

**The Cross and the Compass: Manifest Destiny,
Religious Aspects of the Mexican-American War**

by

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As a friend said, "Manifest destiny and the Mexican-American War are a well-mined field!" As I began to read, I realized how true this was! It has been well discussed, from both sides of the border. Nevertheless, I hope that considering the aspect of Freemasonry will add a new dimension to the topic. As both Anglicans from Virginia and Puritans from New England were somewhat influenced by Freemasonry, I believe the impact of the brotherhood was significant.

Why does it matter? If almost everyone in the United States accepted the concept of manifest destiny, are the origins important? I believe they are, both for the academic and the Christian community. The academic community searches for truth and studies history to learn from the past, to avoid future mistakes. It is also important for both Catholics and Protestants to comprehend the influence of Masonry.

There has been a tendency for Christians to blame each other for failure, ignorant of Masonic infiltration into the Christian faith, not realizing that another belief system has penetrated the church. Catholics have blamed Protestants, Protestants Catholics, neither one cognizant of Masonic influence. An example of this would be Ireland, where Masonic lodges have stirred up the pot.¹

Another area of confusion is that a significant number of North American Christians look to the United States as a Christian nation, the founding fathers as exemplary Christians. If this is a misunderstanding, if our foundations are Masonic, or even a mixture of Christian and Masonic, then this faith is misplaced.

At the outset, it is necessary to understand that the religion of the cross, Christianity, and the religion of the compass, Freemasonry, are very different, standing in opposition to each other. Christianity, believing in the sinful nature of man and the holy nature of God, sees the death of Jesus Christ on the cross to be the necessary salvation for sinners. God Himself provided the remedy that man could not find. Freemasonry, however, a product of the enlightenment, does not accept man's sinful nature. Instead, the salvation offered is one of enlightenment and education, progressing through various degrees to enter the grand lodge on high. The cross is superfluous, even though many Masons consider themselves Christians.

Freemasonry is eclectic, taking, as Masons believe, the best from all religions. Christianity may agree that all religions contain some truth but deny that there is any other Savior than Jesus, any other way of salvation but the cross.

Returning to the topic of manifest destiny, Albert K. Weinberg in his book Manifest Destiny, saw it as a general term for, "a natural right on the part of our race, to possess the earth."² It was also a crusade for freedom, for democracy, for government by the people, freedom from monarchy, freedom from the divine right of kings.

Some Mexican authors have seen Puritanism as the source of the doctrine of manifest destiny. Before I examine that assumption I would like to raise the question of Masonic influence on Puritanism. As Masonry was not formally organized until 1717, the influence would have come from a forerunner of Masonry, probably Rosicrucianism.

There is debate about the relationship of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. Rosicrucianism appears to have been a center of Gnosticism and political activity. Members were alchemists, astrologers and spiritists whose desire was to find a process to turn metals into gold and to discover the secret of life.³ Nesta Webster in her book Secret Societies and Subversive Movements had this to say:

Whatever were the origins of the Order we now know as Freemasonry, it is clear that during the century preceding its reorganization under Grand Lodge of London the secret system of binding men together for a common purpose, based on Eastern esoteric doctrines, had been anticipated by the Rosicrucians. Was this secret system employed, however, by any other body of men? It is certainly easy to imagine how in this momentous seventeenth century, when men of all opinions were coalescing against opposing forces - Lutherans combining against the Papacy, Catholics rallying their forces against invading Protestantism, Republicans plotting in favour of Cromwell, Royalists in their turn plotting to restore the Stuarts...an organization of this kind, enabling one to work secretly for a cause and to set invisibly vast numbers of human beings in motion, might prove invaluable to any party.⁴

Edith Starr Miller referred to Michael Maier, a German alchemist and a Rosicrucian Grand Master, who in his book Themis Aurea (1618), mentioned a resolution of 1617 by which members of the Rose Croix agreed on secrecy for a hundred years. They hoped to destroy the church of Jesus Christ and decreed that, in the year 1717, they would change the fraternity into an association which would be more open in propaganda.⁵

Many of the Puritans were Rosicrucians, involved in the revolution against civil authority, with Oliver Cromwell at the head of the Parliament troops. There is no record that Cromwell was a Mason, although he was certainly on good terms with the Rosicrucians.⁶

David Stevenson in The Origins of Freemasonry, Scotland's century 1590-1710, stated that direct evidence linking Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry is limited. Circumstantial evidence, on the other hand, is overwhelming. Sir Robert Moray of

Scotland and Elias Ashmole of England were early influential Freemasons involved in Rosicrucianism.⁷

Albert Mackey, a Masonic historian, in The History of Freemasonry noted that Rosicrucians were very popular at the time of the beginning of Freemasonry. Many "mystical brethren of the Rosy Cross were ready to enter within its portals and to take advantage of its organization." However, they had a superior attitude, believing they had perfect wisdom and secret knowledge. He claimed that one brotherhood did not proceed from the other. He mentioned other authors that disagreed.⁸

I would contend that Freemasonry as a cult of the enlightenment had more influence on the concept of manifest destiny than did Puritanism. One of the purposes of the founding of this secret brotherhood in 1717 was to organize in such a way as to counter the strength of the Roman Catholic Church, which ruled so many countries. From the beginning, the separation of church and state was an important tenet of Freemasonry. At this time Masons opposed to the divine right of kings and supported democracy. The Catholic Church began to publish papal bulls opposing Masonry soon after its founding, realizing the threat to both monarchy and faith.

But let's examine the claims of Mexican authors. They emphasized that Puritan belief in predestination, the desire and calling to build a city of God in the wilderness, empowered the Puritans with purpose.

Mexican authors were especially sensitive to the anti-Catholic tenor of Puritanism. Anti-Catholicism was a strong component of Masonry as well. Ironically though, despite nine papal bulls forbidding Masonry, many Catholics became Masons. In fact, priests were among those who began Masonry in Mexico. Liberal Catholics of the Mexican independence era were often Masons. There was hope of separating from Rome, of having a national Mexican church.

Mexican Masons of the generation of Benito Juárez worked hard for separation of church and state, to rid the constitution of the control of Catholicism. The Constitution of 1824, although Masons had a hand in composing it, kept Roman Catholicism as the state religion. Not until the Constitution of 1857 did religious freedom prevail. Nevertheless, many Mexicans refused to have their faith legislated and remained true to the Catholic faith, desiring a Catholic country.

Juan A. Ortega y Medina remarked that in the matter of predestined election, it went without saying, that according to Puritan theology, Catholics and Hispanics were in second place. This stemmed from sixteenth century conflicts between Spanish Catholics and British Anglicans. Mexico, in breaking with Spain, wished to separate from the Spanish reputation, but it wasn't to be. The doctrine of manifest destiny was

weighted by years of anti-Spanish tradition, and Mexicans were receiving the brunt of it.⁹

An example of seeing Mexicans in second place was the speech of Senator John Niles, February 9, 1848. He emphatically declared that to unite the destiny of a free and great republic with a country like Mexico would be unthinkable. "In what other country could we find such a combination of all the evils of race, government, religion and morality. And if other evils exist, surely they will be found there!"¹⁰

Puritans had inherited English religious attitudes, birthed partly through years of quarrels with Spain. Many Protestants were governed by political rather than religious motives. There was a nationalistic distrust of the papacy.¹¹ Puritans were concerned that the Anglicans were not free from Roman ceremonies, vestments and beliefs. The Roman concept of the church ruling the state was also objectionable.¹²

When England passed the Toleration Act of 1689, Catholics were omitted. It seemed toleration was for everyone else, excepting Catholics! No doubt there was fear of Catholic intolerance.¹³

Jose Fuentes Mares also commented on the anti-Catholicism of the Puritans. Puritans believed that the elect would be evident by their tangible success in this life, confirming that they were better equipped than Catholics for the demands of the new modernity, which was expansionist and imperialist, capitalistic and industrial. Spaniards were seen as abandoning God to become servants of the Antichrist, or the Roman pope. If in the twentieth century Americans were opposed to fascism and communism, in the eighteenth and nineteenth they were opposed to monarchy and Catholicism. Spain represented all that was detested..."from the commercial monopoly to food that didn't suit their stomachs, from the siesta to the bull fights."¹⁴

The theme of fanaticism, cruelty and Spanish laziness was prevalent in England and France, beginning in the seventeenth century. Anglo-Saxon newspapers during the first quarter of the nineteenth century used this black legend for expansionist propaganda.¹⁵ There was a distortion and exaggeration of the good intentions of Bartolomé de Las Casas, a Dominican father and champion of Indian rights. Las Casas intended to provoke Spain to justice, not to incite Europe against Spain. The English had no Las Casas of their own, to denounce atrocities in Ireland and elsewhere.¹⁶

Sir Humphrey Gilbert and his brother-in-law, Walter Raleigh, explored the North American coast between 1570-1580. The object was to establish a base to intercept and disrupt Spanish shipping from the Indies. The financiers of these excursions were not adverse to pirating, especially if the most lucrative finds were on Spanish vessels. This activity contributed to the consolidation of the capitalistic

economy in England at the cost of the Spanish empire. It was believed that Spanish gold had financed Spanish wars in Europe, and England was determined to cut this off at the root.¹⁷

As well as establishing an English base, there would be an evangelization of the Indians, falsely converted by the hated Spaniards. It was necessary to expand the area of freedom, taken captive by Satan and his servants, the French and Spanish Catholics. Catholics were papists, a derogatory term, replete with political and religious overtones. There was a double motive of gain and evangelization, not so different from Spain.¹⁸ Both James I and the Puritans agreed that the Pope was a good candidate for the anti-Christ.¹⁹

Zoraida commented that North Americans believed the arrival of the white man guaranteed the arrival of civilization. Only the white man knew how to organize, transform, and care for natural resources, therefore it was his obligation to direct and watch over every one else.²⁰ Mexicans saw the basis of this in Puritan doctrine. Puritans despised the fasting and praying of monks, feeling they were not productive members of society. The purpose of this life was not simply to endure and suffer in the world, but rather to be involved in regenerating, saving activity, intense and practical.²¹

Ortega noted that the emphasis on election gave Puritans confidence and the call of destiny to rule the world. From Calvin to Franklin they were individualistic, industrious, and frugal. Ortega included within his understanding of Puritanism more than would commonly be accepted. Few would consider Benjamin Franklin a Puritan! He was instead, a Freemason, a man of the enlightenment. Nevertheless, a link to the Puritans might be through the Rosicrucians. According to Michael Howard in The Occult Conspiracy, Franklin was a Grand Master of that order.²²

Puritans undoubtedly were influenced by Calvin, but neither could Calvin be considered a Puritan.²³ One could trace the development of thought, but there are wide areas of disagreement.

Success was considered a sign of God's favor, failure a sign of rejection. Prosperity and happiness were approved by God.²⁴ This is reminiscent of Masonic thought and optimism. A Masonic author, Bobby J. Demott, illustrated an ascending ladder of concepts in his book, Freemasonry in American Culture and Society. These are illustrative of steps, "in the attainment of human happiness from the basic natural religion." Beginning with natural religion, the Freemason proceeds to knowledge, then reasoning, followed by virtue, freedom, security, and finally human happiness!²⁵

The concept of calling was prevalent among Puritans. They believed it was necessary to study the Word of God and examine God-given abilities to determine your

calling. The age of revelation had ceased, so it was necessary to use reason. Calling was always connected to work. Idleness was not permissible.²⁶ The emphasis on reason reflects English deism, an important founding doctrine in Masonry.

Much as Calvin had his "Rome" in Geneva, so the Puritans felt they were in the new Zion. They had the legacy of Abraham, they were the chosen people. The separatists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century excluded other Christians from salvation, especially the hated Papists. God would give his subjects statutes of inalienable rights in agreement with man's rational nature. According to Ortega, this brought down the medieval Catholic idea. Capitalism was enthroned, church property dispossessed. Free will was eliminated and riches became proof of salvation.²⁷

Puritans believed they had a covenant with God. God would make a covenant with every Christian nation, as he did with Israel. To His chosen people he promised happiness and prosperity in this world, with the condition that they obeyed His commandments as revealed in the Bible. It might not be fully possible to obey due to man's sinful nature, but outward obedience would be rewarded. English and Scottish Protestants were especially taken with the idea of a national covenant. Every failure was seen as a threat to the covenant. This was one of the reasons the Puritans escaped to the new world, before England suffered the fate of Sodom and Gomorra.²⁸

The idea that God has chosen nations in the New Testament era that are able to be detected by their prosperity and happiness is questionable; there is little Biblical justification for this perspective. Instead, suffering is a very real aspect of the Christian life. Nevertheless Jesus says there will be accountability of nations, and obedience does result in blessing.

It is not surprising that Mexicans reacted against Puritanism. Despite the fact that the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell was called the Puritan Revolution, "it is one of the minor ironies of history that the triumph of Cromwell in 1649, and the inauguration of a decade of religious tolerance in England, should have synchronized with the consummation in New England of an intolerant theocracy." There was a theocratic state in New England from 1650-1690, in which was combined a church, a state and a joint-stock company.²⁹ Tolerance was not its strong point.

The roots of this were probably in Calvinism. English Protestants were exiled during the reign of Catholic Queen Mary (1554-1558). Many went to Geneva. They returned with Calvinist tendencies.³⁰ Accompanying Calvinism was a good dose of legalism and authoritarianism. New England Puritans taught covenant theology and filled in Calvinist thinking with reason and conscience, the sense that, "God helps those

who help themselves."³¹ Deistic and enlightenment influence can be seen here once again.

As the eighteenth century enlightenment reached America, there was less emphasis on covenant and right standing with God. God was removed from the forefront of all thinking. John Locke's writing on civil government was popular. In Locke's explanation of government, God was absent from the covenant; God was identified as the God of nature. "Government existed not to help the people please God and fend off His wrath but simply to help them protect their lives, liberties, and properties against each other."³²

Margaret Jacob, in her book, Living the Enlightenment, brought forth new evidence indicating the importance of Freemasonry as an institution spreading constitutional government. Having access to Masonic archives in Amsterdam, Paris, and England, she noted that these had been available since World War II.³³

Britain was the birthplace of a civil society with a constitutional structure. In the lodges men became legislators and constitution makers. Police records in Paris recorded the alarm and concern provoked by legislation occurring within the lodges. "The lodge, the philosophical society, the scientific academy became the underpinning for the republican and democratic forms of government that evolved slowly and fitfully in Western Europe from the late 18th Century on."³⁴

Even though lodges became workshops for democracy, they reflected the old order, while at the same time creating a form of civil society to replace that order. Masons held the belief that merit, rather than birth, should be the foundation for political order. "The Masonic message that made its way to Continental Europe would never lose its originally British associations...by their own admission and by their meeting records, the European lodges emerge as societies organized around British constitutional principles, around elections, majority rule and representative government." Virtue and reason were highly valued.³⁵

Freemasons established a constitutional form of self-government, with laws, elections and representatives. The government could be altered by a majority of the brothers. "The lodges became microscopic civil polities, new public spaces, in effect schools for constitutional government." Men were taught public speaking, record keeping, debate, tolerance and lifelong devotion to other brothers.

They gained civic consciousness and came to embody "a variety of ethical prescriptions for living in this world, a stance that was secular and philosophical as distinct from religious and doctrinal...their ideas were woven into a tapestry of rituals and oaths...there is an all pervasive religiosity about Masonic sociability." The English,

due to their revolutions in 1640 and 1688-89, gained constitutional monarchy, while Europe continued with the monarchical system.³⁶

The legend of Atlantis was dear to secret societies. Looking back to Plato's ideal democracy, Francis Bacon's novel saw America as the new democratic Atlantis, a center of learning and science, a man-made utopia.³⁷ According to Paul Hazard, author of European Thought in the Eighteenth Century, Freemasonry, "became one of the most conspicuous centres of activity in the age of enlightenment. If one were to trace the stages in the progressive conquest, we should see how the great communication centres, seaports, capital cities, all fell before it."³⁸

Freemasonry, carrier of the enlightenment, no doubt influenced the concept of manifest destiny. Although there has been some question about the origin of the phrase "manifest destiny," it appears to have been first used in Congress on January 3, 1846 by Representative Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts. Winthrop mentioned that it had been found in a journal. Conducting an investigative search, Julius Pratt thought perhaps it was The New York Morning News, December 27, 1845, in an editorial called, "The True Title." This article stated that the claim of the United States to land was not valid simply because of rights of discovery, exploration, settlement, or continuity. Instead,

...that claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us...The God of nature and of nations has marked it for our own; and with His blessing we will firmly maintain the incontestable rights He has given, and fearlessly perform the high duties He has imposed.³⁹

Who was this God of nature? Was this the Christian God? Probably not. Deism and natural religion, prevalent in the enlightenment thought of the late 17th and early 18th centuries in England, were most likely the basis for Freemasonry. Matthew Tindal, an English deist, defined natural religion as the knowledge that from the beginning God gave man a law, which by keeping it made man acceptable to God. This was a law of nature or reason, common and universal for all rational creatures. Providence is a common Masonic euphemism for God.⁴⁰

John L. O'Sullivan, editor of The Morning News, also edited The Democratic Review. The following appeared in November, 1839:

The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and

time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High-the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere-its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation an Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood of "peace and good will amongst men".⁴¹

This quote sounds very Masonic! Compare it to a letter written to George Washington, President of the United States, from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1791.

Sir and Brother: The Ancient York Masons of the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania...beg leave to approach you with congratulations from the East, and, in the pride of fraternal affect, to hail you as the great master-builder (under the Supreme Architect), by whose labors the temple of liberty hath been reared in the West, exhibiting to the nations of the earth a model of beauty, order and harmony worthy of their imitation and praise. Our prayer [is] that you may long continue to adorn the bright list of master workmen which our Fraternity produces in the terrestrial lodge....⁴²

In a combined issue of The Democratic Review, July and August, 1845, manifest destiny was used in reference to the annexation of Texas. The editor encouraged all parties to unite, as other nations had tried to hamper "our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."⁴³

The seeds of manifest destiny were in England, as the English saw their destiny as separate from that of Europe. They believed they were divinely chosen for the source of true religion. The Separatists who left were even more radical, seeing England as failing to break with Catholicism. A new and uncorrupted land would bring fulfillment and completion to their aspirations.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, in the early years of the United States, manifest destiny was not such a dominant concept as it became in the 1840's. The Founding Fathers were content with a model republic which might be worthy of imitation. They had a concern that expansion might bring disunity.⁴⁵

According to Frederick Merk, author of Manifest Destiny and Mission, it was John Quincy Adams who in an imperialistic manner "embodied the spirit of nationalism sweeping the country after the war [the war of 1812]." He told the minister of Britain that because Britain possessed holdings in Europe, Asia, and Africa, she should not be jealous of the extension of "our national domain in North America."⁴⁶

A year and a half later Adams explained what he meant. Spanish possessions on the southern border of the United States and British on the north would eventually belong to the United States. He felt that any attempt to convince the world that the United States was not ambitious would only add hypocrisy to the ambition!⁴⁷

By the mid 1840's manifest destiny was a movement. Neighboring countries could reach fulfillment; they could apply to join the American Union! Some peoples, the Mexican, for example, might need schooling in principles of freedom before they could participate. Any unhurried admission to the temple of freedom would be unwise.⁴⁸

As congress discussed the annexation of Texas, attitudes bordered on arrogance. Illinois congressman John Wentworth remarked that in the future there would be gentleman from Texas, Oregon, Nova Scotia, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, even Patagonia that would be congressmen. He did not believe that:

..the God of heaven, when he crowned the American arms with success [in the Revolutionary War], designed that the original States should be the only abode of liberty on earth. On the contrary, he only designed them as the great center from which civilization, religion, and liberty should radiate and radiate until the whole continent shall bask in their blessing.⁴⁹

As these issues continued to be discussed in congress in the late 1840's, there was ready agreement. Stephan A. Douglas from Illinois spoke of the boundaries which the God of Nature had marked out. Andrew Kennedy of Indiana spoke of covering the continent from the Isthmus of Darien to Behring's straits. Daniel S. Dickinson of New York spoke of the new territory destined to be subdued; the new races to civilize, educate and absorb; new triumphs to be achieved in the cause of freedom.⁵⁰

There was a fusing of sacred and secular functions, of providence and republicanism, a new world order on view for all of humanity. This was evident on the Great Seal with the inscription declaring that God had blessed the undertaking of a new order for the ages.⁵¹ This had Masonic undertones.

On September 18, 1793 the cornerstone of the U.S. capitol was laid. President George Washington placed a silver plate on the cornerstone, covering it with Masonic

symbols of oil, corn and wine. The ceremony and the silver plate identified Masonry with the republic. Thomas Jefferson had spoken of the capital as the first temple dedicated to the sovereignty of the people. The brothers in their ritual garments were the first high priests.⁵²

There were many such dedications in the next years, symbolic of Masonry's standing in post-Revolutionary times. The fraternity became increasingly identified with the ideals of the country, spreading virtue, learning and religion. "Masons thus did more than lay the Republic's physical cornerstones; they also helped form the symbolic foundations of what the Great Seal called 'the new order for the ages.'" Symbols of Masonry decorated quilts, tavern signs, as well as the Great Seal. Cornerstones were laid for churches, universities and public buildings.⁵³

Masonry increased greatly in numbers in the generation after the Revolution. More lodges met in the United States in 1825 than in the whole world fifty years earlier. DeWitt Clinton, a political leader and lodge member from New York, believed Masonry brought the "sunshine of mental and moral illumination across the world." The importance of freedom and natural equality was revealed. American Masons believed that Masonry spread civilization, the proper principles necessary to bring light to mankind, to rid it of superstition and prejudice.⁵⁴

A small book entitled Masonry and Americanism (no named author) published in 1924 by the Masonic Service Association of the United States, noted how men of the future joined Masonry. Their ideal was "the universal brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God." As they heard of "the wonderful new country across the sea," they left their homeland in search of religious freedom. "They brought their Masonic Altars with them and set them up in the wilderness." As the colonies prospered, Masonry prospered. The history of the United States and Masonry were "inseparably linked together." The author believed that Masonry could bring to men the fundamental religious principles needed by all, because it was a plan of life, a trestle-board, which contained the "edicts of the Grand Architect of the Universe," which, if faithfully followed, would not fail to bring happiness.⁵⁵

In the article entitled "Masonry," the Catholic Encyclopedia quoted Albert Pike. "Masonry propagates no creed, except its own most simple and sublime one taught by Nature and Reason. There has never been a false religion in the world. The permanent one universal religion is written in visible nature and explained by Reason and is completed by the wise analogies of faith. There is but one true religion, one dogma, one legitimate belief."⁵⁶ Pike was Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of Scottish Rite Masonry, author of "Morals and Dogma," a handbook of Masonry.

This sense of mission, the desire to spread liberty, democratic and republican principles, was surely inconsistent with the doctrine of self-determination for all nations. It became easy to justify expansion in order to impose a better religion, a better morality, a better form of government.

Gene Brack, author of The Diplomacy of Racism: Manifest Destiny and Mexico, 1821-1848, believed that the term manifest destiny was coined in 1845 to justify imposing our will on Mexico. "...the methods of expansion betrayed...expressed ideals, while the racist assumptions which seemed to justify those methods placed an unduly and perhaps permanent scar on future relations between the two peoples." American success was explained as Anglo-Saxon superiority. We believed we were the instrument of God's will.⁵⁷

Most of the colonists settling in Texas were slave owners from cotton-growing states. As they clashed with Mexicans, there were violent incidents, "bred of mutual misunderstanding and differences in language, religion, customs and taste." Santa Anna's imposition of a centralist government in Mexico caused many states to rebel, Texas being one of them. Mexico realized that the United States, in spite of neutrality agreements, was sending money and supplies to Texas. When the Texans declared independence, they were recognized by the United States, but not by Mexico.⁵⁸

Although many Whigs, including candidate Henry Clay, were opposed to the annexation of Texas, the victory of James Polk was considered a mandate for annexation. There was conflict in the United States over Texas, as some thought there was a southern conspiracy to add Texas as a slave state. Mexicans feared that if Texas were permanently lost, Mexico would be the next goal. It had been observed that blacks in the United States were "reduced to servitude," and that Indians had been despoiled, along with their civilization. Agreements with Indians had not been honored. Mexicans feared that in order to "expand freedom" they would be considered inferior, and the Catholic religion would be destroyed.⁵⁹

To the Mexicans Texas represented "the ground on which the nation's ability to survive would be tested." However, for the United States, the real prize was California. President Polk could not understand why Mexico wouldn't sell California and other desired land. He failed to understand that to offer money for a national patrimony was an affront to Mexico's honor, and that many stood in opposition to the United States. General Winfield Scott led the invasion to Mexico City, seizing the capital in September, 1847.⁶⁰

In the end, some of those who had opposed the war, not wanting to see slavery extended, had a new rationale for invading Mexico. It was thought that because

Mexicans were ignorant and impoverished, they would be blessed to become part of the United States. On the other hand, there was the fear that Mexicans would not be good citizens. Racist attitudes influenced the United States to settle for California and New Mexico, which included Arizona, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, California and Wyoming. Also relinquished was the idea of taking over all of Mexico. Brack commented, "Inevitable though it may have been that the United States would expand to the Pacific at Mexico's expense, it is to be regretted she did so by invoking the will of God to justify the principal that "might makes right."⁶¹

Fifteen Mexican liberals compiled their experiences in a book entitled, Apuntes para la guerra con los Estados Unidos, 1848. (Notes on the war with the United States, 1848) Written after the defeat, the dejection of the authors was evident. They were convinced that the United States had conceived a plan to extend their laws and their dominion over all of America. When the United States wanted to buy land, nothing was able to stop her. Boundary agreements with Spain and Mexico were ignored, as productive lands were coveted. When independence from Spain came, immigration into Texas brought "a fountain of evils," causing the separation of one of Mexico's most important states, leading to a disastrous war.⁶²

It was remarked that there were those in the United States that did defend Mexico: Clay, Adams, Webster, Gallatin. The authors offered them a tribute of gratitude. The real cause of the war was the spirit of greed, as the United States used power to dominate. Impartial history would show one day that this republic went against all law, divine and human, in a supposedly enlightened century, which was instead filled with force and violence.⁶³

These authors felt that the Spanish world was even more foreign to Anglo-Americans than the world of the Russian, the Italian. This was due to hatred toward Spaniards, especially their colonizing work in the new world. Newspapers in Boston and Philadelphia spoke of the wonderful opportunity to liquidate Spanish commercial monopoly, at the same time freeing the population imprisoned by the despotic Spaniards. It was claimed that the celibacy of the clergy was unnatural; it would be difficult for a society which had been so dominated by the church to ever be free.⁶⁴

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were avid readers of the anti-Spanish literature of the time. This came mainly from England and France. Adams said that you might as well talk of democracy among beasts, bird and fish as among Spanish Americans. There was a concern, however, not to get rid of Spain too quickly. In a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to A. Stuart in 1786, he said, "At the moment these

countries are in the best hands, I only fear that Spain may be too weak to keep them subject until our population grows sufficiently to take over country by country."⁶⁵

Was the concept of manifest destiny a Puritan idea, as so many Mexican authors contend? They pointed to elements of predestined election, an awareness of being a chosen people, certainly dominant strains in Puritan thought. The emphasis was on being productive members of society, their calling having to do with tangible success in this life. Protestantism was seen as individualistic, industrious and frugal, emphasizing prosperity and happiness. Capitalism was enthroned, and church property was dispossessed. There was an anti-Spanish tradition, inherited from England.

On the other hand, authors from the United States stressed that theirs was an experiment in liberty, a federated self government entrusted to the United States by the God of nature, founded on divine principles. There was a law of brotherhood, a natural and moral law of equality which would help build the temple of freedom, the abode of liberty. The noblest temple would be established on earth for the worship of the Most high, the sacred and true. This is reminiscent of Masonic thought, rather than Puritan belief.

From the inception of Freemasonry, the Anglican church had taken no stand against it. In vogue instead was their policy of latitudinarianism, a permission of varied beliefs within the established church. Heresy was no longer deviance from a creed. Original sin was minimized, along with the atonement and the incarnation. There was much discussion concerning the Trinity.⁶⁶

Archbishop Tillotson (1630-1694) believed that anyone avoiding evil and doing good was a Christian. Quoted by deists and widely read, he saw natural law as superior to revealed religion. Many believed that "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was a person commissioned from heaven and employed by God to bring men to eternal happiness." He ignored original sin and found Christianity compatible with reason.⁶⁷

Within Anglicanism there was little emphasis on sin or on predestination. Many of the leaders in revolutionary and post-revolutionary history were Virginian Anglicans. They were also Masons. The families of Washington, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, Lee and Jefferson were prominent. "...taken as a whole, the form of Virginia society was due to the cult of tobacco rather than to a cult of piety. Being more moderate in temper, more liberal in its conception of church membership, and more vulnerable to latitudinarian influences, Anglicanism provided no such theocratic impulse as moved the covenanted elect of New England."⁶⁸

Some Masonic ideas which could be viewed as influencing the concept of manifest destiny are the emphasis on happiness, perfectionism, a creedless national

religion, an optimistic view of human nature. Man was viewed as basically good and the idea of man as sinful was seen as harmful, hampering progress. Religious vocabulary was used, but words commonly used by Christians had different connotations. Unitarians, deists, Freemasons would be in agreement. To the extent that Anglicanism was influenced by these beliefs, many Anglicans would also agree.

It is not easy to sort out the various influences, which are intertwined and complex. Racism, anti-Catholicism, Freemasonry, all of these played a part in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. It could be said that racism and anti-Catholicism have been prevalent in Freemasonry.

Freemasonry, I feel, is one aspect which has been ignored, so the purpose of this paper has been to add that element to the melting pot of various North American attitudes. Masonry was also influential in Mexico, but because of the opposition of the Catholic church, it has taken a different flavor than in the United States.

As a North American who is very fond of Mexico, I can only view with concern and disappointment our past history, especially concerning the aggressive policy taken during the Mexican-American War. Perhaps as North Americans, we must ask forgiveness of our neighbor, and hope that future relations will be on a better basis.

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²Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963), p. 41.

³Edith Starr Miller, Occult Theocracy (Los Angeles: The Christian Book Club of America, 1933), p.150.

⁴Nesta Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, (Omni Publications, 1924), p. 125.

⁵Miller, Occult Theocracy, pp.152-153.

⁶Ibid., pp.157,159.

⁷David Stevenson, The Origins of Freemasonry, Scotland's Century 1590-1710 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1988), pp. 102-104.

⁸Albert Mackey, The History of Freemasonry (New York: Random House Value Publishing, Inc., 1996), p.345.

⁹Juan A. Ortega y Medina, Destino Manifesto (México D.F.: Sep/Setentas, 1972), pp.10-12.

¹⁰Zoraida, Mexicanos y Norteamericanos ante la Guerra del '47, pp. 25-26.

¹¹Ralph Barton Perry, Puritanism and Democracy, (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1944), p.67.

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- ¹²Edmund S. Morgan, ed., Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.), pp. xvi, xviii.
- ¹³Perry, Puritanism and Democracy, p.348.
- ¹⁴Jose Fuentes Mares, Genesis Del Expansionismo Norteamericano, (México, D.F., El Colegio de México, 1980)pp. 32-33, 36-37.
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 41.
- ¹⁶Juan A. Ortega y Medina, Destino Manifiesto,pp.51-53.
- ¹⁷Ibid., pp.14, 57-58, 74.
- ¹⁸Ibid., pp. 18, 21, 46-47.
- ¹⁹Morgan, ed., Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794, p.xxix.
- ²⁰Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, Mexicanos y Norteamericanos ante la Guerra del '47, (México D.F.:Sep/Setentas, 1972),p.32.
- ²¹Juan A. Ortega y Medina, Destino Manifiesto, p. 90.
- ²²Michael Howard, The Occult Conspiracy, (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1989), p. 48.
- ²³Juan A. Ortega y Medina, Destino Manifiesto, pp. 93, 102.
- ²⁴Ibid., p.95.
- ²⁵Bobby J. Demott, Freemasonry in American Culture and Society, (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1986), p. 21.
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- ²⁸Morgan, ed., Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794,pp.xxi-xxii.
- ²⁹Perry, Puritanism and Democracy, pp. 73-74.
- ³⁰Mark A. Noll, One Nation Under God?(San Francisco:Harper and Row, 1988), p.17.
- ³¹Perry, Puritanism and Democracy, pp. 92-93, 96.
- ³²Morgan, ed., Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794,p. xli.
- ³³Margaret C. Jacob, Living the Enlightenment, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. vii.
- ³⁴Ibid., pp. 4-5.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 15.
- ³⁶Ibid., pp. 20-24.
- ³⁷Michael Howard, The Occult Conspiracy, pp. 74-75. See also William T. Still, New World Order: The Ancient Plan of Secret Societies, (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House, 1990), pp.41, 67.
- ³⁸Paul Hazard, European Thought in the 18th Century, trans. J.Lewis May (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1967), p.269

³⁹Julius W. Pratt, The Origin of "Manifest Destiny," American Historical Review, Vol. XXXII, No.4 (July 1927):796.

⁴⁰See Bro. J.R. Clarke, "The Change from Chritianity to Deism in Freemasonry," Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, 78 (1965); Douglas Knoop and G.P. Jones, "Freemasonry and the Idea of Natural Religion," Ars Quatuor Coronatourum, LVI (1946). (Ars Quatuor Coronatorum is a publication of the historical research lodge in London, Quatuor Coronati Lodge no. 1076. These are available from the Masonic Library in Waco, Texas)

⁴¹Pratt, The Origin of "Manifest Destiny", p.797.

⁴²Charles H. Callahan, Washington, the Man, and the Mason, (Washington, D.C.:Memorial Temple Committee of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association, 1913), p.272.

⁴³Pratt, The Origin of "Manifest Destiny", p.798.

⁴⁴Anders Stephanson, Manifest Destiny, (New York:Hill and Wang, of Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1995), pp.3-4.

⁴⁵Norman A. Graebner, ed., Manifest Destiny (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs Merrill Co, Inc., 1968), p.xix.

⁴⁶Frederick Merk, Manifest Destiny and American Mission in American History, (New York:Vintage Books, Random House, 1963), pp.14,16.

⁴⁷Charles F. Adams, (ed.):Memoirs of John Quincy Adams (12 vols. Philadelphia, 1874-7),IV,438-439 as cited in Merk, p.16.

⁴⁸Democratic Review, New York, XVII (October 1845), 243-248, as cited in Merk, p.24.

⁴⁹Congressional Globe, 28 Congress, 2 Session 200 (January 27, 1845), as cited in Merk, p. 28.

⁵⁰Congressional Globe, 28 Congress, 2 Session 200 (January 27, 1845); 29 Congress, 1 Sessions, 180) January 10, 1846; 30 Congress, 1 Session, App.86-7 (January 12, 1848), as cited in Merk, pp.28-29.

⁵¹Stephanson, Manifest Destiny, p.5.

⁵²Stephen C. Bullock, Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 137.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 1, 137.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 137, 143-145.

⁵⁵Masonry and Americanism, (Washington, D.C.: The Masonic Service Association of the United States, 1924), p.4-5, 20.

⁵⁶Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v."Masonry,"IX:779-780.

⁵⁷Gene Brack, The Diplomacy of Racism: Manifest Destiny and Mexico, 1821-1848, (St. Charles, Mo.:Forum Press, 1974), p.2.

⁵⁸Ibid., p.4

⁵⁹Ibid., pp 6-7.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 9, 12, 14.

⁶¹Ibid., p.15.

⁶²Payno, Prieto, Ramirez, et al, "Apuntes para la guerra con los Estados Unidos, 1848," as cited in Zoraida, Mexicanos y Norteamericanos ante la Guerra del '47, pp. 66-67, 83.

⁶³Ibid., p.103.

⁶⁴Jose Fuentes Mares, Genesis Del Expansionismo Norteamericano, (México, D.F., El Colegio de México, 1980), pp. 3, 8, 12.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 12, 15.

⁶⁶Jacob, The Radical Enlightenment, p. 69; and Robert E. Sullivan, John Toland and the Deist Controversy (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982),pp.253-262.

⁶⁷Sullivan, John Toland and the Deist Controversy, p.66.

⁶⁸Perry, Puritanism and Democracy, p.73.