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American Minute with Bill Federer Tocqueville: on Christianity in America; Islam in Algeria; & his seemingly prophetic warning on how Americans will lose their Freedom

Read American Minute

Alexis de Tocqueville was born JULY 29, 1805.

A French social scientist, he traveled the United States in 1831, and wrote a two-part work, **Democracy in America** (1835; 1840), which has been described as:

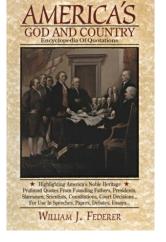
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between character and society in America that has ever been written" ... continue reading American Minute here ...

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America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations



In it, **Tocqueville** wrote:

"Upon my arrival in the United States **the religious aspect** of the country was the first thing that struck my attention;

and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the **great political consequences** resulting from this new state of things, to which I was unaccustomed.

In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions.

But **in America** I found they were **intimately united** and that they **reigned in common** over the same country ..."

Tocqueville wrote further:

"The Americans combine the notions of **Christianity** and of **liberty** so intimately in their minds, that **it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other;**

and with them this conviction does not spring from that barren traditionary faith which seems to vegetate in the soul rather than to live ..."

Tocqueville continued:

"They brought with them ... a form of Christianity, which I cannot better describe, than by styling it a democratic and republican religion ...

From the earliest settlement of the emigrants, **politics and religion contracted an alliance** which has never been dissolved."

Tocqueville wrote:

"Religion in America ... must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it ...

This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or a party, but **it belongs to the whole nation."**

Tocqueville observed:

"The sects that exist in the United States are innumerable. They all differ in respect to the worship which is due to **the Creator**;

but **they all agree** in respect to the **duties** which are due **from man to man.**

Each sect adores **the Deity** in its own peculiar manner, but all sects preach the same **moral law** in the **name of God** ...

Moreover, **all the sects** of the United States are comprised within **the great unity of Christianity**, and **Christian morality** is everywhere the same."

Tocqueville added:

"In the United States the sovereign authority is religious

There is no country in the whole world where **the Christian religion** retains a greater influence than in America ...

America is still the place where the **Christian religion** has kept **the greatest real power over men's souls**;

and nothing better demonstrates how useful and natural it is to man, since **the country** where it now has the widest sway is both **the most enlightened and the freest.**"

Tocqueville continued:

"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 obstacle, by universal consent."**

In Book Two of *Democracy in America, de Tocqueville* wrote:

"Christianity has therefore retained a strong hold on the public mind in America ...

In the United States ... Christianity itself is a fact so irresistibly established, that no one undertakes either to attack or to defend it."

In August of 1831, **Alexis de Tocqueville** traveled through Chester County, New York, and had the opportunity to observe a court case:

"While I was in America, a witness, who happened to be called at the assizes of the county of Chester, declared that he did not believe in **the existence of God** or in the **immortality of the soul.**

The judge refused to admit his evidence, on the ground that the witness had destroyed beforehand all confidence of the court in what he was about to say

He continued:

...."

"The newspapers related the fact without any further comment.

... The New York Spectator of August 23d, 1831, relates the fact in the following terms:

'The court of common pleas of Chester county (New York), a few days since rejected a witness who declared his disbelief in **the existence of God.**

The presiding judge remarked, that he had not before been aware that there was a man living who did not believe in **the existence of God**;

that **this belief** constituted the sanction of all testimony in a court of justice: and

that he knew of no case in **a Christian country**, where a witness had been permitted to testify without such **belief.'''**

In 1895, Josiah Hotchkiss Gilbert compiled *The Dictionary of Burning Words of Brilliant Writers,* which included the statement from **Alexis de Tocqueville:**

"Christianity is the companion of liberty in all its conflicts -- the cradle of its infancy, and the divine source of its claims."

A contemporary of **Alexis de Tocqueville**, who traveled with him across America, was the **French historian Gustave de Beaumont** (1802-1865).

Beaumont wrote in his work, *Marie ou l'Esclavage aux E'tas-Unis* (1835):

"The principal established **religious sects** in North America are the:

- Methodists,
- Anabaptists,
- Catholics,
- Presbyterians,
- Episcopalians,
- Quakers or Friends,
- Universalists,
- Congregationalists,
- Unitarians,
- Dutch Reformed,
- German Reformed,
- Moravians,
- Evangelical Lutherans, etc ..."

Beaumont continued:

"Religion in America is not only a moral institution but also **a political institution** ...

In the United States, the law is never atheistic ...

All of the American constitutions proclaim **freedom of conscience** and the **liberty and equality** of all the confessions ..."

Beaumont stated further:

"The **Constitution of Massachusetts** proclaims the freedom of the various faiths in the sense that it does not wish to persecute any of them; but it recognizes within the state only **Christians** and protects only the **Protestants**.

Maryland's Constitution also declares that all of the faiths are free, and that no one is forced to contribute to the maintenance of a particular church.

However, it gives the legislature the right to establish a general tax, according to the circumstances, for the support of the Christian religion.

The Constitution of Vermont recognizes only the Christian faiths, and says specifically that every congregation of Christians should celebrate the Sabbath or the Lord's Day, and observe the religious worship which seems to it most pleasing to the will of God, manifested by revelation.

Sometimes the American constitutions offer religious bodies some indirect assistance: thus, Maryland law declares that, to be admitted to public office, it is necessary to be a Christian ..."

Gustave de Beaumont continued in *Marie ou l'Esclavage aux E'tas-Unis* (1835):

"The **Pennsylvania Constitution** requires that one believe in **the existence of God** and in **a future life of punishment or rewards** ...

The law ... confirms the power of religion ...

The **religious sects** ... are far from showing themselves indifferent to political interests and to the government of the country.

They all take a lively interest in the **maintenance of American institutions** through **the voice of their ministers in the sacred pulpit** and even in the **political assemblies** ..."

Beaumont concluded:

"In America, **Christian religion** is always at the service of **freedom**.

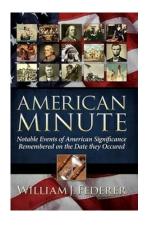
It is a principle of the United States legislature that, to be

good citizen, it is necessary to be **religious**; and it is a no less well-established rule that, to fulfill **one's duty toward God,** it is necessary to be a good citizen ...

... In general, anyone who adheres to one of the **religious sects**, whose number is immense in the United States, **enjoys all of his social and political rights in peace.**

But the man who would claim to have **neither a church nor religious beliefs** would not only be **excluded from all civil employment and from all political offices** ... but ... would be an **object of moral persecution** of all kinds. No one would care to have any social relations with him ...

No one in the United States believes that a man without religion could be an honest man."



American Minute-Notable Events of American Significance Remembered on the Date They Occurred

In the 1840's, **Alexis de Tocqueville** traveled twice to the North African country of ALGERIA.

In *Democracy in America,* Vol. II, (1840, Book 1, Chapter V), **Alexis de Tocqueville** wrote:

"Mohammed brought down from heaven and put into the **Koran** not religious doctrines only, but political maxims, criminal and civil laws, and scientific theories ...

The **Gospels**, on the other hand, deal only with the general relations between **man and God** and between man and man. Beyond that, they teach nothing and do

not oblige people to believe anything.

... That alone, among a thousand reasons, is enough to show that **Islam will not be able to hold its power long in an age of enlightenment** and **democracy**, while **Christianity is destined to reign** in such age, as in all others."

Similar comments on the political and military aspects of Islam were made by **St. Alfonsus Liguori** (1696-1787), who wrote in *The History of Heresies & their Refutation* (published 1847):

"The **Mahometan** paradise, however, is only fit for beasts; for **filthy sensual pleasure** is all the believer has to expect there ...

Mahometans ... are permitted to have four wives by their law ...

It is prohibited to dispute on the **Alcoran (Qur'an)** and the Scriptures; and the devil appears to have dictated this precept himself, for, by **keeping those poor people in ignorance,** he keeps them in darkness ..."

Liguori continued:

"Mahomet died in 632, in the sixtythird year of his age, and nine years after he was recognized as Sovereign of Arabia.

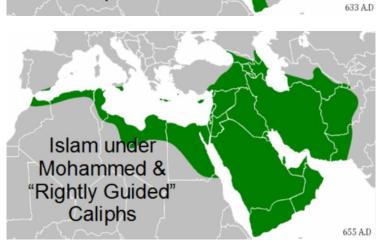
... He saw almost the whole Peninsula subject to his sway, and Islam under Mohammed & "Rightly Guided" Caliphs

632 A.D

for four hundred leagues to the North and South of Medina no other sovereign was known.

Islam under Mohammed & "Rightly Guided" Caliphs

... He was succeeded by **Aboubeker,** one of his earliest disciples, and **a** great conqueror likewise.



A long line of **Caliphs** united in their own persons the **spiritual and royal power** of the Arabian Empire.

They **destroyed** the **Empire of Persia**; and **Egypt**, and **Syria**, and the rich **provinces and kingdoms of the East** yielded to their **arms**."

Thomas Paine referred to the political aspect of **"Mahomet"** in his 3rd edition of *Common Sense,* Philadelphia, Feb. 14, 1776:

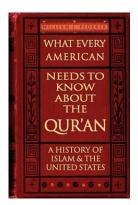
"Kings ... could we ... trace them to their first rise, we should find ... the principal ruffian of some restless gang, whose savage manners ... obtained him the title of chief among plunderers ...

History stuffed with fables ... to trump up some superstitious tale conveniently timed, Mahomet-like, to cram hereditary right down the throats of the vulgar."

Alexis de Tocqueville stated in "Travail sur l'Algerie dans oeuvres complètes" (1841):

"I came back from **Africa** with the pathetic notion that at present in our way of waging war ...

If our sole aim is to equal the **Turks**, in fact we shall be in a far lower position than theirs: **barbarians for barbarians**, the **Turks** will always outdo us because they are **Muslim barbarians**."



What Every American Needs to Know about the Qur'an-A History of Islam and the United States

Washington Irving, the U.S. Minister to Spain, wrote in *Mohammed and His Successors* (1850, ch. 16):

"Mohammed ... hitherto he had relied on ... persuasion to make proselytes ...

He now arrived at a point where he completely **diverged from the celestial spirit of the Christian doctrines**, and stamped **his religion** with the alloy of **fallible mortality** ...

He had come to Medina a fugitive seeking an asylum ...

In a little while, and probably to his own surprise, **he found an army at his command** ... men of resolute spirit, skilled in the use of arms, and **fond of partisan warfare** ...

He endeavored to persuade himself ... 'I, therefore, the last of the prophets, am **sent with the sword!'** ... **'The sword,'** added he, 'is the **key of heaven and hell'** ...

Such were the ... revelations which **converted Islamism** ... from a religion of meekness ... to one of **violence and**

the sword."

Mohammed stated:

"By Allah, though I am the **Apostle of Allah**, yet I do not **know what Allah will do to me."** (Hadith Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 266)

Muhammad conquered the Jewish city of **Khaybar** in 628 AD.

He beheaded the city's chief and took his wife, **Safiyah**, to be one of his wives.

A few years later, Safiyah poisoned Mohammed:

"Narrated Anas bin Malik: A Jewess brought a **poisoned** (cooked) sheep for the Prophet who ate from it.

She was brought to the **Prophet** and he was asked, 'Shall we kill her?' He said, 'No.' I continued to see the effect of the poison on the palate of the mouth of Allah's Apostle. *(Sahih Bukhari* 3:47:786)

"The Apostle of Allah sent for Zaynab and said to her,

'What induced you to do what you have done?'

She replied, 'You have done to my people what you have done. You have killed my father, my uncle and my husband, so I said to myself, If you are a prophet, the foreleg will inform you; and others have said, If you are a king we will get rid of you.'" (*Ibn Sa'd*, p. 252)

Mohammed was with his favorite wife, **Aisha**, when he died.

"Narrated 'Aisha: The Prophet in his ailment in which he died, used to say, 'O 'Aisha! I still feel the pain caused

by the **food I ate at Khaibar**, and at this time, **I feel as if my aorta is being cut from that poison.'''** (Sahih Bukhari 5:59:713)

Narrated 'Aisha: that during his fatal ailment, Allah's Apostle, used to ask his wives, "Where shall I stay tomorrow? Where shall I stay tomorrow?" He was looking forward to Aisha's turn. So all his wives allowed him to stay where he wished ... (Sahih Bukhari 7:62:144)

... He came out with the help of two men and his legs were dragging on the ground. He was between Al-Abbas and another man [Ali Ibn Abi Talib]" ... (Sahih Bukhari 1:11:634)

Narrated **'Aisha** and Ibn 'Abbas: On his death-bed **Allah's Apostle** put a sheet over his-face and when he felt hot, he would remove it from his face. *(Sahih Bukhari* 4:56:660)

'Aisha added: He died on the day of my usual turn at my house ... (Sahih Bukhari 7:62:144)

Mohammed died June 8, 632 AD. He had fought in 66 battles and raids, killing an estimated 3,000, including:

- 624 AD Battle of Badr;
- 625 AD Battle of Uhud and Expulsion of Banu Nadir;
- 626 AD Attack on Banu Mustaliq;
- 627 AD Battle of the Trench, where he killed and enslaved Banu Quraiza;
- 628 AD Battle of Khaybar;
- 629 AD Battle of Mu'tah;
- 630 AD Conquest of Mecca, Battle of Hunayn, Battle of Auras and Siege of al-Ta'if (where Mohammed used a catapult);
- 631 AD Battle of Tabouk, Subjugation of Banu Thaqif (Yemen) & Subjugation of Ghassanids (Arab Christians).

John Wesley, who founded Methodism, wrote in *The Doctrine of Original Sin* (published 1817, p. 35; Works, 1841, ix. 205):

"An ingenious writer, who a few years ago published a pompous translation of the **Koran**, takes great pains to give us a very favorable opinion both of **Mahomet and his followers** ...

but a moderate share of reason, cannot but observe in his **Koran** ... the most gross and impious absurdities ...

Human understanding must be **debased** to an inconceivable degree, in those who can swallow such **absurdities** as divinely revealed ...

That these men then have **no knowledge or love of God** is undeniably manifest, not only from their gross, **horrible notions** of him, but from their not loving their brethren ...

Mahometans will butcher each other by thousands, without so plausible a plea as this ... because they differ in the manner of dressing their head.

The **Ottoman** vehemently maintains ... that a **Mussulman** should wear a round turban. Whereas the **Persian** insists upon his liberty of conscience, and will wear it picked before.

So, for this wonderful reason, when a more plausible one is wanting, they **beat out each other's brains** from generation to generation ..."

Wesley added:

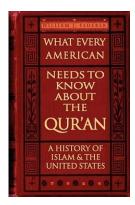
"It is not therefore strange, that **ever since the religion of Mahomet appeared** in the world, the **espousers of it**, particularly those under the Turkish emperor, **have been** as wolves and tigers to all other nations; rending and tearing all that fell into their merciless paws, and grinding them with their iron teeth: that numberless cities are razed from the foundation."

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of Muslim "political tendencies" in a letter to Arthur de Gobineau, October 22, 1843 (*Tocqueville Reader,* p. 229):

"I studied the **Koran** a great deal. I came away from that study with the conviction there have been few religions in the world as **deadly** to men as that of **Mohammed** ...

... So far as I can see, it is the principle cause of the **decadence** so visible today in the **Muslim world** and, though less absurd than the polytheism of old, its **social and political tendencies** are in my opinion **to be feared**

I therefore regard it as a form of decadence rather than a form of progress in relation to paganism itself."



What Every American Needs to Know about the Qur'an-A History of Islam and the United States

Alexis de Tocqueville predicted how Americans would eventually lose their freedom.

It would happen **a little at a time,** as he wrote in *Democracy in America* (Vol. 2, 1840, The Second Part, Bk 4, Ch. VI):

"I had noted in my stay in the **United States** that **a democratic state of society** similar to the American model could lay itself **open to the establishment of** despotism with unusual ease ...

It would **debase men** without tormenting them ... Men, all alike and equal, turned in upon themselves in a restless search for those **petty**, **vulgar pleasures** with which they fill their souls ...

Above these men stands **an immense and protective power** ...

It prefers its citizens to enjoy themselves provided they have only enjoyment in mind.

It restricts the activity of free will within a narrower range and gradually removes autonomy itself from each citizen ..."

He continued:

"Thus, the ruling power, having taken each citizen one by one into its powerful grasp ... spreads its arms over the whole of society, covering the surface of social life with a network of petty, complicated, detailed, and uniform rules ...

It does not break men's wills but it does soften, bend, and control them ... It constantly opposes what actions they perform ...

It inhibits, represses, drains, snuffs out, dulls so much effort that finally it reduces each nation to nothing more than a flock of timid and hardworking animals with the government as shepherd ... a single, protective, and all-powerful government ...

Individual intervention ... is ... suppressed ... It is ... in the details that we run the risk of enslaving men.

... For my part, I would be tempted to believe that **freedom in the big things of life is less important**

than in the slightest ...

Subjection in the minor things of life is obvious every day ...

It constantly irks them until they give up the exercise of their will ... and enfeebles their spirit ...

It will be useless to call upon those very citizens who have become **so dependent upon central government** to choose from time to time the representative of this government ..."

Tocqueville concluded with a **seemingly prophetic warning**:

"Increasing **despotism in the administrative sphere** ... they reckon **citizens** are **incompetent** ...

It is ... difficult to imagine how **men** who have **completely given up the habit of self-government** could successfully choose those who should do it for them ...

The vices of those who govern and the ineptitude of those governed would soon bring it to ruin and ... revert to its abasement to one single master."

Download as PDF ... Tocqueville: on Christianity in America, Islam in Algeria, & "Despotism" of an "all powerful Government" when Citizens "debase" their Souls with "Vulgar Pleasures"

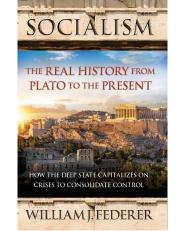
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