute monarchy ...

Laws were founded on the plain immutable principles of reason, justice, and social virtue ...

How unexampled was this quick progress of the **Israelites, from abject slavery**, ignorance, and almost total want of order, **to a national establishment perfected in all its parts** far beyond all other kingdoms and states!

From a mere mob, to a well regulated nation, under a government and **laws far superior to what any other nation could boast! ..."**

Langdon continued:

"It was a long time after the **law of Moses** was given before the rest of the world knew any thing of **government by law** ...

It was **six hundred years after Moses** before ... **Grecian republics** received a very imperfect ... code of **laws** from **Lycurgus**.

It was about **five hundred years** from the first founding of the celebrated Roman empire ... before the **first laws of that empire."**

After **Rev. Langdon's** address, the **New Hampshire delegates** voted on JUNE 21, 1788, **to ratify** the U.S. Constitution.

Since it was the ninth state to do so, **the U.S. Constitution went into effect**.

The Portsmouth Daily Evening Times, January 1, 1891, acknowledged **Rev. Samuel Langdon's** influence:

"... **by his voice** and example **he contributed more** perhaps, **than any other man** to the **favorable action of that body.**"

In their act of ratifying the Constitution, the **New Hampshire delegates** also directed "Congress shall **never disarm any citizen,**" ending with:

"Acknowledging with grateful hearts **the goodness of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe** in affording the People of the United States in the Course of **his Providence** an Opportunity, deliberately & peaceably without fraud or surprise of entering into an explicit and solemn compact with each other

by assenting to & **ratifying a new Constitution**, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and **secure the Blessings of Liberty** to themselves & **their Posterity-**

Do In the Name & behalf of the People of the State of New Hampshire assent to & **ratify the said Constitution** for the United States of America."

Were the states that ratified the U.S. Constitution effectively "Christian" states?

The answer can be seen by examining the **acknowledgements of religion** in the **state constitutions** at the time those **states debated** and **ratified the U.S. Constitution.**

DELAWARE, the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1776 State Constitution:**

"Every person ... appointed to any office ... shall ... subscribe ...

"I ... 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.**"

PENNSYLVANIA, the 2nd state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1776 State Constitution**, signed by Ben Franklin:

"Each member, before he takes his seat, shall ... subscribe ...

"I do believe in **one GOD**, the **Creator and Governor of the Universe**, the **Rewarder of the good and the Punisher of the wicked**. And I do acknowledge the **Scriptures** of the **Old and New Testament** to be given by **Divine Inspiration.**"

NEW JERSEY, the 3rd state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1776 State Constitution**:

"All persons, professing a belief in the **faith of any PROTESTANT sect**, who shall demean themselves peaceably under the government ... shall be capable of being elected."

GEORGIA, the 4th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1777 State Constitution**:

"Representatives shall be chosen out of the residents in each county ... and they shall be of the **PROTESTANT religion.**"

CONNECTICUT, the 5th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, retained its **1662 Colonial Constitution**, which was established **PROTESTANT CONGREGATIONAL**, till 1818:

"By the **Providence of GOD** ... having from their

ancestors derived a free and excellent Constitution ... whereby the legislature depends on the free and annual election ... The free fruition of such liberties and privileges as humanity, civility and **CHRISTIANITY** call for."

MASSACHUSETTS, the 6th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1780 State Constitution**, written by John Adams:

"Any person ... before he ... execute the duties of his ... office ... [shall] subscribe ... 'I... declare, that I believe the **CHRISTIAN religion**, and have a firm persuasion of its truth' ...

The legislature shall ... authorize the support and maintenance of **public PROTESTANT teachers of piety, religion and morality.**"

MARYLAND, the 7th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1776 State Constitution**:

"No other test ... ought to be required, on admission to any office ... than such oath of support and fidelity to this State ... and a declaration of a belief in the **CHRISTIAN religion.**"

SOUTH CAROLINA, the 8th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1778 State Constitution**:

"No person shall be eligible to a seat ... unless he be of the **PROTESTANT religion** ... The **CHRISTIAN PROTESTANT religion** shall be deemed ... the **established religion of this State.**"

NEW HAMPSHIRE, the 9th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1784 State Constitution**:

"No person shall be capable of being elected ... who is not of the **PROTESTANT religion.**"

VIRGINIA, the 10th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1776 State Constitution, Bill of Rights**, written with the help of James Madison and George Mason:

"It is the mutual duty of all to practice **CHRISTIAN forbearance, love, and charity** towards each other."

NEW YORK, the 11th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1777 State Constitution**:

"The United American States ... declare ...

'Laws of nature and of **NATURE'S GOD** ... All men are created equal; that they are endowed by their **CREATOR** with certain unalienable rights ... Appealing to the **SUPREME JUDGE of the world** ... A firm reliance on the protection of **DIVINE PROVIDENCE**' ...

People of this State, ordain ... the free exercise and enjoyment of **religious profession and worship**, without discrimination ...

Provided, That the **liberty of conscience**, hereby granted, **shall not** be so construed as to **excuse acts of licentiousness** (sexuality immorality)."

NORTH CAROLINA, the 12th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, stated in its **1776 State Constitution**:

"No person, who shall deny the being of **GOD** or the truth of the **PROTESTANT religion**, or the **Divine authority** either 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 ... office."

RHODE ISLAND, the 13th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, retained its **1663 Colonial Constitution** till 1843, which stated:

"By the blessing of **God** ... a **full liberty in religious concernements** ... rightly grounded upon **GOSPEL principles**, will give the best and greatest security ... in the **true CHRISTIAN faith and worship of God** ... They may ... **defend themselves**, in their just rights and liberties **against all the enemies of the CHRISTIAN faith.**"

President John F. Kennedy stated February 9, 1961:

"This country was founded by men and women ... dedicated to two propositions:

FIRST, a **strong religious conviction**, and SECONDLY a recognition that this conviction could flourish only under a **system of freedom** ...

The **Puritans** and the **Pilgrims** of my own section of New England, the **Quakers** of Pennsylvania, the **Catholics** of Maryland, the **Presbyterians** of North Carolina, the **Methodists** and **Baptists** who came later; all shared these two great traditions."

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Lafayette Black wrote in *Engel v. Vitale*, 1962:

"As late as the time of the Revolutionary War, there were **established Churches** in at least 8 of the 13 former colonies and **established religions** in at least 4 of the other 5."

John K. Wilson wrote in "**Religion Under the State Constitutions 1776-1800**" (*Journal of Church and State*, Volume 32, Autumn 1990, Number 4, pp. 754):

"An **establishment of religion**, in terms of **direct tax aid to Churches**, was the situation in 9 of the 13 colonies on the eve of the American revolution."

The Journal of the U.S. House recorded that on March

27, 1854, the 33rd Congress voted unanimously to print **Rep. James Meacham's** report, which stated:

"At the adoption of the Constitution, we believe every state -- certainly 10 of the 13 -- provided as regularly for the support of the Church as for the support of the Government ...

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."**

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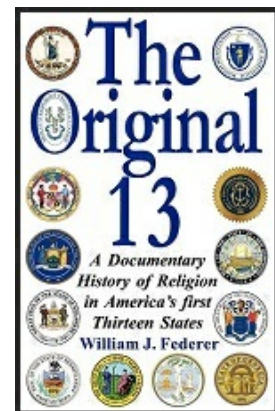
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