



Columbus Landing, 1492

“It ought to be an occasion of unceasing gratitude for every American patriot that this mighty continent was colonized by Protestant England rather than by Catholic France or Spain. When Columbus, steering west and nearing the shores of an undiscovered world, saw a flock of birds towards the south, he changed his course to follow their flight and gave to Spain the West Indies. If it were not for those winged messengers, guided by a favoring Providence, the great voyager would have come directly to the shores of Carolina, and this magnificent country, so distinctly Protestant and powerful, might have become the sterile land of an unprogressive Catholic civilization. Such a nation could only have been born of sturdy Protestant faith. The Declaration of Independence could never have been penned by a man, or adopted by a people, who were dominated by the principles of a papal hierarchy.”

Charles Galloway, *Christianity & the American Commonwealth*

<sup>1,2</sup> Peter Marshall, *The Light & Glory*

<sup>3</sup> Beliles and McDowell, *America's Providential History*

<sup>5</sup> B.F. Morris

## American Soil Was *Preserved* by God for *Protestant* Seeds

August 3, 1492, Italian map-maker Christopher Columbus left Palos, Spain, with three ships bound for the Indies. He and his crew landed in the Bahamas, October 12, and claimed for Spain the island of San Salvador (“Holy Savior”). Representing his King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, Columbus achieved what no man thought possible – he had reached, from Europe, what he thought was the East by sailing west. Little did he know that his discovery would change the world.

Columbus was convinced that God had given him a special mission – to carry the light of Christ into the darkness of undiscovered heathen lands and to bring the inhabitants to the holy faith of Christianity. On every island at which he stopped, Columbus had his men erect a large wooden cross as a token of Jesus Christ and in honor of the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

Although Columbus’s intentions were admirable, and the Lord honored him accordingly, the determined explorer quickly abandoned his gospel purpose for the love of fame, power, and money. Satan derailed his mission with the age-old lure of greed. The change was noticeable in his journals. He wrote, “Gold is most excellent. Gold constitutes treasure, and he who possesses it may do what he wills, even bring souls to Paradise.”

Had Columbus remained fixed on the will of God, the Lord might have climaxed his career by leading him to North America, or to the straits at the tip of South America, to the Pacific Ocean, or perhaps around the world. But, as it was, Columbus neither discovered nor

achieved much more than what he had in 1492. The rest of his life was fraught with failure and misery. Though Columbus had opened the door to God’s best-kept secret, the Lord did not extend to him an opportunity to enter.<sup>2</sup>

No doubt, as Columbus turned his back on God, God shut the door on Columbus. In his journal, he records turning north from Cuba, to see if he could find anything in that direction. That course would have led him to Florida, and a much bigger prize, but Columbus wrote that fierce winds impeded his progress, to the point that he had to turn around. Was God preserving North America *from* Columbus, when He had reserved the New World *for* Columbus? It would seem that way, but why? We have the advantage of history on our side, for we can look back and discern God’s plan.

While Columbus may have discovered the New World, God did not allow the Spanish to colonize the territory which would become the United States. Why? Columbus and his counterparts carried with them the seeds of religious tyranny – Roman Catholicism. *God intended America to be planted with the seeds of liberty.*<sup>3</sup>

An unmistakable connection exists between religion and government, as the great preacher and historian Charles Galloway observed. “Governments and civilizations of all people are determined by the character of their religion. A man’s thinking in the political field is determined by his convictions in the spiritual field. Out of religious doctrines are developed political principles. Therefore, the

# America Was *Preserved* for *Protestantism*



*Pilgrim Mayflower, 1620*

“The *when* of the coming of the colonists is no less significant than the *whither* (where) and the *why*. An earlier or later date would have written for us a different history. The hour of American colonization was the fittest one for the New World to receive the best of which the Old World had to give.”

*Charles Galloway*

“purer the religion, the broader a nation's constitution and the wiser its [laws].”<sup>4</sup>

If God had in mind to produce in North America a nation of free people, then He could not have planted that nation with an oppressive religion. *For without spiritual liberty, there can be no civil liberty.* Simply put, the United States could not have been established by European Catholicism, because *an enslaved religion cannot produce a free people.*

Not only did God lead Columbus away from the eastern shores of North America, He spared its lands and natives from the brutal conquistadors that soon followed him. Their greedy, heartless pursuits ran roughshod over tribes in Central and South America, until nothing was left but death and destruction. Where gold abounded, Spanish brutality was multiplied, yet gold was not discovered in North America, so the Spanish labeled it “God-forsaken” and stayed away.

Thus, while the thirst for gold served a Providential purpose, by opening the New World, the territory of the future United States was mysteriously guarded. God did so until changes were made in Europe that

would ensure America would be a land of religious freedom.<sup>5</sup>

The man whom God chose to accomplish these changes was the feisty German monk, Martin Luther. In 1517, when he wrote his *95 Theses*, Luther confronted the Church and its misleading doctrines and launched a Reformation that sent shockwaves throughout Europe. Luther called into question papal authority, the means to salvation, and the restrictive sacramental system. Man's conscience, he claimed, should be captive to no authority but that of Scripture. Salvation, he said, was a work of God not of man, and Christ, he warned, only instituted two sacraments (baptism, communion) which, in essence, toppled the Catholic house of cards.

Luther unveiled truths of Christ which had been hidden for a millennium. Within 50 years, Germans were allowed to choose Catholicism or Protestantism. Within 100 years, believers in other countries called for complete religious liberty. This proposition caused monarchs discomfort and, in an effort to stop the “rebellion,” they persecuted those in favor of religious liberty. However, it was that persecution that prompted the Pilgrims, a band of English Protestants, to leave their homeland, relocate to America, and plant a colony where they were free to live according to their conscience.

Luther's Reformation led to the shores of America, the place God had preserved from Catholic oppression. The seeds of Protestantism, planted by the Pilgrims and others blossomed into a nation that reflected their desire for liberty. Because of our Protestant origins, Americans have treasured and protected religious freedom. Every religion has been free to come here, but only because America was first seeded with the free-loving principles of Protestantism.



“Luther” by Greg Copeland