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Thesis
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Democracy, American Nationalism and Woodrow Wilson’s Search for Identity

by
David T. Rowlands

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To

my Father, Terence Edward Rowlands,
my late Mother, Ruth Elizabeth Rowlands
and
Olga Manrique Davila

with gratitude
and admiration.
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-David Thomas Rowlands,
The University of Sydney,
February 3, 1999.
Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the evolution of Woodrow Wilson's world view, and to account for his conversion to the myths of American nationalism. Nations, as Anderson has argued, are "imagined communities". Each one is defined by a myth about itself which is peculiar to itself. This is as true for the United States as for other nations. In America's case, however, the national myth is grounded on ideological rather than ethnic, religious or linguistic premises. It is the story of a people made up of all the peoples of the world who went to the American continent in search of liberty. According to the myth, the American Revolution saw the birth of a nation with a providential mission to democratise the world and so bring about the political redemption of humanity.

This national ideology came to be implemented during the first half of the nineteenth century as a modern mass democracy came to displace the traditional republican order, which had subscribed to a sceptical view of human nature, a cyclical philosophy of history and a rejection of popular sovereignty. George Bancroft, known as the father of American history, gave the emerging national myth its authorised expression. In an 1826 oration, Bancroft proclaimed

When the names of our venerated Fathers were affixed to the instrument which declared our independence, an impulse and confidence were imparted to all efforts at improvement throughout the world. The festival which we keep is the festival of freedom itself; all the nations of the earth have an interest in it, and humanity proclaims it sacred....The events of the last fifty years lead us to hope, that liberty, so long militant, is at length triumphant. From our own revolution the period derives its character. As on the morning of the nativity the astonished wizards hastened with sweet odors on the Eastern road, our government had hardly come into being and the star of liberty shed over us its benignant light, before the nations began to follow its guidance and do homage to its beauty....Our moral condition is, then, indeed superior to that of the old world in the present, or in any former age. We have institutions more free, more just, and more beneficent, than have ever before been established....The dearest interests of mankind were

entrusted to our country;...the nations of the earth turned towards her as to their last hope. And the country has not deceived them.\(^2\)

All Presidents since Lincoln have, in some measure, given expression to this view of America’s mission. Owing to the ideological nature of American nationalism, the United States has sought to vindicate its national existence by pursuing the victory of its liberal internationalism. Because America is viewed as the embodiment of liberty, American interests have been conflated with the interests of all nations and the welfare of the human race.

In Wilson, the twenty-eighth President (1913-1921), this tendency to meld universal principles with national interests found its clearest delineation. "I have sometimes heard", he said in 1919, "a distinction drawn between nationalism and internationalism...in the questions that are now before us....It is very difficult for me to follow [that] distinction. The greatest nationalist is the man who wants his nation to be the greatest nation, and the greatest nation is the nation which penetrates to the heart of its duty and mission among the nations of the world."\(^3\) Wilson’s public addresses were absolutely consistent in their application of national mythology:

\[\text{We are the predestined mediators of mankind....Our fathers of the Revolutionary age had a vision, my fellow citizens. There were only 3,000,000 Americans then, in a little strip of settlements on the Atlantic coast. Now the great body of Americans extends from ocean to ocean, more than a hundred millions strong. These are the people of whom the founders of the republic were dreaming: those great hosts of free men and women who should come in the future and who should say to all the world: ‘Here are the testaments of liberty. Here are the principles of freedom. Here are the things which we must do in order that mankind may be released from the intolerable things of the past.’}\(^4\)

\(^2\)Oration Delivered on the Fourth of July 1826 at Northampton, Massachusetts.
\(^4\)Ibid, 63:143,148.
Diplomatic historians, whether of the National Liberal, New Left or Realist schools of interpretation, have all alluded to Wilson's centrality in the history of American foreign relations. The national ideology by which Wilson sought to justify America's entry into the Great War has assured him of a lasting place in the pantheon of great national leaders. Throughout the turbulent course of the twentieth century, the United States has explained its actions in the world with constant reference to the Wilsonian prophecy of a new world order founded on universal democracy and dependent on America's moral leadership. Since the end of the Cold War, triumphalist scholars such as Knock and Smith have produced works in which Wilson is portrayed as the great hero of America's mission to redeem humanity.\textsuperscript{5}

It is Wilson's symbolic status as a crusading champion of American ideology that has served to obscure the important issue of his intellectual development. The orthodox historiography has failed to recognise that Wilson did not identify with American national ideology until 1910, at the onset of his political career. This failure has arisen from the fact that virtually all historians who have dealt with Wilson and the nature of his world view have written from within the pervasive national tradition. Themselves influenced by nationalism, it has proved difficult for them to consider Wilson's identification with "American ideals" as anything but a natural and inevitable condition. National Liberal scholars such as Arthur S. Link and John M. Mulder have viewed Wilson's religious background as the key to understanding why he became the most ardent apostle of American ideals. Brought up in a Presbyterian manse, they argued, it was a simple task for the future President to equate the tenets of the Christian religion with America's duty and destiny. "The...main assumptions of Wilson's thoughts about international relations grew out of his attempt to define the role of the United States in world

affairs", wrote Link, "within the context of American democratic traditions and his own...religious faith....America's mission in the world was not to attain wealth and power, but to serve mankind through leadership in moral purposes and in advancing peace and world unity." Yet Wilson's vision of a world made safe for democracy by America was "not a product of 'eternal' or 'natural' laws', but rather, as has been said of nationalism more generally, of "the growth of social and intellectual factors at a certain stage of history". How, then, did Wilson come to identify with the Bancroftian vision by which he is known to history?

The thesis consists of three sections. In the first section, an attempt is made to refute the nationalist presupposition that Wilson's intellectual identity evinced a lifelong continuity. Contrary to the judgement of Link and Mulder, Wilson's early world view did not correspond with the essence of his later outlook on human affairs. Convinced that human nature was irrevocably flawed and that this world must ever remain a place of trial and torment, liberal Protestant notions of social salvation and collective moral progress were anathema to his religious and political sensibilities. Having internalised his father's Southern Presbyterian blend of Covenant theology and classical republicanism, Wilson rejected the principle of popular sovereignty by idealising a system of government based on limited suffrage. Aware of America only as he thought it part of a wider Anglo-Saxon civilisation, Wilson was dismissive of the Bancroftian idea that the United States had been founded to establish a reign of universal democracy.

The second section, which covers the period 1881-1890, seeks to relate Wilson's inner conflicts to the transformation of his outlook on human affairs. In 1883, Wilson embarked on graduate study at the Johns Hopkins University. There he studied political economy under the eminent Social Gospel theologian Richard T.

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Ely, whose ethical-historical economics and democratic social organicism provided Wilson with a model of intellectual divergence. Unable to make open expression of his need for emancipation from his father's unusually severe authority, Woodrow came to identify with a different world view from that of Dr. Wilson. Thus, the identity crisis of early adulthood found sublimated expression in the form of Wilson's transition from Covenant theology and classical republicanism to democracy and liberal Protestantism.

The third and final section examines the period 1891-1910. Though Wilson had become sympathetic to a conception of democracy, it was a democracy suffused with Burkean Anglo-Saxonism. While his world view had been altered as a result of his time at Johns Hopkins, he as yet gave no expression to the Bancroftian definition of America. Democracy, argued Wilson, was not a political creed suitable for all peoples. He did not consider that the United States had a special role to play in bequeathing democracy to all humanity. America was a democratic nation, according to Wilson, only because of its English race heritage. Hence, democracy was not considered an a priori principle capable of universal application. It was viewed, rather, as a contingent expression of the character and experience of the English-speaking organic community. Wilson's adherence to the Anglo-Saxonist "germ" account of American democracy was combined, not altogether coherently, with a partial acceptance of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. The unique American environment, Wilson sometimes joined Turner in saying, had wrought a uniquely American democracy. Immigrants from the Old World, whether English-speaking or not, had left their heritage behind and been forged anew as democratic Americans on the frontier.

Whether Wilson argued from the "germ" or "frontier" perspective, he was consistent in his rejection of the myths of American nationalism. The frontier thesis, with its inherent insularity and marked sense of exclusivity, was as unrelated
to Bancroftian typology as was "germ" theory. There was no sense in Turner's argument that American democracy owed its provenance to the aspirations of immigrants who fled Old World autocracy to construct a haven of liberty in the New World. Nor, consequently, was there any sense that other peoples in other lands should be led by the United States to adopt the American form of governance as their own. The frontier thesis held that American principles were the product of geo-historical accident, and did not pertain to the aspirations of all humanity.

During the late 1890s, the growing influence of the Social Gospel on Wilson led him to embrace both a more positive view of human progress and a more universalist definition of democracy. (At times, however, this new perspective competed with Wilson's residual sense of Anglo-Saxonist exclusivity.) The intellectual premise of the Social Gospel movement, which stemmed from liberal theology, was a belief in the inevitable perfectibility of human society. Liberal Protestant opinion of the era commonly held that a democratic world order based on the historical Christ's ethical code would shortly be realised. By the time of the Spanish-American War, this millennial creed had exerted a considerable influence on the future President's emerging philosophy of international relations.

Not yet, though, had he come to equate the redemption of the world through selflessness and service with the triumph of ideals believed to be American in origin. At this pre-nationalist stage of his career, Wilson did not identify with the Bancroftian argument that America was the sole fount of human progress and democracy. Caught up in the burgeoning Eastern-elite movement for Anglo-American cooperation, he conceived instead of a joint Anglo-American mission to humanity, and related the Social Gospel ideal of an altruistic foreign policy to that end. In fact, it was not until the onset of Wilson's political career in 1910 that he gave expression to the Bancroftian nationalist vision of America's role in the world. Desirous of becoming a national leader, the New Jersey gubernatorial candidate was
suddenly compelled to assess his own world view in relation to the collective identity of the American people. As a consequence of this process, Wilson underwent a conversion to the myths of American nationalism. Having abandoned his earlier emphasis on the inseparable morality of Britain and the United States, Wilson came to interpret the Social Gospel in such a way as to equate the victory of uniquely American principles with the salvation of international society. In 1776, he now proclaimed, the American people set themselves free from imperial despotism and were entrusted with a providential mission to spread democracy to the rest of the world. Wilson's metamorphosis was complete.
I

WILSON'S INHERITANCE:
COVENANT THEOLOGY AND CLASSICAL
REPUBLICANISM

The one hundredth anniversary of American independence. One hundred years ago America conquered England in an unequal struggle and this year she glories over it. How much happier she would be now if she had England's form of government instead of the miserable delusion [of] abstract liberty! I venture to say that this country will never celebrate another centennial as a republic. The English form of government is the only true one.

Woodrow Wilson, July 4, 1876.¹

I have taken pains since I was a boy so to saturate myself in the traditions of America that I generally feel a good deal of confidence that the impulses which I find in myself are American impulses.... A true American conceives America in the atmosphere and the whole setting of...her destiny....We set this nation up with the profession then that we wanted to set an example of liberty, not only, but to lead the world in the paths of liberty and justice and of right.

Woodrow Wilson, September 12, 1919.²

Between 1876 and 1919, as the above extracts reveal, Wilson's regard for the myths of American nationalism underwent a profound transformation. This thesis will attempt to recount the as yet untold story of that transformation. The present section will focus on Wilson's student years at Davidson College, Princeton and the University of Virginia, a period that ended in late 1880 when Wilson was almost 24. Wilson's religious and political thought will be considered in relation to his father's world view, which was derived from the philosophical system of Covenant theology and classical republicanism.

¹From Wilson's Shorthand Diary, PWW, 1:148-149.
²An Address in Coeur d'Alene, ibid, 63:212, 213.
1. **Covenant theology**

The historiography has generally argued that the "Calvinist" or "Covenant" religious outlook of Wilson's early youth remained with Wilson throughout adulthood and eventually, when he became President of the United States, came to be the philosophical underpinning of his foreign policy. Yet there was much that separated Wilson's early religious and political ideas from the essence of his Presidential world view, the most important aspect of which has been identified by N. Gordon Levin, Jr., who argued that "For Wilson... American national values were identical with universal progressive values, and an exceptionalist America had a mission to lead mankind toward the orderly international society of the future."\(^3\) Wilson, according to Levin, "defined the American national interest in liberal-internationalist terms".\(^4\) The national interest thereby "became merged with liberal ideology in such a way that he could act simultaneously as the champion of American nationalism and as the spokesman for internationalism and anti-imperialism."\(^5\) Did Wilson's early religious and political thought really condition his later understanding of America and America's role in the world?

The historiography has tended to portray the youthful Wilson as a "Calvinist". According to Arthur S. Link, "The foundations of Wilson's political thinking were the beliefs and ethical values that he inherited from the Christian tradition in general and from Presbyterianism in particular.... He derived his faith from Joseph Ruggles Wilson, a Presbyterian minister, and from the Westminster Confession and the Shorter Catechism. Hence Wilson was, inevitably, a Calvinist."\(^6\) Wilson's

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\(^4\)Ibid., 2.
\(^5\)Ibid., 1.
"Calvinism", Link argued, meant that "He believed in a sovereign God, just but also loving; in a moral universe, the laws of which ruled nations as well as men; in the supreme revelation of Jesus Christ; and in the Bible as the incomparable word of God and the rule of life. He further believed that God controls history and uses men and nations to achieve His preordained purposes."7

Such a definition of "Calvinism" rendered it virtually interchangeable with the term "Covenant theology". John M. Mulder saw Covenant theology as the basis of Wilson's early religious beliefs and, later, of his Presidential policies. "Wilson was profoundly influenced by the Presbyterian covenant religious tradition", argued Mulder, "particularly as conveyed by his minister father."8 Mulder's understanding of "Covenant theology" was that "God had established a covenant of grace with the people, offering them forgiveness from their sins in exchange for obedience to the divine will. A further covenant, one of nature, had also been established by God, in which the affairs of this world- its laws and its government- were conducted according to God's moral law. The essential thrust of the covenant theology was to provide a comprehensive theological view of the individual, the church, and society, each with its own function and place within the divine scheme of government of the world."9

Mulder's definition of "Covenant theology" corresponded with Perry Miller's account. In his influential study of the seventeenth-century New England mind, Miller argued that the Puritan religious outlook was based only indirectly on Calvinist precepts. The early New Englanders espoused the Calvinist model of the holy commonweal as a Christian ideal while utilising his conception of the church

7Ibid, 5.
9Ibid, xiii.
invisible and lending a similar significance to the Fall. Yet they did not subscribe to Calvin's views on God, the absolute depravity of mankind, or predestination. The New England Puritans did not adopt a pure Calvinism.\footnote{See Perry Miller, \textit{The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century} (New York, 1939), especially 365-397.} Rather, they embraced a "covenant theology", which involved a softening of Calvin's obdurate doctrine of predestination in which by "the eternal degree of God," some are "preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation."\footnote{Henry Beveridge, trans., \textit{"Institutes of the Christian Religion"}, \textit{Works of John Calvin}, 52 vols. (Edinburgh, 1843-55), LI, Book iii, 534.}

"Federal" or Covenant theology did not originate in New England; it was taken there by the English Puritans. Tyndale and John Frith were the first to expound Covenantal thought in England, and, for this reason, it was dominant there from very early on among Puritans.\footnote{See Everett H. Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology", \textit{Church History}, XXV (1956), 136-137.} The Covenant of Grace allowed for a modified New England Calvinism in which God's relationship with mankind was expressed by a straightforward redemptive contract freely entered into by God himself. "It has pleased the great God to enter into a treaty and covenant of agreement with us his poor creatures", proclaimed William Sibbes. "God, for his part, undertakes to convey all that concerns our happiness, upon our receiving of them, by believing on him. Every one in particular that recites these articles from a Spirit of faith makes good this condition."\footnote{Quoted in Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity", in \textit{C.S.M. Publications}, XXXII (Boston, 1938), 261.}

In practice, covenant theology entailed a release from the absolute vice of predestination. Though God remained above all law, he could still be trusted to conform to the Covenant of Grace. Calvin's God of wrath was transformed into a relatively comforting God. In deigning to reach down, according to Preston, God
had implied "a kindle of equality" with mankind. 14 Having chosen to base his commandments on reason, God decreed that upon the reason of regenerate humanity rests all that is good and true. Accordingly, the means for man of discovering goodness and truth lay in the application of "right reason". Man, being furnished with reason, was able to distinguish between good and evil. The Covenant thereby entailed a mandate upon man to pursue moral perfection. Thomas Shepard gave expression to this idea, arguing that "God hath linked together the blessing of the Covenant (which is his to give) with the duty and way of it (which is ours to walk in) that we cannot with comfort expect the one, but it will work in us a careful[ sic] endeavor[ sic] of the other." 15

Covenant theology's understanding of the conversion process was gradualist. Covenanters did not have a sense of sudden personal epiphany leading to an inner fusion of the individual with Christ the redeemer. Rather, the regeneration of the soul was thought of as an evolutionary development. As Miller put it, conversion was perceived as "a reinvigoration of the slumbering capacities of the soul." 16

14Quoted in Miller, "The Marrow", 264.
15Quoted in ibid, 285.
16Quoted in Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology", 137. It should be noted that Miller's assessment of the differences between Calvinism and Covenant theology is not accepted by all students of the subject. Emerson, who concedes that "The theology of the early New Englanders is truly not the theology of Calvin" [142], has argued that Miller actually overstated the wrong differences. Emerson's view of the disparity between the two theologies is grounded not so much on their doctrinal divergence but on their differing emphases. The essential difference between New England theologians of the seventeenth century and Calvin, then, according to Emerson, was that while Calvin was preaching to the already converted, Covenanters were attempting to exhort the unconverted. "The sermons of the covenant theologians of early New England", he argued, "are usually either attempts to persuade the uncalled, or exhortations to those who regard themselves as called to test their calling. But Calvin's sermons, addressed to the already called, assure them of salvation and exhort them to be grateful." [142.] In other respects, Covenant theology and Calvinism were essentially quite similar, suggests Emerson. "Calvin was not a covenant theologian", he wrote, "but many of the implications of covenant theology...are present in Calvin's teaching." [141.] These remarks are included to show that, given the many points of convergence between Covenant theology and Calvinism proper, it is understandable that the historiography should label Wilson both a Calvinist and a Covenanter.

A further complication in this theological debate is reported by C. J. Sommerville in his article "Conversion Versus The Early Puritan Covenant of Grace", Journal of Presbyterian History, 44 (1966), 179: "Miller expressed some distress that his idea had been widely construed to mean that the Puritans were not Calvinists at all. Stickying by his contention that the covenant or 'federal'
Through education, the unregenerate soul could acquire faith. The faithful would receive grace. On receiving grace, the soul gradually became regenerate. This resulted in the acquisition of right reason and, ultimately, the salvation of the individual.

The point of all this is to show the character of the theological universe into which Wilson was born, in Staunton, Virginia, on December 28, 1856. Covenant theology, though no longer a dynamic influence in New England religion, had continued to thrive in the Southern states as the dominant theological perspective. James H. Thornwell, among others, had been instrumental in developing Covenant theology in the South. It was essentially a pre-modern religious creed, whose overriding concern was with the problem of achieving individual salvation in a universe divided between the temporal world and an unknowable creator separate from it. This would suggest that Covenant theology was philosophically unrelated to Wilsonianism, a fusion of nationalism and liberal Protestant ideas regarding the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth.

While Covenant theology did have a conception of the "holy community", this world was bound to remain an imperfect place, incapable of ever becoming totally regenerated. The best one could do was attempt keeping oneself unspotted from the world. One’s salvation was not to be realised in this world, but outside of the corrupted human sphere and outside the flow of earthly time. It was this aspect of

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17August Heksher notes in Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1991), 10 that "Wilson was actually born between December 28 and 29. The family Bible records his birth as being "on the 28th December, 1856 at 12 3/4 o'clock at night." The twenty-eighth was always celebrated as his birthday."

Covenant theology that is of most significance to the question of Wilson's religious background and its supposed contribution to his mature world view. The problem of overcoming one's sinful nature in order to find redemption outside the human sphere remained at the heart of the Covenantal tradition.

Covenant theology held that even the most regenerate of individuals must remain flawed whilst inhabiting this world. Life was a continual process, argued Thomas Hooker, of a "purging out of impurities, as it manifesteth itself. You may conceive it by a similitude, if a pot be boiling upon the fire, there will scum arise, but yet they that are good house-wives...they watch it, and as the scum riseth up, they take it off and throw it away, happily more scum will arise, but still as it riseth they scum it off."19 This theology produced keenly introspective mentality in which one's spiritual energies were focused on the continual purging out of impurity. Covenant theology forced the individual to pay greater attention to the struggle for individual salvation than did Calvinism pure, which held that man could do nothing to alter God's immutable and predestined judgement. Significantly, Covenant theology had none of that brimming optimism regarding human potential which was the hallmark of theological liberalism and the related myths of American nationalism. Covenant theology saw mankind as fundamentally flawed. In casting off the continually-rising scum of his own impurity, the Covenanter had enough to accomplish without entertaining hopes of a perfected world.

Yet it was precisely this hope of a perfected world that Wilson would later entertain. "I beg...that you will carry this question home with you", he said in an address delivered as part of the 1919 Western speaking tour, "as a great picture, including the whole of the nation and the whole of humanity, and know that now is the

19Quoted in Miller, "The Marrow", 283-284.
golden hour when America can at last prove that what she promised in the day of her birth was no dream, but a thing which she saw in its concrete reality— the rights of man, the prosperity of nations, the majesty of justice, and the sacredness of peace."20 Such ideas did not stem from a Covenantal mind, and herein lies the error of conflating Wilsonianism with the Covenant theology of Wilson's youth.

2. **Father and teacher: the Reverend Doctor Joseph Ruggles Wilson**

Woodrow Wilson's father was one of the founding fathers of the Southern Presbyterian church. By examining Dr. Wilson’s own religious ideas we are better enabled to understand how his son's world view changed over the course of time. At first, Wilson saw the world very much from his father’s perspective. Later, as he faced an adolescent identity crisis, Wilson would reinvent himself as a liberal Protestant and a democrat.

Born in Ohio and ordained in 1849, Joseph Wilson moved to the South in 1855. What prompted this move appears to have been the young preacher’s increasing disaffection with the democratisation of Northern culture. Dr. Wilson decided that his sympathies lay with the conservative republicanism of an older political order. During the Civil War, Dr. Wilson's church in Augusta was used as a hospital and also to detain Union prisoners. Under the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, Dr. Wilson served as an army chaplain; he was also chairman of the Executive Committee of the Georgia Relief and Hospital Association. Because of his dynamic personality and eloquent preaching, Dr. Wilson's congregation doubled in size. In 1863, the General Assembly elected him to the Board of Trustees of Columbia Theological Seminary. He was re-elected in 1867, and it was while serving as chairman of the Board of Trustees in 1870 that he was elected the new chair of Professor of Pastoral and Evangelistic Theology and Sacred Rhetoric. Dr. Wilson also served as Stated Supply in the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, South Carolina.

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21 In the interests of textual clarity, Wilson's father will subsequently be identified as "Dr. Wilson" or "Joseph Wilson". "Wilson" will refer to Woodrow Wilson.
A popular professor, and acknowledged as one of the Southern Presbyterian church's great leaders and preachers, Dr. Wilson was soon to endure at Columbia a severe professional- and personal- blow. In the fall of 1873, after resigning as Stated Supply at the First Presbyterian Church because of the parish's inability to remunerate him, he made it compulsory for all students at the seminary to attend Sunday chapel services. This provoked a storm of protest not only from the new minister of the First Church, whose services were placed in direct conflict with those at the seminary, but from students, other faculty members and other churches. Dr. Wilson and his supporters, convinced they had done right, proved intractable. With the faculty in schism, however, he resigned over the compulsory services controversy.

Joseph Wilson left Augusta in these bitter circumstances for the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, North Carolina. He would suffer from depression during his long tenure at Wilmington. Its congregation was smaller; the town had no intellectual life to speak of, and the church session failed to pay him regularly. Afters years of stifled discontent, Dr. Wilson finally resigned in 1886 and took up a teaching position at the theological school of the Southwestern Presbyterian University in Clarksville, Tennessee. Yet the persistent unhappiness which had so far attached itself to his life and career followed Dr. Wilson to Clarksville. In 1888 his wife, Jessie, and a daughter died. Grief rendered Southwestern more unacceptable than its poor quality of student- he spoke of his work there as "ding-donging theology and Greek exegesis into dull brains"22- might ordinarily have done. He resigned in 1893, and, five years later, weary of his official church duties, he resigned as Stated Clerk to the General Assembly. Thence followed a period of itinerant retirement, until poor health forced Dr. Wilson to move to

22As cited in Miller, "The Marrow", 261.
Princeton in the spring of 1901. He lived with his son's family there until his death in 1903.

Dr. Wilson's sermons, of which a number have survived as verbatim transcripts, provide the best possible insight into the nature of his religious ideas. "Presbyterians", his son would later remark, "have an inordinate taste for sermons. They come to be instructed; they come to hear life expounded and the standards applied to life upon some high plane of exposition". The chronology of Joseph Wilson's life helps to place the sermons in a personal context. Not all of them are reliably dated, but most come from the Wilmington period, by which time his halcyon days were but a memory. This intensified his Covenantal tendency to portray the temporal world as an unhappy, foreign place. As Dr. Wilson once said, "there is a sense in which the preacher preaches himself." In the first sermon, Dr. Wilson proposed that the souls of the elect were the jewels with which God would adorn himself for all eternity. Individual souls were of incomparable value to God- of far more worth, in fact, than the entire temporal universe. "God has many possessions", spoke Dr. Wilson, "but much even of His wealth, being never intended to endure, is perishable...We are informed...that this earth on which we dwell...will go down into the cold ashes that a vast but sudden fire shall one day leave." However, "out of the Almighty's rich estate, there are certain objects of His regard to the preservation of whose singular being He has pledged the faithfulness of His eternal word and the resources of His everlasting

24 "In What Sense are Preachers to Preach Themselves," _Southern Presbyterian Review_, XXV (1874). Quoted in Miller, "The Marrow", 255.
25 Dr. Wilson did not number the sermons and dated only some of them. For want of a better system, I will therefore deal with the sermons in the order that they appear in Series 11 of the Wilson Papers, Library of Congress. Page numbers are those designated by Dr. Wilson in the original hand-written manuscript.
26 Sermon 1 (on Malachi 3:17), 3-4.
love as objects dearer to Him than all the universe...these objects are persons...They are they who 'fear the Lord' ".27

The temporal world was destined to pass away into complete nothingness. In the cosmic scheme of things, what really mattered to God was the individual soul, of which Dr. Wilson claimed "the wealth of a world is not big enough for its purchase."28 The Kingdom of God would not be realised here on earth in the form of international brotherhood and peace. Instead, Dr. Wilson spoke of those who would be "carried out of the preparing kingdom below to the prepared kingdom above."29 The temporal world was bound to remain a realm of confusion, woe and trial, a place out of which the redeemed would be miraculously transported, those "whose destiny is yonder bright and ever-brightening heaven".30

It was not only inevitable but actually desirable that this world remain a vale of tears, because suffering stimulated spiritual growth. According to Dr. Wilson, "the very distresses- the very fires- through which the different specimens of His spiritual workmanship are passing, shall contribute to their gradual perfection".31 After gathering up all his jewels on the final day, God would consume all else in wrathful fire. Those whom "hell's lurid light" gave "a more coveted coloring"32 here on earth would ultimately be shown up as worthless, and be destroyed in the "common wreck."33 Dr. Wilson entertained no hope that all humanity would one day realise its temporal salvation. The majority would suffer eternal damnation, and the world itself would be consumed by fire.

27Ibid, 4-5.
29Ibid, 15.
31Ibid, 18.
32Ibid, 18.
33Ibid, 1.
In the second sermon, Dr. Wilson stressed that the relationship of the soul to its creator was more important than the temporal condition of man in society. Beneath the world of appearances lay the inner man. It was this inner man, he argued, that was "unquestionably...the truer of the two"\textsuperscript{34}. This sermon is interesting for its stern repudiation of those who strove to cure all society's ills. He argued that "The philanthropist who dreams away his time in endeavouring to perfect schemes for making everybody rich, or for lifting them above all the cares which penury brings, does not deserve the name of wise man."\textsuperscript{35} God's concern was with the cosmic drama of judgement, salvation and damnation. "He may not furnish wardrobes of warmth for the shivering hands, or...miraculous oil for the starving appetite, or pillows of repose for the sleepless eyelids", he explained, "but, knowing, as He does of a poverty that is deeper than this implies, every one is welcome to His dresses of holiness, to His plentiful oils of spiritual joy, to His praiseful abodes of gospel peace"\textsuperscript{36}.

The only consolation available to a suffering humanity was the knowledge that God was concerned for our spiritual progress. Happy, according to Dr. Wilson, "is the sufferer who, deprived of every outward alleviation, finds more than a compensation in that heavenly whisper which the answering heart translates into its own words: 'yet the Lord thinketh upon me!' "\textsuperscript{37} If God allowed hardship and woe to prevail on earth, it was not mankind's place to attempt its eradication. Those misguided philanthropists who sought to create an ideal social environment had lost sight of a more important mission, namely, the salvation of the individual soul.

This sermon is an example of how Covenant theology, far from motivating its

\textsuperscript{34}Sermon 2 (on Psalm 40:17), 2.
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 14.
adherents to construct a new world order, encouraged retreat from the contemplation of social problems into the abstract world of the inner self. Value was placed on individual salvation rather than on the redemption of human society.

When such an outlook is compared with the following extract from one of Wilson's 1919 addresses, the essential disparity between Covenant theology and Wilsonianism is laid bare. Rather than speak of plentiful oils of spiritual joy or abodes of gospel peace, he argued "we have got to realise that we are face to face with a great industrial problem....The laboring men of the world are not satisfied with their relations with their employers....And one of the things that have to be brought about for mankind can be brought about by what we do in this country".38

There was, explained Wilson, "a part of that treaty which sets up an international method of consultation about the conditions of labor. It is a splendid instrument locked up in that great document. I have called it frequently, the Magna Carta of labor".39

Dr. Wilson's fourth sermon was devoted to the theme of Christ the personal saviour. He proposed that humanity's fear of death stemmed from the knowledge that we must face the judgement of "the God whose laws we have so often broken, whose glories we have so often shamed, and whose world we have so often denied."40 Were nothing to mitigate God's justice, all humanity must be consigned to damnation. This was described as "the thrill of a burial such as mourning friends never wept over in this world when they have wept the bitterest."41

40Sermon 4 (on 2 Timothy 1:10), 4.5.
41Ibid, 5.
Having painted a gloomy picture of man's hopeless condition, Dr. Wilson then discussed Christ's achievement. "But what if a power greater than death", he asked, "were to dissolve its bonds...were to change the whole enmity of disease, and even of sin, into a blessed and lasting friendship...What if some hand should tear away the curtain which death both drops and lifts, and show that dying is not necessarily a dark woe, but rather an usherer into whatsoever in eternity is light & gladsome...an elastic spring into regions of joy?"\(^{42}\)

The "power greater than death" to which Dr. Wilson referred was Jesus Christ, a "divine saviour",\(^ {43}\) whom God had sent and who "by a power hitherto unknown [saved] us from the very fear of death, by putting in its stead the assurance of a most glorious immortality!"\(^ {44}\) It was only through Christ that man could avert the eternal punishment that he fully deserved. "You, indeed," he informed the congregation, "cannot achieve this piece of wondrous surgery, or strike down this mighty law."\(^ {45}\) The victory over death was won only "through our Lord Jesus Christ!"\(^ {46}\) Thus, Dr. Wilson continued, "you have only to be united with Christ, in order to possess the life which springs out of His death...the unquenchable life of heaven!"\(^ {47}\) Dr. Wilson's focus on the role of Christ as the saviour of a lost humanity proceeded from his Covenant theology, which was preoccupied with the problem of how the individual, heir to the legacy of original sin, was to reconcile himself with a just God.

To the Covenanter, the Bible was not a product of the finite human mind. Scripture was revered as the fruit of divine inspiration, containing truths beyond
considerations of time and place. This idea found picturesque expression in Dr. Wilson's fifth sermon, in which he depicted holy scripture as a mirror for the condition of the soul. The Bible's teachings laid bare man's inner corruption: "tell me, what does anyone know of the nature of sin, until he learn it from the inspired volume?" 48

Dr. Wilson asked "Might it not be that the beautiful girl who receives back from her looking-glass a countenance radiant with loveliness, - or the handsome man to whom a parlor pier-glass reveals an enviable form,- might it not be- if these specimens of outward comeliness were to use a soul-reflector- that they would turn, abashed, from the vision it would present!" There was such a soul mirror, he insisted. "It is the word of God." 49 The Gospel was a "revelation". 50 This implied "the need of studious earnest examination of its contents." 51 Dr. Wilson exhorted the congregation "Oh, that all who hear me this day would consent to open their eyes upon the gospel of Jesus Christ- and keep them open! Herein is what you most need." 52 The Bible's truths were perpetually new and vibrant, despite the antiquity of the Scriptures: "There is of course a sense in which the gospel is, also, old. It is gray with age. It has on it the dross of centuries. It is venerable with years as time itself, almost. But so is daylight old- as old as the sun which gave it birth and gives it perpetuity. Yet, how new it always is, too!" 53 Dr. Wilson could not sympathise with the new Biblical criticism then gaining ground in academic Protestant circles of Europe and the United States. He did not view scripture as a literary artefact belonging to a particular time and place. Dr. Wilson's Bible, like his God, was outside history, and not of this earth.

48 Sermon 5 (on James 1:25), 18.
49 Ibid, 1.
50 Ibid, 5.
51 Ibid, 5.
52 Ibid, 20.
53 Ibid, 5.
The sixth sermon is notable mainly for its exposition of the notion that the temporal world, and its standards, are of no importance to the Christian. Once the final judgement of humanity had taken place, God would allow the entire physical universe to be consumed. Dr. Wilson argued that "scripture in many a glowing passage teaches us that when the redemption of the saints shall have been completed, there can be no more use for the sunlit day or the starlit night:- these alike being appointed to disappear to make place for that wondrous day which needs no sun, and is followed by no night." 54 The temporal world, not intended to endure, was conceived of as a battleground for human souls, a preparation for what would come after. The "Church", by which Dr. Wilson meant Christianity in general, had subordinated the affairs of this world to the unfolding drama of individual salvation. "The greatest men," he argued, "rulers, statesmen, heroes, individual believers and unbelievers of every station and name, live or die...as shall most subserve the intents of that Church about which, as upon a hinge, all peoples and all events turn." 55 What, then, were the "intents" of "that Church", according to Dr. Wilson? He argued that the intent of Christianity was to render the soul eligible for entry into Heaven, urging the Christian to draw strength from the consideration that "providence...is directed to the one end of promoting his interests as an heir of salvation". 56 Dr. Wilson was of the conviction that this world was of importance only in that it served to bring about the final redemption of the elect. The external was sacrificed to the internal, the "real" to the abstract. He stated "the Church is the proprietor of the whole life of mankind, and has the use of all its deaths." 57

54Sermon 6 (on 1 Corinthians 3:21), 10.
55Ibid, 11.
56Ibid, 10.
57Ibid, 11-12.
There was no need to improve the condition of society, because Christians were already the owners not only of this world but of the entire universe itself. Creation belonged to the creator, and so those who enjoyed a mystical union with God through Christ were also owners, in a spiritual sense, of creation. Dr. Wilson told the congregation "the world is yours...all that this world is...is my Father's; and, with the rest of His children, I can join in the thankful exclaim 'we shall not lack any good', leaving Him to be the judge of what this good shall be". Material poverty or the afflictions of any other social problem were powerless against this inheritance of the soul. Thus it mattered not, argued Dr. Wilson, to "have only a dry crust for my hunger, or a tin-cup out of which to quench my thirst, or a scanty piece of cheapest cloth with which to cloth my limbs." It was better to have "God's smile for a relish or a warmth".

The eighth sermon dealt with a subject that was of special concern to Dr. Wilson: spiritual pride. Covenant theology had emphasised the absolute depravity of mankind and the utter hopelessness of his condition. Powerless to save himself, mankind's only path to redemption was the acceptance of Christ as a personal saviour. On the day of judgement, Dr. Wilson told his congregation, "you cannot stand before him [God] pleading your own righteousness, but do stand appeared in his sight when you claim only his mercy." Spiritual pride was something to be condemned at every turn because it demonstrated that the individual had not yet acknowledged his own worthlessness.

Joseph Wilson's definition of the term "pride" was essentially that man, by an "overvaluation of his own goodness, sets aside God as the standard of

58Ibid, 8.
60Ibid, 9.
excellence". The "proud" were those who spoke with "Not a word in it all to indicate a sense of littleness as a creature, or to wince a feeling of undeservedness as a sinner". It was axiomatic to Dr. Wilson that man was not, and could never be, the model of perfection. This was an expression of his ingrained philosophical conservatism. He regarded human nature with deep suspicion, as a force to be kept under control. "Pride," he warned, "whatever and whenever its manifestations, is odious, and always odious, but let it put on the garb of piety, especially of piety at prayer, and it becomes odious beyond the power of the strongest language to express its offensiveness."

This sermon reveals that Dr. Wilson identified with a cyclical view of history. He felt that human nature, being tainted, must continually repeat the same errors. "Human nature", he argued, "is all the while repeating itself. Change of persons, change of times, change of countries, produce no radical change in that common humanity which, from age to age, flows on, like a rock-bound river, in much the same channels: almost never altering". He spoke, furthermore, of "the uniformity which thus characterizes those leading principles of conduct that sway our race...you may expect the men of this day to do what, under similar circumstances, men have always done." Dr. Wilson did not feel that humanity had made any genuine moral progress. Human nature had not changed since ancient times, and would never change. Accordingly, he made it clear in this sermon that he rejected the idea of American exceptionalism. The United States, as a nation composed of tainted individuals, had no right to consider itself the moral arbiter of mankind. "That history of the Jews over which we sometimes mourn and at which we are

\[\text{Footnotes:}
\begin{align*}
62&\text{bid. 4.} \\
63&\text{bid. 3.} \\
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sometimes indignant," he informed the congregation, "would now be rehearsed by Anglo-Saxons, -by Britains and Americans and Germans- were these to be placed as those ancient fighters against God were placed. The stage would have new scenes, but the tragedy would have been that old one."67

This was completely at odds with the liberal teleological outlook that underpinned the Wilsonian vision. "The example that we set in 1776", Wilson said in a Cheyenne address, "set fires going in the hearts of men which no influence was able to quench. And, one after another, the governments of the world have yielded to the influences of democracy....I made every effort to keep this country out of the war, until it came to my conscience, as it came to yours, that after all it was our war, that the ambition of these central empires was directed against nothing less than the liberty of the world, and that if we were indeed what we had always professed to be- champions of the liberty of the world- it was not within our choice to keep out of the great enterprise."68

Dr. Wilson's ninth sermon argued sorrow is better than laughter, because it reminded men of their true nature and kept them from pride. "His most loved & loving followers", he argued, "are more or less the children of grief most bitter because they still have fighting sins with which to contend: pardoned sins, it is true, but nevertheless possessing a power in their very fragments which shall be felt until, by divine grace, the last one of them is finally captured and subdued, at the threshold of heaven".69 Thus, the Christian life was a constant vigil against the reflorescence of one's inner corruption. Our earthly existence was meant as a struggle and a trial; true happiness would only be achieved in the presence of God.

67Ibid, 6.
68An Address in the Princess Theater in Cheyenne, September 24, 1919, PW, 63:468.
69Sermon 9 (on Ecclesiastes 7:3), 10.
Dr. Wilson rejected the idea of a perfect world, arguing that such a world would cause men to neglect their relationship with God. "Why, were this life all sunshine," he asked, "with never a cloud to darken its genial sky, and with never a pang to remind one of its end-what could that life be but one wild round of careless amusement?" Against the vice of temporal contentment, Dr. Wilson pitted the virtue of a reflective sorrow that sprang from the individual's realisation of his soul's true condition. "Sorrow for sin; sorrow on account of our felt unpreparedness for eternity; sorrow that springs from the anticipation of an angry judgement-when all this life is done with: sorrow in view of a neglected saviour-", he advised the congregation, "this sorrow is better than all laughter, except the laughter which bursts into the song of salvation."

In the tenth sermon, Dr. Wilson gave expression to the Covenantal idea that faith would be rewarded with grace. He spoke of the faithless man as "a running sore of corruption that everywhere spreads infection: and which no surgery can cure except the divine surgery that shall take the man all apart". Only those who had faith in God's purposes, those, in other words, who had submitted to the "divine surgery", would ultimately attain salvation. "The faithful", Dr. Wilson argued, "receive the crown because the faithful are they who alone are leading towards it. None other shall have it, for the reason that none other has lived unto it." Here was the contractual mentality of Covenant theology at work: those who discharged their duties to God in this life would be compensated in the kingdom of heaven. As Dr. Wilson warned, "The hill-top is only a part of the hill itself-and of course he who

70Ibid, 17.
71Ibid, 12.
72Sermon 10 (unspecified), 6.
73Ibid, 16.
does not climb the hill never gets to the top." He did not believe that all humanity was progressing toward the realisation of the Kingdom of God. Most of humanity, according to Dr. Wilson, was sliding toward destruction, and only those who had earned salvation had the right to enjoy its benefits.

In the eleventh sermon, Dr. Wilson spoke of the importance of being faithful, and of the vast store of spiritual riches open to those who worship "the name which is above every name: the Lord Jesus Christ." This world was presented as a place of trial where souls are prepared either for eternal life or for eternal damnation. Those who suffer here for Christ, argued Dr. Wilson, were to be considered more blessed than those who prosper outwardly. The standards of this world were no indication of the soul's true condition.

As Dr. Wilson said of the rich and powerful, "All these are poor when compared with that suffering Christian, who, like his master, has nowhere to lay his head." Spiritual riches, that is, the notion of God's grace at work in the heart, counted for more than material gain. "God's rich man", argued Dr. Wilson, "is he who has come to realize that he has a soul which earth cannot fill, and who has provided for this soul's welfare." He was emphatic that "nothing outward is of account, so long as his inner man is alright."

The twelfth sermon, on Matthew 3:12, focused on the irreconcilable divide separating the regenerate from the damned. "In the light of this simple parable", reflected the preacher, "it is painful to face the fact that there are individuals- not a

74 Ibid., 16.
75 Sermon 11 (unspecified), 15.
76 Ibid., 7.
77 Ibid., 9.
78 Ibid., 9.
few-who are by-and-by to be set aside as of no account in this universe: each one a
nuisance and an obstruction of the world's chaff". There was no mistaking the
import of these words. The outlook they embodied was one that saw humanity as
essentially bad. Only those who had grasped the life-line flung to them by Christ
the saviour would escape the dread judgement of a vengeful God. Dr. Wilson
criticised those to whom the approach of the last day was of no account, those who
could not "dream of that impossible hour when the sickle, crashing through the
field, shall lay it low with all its flaunting bravery gone, nothing being now left to it
but to be floated off into the worthless chaff-PILE!- to be taken thence, along with
much of the same sort, only to be burned!"80

Dr. Wilson's God was not a God whose will it was that one should selflessly serve
other members of society, nor a God on whose essential benevolence one pinned
hopes of an international order regenerated by peace and harmony. Here was a God
who always seemed to be on the verge of destroying the world and punishing the
wicked. When Wilson's Inaugural Address is read in the light of this sermon, yet
again the essential dissimilarity between Covenant theology and Wilsonianism is
revealed. "This is the enterprise of the new day", he announced on March 4, 1913,
"to lift everything that concerns our life as a nation to the light that shines from the
hearthfire of every man's conscience and vision of the right....The feelings with
which we face this new age of right and opportunity sweep across our heartstrings
like some air out of God's own presence, where justice and mercy are reconciled
and the judge and brother are one."81

79 Sermon 12 (on Matthew 3:12), 2.
80 Ibid. 6.
81 An Inaugural Address, March 4, 1913, PWV, 27:151.
In the thirteenth sermon, Dr. Wilson reflected on the "true Christian...and what he has, or hopes to be." The true Christian was one who had seen past the standards of this world and, with naked soul, given themselves over wholly and utterly to Christ the personal saviour. There were to be no half measures. "To be 'almost' a Christian is therefore to be no Christian at all", argued Dr. Wilson, "as to be almost a citizen is to be no citizen at all- as to be almost married is not to be married at all- as to be almost anything is not to be anything at all."  

It was necessary for the Christian to focus all attention on the great problem of righting his own relationship with God, to have "all that doctrine working in [them] as a personal experience...to become a creature blessed forever". The Christian belonged not to this world but to the kingdom of heaven, and his greatest fulfilment was to be had there. Salvation would not be attained here on this earth. "You may not see- in fact you cannot see", argued Dr. Wilson, "a Christian- complete- in the world around you- for he is not now complete- and so you must get a look at what he is yet to become". This world would never progress enough for the Kingdom of God to realised here, nor would Christians find true fulfilment here in the form of selfless service. Dr. Wilson's religious sensibilities treated others as a source of competition for divine favour. He did not identify with the notion that all individuals within society were working together to achieve lasting peace.

In the fifteenth sermon, Dr. Wilson focused on the majestic divinity of Christ, who was held to be lord of a "domain which outstretches nature: the domain of salvation". In this kingdom of heaven outside the flow of earthly time, Dr.

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82Sermon 13 (on Acts 26:28), 17.
83Ibid. 8.
84Ibid. 12.
85Ibid. 17.
86Sermon 15 (on Malachi 4:2), 2.
Wilson continued, "the very angels possess no radiancy which they have not
derived from Him at whose feet they worship...the Scriptures seem unable to
employ language that is full enough...for expressing the truth that the Lord Jesus
Christ is the absolute all-in-all of the moral universe, towards whom...every soul
on earth is compelled to look... and every soul in heaven".87 Jesus Christ, according
to Dr. Wilson, was not merely an historical personage whose ethical
teachings were worthy of emulation, but a divine being who, at the transfiguration,
gave off such sun-like radiance that the disciples "felt their brains so crazed by the
piercing splendour as to cause them to babble they knew not what; and it was not
until a cloud overshadowed them that they could look and understand."88 The tone
of Dr. Wilson's sermon, with its sense of Christ's awe-inspiring presence, is
entirely in keeping with the importance that Covenant theology attached to the
notion of Christ the personal saviour. Christ was held to be the son of God, the
divine saviour. To the Covenanter, Christ was the only hope that lost souls had of
attaining salvation at the last judgement. Given the immediacy that notions of
judgement, damnation, hell and salvation held for the Covenanter, it is fitting that
Dr. Wilson's portrayal of Christ gave greater emphasis to the saviour's identity in
the kingdom of heaven. His image of Christ reflected those issues which were of
greatest import to him, just as, by contrast, the liberal image of Christ as the model
of a perfect man reflected the issues that were of more concern to liberal Protestants.
The issue that was clearly of most importance to Dr. Wilson was how the sinful
individual might placate the awful judgement of an omnipotent creator who reigned
outside the physical universe in an abstract realm. The "person of our Lord", he
explained, "cannot, of course, be reckoned in miles. Indeed, just where He is no
one can confidently say".89 On the other hand, liberal Protestants, with their image

87Ibid, 2.
88Ibid, 4-5.
89Ibid, 12.
of Christ as the supreme ethical teacher, attached more importance to the here and now. Their concern was not with salvation in the next life but with how to solve society's problems by applying Christ's ethics to everyday relations.

In the sixteenth sermon, Dr. Wilson reflected on what it means to be a believer in Christ. He would allow for no modification of the fundamentals; the Bible's teachings were timeless and were to be followed to the letter. True Christians were "believers in it all, from beginning to end: believers, mind you, not disputers: believers, not doubters: believers, not reasoners: believers, not wranglers, nor menders, nor modifiers, nor exceptors, nor supposers, nor suspectors. Whatever God says is to them absolute truth; whatever God commands is to them absolute duty; whatever God covenants to give, is to them absolute certainty. His word is to them the end of all controversy."90 The tone of these remarks is revealing of the extent to which Dr. Wilson identified with Covenental views on the right relationship between God and mankind. God was viewed as the embodiment of all goodness, and his divine power was absolute over all creation. Humanity was seen as the embodiment of depravity, and therefore had absolutely no right to question God's holy commands as expounded in the Bible. Man was by nature a frail, limited creature, and his duty was not to understand God's ways but merely to believe.

True Christians, according to Dr. Wilson, "believe even without always comprehending ....They do not comprehend the doctrine of the Trinity, but they believe it. They do not trace the nature of that mysterious union which connects in...their Saviour...the essence of deity with the essence of humanity, but they believe it....All along they are believers although they cannot always be

90Sermon 16 (on 1 Timothy 4:12), 16.
knowers". The outlook that led Dr. Wilson to such reasoning was that humanity was utterly incapable of bringing about its own salvation. As inheritors of original sin, human beings were entirely dependent on their creator for their redemption. Here was a view of human nature that held no hope for the moral advancement of society through effort and rationality. Dr. Wilson's insistence that authority should not rest upon clear reason but upon blind faith identifies him as a theological conservative, for this very issue was one of the classic points of contention between liberal and conservative Protestant theologians. To the theological conservative, the Bible needed no justification whatsoever in the daily experience of rational human beings; the Scriptures were considered to be above the judgement of an errant humanity. Dr. Wilson expressed such a conservative view on Biblical authority in this sermon, and, as will be remembered, in the fifth sermon also.

In the final sermon, Dr. Wilson argued that perfection, either of individuals or institutions, could never be attained on this earth. The Christian had to wait for the next life for the highest stage of his spiritual development to be realised. "I direct you", said Dr. Wilson, "to those scripture passages which establish the certainty of a glorious hereafter- of that home beyond the skies, where at least, if not in this world, the perfection whose essential elements I have outlined, shall finally be resolved". The "perfection" to which Dr. Wilson referred was defined by him as the combination of "a thoroughly sound body, a thoroughly sound mind, and a thoroughly sound morality". The "product of this noble union", he continued, "brings before you the spectacle of a truly perfect man." It was only in the kingdom of heaven outside this earth that such perfection could be realised. After the return of Christ and the holding of the last judgement, argued Dr. Wilson, the

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91 Ibid., 17.
92 Sermon 17 ("The Perfect Man"), 8.
93 Ibid., 7.
94 Ibid., 7.
elect would undergo a miraculous transformation which would see them rid of their frail earthly bodies and given new Christ-like bodies fitted for the enjoyment of eternity. These new bodies would "flourish forever, removed from the most distant approach of disease- strong, comely, incorruptible...Its strength no lapse of ages shall impair."95 As for the mind, Dr. Wilson predicted "how exquisitely shall it be balanced in that region where all its powers will be poised within the sustaining hand of God, who shall evermore breathe into it the spirit of His own pure and comprehensive knowledge."96 Not only would the bodies and minds of the elect be perfected, but their sinful nature would be purified also. Freed from all earthly temptations, the blemish of sin would disappear. "What, too," he continued, "must be the vigor of the soul's morality in that heavenly habitation where all the atmosphere is drenched with holiness!"97 Such was the "perfection" envisaged by Dr. Wilson. This was a vision of spiritual fulfilment that completely bypassed this world and its condition. It is abundantly clear that Dr. Wilson's dearest hopes were not pinned on God's kingdom being realised here on earth. The ending that Dr. Wilson promised his congregation was not a perfected social order or an international society founded on altruism, but "the prophecy of...immortality in the next...world."98

Of overriding concern to Dr. Wilson was the relationship of the sinful individual to a God separate from the temporal world. Christ was held to be the only means by which individuals could bring about a reconciliation with God. Faith in Christ would be rewarded with God's grace; those who did not share this faith were to suffer eternal damnation. Dr. Wilson evinced little interest in improving mankind's earthly lot. The task of the Christian was not to set about perfecting society at large,
but to ensure that his own heart was discharging the contract of faith into which God had entered with his "poor creatures". When Dr. Wilson did allude to the Christian's duties in everyday life, he spoke from the standpoint of one who consistently related all ethical injunctions to the issue of individual redemption. He did not envisage that the practice of benevolent love and self-sacrifice would bring about the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth. What he valued most in these Christian virtues was that they testified to the presence of God's grace at work in the individual.

Dr. Wilson's religious thought was summarised in his inaugural address at Southwestern Presbyterian University, which was intended to set forth the conservative character of his theology. The address is thus an important piece of evidence because its academic context allowed Dr. Wilson to define his theology more precisely than in his sermons. In the address, Wilson made a direct comparison between his own theology and that of his Presbyterian ancestors, the Scottish Covenanters. Dr. Wilson spoke of "those renowned Scotch universities wherein chairs of theology have long been occupied by men of brilliancy and power" of a theology, too, which is, in all essential respects, distinctively like that of our own." The "men of brilliancy and power" whom he so admired were those of "covenanting Scotland" whose theology "fed the faith and fanned the hopes and fortified the courage of a 'thus-saith-the-Lord' ancestry, the intelligence, the intrepidity, the inspiring activity of whose robust piety have never been excelled-the well-tried theology which now signalizes our unequalled Catechisms and preeminent Confession".

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99Joseph R. Wilson, "Inaugural Address Delivered Before The Board of Directors of the S.W.P. University", 4.
100Ibid, 6.
101Ibid, 6.
At the heart of this creed, bequeathed by Joseph Wilson's "covenenting Scotland", was the necessity of faith in Christ the personal saviour. The "most conspicuous glory" of Covenant theology, continued Dr. Wilson, was "the glory of the cross - the theology that has steadfastly refused to tolerate at the altar ['ric] of a sin-bearing sacrifice, any Priest; or on the throne of redeeming sovereignty, any King; or within the sanctuary of the soul itself, any Prophet- who shall shadow however dimly, or rival, however distantly, the all-sufficient Lord Jesus Christ, apart from whom...no sinner can ever be saved and no believer can ever be sainted." Just as Dr. Wilson had exhorted congregations to ponder Christ's redemptive power from many a fervent Sabbath pulpit, he now extolled the Son of Man among his academic colleagues. Having placed Christ at the centre of his theological universe, Dr. Wilson then went on to summarise other "central facts" pertaining to his theology. These "facts", according to Dr. Wilson, were

the creation of man, his fall in the representative first, and his recovery in the vicarious second, Adam--; and these surrounded by a circle of doctrines wherein emerges the necessity for repentance, for a new birth, for union with Christ, for the indwelling Spirit, for entire sanctification through appointed means of grace- to say nothing of that surprising eschatology which discloses the mystery of death, declares the millennium, depicts the final judgement, divides the curtain beyond which are beheld the raptures of heaven and the regrets of hell, the one the perfection of happiness because the perfection of holiness, the other the perfection of grief because the perfection of guilt. It is that theology, moreover, which is at once a proclamation of man's personal responsibility because of his free agency, and of God's absolute and universal rule because of His essential supremacy- the theology which publishes, without attempting to explain, the unity of the God-head as immanent in three co-equal persons, and to view their several self-distributed places in the completed plan of redeeming love- the whole issuing in a visible Church, whose members, entering by baptism, and composed of professing believers and their offspring, are known to belong to the invisible Church by the visible fruits of their holy living.

Here was the familiar story of an humanity corrupted by sin and then, by the grace of god, offered redemption through Christ. Dr. Wilson's call for "union with Christ" in this address corresponded with the message of his fourth sermon, in

102bid. 6-7.
103bid. 7.
104bid. 7.
which he had stated "you have...to be united with Christ, in order to possess the Life which springs out of His death".

Similarly, Dr. Wilson's mention of the "surprising eschatology" of a last day and judgement, of heaven and of hell corresponded with the imagery that was a staple feature of all the above sermons. In the sixth sermon, for example, he had stated that "scripture...teaches us that when the redemption of the saints shall have been completed, there can be no more use for the sunlit day or the starlit night: these alike being appointed to disappear to make place for that wondrous day which needs no sun, and is followed by no night." The end of history, for Wilson, would spell the destruction of the physical universe and the miraculous transportation of the elect to "Heaven". This kingdom of heaven, which in the address was described as the "perfection of holiness", was likewise depicted in the seventeenth sermon as "that...habitation where all the atmosphere is drenched with holiness!" and, in the first sermon, as "the prepared kingdom above" where the souls of the elect would adorn God for eternity like precious jewels. Conversely, Hell, described here as the "perfection of guilt" had been treated of in the fourth sermon as a place of eternal, bitter reflection for those for those who continued to deny the word, and shame the glories, of God their creator.

Dr. Wilson's mention in this address of God's "absolute and universal rule because of His essential supremacy" corresponded with the monarchical image of God he had consistently presented in the above sermons. In the sixteenth sermon, Dr. Wilson had said of the faithful, "Whatever God says to them is absolute truth...whatever God covenants to give, is to them absolute certainty." Whether speaking from the pulpit or lectern, Dr. Wilson was certain that humanity's lot was not to question the omniscient creator.
Related to the notion of God's omniscience was the idea that the human mind was not capable of understanding all of God's truths. This was another aspect of Dr. Wilson's sermons that was mirrored in the Southwestern address: that there were spiritual truths beyond human understanding. In the sixteenth sermon, he had argued that believers could not always be comprehenders, and that what was most important was to know what one believed about God rather than why one believed. Similarly, in this address, Dr. Wilson argued that his theology "publishes, without attempting to explain, the unity of the God-head as immanent in three co-equal persons". The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, according to Wilson, was to be regarded as an eternal truth, regardless of whether the human mind could understand it.

For Dr. Wilson, the "visible Church" had been issued on earth in order to witness the hidden realities of the spiritual realm, and to help identify those who were the redeemed. This sense of the Church's supreme importance had been expressed in the sixth sermon, in which Dr. Wilson had said "every believer is a living member of God's Church...life and death are uniformly dispensed by their all-wise Arbiter so as best to fulfill the designs of the Church's king in view of the welfare of His all-embracing Spiritual realm."\(^{105}\) The "visible" Church was therefore the instrument of an "invisible" spiritual realm. This tendency to subordinate the temporal world to the kingdom of heaven was also reflected in Dr. Wilson's understanding of Christian duty. In the second sermon, Dr. Wilson had argued that while the Christian sometimes ought to help ease the daily burdens of others, it was folly to entertain hopes of achieving a perfect society. This was because God's

\(^{105}\)Sermon 6, 11.
concern was for the inner man and his salvation, not the salvation of the temporal world. Society must remain imperfect, to test the Christian.

Dr. Wilson saw human nature as fixedly and immutably corrupt. To him, human history was a story not of linear progress, but of unchanging depravity. The eighth sermon, with its conservative assertion "Human nature is...all the while repeating itself", embodied Dr. Wilson’s view of history and the human condition. His theology was a philosophy of retreat from the exigencies of the temporal world. Religious devotion was focused inward, on the plight of the individual soul. The external world was considered but a passing stage, destined to be consumed by fire. It is therefore difficult to conceive that Dr. Wilson’s Covenant theology imbued Woodrow with the conviction that international society was moving toward liberty, democracy and the realisation of perpetual peace under America's moral guidance.
3. Wilson's early religious thought

Mulder has argued that an understanding of "Joseph Ruggles Wilson is an essential ingredient to a fuller understanding of Woodrow Wilson and the man he became."\(^{106}\) This is only true in the sense that Wilson's mature world view developed in opposition to his father's ideas. In fact, Wilson's identification with Covenant theology was a period of divergence from the vision he would later espouse. Joseph Wilson had told his colleagues at Southwestern Presbyterian University that the visible "Church" was composed not only of the mature faithful, but their offspring also. Accordingly, the Minutes of Session from the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina,\(^{107}\) record that on July 5, 1873, "three young men out of the Sunday School & well known to us all"- one of these three being "Thos W Wilson"\(^{108}\)- after "a free conversation during which they severally exhibited evidences of a work of grace begun in their hearts- were unanimously admitted into the membership of this church."\(^{109}\) The idea of expressing a work of grace begun in one's heart was characteristic of the Covenant theological style, which had conceived of man's relations to God as a simple contract whereby faith would be rewarded with grace. Dr. Wilson's sermons had often referred to the importance of the "heart" in religion. In the third sermon, he argued "let the heart be once given to Christ- the unreserved all of it- and then there will be no quarrel with His method of salvation".\(^{110}\) Once the "heart"- or, put another way, the inner man, was receptive to God's grace, salvation was assured.

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\(^{107}\) Wilson's family had moved from Augusta, Georgia, to Columbia, South Carolina, during the summer of 1870. Joseph Ruggles Wilson had been appointed professor of pastoral theology in the seminary at Columbia. Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson*, 19.

\(^{108}\) Wilson's full name was Thomas Woodrow Wilson, and throughout boyhood he was known as "Tommy". "Woodrow" had been his mother's maiden name; it was at her instigation that Wilson would later take on "Woodrow" as his first name. *Ibid.*, 1.

\(^{109}\) From the Minutes of Session, First Presbyterian Church, July 5, 1873, *PW*, 1:22-23.

\(^{110}\) Sermon 3, 18.
Wherever there was a "splash of His grace", as Dr. Wilson proposed in the first sermon, God undertook to prevent its extinguishment. "The pure in heart see God", Dr. Wilson had argued in the seventh sermon. "Heaven is, first of all, a kingdom set up within us". Accordingly, as Dr. Wilson was to state in the eleventh sermon, nothing outward was of account, so long as the inner man was alright. It was this covenantal emphasis on the internal that led the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia to seek evidence of grace at work in the hearts of its young members.

That Wilson's heart had "faith", in the Covenant sense of the word, seems beyond question. In November of the same year, Wilson went to the trouble of copying a religious poem from the Southern Presbyterian into an extant notebook. Comprised of two sections, entitled respectively "The Prayer" and "The Answer", its outlook owed much to Covenant theology. As such, the poem is worthy of examination, in order to reveal those religious sentiments with which the seventeen-year old Wilson so keenly identified. True to the Covenanter tradition, the subject's world was like the valley which was full of bones. "The way is dark, my Father! Cloud on cloud Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud The thunders roar above me." To be in such a world was to "stand Like one bewildered", and to entreat the Creator to take one's hand "And through the gloom Lead safely home Thy child." The "home" to which the poem referred was not of this earth, but in heaven. Life was a weary journey homeward, with the objective of attaining the grace of God that guaranteed salvation. "The way is long", copied Wilson, "and my soul Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal." Those who had taken up their cross would never find the desired goal of rest and quiet in this world. "The cross

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111 Sermon 7, 5.
112 Two items from a Wilson Notebook, November 6, 1873, PW, 1:33.
113 Ibid., 1:33.
114 Ibid., 1:33.
115 Ibid., 1:33.
is heavy, Father; I have borne It long and still do bear it. Let my worn And fainting spirit rise to that blest land Where crowns are given.\textsuperscript{116}

God's answer to the poem's supplicant came swiftly from on high, with the assurance that "The way is dark, my child, but leads to light."\textsuperscript{117} Despite man's inability to know God- "I would not always have thee walk by sight; My dealings now thou canst not understand"\textsuperscript{118} at the last all would be revealed to the faithful: "thou shalt know at last, when thou shalt stand Safe at the goal, how I did take thy hand".\textsuperscript{119} God was emphatic that his kingdom of heaven, the true home of the redeemed, lay outside this world. The temporal world was merely a path, and a treacherous one at that, leading to heaven. Life's "path is rough, my child, but oh! how sweet Will be the rest, for weary pilgrims meet. When thou shalt reach the borders of that land To which I lead thee as I take thy hand".\textsuperscript{120}

The poem's treatment of Christ also revealed a Protestant outlook that was characteristically pre-liberal in tone. In reply to the weary prayer of the supplicant, God acknowledged that "The cross is heavy, child", yet "there was One Who bore a heavier for thee- My Son, My well beloved."\textsuperscript{121} This, of course, was a reference to Christ, who "for thee" had been crucified, meaning that Christ's real significance lay in the opportunity he had given humanity for overcoming the stain of original sin and attaining individual salvation. The issue of the historical Christ's code of ethics did not appear in the poem. There was no exhortation to make Christ's values the moral foundation of one's relationships in order to redeem society and thereby realise the Kingdom of God here on earth. Rather, one was expected to

\textsuperscript{116}ibid, 1:34.
\textsuperscript{117}ibid, 1:34.
\textsuperscript{118}ibid, 1:34.
\textsuperscript{119}ibid, 1:34.
\textsuperscript{120}ibid, 1:34-35.
\textsuperscript{121}ibid, 1:35.
emulate the spiritual journey of Christ's travail. The experience of the wormwood and the gall of this world would earn one the right of entry into heaven. After referring to Christ's cross, the voice of God in the poem decreed "For him bear thine, and stand With him at last, and from Thy Father's hand, Thy cross laid down, Receive a crown".\textsuperscript{122} Here was expressed most concisely the contractual mentality of Covenant theology. In exchange for the laying down of one's cross in God's presence, God would bestow "a crown". This, of course, was a euphemism for salvation.

The poem and Dr. Wilson's sermons were very similar in outlook. Both issued from a theology whose view of the Christian life was that of a wearisome journey through a hostile world ending in the miraculous transportation of the redeemed soul to the presence of God. Dr. Wilson's use of the phrase "an enemy's country"\textsuperscript{123} in the twelfth sermon to describe the temporal world matched the poem's cry that "The way is dark". Another point of comparison between the poems and Dr. Wilson's sermons is the treatment of Christ, who was depicted both in this poem and in Dr. Wilson's sermons as a divine saviour whose significance lay in the passport he offered the faithful to the kingdom of heaven. In the fourth sermon, Dr. Wilson had argued that Christ had saved the elect from all fear of death "by putting in its stead the assurance of a most glorious immortality". The very same idea was expressed in the poem, with its reference to "that land" to which the faithful were being led where "how Sweet Will be the rest...when thou Shalt stand safe at the goal".

This poem appealed to Wilson because it depicted the eternal reward awaiting those with God's grace at work in their hearts. The ritualistic act of transcribing these

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid, 1:35.
\textsuperscript{123}Sermon 12, 10.
lines was, in itself, an attempt on Wilson's part to exhibit grace. In times of anxiety, Wilson's contemplation of the ideal served to allay the niggling spiritual doubts to which he was prone. "I am now in my seventeenth year," he wrote in an abortive journal, "and it is sad, when looking over my past life to see how few of those seventeen years I have spent in the fear of God, and how much time I have spent in the service of the Devil. Although having professed Christ's name some time ago, I have increased very little in grace and have done almost nothing for the Saviour's Cause here below." 124 Convinced intellectually that the church's teachings were true, Wilson still found it hard to actually "feel" the grace of God. "If God will give me the grace I will try to serve him from this time on," he continued, "and will endeavour to attain nearer and nearer to perfection." 125

The theme of individual salvation, so prominent in the Covenant theology of Dr. Wilson, figured not only in Wilson's private writings but in his personal correspondence also. In mid-May of 1875, a letter from John William Leckie, one of Wilson's friends at Davidson College, 126 referred to an earlier letter, now lost, in which Wilson had enthusiastically related the story of a group conversion. Wilson's friend replied, "As to the last part of your letter I need not tell you how glad I am to hear such news, though I am painfully sensible that I am not as glad as I ought to be, if I were more in harmony with what God requires, and recognized as I ought the value of one soul." 127 It is reasonable to assume that the ideas expressed in this letter, penned in response to Wilson's tidings, reveal something of the theological tone of Wilson's earlier letter. Here was a Covenanter sensibility that knew full well "the value of one soul". To be "in harmony with what God requires" was to rejoice at the regeneration of every soul. This regeneration was

124 Addenda, May 3, 1874, PWW, 6:693.
125 Ibid, 6:693.
126 In the fall of 1873, Wilson had left the manse for Davidson College, North Carolina.
127 From John William Leckie, May 7, 1875, PWW, 1:64.
only possible because of Christ's sacrifice. Christ's significance had been in the possibility he afforded sinful humanity of a reconciliation with God: his blood that cleans us from all sin. "When I think that Jesus died (and what do those two words not contain?)", continued Wilson's confidant, "for the price of one soul and then think of 51 of those precious souls being saved from death it shows a hard and very insensible heart that I am not more rejoiced than I am. Oh that God would give us hearts of flesh!"128 The confessional tone of these remarks was indicative of Covenant theology's pervasive influence, which gauged the status of one's soul according to evidence of grace at work in the heart. Genuine faith would be rewarded with the ability to provide such evidence. This produced an introspective mentality that strove and strained to feel the presence of God in one's own heart. It was thus a source of considerable concern when one's feelings did not correspond with those very intense feelings which were expected of the regenerate. Those, like Wilson's friend, who lamented having "a hard and very insensible heart", feared that God's grace had not yet assured them of eventual salvation.

The value of this letter from Wilson's friend at Davidson College is to demonstrate the type of religious ideas that pervaded Wilson's adolescent world. Indirect evidence such as this would, of course, be of little value if Wilson had not himself given expression to these religious ideas. Yet, the fact that Wilson did indeed give vent to the same Covenental attitudes reflects well on the indirect evidence at hand. John Williams Leckie, in his letter to Wilson, had expressed the nagging spiritual uncertainty that often accompanies the conviction that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In addition the Davidson College journal, a Princeton shorthand diary129 confirms that spiritual uncertainty continued to plague Wilson

128Ibid., 1:64.
129Wilson arrived in Princeton during the fall of 1875, having left Davidson college in June 1874. In the meantime, he had gone to live with his family in Wilmington, North Carolina, where Dr. Wilson had been appointed regular minister in the First Presbyterian Church.
throughout his adolescence. This was not surprising, given Dr. Wilson's tendency to encourage fits of self-examination. In the third sermon, for example, he had alluded rather cryptically to those who "are in the church, but their hearts are not."\textsuperscript{130} Such remarks had their desired effect. As the Georges have observed, Woodrow was frequently provoked by such warnings to guilty bouts of religious introspection.

In late-September of 1876, he confided to the journal that extra effort during nocturnal prayers could reinvigorate one's relationship with God. "Before going to bed I prayed out loud", wrote Wilson, "and found that I enjoyed my prayer much more than usual. This is a lesson to me. I would advise everyone to pray out loud. One feels more as if he was praying to God and talking with him when his tones are audible."\textsuperscript{131} With a guilty conscience, Wilson continued, "I prayed last night as I have seldom done in the last few months." This consideration then prompted Wilson to employ an expression strikingly similar to his friend John William Leckie's cry "Oh that God would give us hearts of flesh!" Wilson adopted the same self-admonitory tone, jotting fervently in his dormitory corner room "Oh that God would give me more of His Holy Spirit and make me something more than the cold Christian I have been of late!" The essence of Wilson's adolescent Christianity was to establish a communicative relationship with a God who dwelt outside this world and who was generally unconcerned with the affairs of this world, except, of course, as they reflected on the individual's state of grace. This was a religion that did not express itself in making Christ's ethics the basis of one's relationship with fellow members of society. Covenant theology expressed itself, rather, by paying due reverence to a God who bore only a metaphysical relationship to that society.

\textsuperscript{130}Sermon 3, 12.
\textsuperscript{131}Shorthand Diary, September 23, 1876, \textit{PWW}, 1:198.
The desired end of such a religion was not the refashioning of international society according to Christ's principle of selflessness and service.

For the Covenanter, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, not the world itself. The Covenanter identified with a Christ who said that his kingdom was not of this world and with a God who had appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness. The task of a true Christian, according to Wilson, was the reciprocation of God's blessings and mercies with more prayer. Introspection, not the ethical imperative, was thus at the heart of Wilson's early religious impulses. The contractual mentality of Covenant theology found concise expression with Wilson's resolution "I shall henceforth endeavour to make Him some slightly better return for His many mercies."\(^{132}\) This was a religious sensibility according to which God had invested his grace in the faithful, and they, in turn, would demonstrate this happy circumstance by making contact with him whenever possible.

The shorthand diary preserved other opposite examples of Wilson's adolescent penitence. Taken together, these snippets of spiritual despondency serve to demonstrate that Wilson's Christianity was one whose emphasis was not on serving mankind so much as becoming intimate with the creator. The best way to become intimate with God, for Wilson, was to observe the formal rituals set aside for this express purpose. On a Sabbath evening in October of 1877, Wilson regretted that "The occasions of the day are not worth recording and might, if recorded, recall unpleasant memories to my mind as I have not spent the Sabbath as a Christian should."\(^{133}\) How unbecoming it was, mused Wilson, that he had "looked over some copy for the Princetonian which was anything but an occupation for Sabbath

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\(^{132}\)Ibid, 1:198.

\(^{133}\)Shorthand Diary, October 14, 1877, ibid, 1:299.
afternoon." This prompted the entreaty "God help me to be a better man in the future. I am constantly failing." The following Sabbath did not bring with it an amelioration of Wilson's spiritual angst. He noted in the shorthand diary "I have to record another Sabbath unprofitably spent. May God give me strength to live a more Christian life." 

Here was a religious mentality that did not allow for man to become intimate with God merely through his own efforts. Mankind, being innately sinful, needed God's help in order to accomplish this undertaking. "Today has been communion Sabbath", Wilson recorded in the shorthand diary, somewhat more optimistically, on one occasion, "and I feel that my relations with God have this day become more intimate." On another Sabbath, in October of 1876, Wilson remarked in the same vein "Thank God for having let me spend another communion Sabbath and for having let me somewhat feel of the love for Him and consecration to His service." Such intimacy was made possible only by the reconciliatory ritual that Christ had bestowed to sinful man. This is a fundamental consideration to be kept in mind when assessing the nature of Wilson's early religious ideas. It was a religion in which flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither corruption inherit incorruption.

Here may be noted another connection between the public pronouncements that were Dr. Wilson's sermons and the private musings of Woodrow as expressed in the shorthand diary. The idea that man, trapped in a state of hopeless depravity, was incapable of bringing about his own improvement also featured in Dr. Wilson's sermons. In the fourth sermon, Dr. Wilson had compared salvation to a piece of

134 ibid, 1:299.
135 Shorthand Diary, October 21, 1877, ibid, 1:304.
136 Shorthand Diary, June 6, 1877, ibid, 1:272.
137 Shorthand Diary, October 1, 1876, ibid, 1:202.
surgery, and then told the congregation "You, indeed, cannot achieve this, or strike down this mighty law". Only through Christ could man reconcile himself with God. Man, if merely acting on the strength of his own efforts, must surely fail.

This Covenanter outlook was in marked contrast to that of liberal theology and the Social Gospel. Theological liberalism had an optimistic view of human nature. Its adherents tended to view the ultimate purpose of the Christian religion as the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth. This Kingdom was not conceived as a supernatural event whereby God himself would come down to earth in a blaze of millennial glory to rule directly over all nations. It envisioned, rather, the historical fulfilment of mankind's moral evolution, a new era in which the historical Christ's principles, not the actual divine personage of the supernatural "Son of Man", would govern the earth. Wilson's early religious thought did not evince such traits. His shorthand diary reveals that not social salvation, but individual salvation, dominated his religious consciousness. This was entirely in keeping with the theological system expounded in the sermons of Dr. Wilson. Wilson's Covenantal preoccupation with the problem of individual salvation, caused him to identify more with Christ's suffering than with Christ's ethical system. In October of 1876, Wilson reported hearing a sermon about the suffering of Christ and being profoundly affected by it. "After prayer meeting went to Second Church", Wilson noted in the shorthand diary, "and heard a most eloquent sermon. His theme was the suffering of Christ. I never heard a man who had such a wonderful command of words as this one- his flow of appropriate beautiful and picturesque words was simply overwhelming almost making my head swim. This has been a most interesting day to me. Thank God for health and strength."138

138Shorthand Diary, October 29, 1876, ibid, 1:218.
Another characteristic of Wilson's early religious sensibilities was a strong disdain for other Protestant denominations. In June of 1876, Wilson vented this disdain in the shorthand diary, recording that "At 4 o'clock went with [a friend] to the Episcopal church, and heard- or rather didn't hear- a very dull sermon from the Rector.... I think the Episcopal service very stupid indeed- it is in my opinion a ridiculous way of worshipping God, and one which must give very little pleasure to God. A mere dull form." Wilson's dismissive reaction to the Episcopal church service stemmed from the Presbyterian belief in the superiority of its doctrine and ritual over the doctrines and rituals of other denominations. Wilson implied that God derived the greatest pleasure from his being worshipped in the exact manner prescribed once and for all- to the Covenanter Presbyter'ans. Other modes of worship were nothing more than mere dull forms, giving, in Wilson's exact words, little pleasure to God. This consideration serves to illustrate the centrality of set ritual in Wilson's undergraduate Christianity. The correct ritual was of such importance that members of those denominations whose ritual was incorrect could not hope to achieve intimacy with God. Wilson's early religious thought was not ecumenical in spirit. This lack of ecumenical feeling stemmed from the jealous Covenantal attitude toward the problem of individual salvation. Covenant theology had continued to stress the depravity of mankind. God's grace, or salvation, was bestowed only to those with genuine faith. The remainder of humanity, those who stood outside the Covenant of Grace, remained unregenerate. Such a mentality did not encourage the ecumenical viewpoint, associated with theological liberalism, that all denominations enjoyed equality in the sight of God.

The evidence surveyed thus far contributes to the conclusion that Wilson's early religious views were derived from Covenant theology. Wilson's personal

139Shorthand Diary June 11, 1876, ibid, 1:138.
correspondence and shorthand diary entries reveal a Covenantal religious sensibility at work. Not once did Wilson’s private religious meditations accompany an espousal of the principle of selflessness and service. Not once did the undergraduate Wilson privately express any desire to reform society according to this principle. Nor, indeed, did he do so in the public arena. The Covenantal religious sentiments that pervaded Wilson’s private writings also pervaded his undergraduate religious essays. These seven essays, published in the Wilmington *North Carolina Presbyterian* between August and December of 1876, are worthy of examination. Taken together, the private and the published writings provide a comprehensive overview of Covenant theology’s influence upon Wilson.

The most illuminating of these essays will be dealt with in published order. In the first essay, entitled “Work-Day Religion”, he addressed the topic of a Christian’s duties in this world. Wilson criticised those Christians who “As they leave the house of God all the warmth of feeling which so delighted them while listening to the word of God wears off, and they content themselves with the thought that upon the next Sabbath, on the next occasion of meeting for prayer, their faith will be renewed and their enjoyment of religion come back to them.” It was not enough, continued Wilson, to contemplate the prospect of eternal life for a few mere hours per week. The task of a true Christian was to pursue such holiness all day, every day. “The Christian character is not one to be assumed only upon the Sabbath or other stated occasions”, Wilson argued, “but is a character which is perfected only by that work-day religion- a religion pervading every act- which is carried with us into every walk of life and made our one stay and hope.” Wilson’s exhortation to have religion “pervading every act” ought not be confused with the ethical imperative of liberal Protestantism. His focus remained firmly fixed on the problem

of individual salvation. The purpose of Wilson's call for action was not the liberal Protestant theme of selfless service to humanity. Conversely, as Wilson put it, "The most humble and insignificant services of the household and the business office, should be attended to with the feeling that we are serving God in the conscientious discharge of them."\(^{142}\) At the last judgement, a just God would review every act committed in this life. Therefore, Wilson argued, "we should perform every act as an act of which we shall some day be made to render a strict account, as an act done either in the service of God or in that of the Devil".\(^{143}\) The reason for being "ardent and warm in the performance of every good act", according to Wilson, was that "life [is] a period allowed us for growth in Christian graces [in order] to fit ourselves for the perfect enjoyment of eternity."\(^{144}\) Here was an exposition of the Covenantal sensibility that saw the temporal world as important only inasmuch as it allowed the individual to demonstrate evidence of grace at work in his heart. The Christian committed laudable acts not for the sake of selfless service, but so that "any one [might] imagine from their conversation, or the manner of their daily life, that they rejoice in the hope of everlasting life."\(^{145}\)

This remark corresponded most richly with the statement Dr. Wilson had made in his inaugural address at Southwestern Presbyterian University, arguing that the faithful are known to belong to the invisible Church by the fruits of their holy living. Wilson's first essay, with its emphasis tenaciously fixed on the problem of individual salvation, faithfully reflected the attitude of Dr. Wilson toward the question of a Christian's duties in this life. The foremost duty of the Christian was to work at his own soul's relationship with God; good works were meant to serve primarily as a reflection of grace at work in the heart.

\(^{142}\)Ibid, 1:177.
\(^{143}\)Ibid, 1:177.
\(^{144}\)Ibid, 1:177.
\(^{145}\)Ibid, 1:177.
In the second religious essay, entitled "Christ’s Army", Wilson expanded on the eschatological theme of a final judgement in which one would be called upon by God to render an account of one’s conduct. The world, according to Wilson, was the "field of battle" in a cosmic war waged between God and the "Prince of Lies". At the end of human history, the temporal world would pass away, with "the army of Saints...driving before them with irresistible force the broken ranks of the enemy."\footnote{146} Those who had fought for righteousness would find salvation in the kingdom of heaven. “Surely”, argued Wilson, “in this great contest there is a part for every one, and each will be made to render a strict account of his conduct on the day of battle.”\footnote{147} Those individuals who were not members of Christ’s army would follow "the alluring paths of worldliness to everlasting destruction."\footnote{148} True to Covenant theology’s emphasis on the irreconcilable divide between the redeemed and the damned, Wilson divided humanity into two opposing camps: "there is no middle course”, he continued, "and every one must enlist with the followers of Christ or those of Satan."\footnote{149} If, Wilson warned the reader, individuals “would be assured of the fact that their names are in the great Roll Book, let them fight for Christ."\footnote{150} The notion that one could be assured of one’s name appearing in the book of life belonged to the Covenantal tradition. So long as one had genuine faith, God, as William Sibbes had argued, guaranteed to “make good” his condition. God’s “treaty and covenant of agreement with us his poor creatures” allowed the Covenanter more certainty of salvation than enjoyed by the strict Calvinist. Yet how was the great battle that assured one of salvation to be waged? Wilson’s definition of the struggle was related to the Covenanter image of the human soul as
a bubbling cauldron with the scum of sin continually rising. One fought for Christ, argued Wilson, by looking within and casting away one's impurity, like the "good house-wives" in Thomas Hooker's sermon. The great enemies one faced in this inner battle were "evil thoughts, evil desires, evil associations." When faced the ever present enemy, one must "Overcome evil desires...by constant watchfulness and with the strong weapon of prayer, and by cultivating those heavenly desires which are sure to root out the evil one." Wilson was insistent that "In every minor thing watch yourself and let no fiery dart enter your soul." The soldier in Christ's army was not one who adopted the principle of selfless service to humanity, but one "who purifies himself in the smallest things." Clearly, this religious essay was not shot through with the idea that all humanity, being essentially good, was progressing together toward the realisation of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Instead, Wilson posited traditional Covenanter views on flawed human nature and on man's relationship to a just God outside the temporal world.

Wilson's vision of the world's eventual destruction corresponded with Dr. Wilson's prophecy in the first sermon regarding the earth going down into the cold ashes left by a vast but sudden fire. The notion of a final judgement, in which all would have to render to a strict account of themselves, was an important idea to Dr. Wilson as well as his son. In the ninth sermon, for example, he had argued that sorrow was a virtue when it sprang from "the anticipation of an angry judgement—when this life is done with". This final judgement would reveal the stark divide between saved and unsaved. In Joseph Wilson's universe, there could be no middle ground. One had either enlisted to fight with Christ or with the Devil. This notion that those who were not actively with Christ must be against him was also a

151 Ibd, 1:181.
152 Ibd, 1:181.
153 Ibd, 1:181.
154 Ibd, 1:181.
fundamental feature of Dr. Wilson's religious thought. The twelfth sermon was based on the judgemental metaphor of Christ separating the wheat from the chaff. He warned that the irreligious would be set aside as of no account in this universe, then consigned to the "worthless chaff-pile" and "burned...along with much of the same sort".

In the third essay, entitled "The Bible", Wilson argued that "As a history the Bible is one of the most valuable of ancient records, though it gives and professes to give, little information as to the history of the period. Into these sacred pages", he assured the reader, "the historian can dip without fear of finding anything but the truth." Advances in biblical criticism, which were related to the proliferation of liberal theology in America, had not prompted Wilson to doubt the absolute accuracy of the Bible. He still accepted as a matter of course the Biblical claim that all scripture is given by inspiration of God in order that the man of God may be corrected and instructed in righteousness. Wilson's unquestioning faith in the Bible's accuracy stemmed from his Covenant outlook, which viewed the Bible as the word of God given to mankind in order to reveal the true path of salvation. The notion that the Bible, this "eternal fountainhead", was a product merely of man's finite mind was anathema to Wilson's religious sensibilities. As Wilson asserted, "in these pages may be found the most perfect rule of life the mind can conceive. Dimly through the old, and brilliantly through the New Testament, shines the principle of love to God as the foundation and cause of men's duties to God, to each other, and to their own souls." The Bible's chief value to sinful man, Wilson argued, lay in the means it provided to gain that all-important "assurance of

157 PWL, 1:185.
everlasting life."\textsuperscript{159} If one's every-day life was firmly grounded on the Bible's teachings, this indicated a true love of God, which in turn indicated that one would gain eternal life. While it is true that Wilson did praise the Bible's utility in instructing men in their duties to each other, this ethical consideration was subordinate to the central concern of individual salvation. According to Wilson, one was supposed to live "according to the perfect model of Christ's life"\textsuperscript{160}, but not because the ethical imperative was held to be the ultimate purpose of the Christian experience. Rather, ethics were important only inasmuch as their practice evidenced a regenerate heart, because the regenerate heart was a guarantee of salvation. For the undergraduate Wilson, "Love to God" remained the rationale of men's duties to each other in this world. This Covenantal ethical system differed in emphasis from that of liberal theology, which, it might almost be said, made men's duties to each other in this world the rationale of love to God.

Dr. Wilson's view on the Bible's absolute authority was similar to that of his son. Just as Woodrow argued that scripture- an "eternal fountainhead" issued directly from God and not from the finite mind of man, so Dr. Wilson had asserted in the fifth sermon that the "gospel is a revelation...No mind has yet got to the bottom of it". It was an "inspired volume" whose teachings were to be viewed as eternal truths, and as an instructive mirror for the human soul. Both Dr. Wilson and his son were absolutely certain that the Bible contained, as Woodrow wrote, "the most perfect rule of life that the mind can conceive." Dr. Wilson put it another way when he referred to "the gospel of Jesus Christ" and said "Herein is what you most need."

Woodrow's regard for the ethical system expounded in the Bible matched that of Dr. Wilson. As already noted, this was an ethic in which the individual's duty

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid, 1:185.  
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid, 1:185.
toward his own soul was just as, if not more, important than duty toward one's fellow man. Both Dr. Wilson's sermons and his son's religious essays conveyed this idea. In the above comparison between Wilson's first religious essay and Dr. Wilson's religious thought, the second and the fourteenth sermons were drawn upon to illustrate the connection. It bears pointing out that these sermons correspond not only with this third essay but with elements of the following essays too:

In the fourth essay, Wilson's Covenental ethical system again found opposite expression. This essay neatly captured the *quid pro quo* mentality that consistently related one's duties on earth to the unearthly reward of salvation, or, conversely, the veiled threat of receiving the wages of sin. Wilson mentioned to the reader "how the Bible commands us to bear ourselves toward our parents, and the promises it makes to such as honour them". The Biblical promise to which Wilson referred was the guarantee of salvation for those whose grace, bestowed by God, was reflected in good works. The principle of honoring one's parents, to the undergraduate Wilson, was not akin to the liberal Protestant principle of service to humanity for the sake of service. The end in mind, for Wilson, was the redemptive contract into which God had freely entered with man. In return for giving regenerate souls a guarantee of salvation, God demanded that the regenerate practice certain ethical precepts, among which was included the important duty of honoring one's parents. "I could never for one moment trust that I am a Christian", continued Wilson, "if I should be impertinent to my parents, or wittingly do anything to pain those to whom I owe everything in the world, and to whom I owe everything." The ethics of Covenant theology, unlike those associated with liberal Protestantism, did not eschew legalistic considerations of one's eventual

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161 Religious Essay ("One Duty of a Son to His Parents"), October 8, 1876, *ibid*, 1:205.
reward. For the Covenanter, a child must serve and honour his parents, because they had dutifully served him. "We none of us", wrote Wilson, "realize how much we owe our parents". This was a service that sprang from a sense of indebtedness. Wilson's sense of the mutual duties involved in familial relationships reflected the Covenantal understanding of God's grace at work in the heart, because here in microcosm was writ man's true relationship with God. In the Covenanter mentality, good works served primarily as a dutiful demonstration to a just God that one's soul was indeed worthy of receiving everlasting life.

In the fifth essay, entitled "The Positive in Religion", Wilson railed against those "modern free-thinkers" who sought to soften the sense of obligation in man's relationship with the divine authority of God. "Men say that the harsh tenets and severe doctrines of our fathers should now be replaced", wrote a concerned Wilson, "by more loving principles and milder teachings- that we should be allowed to put our own interpretations upon the teachings of the Bible, and simply follow the dictates each of his own conscience." Wilson was here referring to the essence of the liberal Protestant sensibility, with its "loving principles" and "milder teachings" that reflected an optimistic view of human nature. Wilson's rejection of the "modern free-thinkers" who sought to place their own interpretation on the Bible's supposedly eternal teachings was a conservative outlook he held in common with Dr. Wilson, who, in the sixteenth sermon, had argued that the true Christian must be a believer, not a modifier. He had severely criticised "the latest notions of hairbrained people who are all the time troubling the world with their foolish...speculations...in religion". There was simply no need for men to speculate about such matters, argued Dr. Wilson, because the Bible contained clear

164 A Religious Essay ("The Positive in Religion"), October 15, ibid, 1:212.
165 Ibid, 1:211.
166 Sermon 16, 22.
instruction regarding that which men need know about God. Those who approached the teachings of the Church's theology as "exceptors", "supposers" or "suspects" were in grave error. In their spiritual pride, they had raised themselves up, forgetting that their role as human beings was not to question God's word but to obey it absolutely. True Christians were "believers in it all, from beginning to end". Dr. Wilson had expressed a similarly conservative argument in his inaugural address at Southwestern Presbyterian University. He called for every tenet of the theology he had outlined to be preserved, because this was a theology that rested at every point "upon that infallible Scripture from whose arbitrament there is no appeal as for whose authority there is no substitute". Dr. Wilson was emphatic that no quarter be given to any professors who swerved from the well defined paths of orthodoxy because, as he entreated his colleagues, "your voice unites with mine in a plea for conservatism, the maintenance, unimpaired, of that great body of sacred lessons which has been given into our hands by the orthodox belief of many preceding generations...never to be profaned."  

It is highly significant for the question at hand that Wilson can be shown to have self-consciously dismissed the new religious style, "loving" and "milder", in decided favour of the old. Here revealed is the extent of Wilson's undergraduate identification with the religious mentality conditioned by his father's understanding of Covenant theology. Underlying Dr. Wilson's theological conservatism was the notion that human beings were incapable of bringing about their own improvement. The human heart, tainted by original sin, was so fickle, so prone to error, that the wanderings of its unassisted intuition could not be trusted. This is the outlook that led both Dr. Wilson and his son to see all spiritual authority as vested in a divine

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167 Ibid, 16.
168 Ibid, 16.
169 Joseph Wilson, "Inaugural Address", 7.
170 Ibid, 8.
source outside this imperfect world. At the heart of their plea for a conservative theology was a deeply-ingrained pessimism regarding human capabilities. This was the philosophically conservative outlook that led Wilson in this essay to rail against any softening of the contractual relationship that existed between God and sinful man.

"We are not misinterpreting the commands of the God of Love", he continued, "when we say that his every command is to be obeyed in every particular, and that his severest commands are not inconsistent with his attribute of love."171 Wilson's Covenental view of human nature led him, as Dr. Wilson had done, to dismiss the spiritual value of personal intuition and interpretation. Man, a bubbling cauldron of impurity, was not at liberty to blithely follow the dictates of his own conscience, unless, of course, it corresponded with set Biblical teachings. A severely tainted human condition required severe divine command, and it was for this reason that God insisted on the most rigorous observance of his every edict. Given an inch, according to the Covenanter, sinful man would certainly take a mile. Accordingly, Wilson drew the reader's attention to the fact that "In every instance of disobedience which the Bible has given for our warning and instruction, the offender has been punished for not obeying God's commands to the very letter, even when his pretexts and excuses were more plausible and just than those of modern free-thinkers."172

Wilson's understanding of the term "God's commands" revealed once again the influence working upon him of the Covenental ethical system. "The key to the whole gospel", Wilson claimed, lay in the Biblical injunction that God "will render unto every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well

171 "The Positive in Religion", PWV, 1:212.
172 Ibid., 1:212.
doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." 173 In order to obey God's commands, then, it was necessary for the Christian to participate in "well doing", which Wilson defined as being "a Christian who is one inwardly, whose praise is of God and not of man." 174 Those who resisted the temporal world, and its denizens, were the true well-doers. Wilson asked "Can we think that we are continuing patient in well doing when we are making the actions of the world the criterion by which to judge of the propriety of our daily walk and conversation as Christians?" 175 This was an ethical system that had defined Christian virtue not as the reformation of the world according to Christ's principles, but, conversely, in blocking the world out of one's consciousness. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. The essence of Wilson's undergraduate Christianity was the metaphysical relationship of individual souls with a distant creator. A patient continuance of this otherworldly relationship was the proof by which one was rendered eligible for salvation. On the other hand, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. As Wilson argued, one's reason for "well doing" in this life was to "seek...honour and immortality, eternal life."

This sense of retreat from the temporal world also pervaded the sermons of Dr. Wilson. In the eleventh sermon, he had argued that this earth was a place of trial where the true Christian could never feel completely comfortable. The world was a corrupt place governed by ungodly standards, and so those who suffered here for their faith were considered more righteous than those who prospered. The man who was truly rich in God's sight, argued Dr. Wilson, was one who had "come to realize that he has a soul which earth cannot fill, and who has provided for this soul's welfare." The individual who had God's grace at work in his heart was

173 ibid, 1:212.
174 ibid, 1:212.
175 ibid, 1:212.
immune to either the joys or sorrows of his outward condition. Nothing outward was held to be of account, so long as the "inner man" was alright. In the sixth sermon, Dr. Wilson gave expression to the same idea, arguing that a dry crust was a better meal, when taken with God's accompanying smile, than luxurious fare which He had not blessed. It was far better to be covered by the scantiest piece of cloth, continued Dr. Wilson, than be "covered by jewels which has [sic] no gleam of heaven in them."

The essays discussed above reveal that Wilson's sense of Christian duty was derived from the ethical system of Dr. Wilson's Covenant theology, which related one's conduct here in the temporal world to the cosmic drama of judgement, salvation and damnation. This was an ethical sensibility that valued well doing not because it helped to realise the Kingdom of God on earth, but because it enabled the individual soul to achieve salvation. The ultimate purpose of Covenantal ethics was not a redeemed earth, but a redeemed soul enjoying eternal life outside this earth. A final religious essay, entitled "Christian Progress", reveals another aspect of Wilson's religious outlook that had been conditioned by Covenant theology. His understanding of the term "Christian Progress" was that it was essentially a "soul-progress". Wilson argued that "The Bible everywhere represents the Christian life as a progress, a progress of the soul." The struggle at hand, then, was clearly not for the progress of international society toward perfection, but, rather, for the progress of the individual soul toward redemption. "As the followers of [the] mighty Prince of Light", Wilson argued, "we are ever under the stern necessity of fighting for our own safety, as well as the general advance of Christian doctrine."

176 Sermon 6, 9.
177 A Religious Essay ("Christian Progress"), December 20, 1876, PWW, 1:234.
178 Ibid, 1:234.
primarily for our "own safety", is significant when compared with the very different conception of Christian progress that accompanied the Social Gospel. "Progress", in the outlook of the Social Gospel, meant the betterment of this world. Wilson's undergraduate conception of Christian progress was virtually devoid of considerations of social redemption.

The purpose of the above discussion has been to test the first of the historiography's claims. At issue has been whether Wilson's early religious ideas were derived from Dr. Wilson's brand of theology. Having concluded that this claim is indeed a valid one, it is now time to turn to the second, and far less satisfactory, claim: that Dr. Joseph Ruggles Wilson's theology was at the heart of Woodrow Wilson's mature vision of America's role in the world. This second claim is of far greater overall importance. The relevance to the present day of the religious ideas of Thomas Woodrow Wilson is that this same Wilson later came to express a coherent vision of America's role in the world that dominated subsequent American foreign policy. Wilsonianism is far from a moribund creed in the United States. At the demise of the Soviet Union, President George Bush announced to Congress and the nation that "in the past twelve months the world has known of changes of almost biblical proportions....By the grace of God, America won the Cold War....A world once divided into two armed camps now recognizes one sole and preeminent power: the United States of America....We are still and ever the freest nation on earth....And so we move on together, a rising nation, the once and future miracle that is still, this night, the hope of the world."180 It is true that Bush, like other American leaders, did not evince Wilson's idiosyncratic monomania regarding the issue of America's role in the world. Nonetheless, this address may justifiably be seen as the Wilsonian vision adapted to the circumstances of the early

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1990s. As Levin has correctly observed, Wilson defined the American national interest in liberal-internationalist terms. This mentality allowed him to act both as the champion of American nationalism and as the spokesman for progressive internationalism.

It has been suggested by Henry Kissinger that, in order to fully understand leaders' actions, one must first come to terms with the world view they bring to high office. "It is an illusion", he wrote, "to believe that leaders gain in profundity while they gain experience...the convictions that leaders have formed before reaching high office are the intellectual capital they will consume as long as they continue in office." From this it follows that the historiography's claim that Covenant theology was Wilson's "intellectual capital", merits further investigation.

Is the historiography justified in its conclusion that his father's Covenant theology led Wilson to believe that the United States stood alone at the moral helm of international society? Was it the theological universe of Hooker, Sibbes and Shepard that encouraged Wilson to see America's moral influence leading humanity toward the inevitable realisation of a new world order in which openness and altruism and democracy- supposedly American principles- would be the guiding principles that cemented all individuals together in brotherhood? In fact, the character of Wilson's early theology was not conducive to the development of such a world view. The philosophical fount of Wilsonianism was not his father's Covenant theology. This assertion can best be validated by comparing Wilson's undergraduate political thought with his Presidential identity in order to see whether there existed a continuity between these two periods. If it were true that Covenant theology moulded Wilsonianism, it stands to reason that Wilson's early views on

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America and politics in general ought to have broadly resembled his later outlook. There ought, if Link and Mulder were correct, to have been a similarity of opinion throughout Wilson's entire life. Yet this was not the case. The political thought of Thomas Woodrow Wilson the undergraduate Covenanter and classical republican bore little relation to that of President Wilson, the "Prince of Peace".
4. Classical republicanism and Wilson's early political thought

Dr. Wilson's political philosophy—which his son shared—belonged to a sceptical republican tradition which feared democracy, and saw history in cyclical rather than progressive terms. As J.G.A. Pocock has shown, "in both Britain and America during the century 1688-1789, discourse was frequently conducted, and problems stated and contested, in terms which did not originate with Locke and in whose employment he took neither an immediate nor a posthumous part."182 Historiography of the American Revolutionary era has generally argued that the United States was founded on Lockean liberalism.183 Yet, according to Pocock, "The republican...discourse of the eighteenth century...made no significant appeal to Lockean formulae, and neither did many of those who constructed the reply or counter-discourse which it encountered."184

This English and American republican tradition stemmed from the heritage of classical republicanism. Sceptical Romans such as Cicero, Tacitus and Plutarch contrasted the growing corruption and disorder they saw around them with an imagined earlier republican world of simple yeomen-citizens enjoying liberty and arcadian virtue.185 By the eighteenth century, "European and English intellectuals evoked the republican spirit and idealized images of the ancient republics as counterforces to the tyranny and luxury of the dominant monarchical society."186

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183See, for example, Louis B. Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution (New York, 1955).
184Pocock, "Ideologia Americana", 341.
185Bernard Bailyn et al., The Great Republic (Boston, 1977), 293.
186Ibid, 293.
Thus, the goal of the American Revolution was not to institute a liberal democracy, but to create an organic society of checks and balances. Republican society was composed of perpetually competing interests, and no one group or faction—including the People—was to be considered sovereign. As James Madison put it in *The Federalist:* "The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government....Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society....The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation".187

Virtue could only be maintained if no one faction dominated the polity. To republicans such as Madison and Washington, democracy represented nothing but the unwarranted tyranny of the people. They viewed human nature with suspicion and feared majority rule, which was thought to lead to anarchy. According to John Adams, the classical world had been "fully sensible of the real misery, as well as dangerous tendency, both of democratical licentiousness and monarchical tyranny; they preferred a well-tempered aristocracy to all other governments."188 To Adams and his contemporaries, it was certain that "Orders of men, watching and balancing each other, are the only security; power must be opposed to power, and interest to interest".189

It was to this view of human nature and society that Dr. Wilson subscribed. He rejected the new democracy of the industrial North and sought refuge in the South. Various of his extant political comments, when read in comparison with the above

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187Number 10.
189Quoted in *ibid*, 3:Prologue.
Madison and Adams extracts, point to Dr. Wilson's mistrust of democracy as a political principle. "The true principle", he wrote Woodrow in April of 1879, "unquestionably is: the owners of a country ought to be its rulers. That is, let there be property qualification— and all the more, because, ordinarily, property and intelligence go together."190 Either "a limitation of suffrage or anarchy in twenty-five years or sooner", he warned. "I do not refer", stipulated Dr. Wilson, "to the Negroes any more than to the ignorant Northern voters."191

Woodrow was encouraged by his father to view modern, democratic America with hostility. It might be said, perhaps, that Dr. Wilson was not a republican in the purest sense of the term. His insistence that the natural aristocracy rule the country was, in a sense, against the idea of checks and balances. Yet such considerations do not mar the essential point, namely, that Woodrow Wilson was heir to a pre-democratic American political tradition. It should also be noted that Dr. Wilson's disdain for popular sovereignty was accompanied by an intense streak of Anglophilia. He looked to England as the heartland of good government, chiefly because the authority of the people was not absolute, but tempered by the check of a constitutional monarch. Consequently, his son was "exposed to British newspapers and quarterlies ever since he could read."192 Thus, Woodrow's "youthful reflections about politics were based on the assumption that British institutions were superior to American."193

The Fourth of July, 1876, was the centenary of the Declaration of Independence was a day on which one could not help but confront one's feelings about the

190 Two Letters from Joseph Ruggles Wilson, April 10, 1879, PWW, 1:477.
191 PW, 1:477.
192 Editorial Note, ibid, 1:492.
193 Ibid, 1:492.
nation's history and destiny. This was how Wilson the undergraduate diarist reacted to the grand occasion:

The one hundredth anniversary of American independence. One hundred years ago America conquered England in an unequal struggle and this year she glories over it. How much happier...she would be now if she had England's form of government instead of the miserable delusion of a republic. A republic too founded upon the notion of abstract liberty! I venture to say that this country will never celebrate another centennial as a republic. The English form of government is the only true one."194

This extract reveals an adolescent Wilson who did not yet identify with the myths of American nationalism which Bancroft had proposed and Lincoln had put forward to justify the Civil War. There was, as yet, no sense of the national myth of which he was later to become the most eloquent apostle.195 It is a very different image of Wilson than that conveyed by the more familiar Presidential addresses, and this is a striking anomaly which ought not be glossed over. Wilson's 1919 claim to have "taken pains" since he was a boy to conceive "America in the whole atmosphere and setting...of her destiny" can no longer be accepted at face value.

For Wilson, the one hundredth anniversary of American independence did not commemorate a decisive event in the history of human progress. Rather, the American Revolution was viewed by him as nothing more than a doomed, ignoble blunder. It had given rise not to institutions more free, more just, and more beneficent, than had ever before been established- as Bancroft had argued- but to the "miserable delusion of a republic". Wilson seemed to be suggesting that democracy had been taken too far, and that Americans were miserably deluded, as he put it, in referring to their polity as a republic. The Fourth of July was therefore not considered by Wilson a festival of freedom proclaimed sacred by all humanity, but a shallow, self-congratulatory exercise over America's Pyrrhic victory in what

194Shorthand Diary, Ibid, 1:148-149.
195It is intriguing that the shorthand diary "came to light only when Mrs. Wilson deposited it in the Wilson Papers in 1952. It was displayed four years later...Why it was kept hidden for so long from the view of scholars, even from that of Wilson's official biographer, Ray Stannard Baker, is something of a mystery." Editorial Note, Ibid, 1:129.
had been "unequal struggle" anyway. His dismissive assessment of American history differed markedly from that of the eminent national historian George Bancroft, who, exactly fifty years earlier, had proclaimed that with the stirring of the American Revolution "an impulse and confidence were imparted to all efforts at improvement throughout the world....The events of the last fifty years lead us to hope, that liberty, so long militant, is at length triumphant....Our moral condition is, then, indeed superior to that of the old world in the present, or in any former age."¹⁹⁶ Such claims about America's role in the world were anathema to Wilson the undergraduate. His opinion of the United States' condition was diametrically opposed to the Bancroftian assertion that America's moral condition was superior to that of the Old World, that America was the model for the world. "How much happier...she would be now", stated Wilson, "if she had England's form of government".

Not only did Wilson reject what he saw as the outcomes of the American Revolution. He rejected also what he saw as its essential premise. It was by no coincidence that this child of Covenant theology and classical republicanism found little merit in hopes of utopian social advancement. Wilson scoffed at the very idea of "A republic too founded upon the notion of abstract liberty!" Far from cherishing the Bancroftian hope that "liberty, so long militant was at length triumphant, Wilson actually predicted that the American Revolution's philosophical defeat and extinguishment was close at hand. The United States, he argued, would "never celebrate another centennial as a republic." It must inevitably return to "the only true...form of government".

¹⁹⁶George Bancroft, Oration Delivered on the Fourth of July 1826 at Northampton, Massachusetts.
It is most illuminating to compare Wilson's sceptical undergraduate view of the American Revolution with what he would later pronounce about its significance to all humanity. In September 1919, for example, Wilson urged an audience at Reno, Nevada, to "look at [the League of Nations] as a fulfilment of the destiny of the United States, for it is nothing less. At last, after this long century and more of blood and terror, the world has come to the vision that the body of 3,000,000 people, strung along the Atlantic coast of this continent had in that far year 1776.

Men in Europe laughed at them, at this little handful of dreamers, this little body of men who talked dogmatically about liberty, and since then that fire which they started...has consumed every autocratic government in the world." This speech was characteristic of Wilson's Presidential view of American history and its ultimate meaning. Here was a vision of America's role in the world utterly true to Bancroft's version of history and the doctrine of American nationalism. Nothing in this 1919 address served to indicate that President Wilson himself, in student days gone by, had been one of those who laughed at this handful of dreamers who talked about liberty. On the contrary, the mature Wilson had come to identify with the very opposite view. Wilson had now come to envisage that the end of history would see the Old World's form of government- "autocracy"- consumed by the fire of liberty kindled at the American Revolution.

Wilson's initial antipathy toward the myths of American nationalism was in keeping with his father's outlook. Old School Presbyterians of the era, being Southerners in the main, identified with the Confederate cause. The catalyst for the 1837 schism between the Old and New Schools of the Church, had been the debate over the slavery question. Unlike Northern New School Presbyterians, who sought to

198 See Edmund A. Moore, "Robert J. Breckinridge and the Slavery Aspect of the Presbyterian Schism of 1837", *Church History*, IV (1955), 282-294. See also Irving Stoddard Kull, "Presbyterian Attitudes Toward Slavery", *Church History*, 7 (1938), 101-114; Peter J. Parish, "The
synthesise national and religious objectives, the Old School clung tenaciously to the traditional distinction between a "preparing kingdom below and a prepared kingdom above."

In other words, Dr. Wilson and his fellow Old School clergymen were unable to conceive of America as a visible agent of God's will designed to realise the mysterious designs and fulfil the holy purposes of Christ's "invisible Church". Old School Presbyterians were implacably opposed to the New School assertion that "the cause of the Union was one with the advance of Christ's approaching millennial Kingdom."\footnote{George Marsden, "Kingdom and Nation: New School Presbyterian Millennialism in the Civil War Era", Journal of Presbyterian History, 46 (1968), 254. See also George Marsden, The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America (New Haven and London, 1970).} Quite the contrary, Dr. Wilson made no mention in his sermons of a special role for America in the life of the world. The United States, he argued, was a nation like any other in the long, tragic history of humankind. A nation composed of sinners, America was to be considered no more righteous than the sin-tainted hearts beating within the breasts of all its people. As was noted in the above discussion of Dr. Wilson's eighth sermon, he stated that the history of the Jews over which "we sometimes mourn and at which we are sometimes indignant" would be repeated "by Anglo-Saxons" - by which he meant "Britains and Americans and Germans" - were they to find themselves in the same circumstances.

Dr. Wilson looked upon America as a coequal member of Anglo-Saxon civilisation. Woodrow gave expression to this notion of Anglo-Saxon homogeneity in a May 1878 review of Green's history of the English people. "It is a grateful thought that this History of the English People", he wrote, "is a history of the American people
as well; it is a high and solemn thought we [are] a lusty branch of a noble race."200 Elsewhere, Wilson merged common race with specific nationality when he wrote "I trust in the Anglo-Saxon instincts, I believe in the American people."201 He believed in the American people not because they were American democrats with a mission to democratise the world but because they were Anglo-Saxons. For Wilson, to be Anglo-Saxon and American was one and the same thing. Wilson's professed belief in America was grounded on the idea of America's racial links to England.

It is worth contrasting the Old School view of America shared by both Dr. Wilson and Woodrow with a view characteristic of the New School. In November 1860, Roswell D. Hitchcock, Professor of Church History at New York's Union Seminary, had said of Americans "We are here, by the ordering of Providence, in charge of the final theatre and the final problems of history....It is for ourselves to say,.whether,.by those sturdy moral virtues begotten only of a positive Christian belief, we may not hold our ground here, puissant and respected among the nations of the earth, till the trumpet of God's providence announces the final triumph of universal justice, freedom, truth and love."202 This was a view of America which was most unlike that purveyed by Dr. Wilson. Whereas Hitchcock saw America as "in charge" of history, Joseph Wilson viewed America, in its common frailty, as a slave to history. So, too, did his son. Clearly, it was the influence of Dr. Wilson's Old School outlook that led Wilson to dismiss claims of American exceptionalism.

201 A Political Essay ("Congressional Government"), October 1, 1879, ibid, 1:574.
202 Quoted in Marsden, "Kingdom and Nation", 266.
It is important to note that the diary entry of July 4, 1876, was not an isolated outburst. Rather, it was representative of Wilson's truest feelings about America at this early stage of his life. A month earlier, he had expressed the same brand of scepticism toward the Bancroftian idea of America's special destiny. Wilson noted reading an article entitled "The American Republic" 203 and commented "The story had little point to it and the article did not amount to much, being simply a resume of this country's history and general praising of it—comparing it favourably with every other country, and predicting its future advance and greatness. The old old story." 204 The tone of this diary extract betrayed a marked weariness toward the idea of America's future advance and greatness. Far from gripping the undergraduate Wilson's imagination, the article's favourable comparison of America with other countries was merely an "old old story."

Having vented his lack of enthusiasm regarding claims of American exceptionalism, Wilson then made the same prediction that he would make a month later regarding the demise of the present American system. "The American Republic [emphasis Wilson's] will in my opinion never celebrate another Centennial. At least under its present Constitution and laws." 205 What, according to Wilson, was the great unresolved problem with the present Constitution and laws? His answer was distinctly un-Wilsonian. Wilson argued that the principle of democracy, was the cause of a national malaise. He wrote

*Universal suffrage is at the foundation of every evil in this country.* 206

Wilson's hostility to universal suffrage was most remarkable, considering that it came from a future national leader, who, in April 1917, would lead America into

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204 Shorthand Diary, June 19, 1876, *PWW*, 1:143.


war proclaiming "we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts, -for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments....The world must be made safe for democracy...for the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and obedience." Universal suffrage had metamorphosed in Wilson's world view from being "the foundation of every evil" to the very rationale of the United States of America. When Wilson spoke of fighting for the democracy that "we...always" cherished he was not being absolutely truthful, for it is clear that he, at any rate, had not always carried democracy nearest his heart.

Wilson's condemnation of universal suffrage was reflected more obliquely in other writings. In his review of Green's history, Wilson had argued that the development of the United States was a continuation of the English tradition. "We profess to be building upon the grand principles of liberty", wrote Wilson, "in whose development nine centuries have been consumed."207 With such an inheritance to build upon, Wilson argued, it was imperative that the United States not abandon the essence of the English political system, which was to concentrate power in the hands of the worthy few. "With what diligence", Wilson warned his readers, "should we guard so precious a legacy of privileges! How careful should we be in this experiment of ours, in which sacred principles are stretched to the utmost, the place of the Goddess of Liberty be not usurped by the Harlot."208 The "Harlot" to which Wilson referred was democracy rampant, in which tyranny would inevitably emerge by allowing the worst, who were many, to govern the best, who were few. The notes that Wilson made in the margin of his copy of Green gave expression to the same concern. "Is the principle of universal suffrage", he asked, "consistent with those principles of government which bear the sanction of the wisest
Englishmen of 8 centuries and which have secured personal freedom and political liberty to a great nation for more than 8 hundred years. Is it necessary or even compatible with the healthy operation of a free government?"203

Wilson was implacably opposed to the principle of universal suffrage. In April 1879, he refused to enter the prestigious Lynde debating competition at Princeton after drawing the negative side for the subject "Resolved that it would be advantageous to the United States to abolish universal suffrage."210 It is revealing of an intensely anti-democratic sensibility that Wilson, in his righteous fervour, could not bring himself to dispute this proposition. Wilson's early dislike of democracy was not an ephemeral adolescent whim that found expression only in his private journal, but a fundamental conviction that was central also to his public identity. Other evidence points to this. In September 1879, shortly before he commenced the study of law at the University of Virginia, 211 Wilson claimed in the course of an essay he wrote about French history, that "the democratic idea" was the "cant of our times".212 Madison and Adams would have understood.

In another essay of the same period, whose topic was cabinet government in the United States, Wilson asserted that "it is indisputably true that universal suffrage is a constant element of weakness, and exposes us to many dangers which we might otherwise escape."213 What were these "dangers" to which Wilson referred? Surely, if the people were the source of all virtue, there was nothing for the state to fear by acting in accordance with their will? Wilson's background led him to believe that human nature was simply not to be trusted, and the "weakness" of democracy was, for Wilson, the weakness at the core of every human heart.

Given that his father was a classical republican, it is not particularly surprising that Wilson was at first opposed to universal suffrage and the world view that underlay it. Wilson regarded the principle of democracy, not with millenial enthusiasm, but with fear and suspicion of a philosophical conservative. Democracy, after all, is the embodiment of the idea that all virtue resides in the people. It hinges on the assumption that the mass of men are good and wise, and that their collective voice is the voice of God by which society must be governed. However, as the above discussion of Dr. Wilson's Covenental-republican world view has shown, such faith in the mass of men had no place in the theological universe into which Woodrow was born. Human beings, as Williams Sibbes argued, were "poor creatures", of whom only a fraction had entered into a redemptive contract with God. The rest were in league with the Devil, and would be consigned with him to the lake of fire and brimstone. To the Covenanter, human nature was a mess of defilement and corruption. This view was not conducive to the development of political ideas that relied upon the notion of the innate goodness of the people. It was therefore quite fitting that an undergraduate Wilson should have asserted in an editorial of The Princetonian from January, 1878, that "Every nation is full of loafers, and its universities have been established for no other purpose than that of counteracting and neutralizing the influence of this vicious class."214 So dangerous was the threat of the demes, argued Wilson, that were not the universities able to afford society "men of mental and moral ability", then "liberal institutions, political freedom, universal suffrage would be, one and all, the worst mockery of freedom, the sorest curse of humanity."215

203Marginal Notes, July 27, 1878, ibid, 1:338.
210Editorial, ibid, 1:480.
211Wilson graduated from Princeton in June 1879. He commenced his studies at the University of Virginia in October of the same year. Hochscher, Woodrow Wilson, 47.
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Yet one of Wilsonianism's guiding assumptions was that all peoples, notwithstanding their leaders, shared an ability to identify with America's democratic, "progressive" ideals. For example, after asking for war with the Imperial German Government on April 2, 1917, Wilson assured Congress that "We...fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included".\textsuperscript{216} The promise of universal redemption that pervaded this remark stemmed from Wilson's certainty that America acted as the champion of humanity. After the peace conference, Wilson would frequently assert America's right to world leadership when attempting to convince the American people that the League of Nations was the fulfilment of their destiny. The political homogeneity of humanity was central to his world view. The peoples of Europe, he argued, "believed in these principles before we promulgated them....We found them ready to lay down the foundations on the lines that America suggested".\textsuperscript{217}

In President Wilson's liberal-internationalist world of the future, the peoples of all nations were to be included. American values, with which human beings everywhere supposedly sympathised, would be the basis of the new world order. By contrast, the undergraduate Wilson was not a universalist who believed that all peoples everywhere saw the world in the same light. In the essay dealing with the history of France, Wilson rejected the notion that a common outlook and destiny might be shared between different peoples. He criticised the view of "persons that are seemingly well read...that the same instincts that have driven our race to its present advance pulsate in the blood of all peoples."\textsuperscript{218} Wilson argued that it was

\textsuperscript{216}Quoted in Paterson, Major Problems, 2:34.
\textsuperscript{217}An Address in Helena, September 11, 1919, \textit{PWW}, 63:185.
\textsuperscript{218}"Self-Government in France", \textit{Ibid}, 1:516.
"necessary ever and again to lay fresh emphasis upon the peculiar, distinctive character of the French people as it has issued, by the evolution of revolution, from the darkness and trials of political servitude into unaccustomed paths of self-government."219 Here was a view of political progress rather different from that which was at the heart of Wilsonian universalism. According to the undergraduate Wilson, there were peoples with "peculiar" and "distinctive" traits which rendered them unfit to share in the "present advance" of the Anglo-Saxon race.

How did Wilson's sense of differences existing between various peoples relate to his father's Covenanter outlook? Had not Dr. Wilson, in the eighth sermon, spoken of that "common humanity...almost never altering" and, in the sixteenth sermon, of the "common human nature of which you are a sharer with all the race".220 On the face of it, this assertion of humanity's sinful homogeneity would appear to clash with Woodrow's world view. Yet, despite his talk of a common human nature, Dr. Wilson also gave many indications that he considered the Anglo-Saxons a preeminent race. His sympathetic attitude toward slavery is an apposite example. Though born in the North, Dr. Wilson later came to identify completely with Southern values. Whites were fitted by nature to direct the lives of blacks, he argued. In 1857, he had spoken of his desire to swing a "flail of rebuke" over the heads of Northerners who sought to abolish slavery and, in so doing, destroy a system that fed the "mutual good will of white and black".221 Just as the white man needed to command, Dr. Wilson seemed to be suggesting, so the black man needed to obey. On the one hand, a common human nature humbled under God, and, on the other, a vision of Anglo-Saxon superiority. This is somewhat of a tangled web, and what it demonstrates is that the Covenanter could, at times, be led to express

219 Ibid, 1:516.
220 Sermon 16, 7.
221 Quoted in Mulder, "Joseph Ruggles Wilson", 249.
seemingly disparate opinions. For while it is true that Covenant theology had a sense of humanity's common sinfulness, it also had a powerful sense of the elect versus the damned. We were all bad, according to the Covenanter, but some of us were going to be saved. Covenant theology therefore prompted Dr. Wilson to speak of a common humanity, and also of uncommon humanity. This was an anomaly neither recognised nor reconciled by Dr. Wilson. It is closely related to Woodrow Wilson's assertion that Anglo-Saxon instincts of advance did not pulsate in the blood of all peoples. Just as Dr. Wilson was able to transfer his Covenanter sense of the elect versus the damned into his positive view of slavery, so Woodrow was able to apply it to his reading of differences between peoples. Anomaly may also be detected at the Wilson's early political outlook. As is shown above, he was deeply distrustful of democracy because of the fearful suspicion with which he viewed human nature. He did not suggest that while Anglo-Saxons might be suitable for democracy, other races were not. His point was that no people, regardless of whether it was Anglo-Saxon or not, could ever be trusted to govern themselves. In this, he was in keeping with the Covenental view that there was a common human nature- common, that is, in depravity. Yet, despite this universal distrust with which he regarded humanity, he also spoke of the "present advance" of the Anglo-Saxons. This was an advance in which only Anglo-Saxons were able to participate. It was, as he literally suggested, in their blood. How, then, was Wilson able to speak of both a common depravity and an uncommon progress? The mentality that conditioned this unreconciled outlook was the same mentality that had led Dr. Wilson to refer to a common human nature and yet speak of the superior qualities of Anglo-Saxons. At the heart of this confusion was a sense of the original sin that belonged to all and the grace of God that, conversely, belonged to a select few.
Another of Wilsonianism's fundamental tenets was that an altruistic sense of selflessness and service must govern America's foreign policy. In her mission to democratise humanity, America had nothing to gain in strategic or material terms. It was immoral, argued Wilson, for a statesman to include the notion of national interest in his diplomacy. "We must show ourselves friends by comprehending their interest, whether it squares with our interest or not", argued Wilson in October, 1913, in connection with inter-American relations. "It is a very perilous thing", he continued, "to determine the foreign policy of a nation in the terms of material interest. It not only is unfair to those with whom you are dealing, but it is degrading as regards your own actions."222 Throughout his Presidency, Wilson reiterated these sentiments with a degree of consistency that revealed his personal identification with the ideal of an altruistic foreign policy.

Wilson's undergraduate views on international relations did not evince a preoccupation with the need for selfless diplomacy. In a speech delivered in January, 1877, entitled "The Ideal Statesman", Wilson argued that the statesman must, in fact, defend "the interest of the state".223 To be sure, Wilson did assert that the statesman must not be selfish, but this idea ought not be conflated with his later espousal of selflessness and service as the purpose of international diplomacy. Rather, Wilson's point was that the statesman must be selfless in order to better defend the national interest. "We have only to look at the results of selfishness to conclude that self-interest and the interest of the state must often clash and counteract each other", he argued, "when brought in contact."224 This emphasis of Wilson's on the interest of state differed from what was most distinctive and remarkable about his later philosophy of foreign policy. Wilson's undergraduate

222 An Address on Latin American Policy in Mobile, Alabama, October 27, 1913, PWW, 27:450.
223 A Speech ("The Ideal Statesman"), January 30, 1877, ibid, 1:244.
224 Ibid, 1:243-244.
views on international relations are also expounded indirectly in another 1877 essay on Bismarck, the high prince of European realpolitik. Wilson praised his subject for "the patriotism that impels him to exhibit his love for his country in constant endeavours to secure for her permanent power and prosperity." Thus, according to Wilson, it was the pursuit of securing "power and prosperity" for the nation, not the ideal of selfless service to all humanity, that made a statesman great.

To what extent can Wilson's early understanding of diplomacy be traced to Covenant theology? There do exist some tantalising hints in the sermons of Dr. Wilson as to nature of his views on diplomacy. Admittedly, it is rather difficult to gauge the value of such indirect evidence. In none of his recorded sermons did Dr. Wilson digress to deal with foreign policy as a subject in its own right. Any mention of diplomacy made by Dr. Wilson came in the form of very brief asides used to elaborate theological points. Some inference is thus required to tease out the meaning of any remarks involving diplomacy. Having said that, however, it is necessary to include such evidence, scanty as it might be, because it is simply the only evidence available regarding Dr. Wilson's views on the matter. Therefore, in the seventh sermon, Dr. Wilson spoke of the "feeble infant, laying helpless in its mother arms" and how difficult it was to imagine that the child could ever develop into a "large-minded man, by whose enterprise a nation is to be enriched, or upon whose statesmanship it is to depend for its security".

When the term statesman came up, Dr. Wilson associated it with the defence of national interest. Dr. Wilson did not equate the term "statesman" with a moral mission to all humanity, and this says something of his essential outlook. It was an outlook very different from Wilsonianism, which did not axiomatically link the idea

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225 A Biographical Essay ("Prince Bismarck"), November 1877, ibid, 1:313.
226 Sermon 7, 8.
of statesmanship with the pursuit of self-interest. Dr. Wilson's view of what diplomacy entailed was not surprising, given the outlook on life that was his inheritance as a Covenanter. He was clearly a conservative, as indicated by his view of human history as an endless, cyclical repetition of error and by his pessimistic view of human nature. Such philosophical conservatism is traditionally associated with a philosophy of international relations that is cautious and limited in its aims. It does not aim for the betterment of all humanity, because it has no faith in the capacity of human nature for moral progress. It seeks, rather, to defend the tangible interests of a single state in a world system where decay and disorder, products of the human condition, perpetually threaten its position. This was the broad paradigm that underlay Dr. Wilson's remark made in passing about a statesman's duty to defend the state's "security". It was the same conservative paradigm that led Woodrow Wilson to define a statesman's greatness by the "power and prosperity" he won for the state. In this way, it can be seen that Dr. Wilson's Covenant theology produced an outlook in the young Woodrow Wilson that led him to identify with a definition of statesmanship that differed significantly from his later Presidential role as the avowedly altruistic Prince of Peace.

The general picture of Wilson's early political thought that has emerged above is one that clashes with central elements of the political philosophy that is termed "Wilsonianism". President Wilson's foreign policy was driven by the idea of an exceptionalist America whose mission was to lead all humanity toward the realisation of an international, democratic society of the future. "America" and "democracy" were, for the mature Wilson, synonymous concepts. Yet, as an undergraduate at Princeton, Wilson had consistently rejected the idea of an exceptionalist America. Influenced by the republican tradition, he even rejected the idea of democracy itself. There was, in fact, something qualitatively different
about Wilson's early political thought. The national leader who prophesied that America would make the world safe for democracy was simply unrecognisable in the opinions of his youth.

This consideration poses a grave problem for the claims of those, like Link and Mulder, who have argued that Wilson's religious background was the dominant intellectual factor in the formation of his later views on America's role in the world.\(^{227}\) They imposed continuity on Wilson's political persuasion throughout his life, but, in fact, there was no such continuity. Rather, Wilson's undergraduate identification with Dr. Wilson's Covenant theology was accompanied by the simultaneous expression of political ideas that bore absolutely no relation to the essence of his later political thought: universal democracy; America's mission; selflessness and service in foreign policy.

If Covenant theology gave rise to Wilsonianism, why was the undergraduate Wilson, a devout Covenanter, opposed to everything for which this Wilsonianism later claimed to stand? This important question, which is ignored by the historiography, would strongly suggest that Dr. Wilson's theology was not the intellectual origin of Wilsonianism.

Wilson's Presidential world view owed much to liberal theology. It was the liberal Protestantism of late nineteenth-century America, not pre-modern Covenant theology, that embraced the ideal of a perfected social order, predicated on selfless service, as the end of Christianity. Liberal Protestantism, too, differed markedly from Covenant theology in its optimistic view of human nature. For liberal

Protestants, the voice of the people was indeed the voice of God. Wilson's changing world view will be the subject of the following chapter. As a graduate student at Johns Hopkins, he would undergo a conversion to the principle of universal suffrage. This was to be Wilson's first step down the road to Wilsonianism, and it was a step taken away from his intellectual inheritance.
II

THE FORGING OF A DEMOCRAT

Woodrow Wilson—always a slow fellow in mental development—long a child, longer a diffident youth, now at last, perhaps, becoming a self-confident (mayhap a self-assertive) man.

To Ellen Axson Wilson, March 9, 1889.1

Men are as clay in the hands of the consummate leader.

"Leaders of Men", June 17, 1890.2

In the previous chapter, it was shown how that Wilson's undergraduate world view stemmed from Covenant theology, classical republicanism and Anglophilia. Having internalised his father's teachings, Wilson declared his hostility to liberal Protestantism, democracy and the myths of American nationalism. Mankind's goal was not to perfect this world, but to defeat his own innately sinful nature through internal surrender to Christ the redeemer.

Covenant theology and the republican tradition produced in Wilson a political outlook opposed to the presuppositions of liberal democracy. The principle of popular sovereignty was rejected unequivocally. If mankind was not to be trusted, it followed that wisdom and virtue did not reside in the mass of men. The good and the few, he felt, ought to rule the depraved majority. Furthermore, it was inconceivable to Wilson that any one nation might be invested with a redemptive mission. Progress in human affairs was considered an impossibility. Tainted

1PWW, 6:139.
2An Address, "Leaders of Men", June 17, 1890, ibid, 6:650.
human nature must remain the same, flowing on, as Dr. Wilson had proposed in one of his sermons, like a rock-bound river. The best that could be hoped for was a system which held the demos' nature in partial check. Such was the classical republican outlook, replete with philosophical conservatism, to which Woodrow Wilson was heir.

This would suggest that the Wilsonian vision was entirely unrelated to Wilson's early world view. "I...believe more profoundly than in anything else human in the destiny of the United States", he would proclaim in a 1919 address. "The armies of the United States", continued Wilson, "seemed to those people on the other side of the sea like bodies of crusaders come out of a free nation to give freedom to their fellows, ready to sacrifice their lives for an idea, for an ideal, for the only thing that is worth living for- the spiritual purpose of redemption that rests in the hearts of mankind."3 This was to be a redemption of the people by the people for the people in this world.

An Address in the San Diego Stadium, September 19, 1919, ibid, 63:380, 382.
1. Between two selves

The years 1881-1890 marked the beginnings of Wilson's transformation. It was during these crucial years that this most devoted son of Covenant theology and republicanism came to abandon his easily religious and political views and embrace democracy as the path, not only of the country's future, but of his own personal destiny. The historiography has tended to stress continuity rather than change in its account of Wilson's road to the Presidency. Link argued that Dr. Wilson's "Calvinist" formulas furnished Woodrow with the world view he took to high office. For Mulder also it was important to show that Presbyterian beliefs- "Covenent theology"- shaped Wilson's later views. Thus, the argument contained in this chapter will run against the orthodoxy. Instead of focusing on that which evidences continuity, it attempts to portray a pattern of change and development by relating Wilson's political thought to inner psychological conflicts.

Wilson's changing political views were in many ways an expression of the psychosocial dynamic that drove his development. It was no coincidence that as Woodrow grappled to emancipate himself from the authority of his father, Dr. Wilson, his politics- and theology- began to change as well. Wilson's endorsement of democracy issued from his adolescent crisis of identity. This identity crisis is a common human experience. As Erik H. Erikson has noted, "In some young people, in some classes, at some periods in history, this crisis will be minimal; in other people, classes, and periods, the crisis will be clearly marked off as a critical period, a kind of 'second birth', apt to be aggravated either by widespread neuroticisms or by pervasive ideological unrest. Some young individuals will succumb to this crisis in all manner of neurotic, psychotic, or delinquent behaviour; others will resolve it through participation in ideological movements passionately
concerned with religion or politics, nature or art." It was this psychological phenomenon that drove "young man Wilson". By rejecting his father's teaching, Woodrow won for himself a degree of personal autonomy. Rather than defy his father openly, Wilson gave sublimated expression to his resentments and his need for adult emancipation.

The Georges, in their developmental biography of Wilson and House, have provided much evidence of the inner struggle that characterised Wilson's relationship with his father. Many of their insights remain valuable, and, indeed, directly applicable. Yet they were not interested in the central question that underpins this thesis, namely, how it was that Wilson arrived at Wilsonianism. The Georges' purpose was to explain why their subject "was attracted to the type of leadership tactics which were at the root of both his successes and failures". Hence, their interest lay more with Wilson's personal style in his dealings with others than the actual evolution and substance of his ideas. In their rather brief treatment of the crucial period covered by this chapter, for example, they did not remark on Wilson's discovery of democracy and how it related to the changing father-son relationship. They made no attempt to connect Wilson's inner conflicts to his intellectual development.

During the years 1881-1890, Wilson achieved ever-increasing personal and professional success. He had withdrawn from the University of Virginia at the end of 1880. At Dr. Wilson's insistence, Wilson began practicing law in Atlanta, Georgia in mid 1882. Yet a feeling of disgust towards his new profession quickly set in, and a yearning grew up to devote himself to a life of the mind. "I can never

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be happy unless I am enabled to lead an intellectual life", he wrote a friend, "and
who can lead an intellectual life in ignorant Georgia?" Within a year, Wilson had
decided to abandon the law and, in its place, pursue graduate study in history and
political science at the Johns Hopkins University. He studied there for two years,
during which time he wrote and published *Congressional Government*. Shortly
before attaining his doctorate, Wilson took up a teaching post at Bryn Mawr, a
newly-formed college for women in Philadelphia.

At the end of 1885, he married Ellen Louise Axson. She was a Presbyterian
minister's daughter whom Wilson had first met during his Atlanta law days. They
stayed at Bryn Mawr for three years, then moved to Middletown, Connecticut, with
Ellen and three infant daughters, to teach at Wesleyan University. His two years
there saw the publication of *The State*, a well-received study in comparative
government. Wilson's scholarly star continued to rise. In early 1890, Wilson was
elected Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Economy at Princeton, his *alma
mater*. This moment marked the end of Wilson's quest to establish himself in
the world as an independent personality. "I feel like sitting at your feet to learn as
you once sat at mine", the father wrote to the son, "you know so much more than I
do, now".7

Wilson's world view did not begin to undergo transformation until he embarked on
his graduate study at Johns Hopkins, and then only slowly. There is no evidence
that he had any desire to challenge the received wisdom of his upbringing until he
reached this important stage of his intellectual development. Democracy was still
anathema to Wilson's sensibilities. In an unpublished article from early 1881, he
argued that universal suffrage was to be opposed at every turn in the new South,

7From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, May 9, 1889, *ibid.*, 6:218.
lest the white population come to be subjugated by the ignorant Negro. White Southerners gave block support to the Democratic party "not because they approve of its national policy so much as because it represents the constitutional opposition to a party which has time and again manifested a desire and a purpose rudely to interfere in their local affairs."

It was the Republican party's enfranchisement of the uneducated black population that Wilson saw as the rudest interference in local affairs. "The enfranchisement of the negro", he continued, "undoubtedly explains everything in the political condition of the South that calls for explanation at all. It is a simple enough matter to understand what choice an English people would make when the alternatives presented to them were, to be ruled by an ignorant and an inferior race, or to band themselves in a political union not to be broken till the danger had past. They determined, as any community of their Northern fellow citizens would have determined under like circumstances, never to suffer themselves to be ruled by another race in every respect unlike themselves; and in that resolve they cannot be, they should not be, shaken." Wilson was careful to differentiate between what he saw as the developing Negro and the ignorant Negro. There were some blacks, indeed, whose experience of owning property was beginning to fit them with the virtues required to participate in government. "The more energetic among the negroes", he explained, "are slowly acquiring habits of thrifty self-support. In some sections...they are becoming extensive land-holders and industrious farmers of their own lands....These men are many of them intelligent citizens: the possessing of earned property always sharpens and opens the intellect. In this class

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8 An Unpublished Article ("Stray Thoughts From the South"), February 22, 1881, ibid, 2:27.
9 Ibid, 2:27.
of the negroes alone are found the men who venture to vote independently both of fear and of prejudice."\textsuperscript{10}

Southern whites were not combining against this improving Negro, Wilson argued, "but against their fellows who remain in darkness."\textsuperscript{11} Southerners were not opposed to the Negro so much as "to ignorant suffrage, entirely irrespective of race or color."\textsuperscript{12} The consideration, however, that so many Negroes were of the ignorant variety, Wilson argued, made it imperative that, on general principle, the "Saxon race of the South" determine "that the negro race shall never...rule over them".\textsuperscript{13} The whites were "bound for the preservation of their own liberties and in the interests of self-government to maintain an united resistance to the domination of an ignorant race". This, in effect, meant excluding Negroes from the political community. It was for this reason that the South was opposed to the continuance of Republican rule.

The chief value of this unpublished article is to show Wilson held classical republican views, even if mixed with Anglo-Saxonism. He still felt exclusion rather than inclusion to be the prerequisite of a healthy polity. Government, it was argued, was best left to those fit to govern. Wilson was at pains to point out that blacks should not be excluded merely because of their race. His opposition to universal suffrage in the South was grounded on a principle that ran deeper than residual prejudice: this was the principle that the wise few in any society ought to govern over, not with, the ignorant. The ignorant, in theory, could be white as well as black. This outlook had been instilled in Woodrow by his father. In sermon after sermon, Dr. Wilson had held up the depravity of man to assembled

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid, 2:29.
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid, 2:29.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid, 2:28.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid, 2:29.
congregations. He conceived of a universe in which the elect of God were separate in quality from those belonging to the devil's party. Most men had not entered into the covenant of grace, and so their hearts remained unregenerate. Starting from this premise, it was easy to conclude that if democracy meant the rule of the masses over the wise few, it was a thing to be rejected.

Such an outlook inevitably coloured Wilson's understanding of his country's history. In an unpublished letter to the editor of a Wilmington newspaper from the same period, Wilson argued that the rise of democracy had corrupted national politics. Before Jackson's demagoguery had sullied the air, claimed Wilson, public life in America had been a sterling example of virtuous propriety. "When one comes to speak of the administration of our national government", he wrote, "the word that springs first and most naturally to his lips is corruption; and...the mind recalls the primitive purity of our institutions and the onetime uprightness of those who stood foremost in our public service." Yet popular elections had turned politics into a selfish contest for the bold, the daring, and the desperate. In other words, the vices of the mass of men were reflected in the adventurers they voted to govern in their name. When the political culture of the early republic had discouraged popular elections, he argued, the virtues of the wise few had been allowed to prevail. Yet now, Wilson wrote, "The patronage of office has sold us into political bondage. The system which Jackson originated and Grant perfected has stolen away our political virtue." The late dominance of the people- "this multitudinous monarch"- had corrupted the atmosphere of American politics. This letter reveals a Wilson who still idealised a pre-Jacksonian, pre-democratic republican order as the best form of government.

14bid, 2:36-37.
15bid, 2:37.
16bid, 2:37.
In an unpublished essay from late 1882, Wilson expressed similarly anti-democratic ideas. Wilson made it clear that he was no believer in the natural supremacy of American popular institutions. His intention was to demonstrate that a constitutional system grounded too closely on the popular voice led to a legislative shambles. Instead of allowing legislation to be originated by Standing Committees composed of appointed Congressman, the Executive himself ought to appoint a small cabinet of ministers to originate legislation, each with their different portfolio. "The only hope of wrecking the clumsy misrule of Congress", wrote Wilson, "lies in the establishment of responsible Cabinet government."\(^{17}\) As it was in England, so should it be in America. This "greatest of all popular governments"\(^{18}\) badly needed to borrow from the tried and true English system, which, Wilson argued, tended to moderate the chaotic tendencies of popular party government.

It is significant that Wilson was willing to concede so much political virtue to the English model. Unlike the Wilson of 1919, he did not look upon America as humanity's natural political tutor. "First or last", he opined, "Congress must be organized in conformity with what is now the prevailing legislative practice of the world. English precedent and the world's fashion must be followed in the institution of Cabinet government in the United States".\(^{19}\) Wilson criticised those Americans who, swayed by patriotism, strove always to differentiate themselves from the old world. He wrote "it happens that we are most of us of English blood, and are, therefore, apt to have decided aptitudes for English institutions; and—oddly enough, as it may seem to those who look upon English ideas as alien to this commonwealth,—to borrow from England now would be only to follow a time-

\(^{18}\)Ibid, 2:167.
\(^{19}\)Ibid, 2:201.
honoured American example." Wilson pointed out that Alexander Hamilton had taken the British constitutional system as his model. Those "very able men of the English race" who attended the constitutional convention "took the system of free government with which they had been familiar, improved it, adapted it to the circumstances with which they had to deal, and put it into successful operation." 

Of all the elements of Wilson's thought revealed in this unpublished essay, the most important is his sense of what political reform in the United States should actually entail. America's role, he argued, lay not in teaching the English, but in learning from them. Thus, his prediction that "what is wrong will be righted and what is corrupt cleansed as surely as every day's sun rises and passes on its setting" ought not be viewed as an early expression of Wilsonian sensibilities. It is true that the choice of words- the charged prophetic air- bears a degree of similarity to Wilson's mature oratorical style. Yet the promised land Wilson sought here was very different from the one he would later come to seek. It was a return to an earlier golden age, a world that had been lost and corrupted by the very liberal democracy on which he would later base his Presidential view of America's mission.

The material presented thus far presents a Wilson who was deeply suspicious of democracy, and aware of America only as a dependent part of a greater English civilisation. As he stated in a letter from this period, "'Freedom of the press' is an expression which carries a very big idea in it now-a-days. It implies the difference between the darkness of Russia and the light of England and America." Wilson's praise was not for America alone, but for Anglo-Saxon civilisation. Wilson was substantially unchanged from the Princeton undergraduate depicted in the previous

\[\text{\textsuperscript{20}Ibid, 2:205.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{21}Ibid, 2:205.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{22}Ibid, 2:208.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{23}To Robert Bridges, August 22, 1881, ibid, 2:79.}\]
chapter. At this stage of his life, Woodrow was still very much the subordinate son of the dominant father. This state of affairs was neatly conveyed in a letter he wrote his friend Robert Bridges from Wilmington in May, 1881. "I make frequent extemporaneous addresses", he confessed, "to the empty benches of my fathers [sic] church in order to get a mastery of easy and correct and elegant expression in preparation for the future. My topics are most of them political and I can sometimes almost see the benches smile at some of my opinions and deliverances." The image conveyed by this passage is that of an ambitious young man still moving in the shadow of parental authority. Dr. Wilson was the undisputed master of the church building where Wilson practiced his public speaking. His eloquent sermons held congregations captivated every Sabbath, as Woodrow was well aware. Thus, when Wilson remarked on the very benches seeming to "smile" at his attempts to orate, he was giving vent to the awkwardness he felt in trying to fill the father's shoes. The church building, for Wilson, was synonymous with the accomplishments of the father; the building's condescending smile was the smile of the father. "I wish that I could believe", Wilson wrote in late 1883, "that I had inherited that rarest gift of making great truths attractive in the telling and of inspiring with great purposes by sheer force of eloquence or by gentle stress of persuasion."  

Woodrow's continued deference to his father was also laid bare by the doubts he often expressed regarding his own physical attractiveness. He felt inferior to the patriarchal figure cut by Dr. Wilson. "My incomparable father," Wilson once wrote. "If I had my father's face and figure, it wouldn't make any difference what I said." In a revealing letter to his future wife, Wilson spoke of the intense self-

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24 To Robert Bridges, May 24, 1881, ibid., 2:70.  
25 To Ellen Louise Axson, October 23, 1883, ibid., 2:487.  
doubt that had always plagued him prior to meeting her. "Somehow I always found it hard to believe that anyone could fall in love with me", he wistfully recalled, "I knew that I was not good looking enough to attract admiring attention, and I was conscious of wearing, towards all but a few intimates, a cold exterior which was no more likely than my limited conversational powers to win favour from the fair sex. I thought that, by passing me by, some body would miss the chance of getting a faithful husband, and I used to derive some whimsical amusement from regarding, in anticipation, my doleful plight- a very lovable gentleman undiscovered; unmarried because nobody could be brought to look upon him as in the market!" 27

One of the most important episodes of Wilson's pre-Baltimore days was the intense, though entirely unreciprocated, infatuation he conceived for his cousin, Harriet Augusta Woodrow. The cousins met again after an interval of many years in Chillicothe, Ohio, where Woodrow was serving a legal apprenticeship with his uncle. This episode is worth recalling as it reveals an adolescent Wilson suffering the thwarted passions common to youth. The relevance of these thwarted passions to the question at hand lies in their depiction of a painfully forthright Woodrow out of his depth in the world of adult feeling, and therefore still very much a child dependent on his father's solicitation and advice. "My love for you has taken such a hold on me as to have become almost a part of myself" 28, Wilson wrote his startled cousin in late 1881. By this stage, Wilson's infatuation had been dragging on for more than a year. Hattie had immediately rejected his first proposal, on the grounds that their blood relationship precluded any thought of marriage. Yet Woodrow was not swayed so easily. After a further melodramatic round of petition and refusal, Hattie finally decided to discontinue their correspondence. Wilson was deeply affected by the whole affair. It was the greatest disappointment of his young

27To Ellen Louise Axson, October 23, 1883, PWW, 2:486.
28Two Letters to Harriet Augusta Woodrow, October 3, 1881, ibid, 2:89.
life, and it did nothing whatsoever to raise his self-esteem. How it must have stung, the sneaking suspicion that he may have made a fool of himself. Wilson wrote to his confidant Robert Bridges informing him of the episode. "I know that you will appreciate", he ventured, 'the embarrassments under which I write. You are the first and only person, outside the circle of my own nearest kin, to whom a word of this matter has been breathed: and I need not tell you that even at this distance of time I am unable to speak of it without such a rush of feeling as makes clear expression next to impossible."29

It is clear that Wilson was in the grip of strong feelings over which he was able to exert no control. The task of putting this painful episode into proper perspective was left to Dr. Wilson, to whom it was tellingly left to make the final pronouncement. "I honestly and firmly believe that the marriage you desired", he wrote his son after the romantic debacle had come to an end, "would have made you happy only for a very little while. I would not have presumed to touch the sore in yr [sic] heart even thus lightly were it not a sore in my own heart, too: but now a sore pretty much cured."30

The wisdom of the father had therefore come to prevail over the child's flight of fancy. However kindly and sympathetic the tone of Dr. Wilson's note, the effect of it was to show that Woodrow had, for the time being, been put in his place. That Woodrow failed to exert the authority of his own emerging identity is most significant. It highlights the extent to which his inability to break free from parental authority coincided with his continued acceptance of Dr. Wilson's world view. The intellectual and the emotional elements of Wilson's personality were closely linked. Whilst Woodrow remained subordinate to his father, he also remained subordinate

29Two Letters to Robert Bridges, March 15, 1882, ibid, 2:107.
30From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, August 28, 1882, ibid, 2:138.
to the father's ideas. When Wilson's political writings are viewed in the context of his familial relationships, a certain tendency is revealed. So long as Woodrow remained emotionally subordinate to his father, the political views he had inherited from Dr. Wilson could not be challenged. "I hated", Wilson wrote his cousin in early 1881, "to say good-bye to college life, which after all, is about the happiest, because freest from care, that one can lead."

When Wilson left college at the end of 1880, it signified for him a return to the home environment and the old role-playing. That a resentful Woodrow was all the while seeking, however blindly, to establish his own identity is very clear. The cousin Hattie affair was one example. There were also the "Anti-Sham" practical joke letters. This episode ought to be considered in the same light, that is, as an example of the suppressed ego-as Dr. Wilson would say, "the proud nature"- attempting to assert itself.

"Anti-Sham" was the pen name that Wilson adopted in order to mount a campaign against the influence of Catholicism in the polity. In a letter to the editor of the North Carolina Presbyterian, Woodrow roundly condemned the editor of his local newspaper for his enthusiastic reporting of "the occasion of two discourses by two prelates of high standing in the Romish connection." In high dudgeon, Wilson protested "With a hardihood such as generally accompanies imperfect knowledge, [the editor] proclaims the two Romish orators models of the truest methods of public speech...Probably the editor...does not realize that, in giving unqualified endorsement to the views of Romish prelates, he is helping on the aggressive advances of an organization whose cardinal tenets are openly antagonistic to the principles of free government-an organization which, whenever and wherever it dares, prefers and enforces obedience to its own laws rather than to those of the

31To Harriet Augusta Woodrow, January 15, 1881, ibid, 2:15.
state-an organization whose avowed object it is to gain ascendency over all civil authority."33

This passage is representative of the populist paranoid style adopted by Wilson's "Anti-Sham" persona. Two more letters in a similar anti-Papist vein were to follow. In the second "Anti-Sham" letter, Wilson concentrated on the subversive intent of Catholic education in the United States, arguing that "Education seems to be the chosen gate of Romish invasion in this country."34 It was harmful to allow the minds of American children to be moulded by Catholicism, because the Catholic outlook, he argued, "denies that freedom of speech should be deemed an inherent right of the citizen; it denounces separation of church and state, and demands of civil governments that they also condemn all acts committed against 'the Catholic religion';...it rejects the doctrine that accomplished facts have the force of law."35

The third "Anti-Sham" letter was similar in tone. Having twice vented his spleen, the intensity of Wilson's denunciation showed no sign of abating. The Wilmington Morning Star was continuing to accord undue privilege to the opinions of "the aggressive policy of the Roman hierarchy".36 Wilson was not about to let the editor get away with it. "From the date of their utterance until now," he continued, "the Star has continued to print advertisements of Rome in her most seductive aspects, and to print them in such form and place as to make it evident that they were inserted free of charge!"37 "Anti-Sham" expressed incredulity at this wicked carelessness. How dare such advantage be given to Romanists-whom he accused on being "shrewd calculators of the main chance"38- when it was widely known that

33 Letter to the Editor: "Anti-Sham" No. 1, January 25, 1882, ibid, 2:98.
34 "Anti-Sham No. 2", ibid, 2:102.
35 ibid, 2:102.
36 Letter to the Editor: "Anti-Sham No. 3", March 22, 1882, ibid, 2:115.
37 ibid, 2:114.
38 ibid, 2:116.
"wherever the Romish church is strong, its strength is used to exalt its power above the civil power, and its influence to unfit its adherents for intelligent or patriotic citizenship."39

What was Wilson's motive in not only conceiving of such a campaign, but actually bringing it to fruition and then sustaining it for weeks on end? The answer to this question was laid bare in a revealing letter to Robert Bridges, in which Woodrow discussed the "Anti-Sham" affair at length. "I have been having, lately, an amusing passage at arms", he confided, "with my Roman Catholic fellow citizens here, through the columns of the local press. I found it a good chance to exercise myself in satire and ridicule, and gloried in the opportunity of turning my guns against the conceited ignorant [sic] who edits our chief daily".40 Here was the truth of the matter. The true object of Wilson's anger was not "Romanism", but the Morning Star's editor. Woodrow's populist anti-Catholic position was essentially a subterfuge manufactured in order that he might wage an extended sniping campaign against a personal adversary. "Like all men of his ilk [the editor] is peculiarly sensitive to ridicule", Wilson explained, "and I have reason to believe that he is specially sensitive to it as coming from me. I some time ago wrote a series of editorials for him on the subject of education, and when they were quoted and lauded throughout the State he complaisantly appropriated all the credit to himself. Of course I do'n't [sic] care to give the man away; but he is conscious that I know what a sham he is. He is now making a figure of himself on the wrong side of the Romish question and I have him in hand. It's poor sport, however, with such small game. Anything legitimate, though, to keep my pen in training."41

40Two Letters to Robert Bridges, March 15, 1882, ibid, 2:108.
This editor's offence had been to deprive Woodrow of the recognition he felt his rich talent- "quoted and lauded"- deserved. Wilson was determined to punish his oppressor. In the liberating guise of "Anti-Sham", Wilson had an opportunity to attack not only the editor, but, in truth, all the "sham" forces then refusing to acknowledge his independent genius. Thus, the editor was only the specific object onto which Wilson's deep-seated resentment was projected. When this figure attempted to deny Wilson's independent personality by appropriating his ideas, it provided Woodrow with a microcosmic symbol of his condition. Hence the rather acute reaction.

It is appropriate to consider once again the Eriksonian relation of these episodes to Wilson's political thought. The purpose of this chapter is to show that Wilson's conversion to democracy was closely related to his identity crisis. During the early 1880s, this conversion had not yet taken place, nor Wilson's rejection of parental authority. His was a personality still very much dependent on the received wisdom of elders, and this is the key to understanding his continued acceptance of the father's political outlook. Unable to face the struggle of personal emancipation, he channelled all such energy into a literary squabble with the editor of his local newspaper. The "Anti-Sham" letters provided Wilson's pride with a safe outlet. It will be remembered that spiritual pride was a sin to which Dr. Wilson had devoted considerable cautionary attention in his sermons. The proud man was against God, because he dared to value his own wisdom above the wisdom of the omniscient father of creation. In their letters to an undergraduate Woodrow, both Dr. Wilson and his wife had spoken of their son's need to combat pride. It was evidently a source of great concern to Wilson's father- who had himself been humbled by pride- that his son was beginning to exhibit the tell-tale signs of this vice.
This preoccupation with the beating-down of spiritual pride meant that Wilson sought to deny its presence. Woodrow's formal reaction to the cousin Hattie episode was to disregard his own feelings and wish the one who had spurned him all the best for the future. For this chivalrous posture he earned an approving compliment from Dr. Wilson, who, following the affair, wrote "I admire your unselfishness in still loving where you cannot secure, and in wishing her happiness even though she may not care for yours in the way you desired... Good bye, dearest boy. I love you more than I can tell." Yet this was not the whole story, as the "Anti-Sham" letters indicate. These anonymous compositions provided him with an outlet for the kind of emotions which would have been less palatable to Dr. Wilson, whose constant hope was that Woodrow would be "trusting to God as to one who is wiser and greater than yourself." He urged his son "Ask help of God, your better and nobler father, and, in His name" - by implication, not in one's own name: "advance your banner".

By comparing the different masks worn by Wilson during this period, the identity crisis is revealed as the brooding *eminence grise* of Woodrow's dealings with the world. Here was a strong ego straining to express its individuality, though kept in check by its acquired habit of deference to the discipline of the father. Something had to give. Woodrow's decision to quit the law and, in its place, pursue graduate study in history and political science at John Hopkins was a significant development in the struggle for his autonomy. This crucial step was taken against the wishes of parental authority. It came after months of growing discontent. In mid-1883, he had complained to Robert Bridges that "a year's observation and experience here have by no means reconciled me to remaining in the practice of the law... [because

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42From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, August 26, 1882, *ibid.*, 2:138.
43Two Letters from Joseph Ruggles Wilson, August 14, 1882, *ibid.*, 2:135.
44Two Letters from Joseph Ruggles Wilson, August 20, 1882, *ibid.*, 2:136.
it is entirely antagonistic to the best interests of the intellectual life...I know its degrading struggles, its denial of philosophical leisure to the studious, its one-sided contests, its jealousy of all other pursuits."45 The tone of this letter was typical of many that Wilson wrote in protest against his new career. Dr. Wilson had been advising his increasingly disconsolate son to stick at the practice of the law. "I do not...quite understand", he wrote Woodrow, "why it is that you are appalled by the prospect of...law. I had supposed that the law comprised a subject wide enough for all ends both of mental discipline and of mental satisfaction...so that, it has occurred to me, a successful mastery of it all around will fit a man for any station in life."46

Dr. Wilson did express sympathy for his son's condition. He realised that the law would never be Woodrow's great love, but he insisted that propriety and Christian virtue demanded that his son make the best he could of the situation. "I know, from much sad experience of my own," confessed Dr. Wilson, "that it never does to nurse a spirit of depression, or to be other than hopeful:- and hope may be cultivated like any other principle or passion of the soul."47 Thus, Woodrow's duty lay in shunning the indulgent, selfish desires that bred his present discontent. "I cannot conceal from you the truth that your letters have of late given me not a little anxious concern", wrote Dr. Wilson on another occasion, "a concern due not to your lack of visible success in your profession, but to the fact, principally of your looking towards a suceedaneum....It is no doubt true, as you say, that the dissatisfaction you sometimes express is not always felt - yet it is there as a 'background,' your own well-chosen word: and needs only a rebellious liver to make it foreground. Now, my darling, will you not have to conquer this enemy-

45To Robert Bridges, May 13, 1883, ibid, 2:355-7.
46From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, October 21, 1882, ibid, 2:146.
this mental liver- this something that leaves you with only one hand instead of two?" Pride, Dr. Wilson was here suggesting, must be resisted at all costs.

"My life has been too-much one of self-deprecations," he continued, "and I deeply regret that it has been so. Both my usefulness and my happiness would have been furthered and augmented by an opposite course of feeling. Hence it is that I so much insist upon your being objective rather than subjective. The latter has been and is- the leading fault of my character. Let me not have the misery of thinking that I have transmitted the same to you." Woodrow was expected to abandon the identity of his heart's desire in order that the father might triumph vicariously over past failures. In deciding to abandon the law for graduate study at the Johns Hopkins, Woodrow was therefore attempting to wrest control of his personal destiny from his father's grasp. Concern for his own personal fulfilment was allowed to prevail over the father's will. "History and Political Science! why they are of all my studies my favourites", wrote Wilson in early 1883. The question of whether to pursue graduate study or law was a question that involved his whole being. It was a crossroads choice not merely between different disciplines, but between different identities.

Throughout his life, Wilson had a tendency to inwardly meld the egotistical triumph of his will with the "altruistic" causes he championed. His identity having merged with a principle, that principle must prevail at all costs. It was illustrative of this phenomenon that Wilson saw academia, not the law, as his road to power. "My path is a very plain one", he had written shortly after leaving the University of Virginia, "and the only question is whether I will have the strength to beast the hill and reach the heights to which it leads. My end is a commanding influence in the

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48 From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, February 13, 1883, ibid, 2:303-4.
49 From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, October 21, 1882, ibid, 2:146.
councils (and counsels) of my country". Woodrow would consistently relate his abandonment of the law to this ambition. "I must confess", he wrote a dubious Robert Bridges after resigning the practice, "to a feeling of deep relief in having escaped from the imprisonment of the bar and having gotten at least within reach of a literary career". With the lawyer's life behind him now, Wilson was free to seek glory in scholarship and thus win the influence and independence he so earnestly desired. "I trust", he continued, "that, before many years have run by, I shall have produced results, by dint of assiduous study and self-cultivation, that will persuade you that I have made no blunder in abandoning the law for a more congenial profession- for to remove your doubts will be as gratifying to me as to succeed in making a name for myself."

In taking up the cause of the intellectual life, Wilson was carving out an identity for himself in resolute opposition to the identity Dr. Wilson sought to impose on him. "History and Political Science" became Wilson's catch-cry during this time of his life. A later catch-cry would be "The world must be made safe for democracy."

Erikson has shown how "great" individuals like Luther, who feel themselves charged by destiny with a mission to all humanity, experience a moment of "flow" in which all inner conflict is resolved and the future's course laid bare. In the case of Woodrow Wilson, there was not one such moment, but a succession of them. The decision to quit the law and go to Baltimore might be viewed as Wilson's first moment of flow. More were to follow over the course of his career.

50To Robert Bridges, January 1, 1881, ibid, 2:10.
51To Robert Bridges, July 26, 1883, ibid, 2:393.
52Ibid, 2:393.
2. Wilson's graduate study and its impact on his world view

Wilson embarked on graduate study at the Johns Hopkins University in the fall of 1883. He would be exposed to contemporary ideas which led him to accept democracy as the way of the future. Teaching at the Johns Hopkins was unusual by contemporary American standards of instruction. The institution's name derived from the wealthy Quaker who, in 1876, had established it by a bequest. It was the first university in the United States to ground itself on German research methods, especially in the social sciences graduate school. The seminar was therefore an integral component of instruction. Weekly departmental meetings saw students and teachers reading papers, discussing novel ideas and reporting on new directions in original research. Wilson was caught up in this new educational experience and became a member of the Seminary of Historical and Political Science. It was through this seminar that Wilson first met the distinguished professor of economics and leading Social Gospel theologian, Dr. Richard T. Ely.53

This was to prove a fateful meeting, for it was the occasion and means through which Wilson would relinquish the world view born of his father's teaching. Wilson and Ely were to form a close intellectual relationship during his time at Johns Hopkins. It has been said of Ely that "There was probably no other man of the period who had as much influence on the economic thinking of parsons and the general religious community."54 He was instrumental in popularising the view that Christian ethics, not the doctrine of laissez-faire, should inform the economic management of the state. "The most modern movement in economics", his popular textbook claimed, "may...be regarded as in part a return to the teaching of Christ,

53See Hecksher, Woodrow Wilson, 68.
although yet far from the ideal which he placed before men....The doctrine of brotherhood is a powerful economic factor. Let us bear one another's burdens.\textsuperscript{55}

The essence of Ely's achievement in political economy was to apply the outlook of liberal theology to economic theory.

Ely's economic thought derived from the German ethical-historical economists, whose ideas he had discovered at Heidelberg through Karl Knies. Knies was one of the leading opponents of the Ricardian view that there were universally valid economic laws. His aim was to apply the historical approach in economic inquiry, and thus shed light on the specific economic experience of different peoples. Other important German economists of this school included Wilhelm Roscher and Bruno Hildebrand. Ely was quick to appropriate the ideas of Knies, who, as he would later say, "conceived of economics as belonging neither to the natural nor to the mental sciences, but to the group of historical disciplines which have for their object the study of man in society in terms of its historical growth."\textsuperscript{56} Like his famous teacher, Ely challenged the sway of abstract theory in economics. Finding the right economic policy for a particular society, argued Ely, depended not on knowledge of \textit{a priori} laws, but on detailed analysis of the actual condition - past and present - of that society.

Fundamental to the historical-ethical approach was this emphasis on society as an intricate, organic union. This led to a rejection of the classical view that a healthy polity depended on unrestricted competition between individuals. The rejection of competition led, in turn, to sympathy with the politics of equitable redistribution. It was through Knies that Ely thus developed a deep and abiding interest in the


condition and aspirations of labour. When he returned to America in the summer of 1880, Ely took up a teaching position at Johns Hopkins and busied himself in incorporating the fundamental assumptions of German ethical-historical economics into American religion. The result of this missionary enthusiasm was a new interpretation of Christianity in which emphasis was placed not on the next life nor on the individual soul, but on the temporal world and the outward condition of society. Salvation of the inner man gave way to salvation of society from the sins of industrial modernity.

The Social Gospel was an experimental turning outward of the American Protestant mind. In addition to Ely, other important representatives of the movement included Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch and George D. Herron. Their theology sought to apply the historical Christ's ethics to all levels of human interaction. Underpinning this new gospel of social redemption was a liberal faith in the perfectibility of human nature. The world's strife resulted not from man's bubbling cauldron of depravity, they held, but from external forces. If these corrupting external forces could be defeated, man would be free to live in perpetual peace and harmony. The Kingdom of God would be established on earth. Temperance; international disarmament; slum regeneration- these social crusades were all part of a widespread attempt to eliminate that which held back the moral evolution of mankind.

Ely's writings in the field of social science were shot through with the principles of applied Christianity. "Professors of political economy," he argued, "finding themselves forced to abandon every hope of reconciling adverse interests of society without a moral and religious regeneration of the various social classes, turn to Christianity, and appeal to it for cooperation in their endeavours to bring about an
era of peace and harmony. Professorial socialism terminates in Christianity. Christian socialism seeks in it a starting point."57 True Christianity, according to Ely, was concerned with the affairs of this world.

Whether commenting on religion or social science, Ely brought the same perspective to bear. The two fields were completely interchangeable. In The Labour Movement in America, Ely wrote "A wider diffusion of sound ethics is an economic requirement of the times", he wrote. "Christian morality is the only stable basis for a State professedly Christian. An ethical demand of the present age is a clearer perception of the duties of property, intelligence, and social position. It must be recognized that extreme individualism is immoral...The absolute ideal was given two thousand years ago by Christ, who established the most perfect system of ethics the world has ever known.58

The immorality of individualism was integrer! to Social Gospel sensibilities. Ely often elaborated on the need for selflessness and service. "Nothing is more difficult, he insisted, "nothing more requires divine grace, than the constant manifestation of love to our fellows in all our daily acts, in our buying, selling, getting gain...[You] cannot serve God and mammon", he continued, "for the ruling motive of the one service-egotism, selfishness- is the opposite of the ruling motive of the other- altruism, devotion to others, consecration of heart, soul, and intellect to the service of others....Did it ever occur to you that a man who claimed to be a Christian, and was not at the same time a philanthropist, was a hypocrite and a liar?"59

57Richard T. Ely, French and German Socialism in Modern Times (New York, 1883), 187.
In light of Wilson's Presidential philosophy of international relations, it is doubly interesting that Ely should have envisioned all humanity coming to share in the new era of peace and harmony. "The International Workingmen's Association", he argued, "is one of the many signs which gives us reason to hope for a continued growth of international relations; and this growth may terminate in that longed-for internationalism, which shall lead to the formation of a world organization, guaranteeing to the nations of the earth perpetual peace. There are numerous evidences of this development, of which the following are a few examples; the international postal union, international congresses, international court of arbitration, and the efforts to establish international factory legislation."60

By the time he met Wilson, Ely was already a famous man. The Minutes of the Seminary of Historical and Political Science are indicative of Ely's growing influence on Wilson. One entry is particularly revealing: "The paper of the evening was by Mr. Wilson, who presented a review of recent American political economists. He stated in brief the economic doctrines of Amasa Walker, Perry, Bowen, and Francis Walker, choosing the chief [sic] works of these writers as types of the recent works published in this country. Remarks were made by Dr. Ely, justifying the method adopted by Mr. Wilson: Dr. Ely also called attention to a late letter of Mr. Bryce to Dr. Adams, in which he calls attention to the subject of laissez-faire in the U.S. as a fruitful one for investigation. Articles in the Christian Union on topics connected with socialism were noted as illustrating signs of the times."61 The atmosphere conveyed is one of student and teacher bouncing ideas off each another. They were obviously on the same theoretical wavelength, as indicated by Ely's enthusiastic response to Wilson's presentation, which dealt with important theorists- Walker, Bowen et al.- of the new economics. This close

60Ely, The Labour Movement, 175.
61Draft of a Report to the Historical Seminary, March 27, 1885, PWW, 4:422.
intellectual relationship led to a scholarly collaboration. Early in 1884, Ely asked Wilson to contribute a section to his planned history of political economy in the United States. What Ely had in mind was an encyclopaedic compendium of the leading American economists, which meant that Wilson would have to master an enormous literature before settling down to write. Despite being burdened with other projects, he agreed at once to participate.62

Wilson and Ely met frequently over the course of the year in order to discuss the project. Ely made suggestions for further reading. Wilson took notes, and made frequent mention of his progress in letters to Ellen. After much labour, he completed the first draft in late May, 1885. Wilson then gave it to Ely, with the expectation he would make suggestions for revision. The professor was apparently pleased with Wilson's effort, but, for a variety of reasons, nothing more came of the project. What the project did achieve, however, was to show that Wilson had embraced Ely's way of thinking. More revealing than the actual draft itself were his research notebook63 and a report to the Historical Seminary. They suggest that Wilson had come to identify with the ideas of the ethical-historical economists, to whose literature he had been introduced by Ely. He followed Ely in rejecting classical economic theory. Wilson argued that economic theories and policies stemmed from particular scenarios and historical development. This was precisely the organic outlook that characterised Ely's new economics.

In his March 1885 report to the Historical Seminary, Wilson praised the predisposition of recent American economists to ground their arguments not on abstract theory but on empirical observation: "It requires no very particular examination to discover a general tendency to use less and less the strictly and

62To Ellen Louise Axson, February 19, 1884, ibid, 3:36.
63See Editorial Note, ibid, 3:447-448.
exclusively deductive method and to adopt more and more exclusively the opposite, the inductive method. Probably at no time would a Ricardo have been a possibility in this country. The industrial facts furnished ready to the hands of our writers by the history of almost every American community were much better than any suppositional cases which they could frame for themselves. They lived, so to say, amongst object-lessons in their science. They would have had to be without neighbours to have been without illustrations of the topics upon which they were writing. The experiences of actual life thrust themselves into their speculations and by their very presence affected those speculations, preventing their becoming mere library theories, mere fine-spun threads of logic.\(^{64}\) Wilson's clear disdain for the "mere library theories" of a Ricardo placed him squarely in the ethical-historical fold. Knies had denied the existence of universal laws in economics. The German methodology was to study the actual conditions of a society, and it was this very same historical approach that Wilson most admired. He welcomed "the gradual decline of the fondness for the a priori methods"\(^{65}\) and praised American writers for their "strong latitudinarian tendencies"\(^{66}\) and their "dissent"\(^{67}\) from orthodox laissez-faire theory.

Without doubt, Richard T. Ely had played a significant role in shaping Wilson's understanding of political economy. The historiography has generally not commented on the significance of this. Mulder drew attention to the connection, but only in passing. "Wilson had not only read widely in nineteenth-century economic thought but also had been dislodged by Ely", he wrote, "from whatever adherence to classical economics he had had.\(^{68}\) Yet Mulder was unwilling to allow for the

\(^{64}\)Draft of a Report to the Historical Seminary, \textit{ibid}, 4:424.


\(^{68}\)Mulder, \textit{The Years of Preparation}, 84.
possibility that Ely's influence on his student extended beyond the realm of mere economic theory. "In one important area," he argued, "Ely left no discernible imprint on Wilson's thought. Despite Ely's involvement in the social gospel movement, Wilson demonstrated little receptivity to the program or theology of this late-nineteenth-century attempt to apply Christianity to contemporary social problems."\(^69\)

What Mulder overlooked was the extent to which the social gospel pervaded Ely's economic theory. Wilson himself was fully aware of the liberal theological connection. He drew the Historical Seminary's attention to the religious premise of the new economics by quoting an economist who observed that "Children used to have a way of classing books as 'Sunday' or 'week-day books' by looking over the leaves for sacred names. According to this criterion several American treatises on political economy would be set apart as Sunday books."\(^70\) Ely's economic thought was primarily religious, which is also to say that his religious thought was primarily economic. "Christian ethics- by all acknowledged to be the most perfect system of ethics, regardless of divine origin", Ely argued, "contains the principles which should animate the entire labor movement." He then remarked "All this is said entirely apart from my views as a church member. I come to it by an independent route as a social scientist."\(^71\) There was no distinction in Ely's mind between Christianity and social science. As one historian of the progressive era noted, "[Ely] brought religion back into the scientific world, a religion controlled and upheld by the concrete and unarguable facts of science; it was a religion of a progressive unfolding of truth."\(^72\) To identify with the new economics, one needed to sympathise with the "scientific" gospel of social salvation. In the process of

\(^69\)Ibid, 85.
\(^70\)Draft of a Report to the Historical Seminary, ibid, 4:423.
\(^71\)Ely, The Labour Movement, 321.
\(^72\)David W. Noble, The Paradox of Progressive Thought (Minneapolis, 1958), 166.
assimilating Ely's economic thought, Wilson fell under the influence of the theology that underlay it.

A newspaper report of a late-1889 lecture Wilson delivered at Brown University conveys this: “He would see every man who believed in the perfectibility of society within careful bounds a socialist, who believed in the perfectibility of society by slow growth and careful adaptation. It should be a state of mutual helpfulness when everyone should stand shoulder to shoulder. Such would be the golden age of civilization.” Yet perhaps the clearest proof is a letter Wilson wrote on August 26, 1887 to another leading figure of ethical-historical economics: John Bates Clark. This item is worth reproducing in its entirety:

I trust you will forgive me the liberty of a self-introduction for the purpose of thanking you for profit and pleasure derived from the perusal of your volume on the 'Philosophy of Wealth.' A constant pressure of college work prevented my reading the book in term time; but vacation has given me the leisure, and, having read the book, I feel under special obligations to its author. I feel that it has fertilized my own thought not only in the field of economics but also in the field of practical politics in which my special studies lie, and that besides refreshing me with its original views and methods, it has cheered me not a little by its spirit, its moderation and its Christianity. A sane, well-balanced sympathizer with organized labour is very dear to my esteem; and one who finds all the necessary stimulations of hope, not in chimeras or in hastened reformation, but in the slow processes of conservative endeavour is sure of my whole respect. I shall, I am sure, return to your book again and again with undiminished pleasure and sympathy, and I hope I may be allowed to subscribe myself your sincere friend.

The letter is of great significance. Wilson himself made the connection between new economic theory, “Christianity” and his evolving thought “in the field of practical politics”. So compelling was this new world view that he desired to be the “sincere friend” of its propounder. This refutes any claim that the new economics and liberal theology did not impact upon Wilson’s world view.

73 A Newspaper Report of a Lecture at Brown University, November 12, 1889, PWW, 6:421.
74 To John Bates Clark, August 26, 1887, ibid, 5:565.
Clark has been called "the greatest of American theoretical economists." His writings were "on a level with Ricardo, Senior, John Stuart Mill, Jevons and Marshall." Yet Clark was more than a technical economist. He achieved fame as a social philosopher, and came to be associated with Ely. In a review, Clark praised Ely for placing applied religion in proper relation to the question of class conflict. "The recognition of Christianity as the ultimate force and of the church as a chief agency for insuring the peace and welfare of economic society" was, Clark wrote, the key feature of Ely's work. This, he continued, "will commend [the book] to those who view with apprehension the estrangement between the church, as now organized and conducted and the working class." Clark's social philosophy resembled Ely's vision of a perfected social order in which organic cooperation had supplanted individualistic competition. This owed much to the fact that Clark, like Ely, had studied at Heidelberg under Knies. Like Ely, Clark was encouraged by Knies to view the phenomena of self-interest and private property in terms of historical development rather than as the manifestation of universal laws. When Clark returned to America in the mid 1870s, he took up a professorship in history and political economy at Carleton. He stayed there until 1882, then moved to Smith College. It was while at Smith that Clark published his most famous work, The Philosophy of Wealth. Economic Principles Newly Formulated. This book was a revised collection of the articles he had written for The New Englander. His aim was to wrest society from the control of classical economic theory and to discover "a "true teleology...the...ultimate goal of social...

75Everett, Religion in Economics, 26.
76E.R.A. Seligman, on the occasion of Clark's eightieth birthday, January 26, 1927. Quoted in ibid, 26.
78Ibid, 533.
79Everett, Religion in Economics, 33.
tendencies”. Classical theory was unsatisfactory because it had no sense of humanity's destiny. "The better elements of human nature were a forgotten factor in certain economic calculations", he wrote, "the man of the scientific formula was more mechanical and more selfish than the man of the actual world. A degraded conception of human nature vitiated the theory of the distribution of wealth." Clark approached political economy with the positive regard for human nature so characteristic of liberal theology. "Economic science", he continued, "found no adequate place for the intellectual activities of men, and made no important use of the fact that society is an organism, to be treated as a unit of discussion of many processes affecting wealth."

Clark's "revolt against the general spirit of the old political economy" stemmed from his rejection of the position that man was an hedonistic animal bent on sensual gratification. In keeping with the empirical approach, he argued that "Economic science has never been based on adequate anthropological study." Man, according to Clark, was a better creature than assumed by most economists. When the individual was studied in his organic relation to society, the immutable law of cooperation was revealed at work. "Every producer is serving the world," wrote Clark, "and the world is serving every consumer." He did not view human society as a chaotic lumping-together of competing individuals. In fact, society was an organism. Man was "the molecule of society...transformed in his whole being by the unifying process of social development."

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81Ibid., iii.
82Ibid., iii.
83Ibid., v.
84Ibid., 33.
85Ibid., 38.
86Ibid., 40.
As individuals became more interdependent, unselfishness would prevail. "Society of the highest type", Clark noted, "is not merely differentiated and cephalized. There is, indeed, in high civilization, increasing division of labour, and a progressive control of the social body by a thinking organ; but there exists, in a marked degree, a growing subordination of brain and members to the dictates of moral law. This is the great and neglected economic fact of modern times."87 The principle of "organic unity" was "every man for mankind".88 For too long, he wrote, "The great fact that society is an organic unit has been...forgotten, and the attention has been focused on individuals".89 Wilson was to echo these implicitly democratic ideas in *The State*. "Society", he wrote," is in no sense artificial; it is as truly natural and organic as the individual man himself....Society...is...a compact, living, organic whole, structural, not mechanical."90 Elsewhere, he defined society as "an organic association of individuals for mutual aid [to] self-development."91

"There is something deeper than competition", Clark concluded, "in the economic life of men".92 Having examined the forces at work in society, he was convinced "that the ultimate end of political economy is not, as generally assumed, the mere quantitative increase of wealth. Society, as an organic unit, has a higher economic end. That end is the attainment of the greatest quantity, the highest quality, and the most moral just distribution of wealth."93 In *The State*, Wilson marshalled the same argument. The aim of society, he argued in accordance with Clark, was to be "satisfying human wants and mitigating human sufferings".94 Wilson condemned that "selfish, misguided individualism" which had "magnified that self-interest

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87 Ibid., 41.
88 Ibid., 48.
89 Ibid., 70.
91 Ibid., 6:305.
92 Clark, *Philosophy of Wealth*, 204.
93 Ibid., 205.
94 From *The State*, *PWW*, 6:305.
which is grasping selfishness and has thrust out love and compassion".\textsuperscript{95} It was the role of government to counteract this modern industrial selfishness by fostering an equitable spirit in society by "forbidding child labor, by supervising the sanitary conditions of factories, by limiting the employment of women in occupations hurtful to their health, by instituting official tests of the purity or the quality of goods sold, by limiting hours of labour in certain trades".\textsuperscript{96} Such ideas derived from Clark's work.

While Clark did sympathise with the objectives of the socialist vision, he objected to its methods. Socialism, he argued, sought to educate society only after a new order had been established by violent overthrow. For Clark, conversely, the new order could only come into being after society had first been educated. The church had thus a special role to play in the moral evolution of mankind. Religion was important because it afforded individuals "an extra-economic motive".\textsuperscript{97} It could unite them "by bonds other than those of pecuniary interest."\textsuperscript{98}

When he referred to "the church", Clark did not mean the established order, which he criticised for its latter-day acquiescence to mammon. "The competitive system", he wrote, "has laid an evil hand upon the activities of the church."\textsuperscript{99} By allowing social distinction to enter into worship, organised religion was neglecting its unifying mission to humanity. "As the fountainhead of the chief moral and spiritual influence," Clark continued, "the church should be the great unifier, the principal author of that fraternal spirit on which higher industrial development depends. It is in fact, the promoter of class antagonism; by its method of gaining a revenue it is

\textsuperscript{95}Ibid, 6:305.
\textsuperscript{96}Ibid, 6:307.
\textsuperscript{97}Clark, Philosophy of Wealth, 194.
\textsuperscript{98}Ibid, 194.
\textsuperscript{99}Ibid, 231.
widening the gulf that needs to be closed."\textsuperscript{100} The church with which Clark identified was the Social Gospel movement. "Sackcloth and ashes", he claimed, "are the proper covering of the man who has made a good bargain."\textsuperscript{101} Social Christianity embodied the virtues on which the emerging selfless society would be grounded. "Upon arbitration, profit-sharing, and full cooperation must be our dependence for the solution of the labour problem", asserted Clark. "The cooperative principle in its different forms is the Christian socialism of Maurice, Kingsley, Hughes, and their worthy co-laborers."\textsuperscript{102}

Accordingly, the purpose of religion was to educate all of society in the ways of non-competitive economics. "In a literal sense", Clark wrote of the church, "its field is the world; and while it may hasten the advent of earthly peace by gathering men more rapidly into its spiritual fold, it may also hasten the spiritual work by promoting outward harmony."\textsuperscript{103} Any discrimination by the church against particular groups within society placed it at odds with God's redemptive plan for the world. "The church", Clark asserted, "must...scatter... moral nutriment...on a democratic principle."\textsuperscript{104}

The church's educative mission was not seen as limited to American society. Clark's vision of a transformed society was avowedly internationalist. The scattering of moral nutriment on a "democratic principle" was taken to include all humanity. When the peoples of the world had been educated in selflessness and service, an organic union of nations would appear. This was Clark's ultimate teleology of political economy. He wrote: "The growth of [cooperative]

\textsuperscript{100}Ibid. 233.
\textsuperscript{101}Ibid. 162.
\textsuperscript{102}Ibid. 196.
\textsuperscript{103}Ibid. 236.
\textsuperscript{104}Ibid. 234.
influences... is a matter of history. They have grown...extensively as tribes have united into nations, and as nations, by the development of international law, have taken on the rudimentary form", Clark ventured to predict, "of what promises to be a world state, an organic unity bounded by no narrower limits than those of the globe we inhabit. There is no quarter of the world, at present, unreached by ethical influences, and none, consequently, where the competitive impulse is not subject to some limitations." 105

The democratic organism that underpinned ethical historical economics was part of a broader intellectual movement then sweeping Western civilisation. Ely and Clark were giving voice to conceptions prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century. This is what confers lasting importance on the story of Woodrow Wilson's discovery of democratic collectivism. A figure linking the early and late nineteenth century, Wilson was a profoundly transitional figure who embodied and symbolised developments occurring in the international intellectual community of which he was a member. Wilson's sympathy with the vision of a non-competitive economic order would find its ultimate expression in his 1919 addresses. Throughout the Western speaking tour, he frequently referred to the Treaty of Versailles as the "Magna Carta of Labor". 106 On September 25, for example, Wilson argued

If we do not have this treaty of peace, labor will continue to be not what it ought to be- a human function, but a purchasable commodity throughout the world. There is incorporated in the articles of this great treaty a Magna Carta of labor. There is set up a means of periodical examination of the conditions of labor all over the world... it is the duty of the nations of the world to study the methods of labor and raise the scale of human labor.... Men are not going to work and produce what they should produce if they feel they are not justly treated. And if you want to realize the real wealth of this country, then bring about the human relationship between employers and employees which will make them co-laborers and partners and fellow

105 Ibid, 153.
workers.\textsuperscript{107}

In a Minnesota address, Wilson spoke of the principle that must animate all industrial reform. The principle, he said, "is that the interests of capital and interests of labor are not different but are the same, and men of business sense ought to know how to work out an organization which will express that identity of interest. Where there is identity of interest there must be community of interest. You can't any longer regard labor as a commodity. You have got to regard it as a means of association- the association of physical skill and physical vigor with the enterprise which is managed by those who represent capital."\textsuperscript{108}

Thus, the ethical-historical economics of Ely and Clark was to become integral to the Wilsonian vision. Wilson's conversion to democracy as a political principle stemmed from his conversion to the ideal, as set out in \textit{The Philosophy of Wealth}, of a democratic industrial order. This linkage between Wilson's economic and political views found its clearest rendering in an address delivered in Billings, Montana, on September 11. "The central fact of the modern world is universal unrest", he observed, "and the unrest is not due merely to the excitement of a recent war. The unrest is not due merely to the fact of recent extraordinary circumstances. It is due to a universal conviction that the conditions under which men live and labor are not satisfactory. It is a conviction all over the world that there is no use talking about political democracy unless you have also industrial democracy."\textsuperscript{109} With monopolies, explained Wilson, "there can be no industrial democracy. With the control of the few, of whatever kind or class, there can be no democracy of any sort. The world is finding that out, in some portions of it in blood and terror."\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{107}An Address in the Denver Auditorium, September 25, 1919, \textit{ibid}, 63:497.
3. **Wilson and the modern democratic state**

The guiding assumptions of ethical-historical economics differed drastically from Dr. Wilson's world view. Covenant theology conceived of man as innately sinful, whereas the Social Gospel was grounded on the liberal view that man was essentially benevolent and thus perfectible. "Sin", argued Social Gospel theologians, was the result not of man's true nature, but of outward corrupting influences. Dr. Wilson held to the opposite view. The temporal world, he held, had been corrupted by man's indelible sin, and was therefore beyond redemption. He did not share the liberal Protestant vision of a world made perfect by the moral law of selflessness and service. Dr. Wilson's teleology was focused, rather, on the next life. Those whose hearts contained grace would pass out of the human sphere to spend eternity with God. Eternal damnation awaited the graceless many. Ely and Clark, conversely, laid greater emphasis on the ethical imperative of social relationships. Service to others was their religious preoccupation. When individuals came to deal with each other in accord with Christ's morality, the Kingdom of God be realised here on earth.

During his early youth, Wilson identified with the Covenantant republicanism of his father. This had a great impact on his protean political thought. Yet, by the mid-1880s, a metamorphosis was occurring in Wilson's outlook. Ely's social Christianity had come to command his attention. On reading Clark's *Philosophy of Wealth*, as Wilson himself admitted, he immediately felt drawn to the alternative reading of Christianity that pervaded it. Wilson's adulatory letter to Clark was a reflection of his changing political thought. The premise of ethical-historical economics was that society is an organic union. It was axiomatic to Ely that individuals related to society just as body parts relate atomistically to the individual.
The welfare of one member was inextricably bound to the welfare of all, and vice versa. Society was not seen to be divided into a myriad of competing interests and classes. There was no sense that the wise few should rule over the ignorant many. Rather, the organic community was seen to regulate itself. It followed from this that democracy was a desirable political philosophy. This was to have a profound effect on Wilson’s thought, as his subsequent compositions were to show. The most important of these were a treatise entitled “The Modern Democratic State” (1885); an essay entitled “The Study of Administration” (1886) and an address delivered on the centennial of Washington’s inauguration entitled “A Commemorative Address”.

In December 1885, Wilson produced a treatise on the nature of the modern democratic state. He had begun writing in October of that year, prompted, it very much seems, by a desire to clarify his own changing thought. Some four years later, Wilson recalled that the treatise had been “a task, not of origination, but of interpretation. Interpret the age: i.e. interpret myself. Account for the creed I hold in politics.” These remarks indicated that the treatise should be read as an attempt on Wilson’s part to make sense of the new ideas with which he now identified. The treatise is thus of great importance, because it reveals that this former opponent of universal suffrage had come to accept democracy as the way of the future. This work was a major turning point in Wilson’s intellectual development. His

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112 This point has never been adequately grasped. Though it is true that other scholars have remarked on the 1885 treatise on modern democracy, none have really seen it for what it essentially was: a departure from the republican tradition with which Wilson had earlier identified. While Thomas J. Knock called the piece “a little-known benchmark” (*To End All Wars*, 5), he did not attempt to contrast it with Wilson’s earlier works. The overall effect of Knock’s argument was to imply that Wilson’s treatise represented not a departure so much as a continuation. Of those scholars who have dealt with the subject of Wilson’s intellectual development, perhaps Niels Aage Thorsen came closest to understanding the full significance of the 1885 treatise. He even referred to “radical changes in Wilson’s vocabulary” (*The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson, 1875-1912* (Princeton, 1988), 96). Yet this tantalising phrase was not developed by Thorsen, who neglected to present the republican nature of Wilson’s pre-1885 thought. The effect of Thorsen’s discussion, again, is to imply continuity.
previous writings had dealt with specific constitutional forms, but the treatise evidenced a new focus on broader themes. As the editors of Wilson's papers have aptly observed, "The Modern Democratic State" marked "the beginning of what would become Wilson's long and systematic study of the origins, development, and problems of democracy in the modern world."\footnote{Editorial Note, ibid, 5:55.}

Wilson began the treatise with some qualifying remarks. Democracy, he admitted, had not yet perfected the world. "All this was to have been expected", he wrote, because never "a doctrine arrogated to itself absolute truth and perfect nutriment for all men alike but was eventually convicted of being only relatively true".\footnote{A Treatise ("The Modern Democratic State"), December 1, 1885, ibid, 5:61.}

Nonetheless, continued Wilson, "By common consent...modern democracy still stands first among the few politics which are for the future. If stripped of all false claims to recognition, it still has many solid claims remaining. It is, indeed, more than ever a matter of deep moment to the world whether the Democratic State prove a success or failure. If not the cap-stone, it must in any case be the foundation of the future structure of politics. Men cannot turn back to the systems which they have rejected; advance or catastrophe is their alternative: and if a democratic polity based on individual initiative prove a failure, they will, apparently, be tempted to grope on, in the doubtful light of Socialism, towards a democratic polity based on communal initiative. Democratic in any case the future system must be."\footnote{Ibid, 5:62.}

It is illuminating to compare this last remark with what Wilson had written on July 4, 1876.\footnote{From Wilson's Shorthand Diary, July 4, 1876, ibid, 1:148-149.} The Princeton undergraduate had scoffed at the popular view of the American Revolution and had also predicted that democracy in America would collapse within fifty years. Hence, it was indicative of a dramatic shift in his
political perceptions that Wilson now made the prediction that democracy would be
the basis of "the future system". This 1885 treatise on the modern democratic state
was thus the first instance in which elements of Wilson's Presidential world view
were clearly discernible. It was a world view born not of Covenant theology and
republicanism, but of the social philosophy that Wilson encountered at the Johns
Hopkins. Wilson had now come to view democracy not as a dangerous
philosophical abstraction but as a product of the organic development of English-
speaking peoples. It would not have been possible for him to conceive of
democracy thus had it not been for the influence of ethical-historical economics.
"Democracy is...wrongly conceived", he explained, "when treated as merely a body
of doctrine. It is a stage of development. It is not created by aspirations or by new
faith; it is built up by slow habit. Its process is experience, its basis old wont, its
meaning national organic oneness and effectual life. It comes like manhood,
as the fruit of youth: immature peoples cannot have it, and the maturity to which it is
vouchsafed is the maturity of freedom and self-control, and no other. It is conduct,
and its only stable foundation is character." 117

Wilson's emphasis on organic development led him to differentiate modern
democracy from its classical predecessor. An implied teleology thus crept into his
analysis. "I take it to be a conception absolutely prerequisite to any competent study
of the development of the modern state", he wrote, "that the...democracy which is
now becoming dominant is a new democracy". 118 Modern democracy, unlike the
ancient, embodied a new spirit of total inclusivity. "The democracy of the modern
state is utterly incompatible with slavery in any form, and denies all class
subordination. Its citizenship is as wide", Wilson continued, "as its adult
population. The citizenship of the ancient state, on the contrary, never stretched

118 Ibid., 5:80.
farther than to a minority of its adult subjects. It was, at widest, an exclusive privilege.\textsuperscript{119}

Democracy, Wilson argued, became more inclusive in proportion to the growth of organic unity on a national scale. "The new conditions of modern political life are not merely new conditions: they are new essences. They enter into the very blood of political systems. First amongst these conditions," he wrote, "there is the popular and territorial size of the modern democracy. Unlike the city democracies of ancient Greece and medieval Italy, it has a life which includes the whole nation. There is no field limit to its active citizenship. Unlike Rome it is not a single narrow state driving the world with looser or tighter rein, but a vast state with autonomous life in every part and yet a common life and purpose, with as many centres of self-directive energy as units of organization and yet with voluntary ardour and unhampered facility of cooperation— not a head organism with huge dependent parts, but itself a single giant organism with a stalwart, common strength and an abounding life in individual limb and sinew."\textsuperscript{120} Wilson's implication that humanity been moving throughout recorded history toward a final destination. It was the destiny of society to become "a single great organism", and democracy was the means by which this unifying end would be achieved. "Democracy", Wilson continued, "is the fullest form of state life: it is the completest possible realization of corporate, cooperate state life for a whole people. The limits of its benefits is the limit of the benefits of cooperation."\textsuperscript{121}

The vast scale of the modern democratic state meant that the masses still did not directly govern. Rather, wrote Wilson, "The national will centres and acts in the

\textsuperscript{119}ibid, 5:80.
\textsuperscript{120}ibid, 5:81-2.
\textsuperscript{121}ibid, 5:92.
nation's representatives. Legislature and executive are the head and mouth of the nation. Judges are the spokesmen of its judgements. Elections transmit the forces of thought and purpose and sentiment from every part of the vast organism to these chief, these capital organs. The will of the organic national community was interpreted by a small educated class. The health of a democratic state, he asserted, "depends upon the character of the few who act for the whole....No democracy can live without a leisured class capable of thinking on the problems of government and in a position to think upon them in the light of the most catholic learning." Wilson now conceived of a "leisured class" interpreting, not originating, the national will. He did not propose government of the wise few over the ignorant many. This shows that Wilson's political thought was no longer republican in essence. The function of those who governed was to represent, not check, the demos. "Those who act for [the people]", Wilson explained, "must have power...to resist all hasty public judgements, but chance to disobey no long, final public judgements." Ultimately, the will of the people must prevail. Though the demos did not directly govern, government nevertheless gave realisation to its greater and soberer aims.

Teleology generally requires a supernatural engine, and, like Ely and Clark, Wilson saw in history the progressive unfolding of God's will. True to the spirit of the Social Gospel, Wilson equated the realisation of democracy with the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth. "If democracy fulfil the best and most characteristic of its promises", he wrote, "its coming will be the establishment of the most humane results of the world's peace and progress". The goal of political development, he continued, "is identical with the goal of individual development.

122 ibid., 5:85.
123 ibid., 5:86.
124 ibid., 5:86.
125 ibid., 5:90.
Both singly and collectively man's nature draws him away from that which is brutish towards that which is human- away from his kinship with beasts towards a fuller realization of his kinship with God.”\textsuperscript{126}

While it is true that Dr. Wilson's sermons had alluded to the moral development of the individual, he never once suggested that society as a whole would come to realise its kinship with God. This consideration serves to highlight the growing divergence of Woodrow's religious sensibilities from his father's world view. Man's collective nature, as far as Dr. Wilson was concerned, was destined to flow on in its corruption like a rock-bound river. "Human nature is, you know, all the while repeating itself", he had asserted.\textsuperscript{127} This was a cyclical view of history at odds with Woodrow's emerging linear philosophy of human progress.

The treatise also reveals that Wilson's discovery of democracy led him to a new understanding of America's role in the world. "Nothing seems more fully assured", he wrote, "that America will continue to be the theatre of the broadest developments of democratic practice."\textsuperscript{128} The reason for this, Wilson continued, was that nowhere else "are there so few things to hinder the free action of social and political forces. It is not predominant power which makes government obeyed and respected in America, but civic principle. We are bound by common consent. Moreover we are not entangled by foreign alliances or saddled with standing armies. Both our energies and our resources are free for the tasks and privileges of peaceful development. Every circumstance invites us to attempt a uniform organization of the people for self-help and self-defence in order that, through that organization, we may work out purified and perfected types of democracy.”\textsuperscript{129} This

\textsuperscript{126}Ibid, 5:90.
\textsuperscript{127}Sermon 8, 5.
\textsuperscript{128}"The Modern Democratic State", \textit{PWW}, 5:92.
\textsuperscript{129}Ibid, 5:92
view of America's role was not truly "Wilsonian". Wilson did not yet envision that America had a providential mission or that the peoples of the world were ready to receive American democracy. Yet, despite this important consideration, it is significant that Wilson no longer made the prediction that America would inevitably fall back on the anti-democratic wisdom of the Old World.

Despite Wilson's insistence that modern democracy belonged to transplanted English-race communities, he did allow for the possibility that, over time, all might come to share in it. "Democracy in America", he wrote, "and in the Eng. colonies, has had, almost from the first, a truly organic growth."\(^{130}\) If other races learned from this and allowed democratic habits to develop organically, they too could eventually have democracy. Their historic mistake had been to wrongly conceive of democracy as a mere body of doctrine. They had "panted toward democracy through constant revolution" instead of cultivating it "by slow and steady stages of deliberate & peaceful development".\(^{131}\) Non-English races were thus in grave need of political instruction. Democracy, Wilson pointed out, "is the heritage of races purged alike of hasty, barbaric passions and of patient servility to rulers, and schooled in temperate common counsel...It can never be made to sit easily or safely on first generations, but strengthens through long heredity."\(^{132}\) To this end, Wilson specifically called upon "American writers...to endeavour to turn the world's thought, with their own, to broader outlooks and larger conceptions than have hitherto prevailed concerning the essential nature, organization, and aims of the Democratic State."\(^{133}\) The broader outlook to which Wilson referred was, of course, the idea that democracy was the fruit of steady organic development. In

\(^{130}\)Ibid, 5:67.
\(^{131}\)Ibid, 5:63.
\(^{132}\)Ibid, 5:71.
\(^{133}\)Ibid, 5:70.
other words, it was left to America to be the purger of humanity's barbaric passions, the schooler in common counsel.

Before Wilson began his graduate study at the Johns Hopkins, his political views bore no relation to this treatise on the democratic state. His 1881 essay on the new South, for example, had urged that suffrage be limited. Not only blacks, but "ignorant whites" too were to be excluded from the political life of the community. The idea that the state is an organic community was as yet unknown to Wilson. He still associated the term "democracy" with classical demagoguery. In an unpublished letter to the editor of a Wilmington newspaper, he had blamed the political philosophy associated with Andrew Jackson, that is, popular sovereignty, for the loss of America's "political virtue". By late 1885, however, Wilson had revised his earlier judgement. "It has been said", he noted, "that the autocratic ascendancy of Andrew Jackson illustrates anew the long credited tendency of democracies to give themselves over to one man."154 This was the same criticism of democracy that Wilson had himself once made. Now, however, he urged readers to view the excesses of the Jackson era in proper perspective. "The country is now older than it was when Andrew Jackson delighted in his power", Wilson explained, "and few can believe that it would again approve and applaud childish arrogance and ignorant arbitrariness like his: but even in his case, singular and ominous as it was, it cannot be overlooked that he was suffered only to strain the Constitution, not to break it. He held his office by orderly election; he exercised it within the letter of the law; he could silence not one word of hostile criticism; and, his second term expired, he passed into private life as harmlessly as did James Monroe."155 In ancient democracies, Wilson argued, the rise of potential demagogues like Jackson had been a perennial danger. However, the modern democratic state was able to

absorb such threats. This was because the modern democratic state, unlike the ancient, had developed out of a self-regulating organic community. Its collective virtue was stronger than individual vaulting ambition. Wilson now drew a positive conclusion from the Jackson era, and this symbolised his growing accommodation with democracy in America.

It is worth comparing Wilson’s treatise on the democratic state with *Congressional Government*, which was the culmination of his pre-Johns Hopkins political thought. Many of its arguments had appeared in earlier essays. This book, published to great acclaim in early 1885, was an overt critique of committee government and a subtle attack on the notion of popular sovereignty. In the first days of the republic, Wilson argued, checks and balances had preserved the health of the polity. However, with the advent of democracy, the voice of the people had become dangerously predominant. “The noble charter of fundamental law given us by the Convention of 1787 is still our Constitution”, he wrote, “but it is now our form of government rather in name than in reality, the form of the Constitution being one of nicely adjusted, ideal balances, whilst the actual form of our present government is simply a scheme of congressional supremacy.”136 Strictly speaking, the term “congressional” refers to both the House of Representatives and the Senate, yet the bulk of Wilson’s text was levelled at the former institution. By “Congress”, therefore, Wilson specifically referred to the House of Representatives. As the House is directly representative of the people, “congressional supremacy” equated, therefore, with the supremacy of the people. The failure of the House of Representatives to effect good government was thus, in effect, the failure of the people.

Committee government was the chief evil resulting from the reign of the people's parliament. By the term "committee government", Wilson referred to the practice of entrusting legislation to the forty-seven Standing Committees of Congressmen appointed by the Speaker of the House. This decentralised approach meant that "The House virtually both deliberates and legislates in small sections. Time would fail it to discuss all the bills brought in, for they every session number thousands....Accordingly, no futile attempt is made to do anything of the kind."\textsuperscript{137} The Standing Committees therefore enjoyed an imperious authority, which meant that the legislative process took place behind closed doors in a corrupting atmosphere of unaccountability. The spirit of debate, which had flourished in earlier times, had virtually disappeared from government in the United States. In practice, whatever the Standing Committees recommended was almost always enacted. "It would seem, therefore", Wilson noted, "that...the House of Representatives, delegates not only its legislative but its deliberative functions to its Standing Committees. The little public debate that arises under the stringent and urgent rules of the House is formal rather than effective, and it is the discussions which take place in the Committees that give form to legislation."\textsuperscript{138} In other words, the unadulterated reign of the people had given rise to an untransparent, anonymous and unaccountable legislative process. "The British system", on the other hand, "is perfected party government."\textsuperscript{139} It was imperative, Wilson argued, that government in the United States should come to model itself on British cabinet government. In a cabinet government, checks and balances were preserved. Legislation originated not with murky committees but with accountable ministers appointed by the Executive. Bills were then presented to the representatives of the people and either enacted or rejected. "Under such a system mere silent voting is

\textsuperscript{137}ibid, 4:47.
\textsuperscript{138}ibid, 4:54.
\textsuperscript{139}ibid, 4:72.
out of the question; debate is a primary necessity. It brings the representatives of
the people and the ministers of the Crown face to face....The two estates sit as it
were in committee on the management of the public business."140 The benefit of
such a system, Wilson argued, was that neither the people nor the monarch
controlled the administration of the commonweal. This state of affairs appealed to
his republican outlook, which insisted that absolute power reside with no faction.
Where the American system erred was in allowing the representatives of the people
to monopolize legislation. "Only the Senate", he noted with some relief, "saves us
often from the headlong popular tyranny."141 The United States "may be said to be
a limited democracy because of the Senate. This has...proved the chief value of that
upper chamber....It is valuable in our democracy in proportion as it is
undemocratic"142, wrote the same Wilson who later sought to make the world safe
for democracy and supported a 1913 constitutional amendment to require the
popular election of senators.

*Congressional Government* unmistakably belonged to the republican political
tradition. The state was not viewed as an organic national community in which all
classes were linked in service and sympathy to one another. Rather, Wilson's
whole argument was constructed on the premise that competition was inevitable
between the wise few and the ignorant many. There was not one organic
community, but several distinct communities, rather, whose divergent goals and
interests must be balanced. Wilson's aim was to alert his countrymen to the harm
caused by unchecked popular sovereignty. The United States, he implied, was too
democratic for its own good. America needed to emulate the British system and
become, in effect, a limited democracy.

140Ibid, 4:72-3.
141Ibid, 4:127.
142Ibid, 4:127.
A comparative reading of *Congressional Government* and the 1885 treatise on modern democracy reveals that Wilson had been converted to democracy at Johns Hopkins. Instead of America coming to copy Britain's limited democracy, he now envisioned Britain following America's democratic advance. "England herself", predicted Wilson, "is close upon democracy."\(^{143}\) What had held the English back for so long, he argued, was the weight of their feudal past. "Her backwardness", Wilson continued, "in entering upon [democracy's] full practice is no less instructive than the forwardness of her off-spring as to the conditions prerequisite to democracy. She sent out to all her colonies which escaped the luckless beginning of being made a penal settlement, comparatively small, homogenous, populations of pioneers with strong instincts of self-govt. and no materials out of which to build govt. otherwise than democratically. She herself, meanwhile, retained masses of population never habituated to participation in govt[,] untaught in political principle either by the teachers of the hustings or of the school-house. She has had to approach democracy by slow and cautious extensions of the franchise to those prepared for it; her better colonies were born in democracy and had to receive all comers into its pale."\(^{144}\) Thus, within the short space of a year, Wilson's world view had undergone significant change.

Wilson's treatise on modern democracy was composed within a year of the publication of *Congressional Government*. The two works were contemporaneous, despite their essential dissimilarity. One was republican in outlook, the other democratic. This is indicative of the dramatic state of flux to which Wilson's world

\(^{143}\) *Ibid*, 4:76.

\(^{144}\)*The Modern Democratic State*. *Ibid*, 5:76. Despite Wilson's disdain for the democratic prospects of colonies which had begun as penal settlements, he did include Australia among the "better colonies" of Britain. Democracy, he wrote, "existed...in Australia...virtually from the first". *Ibid*, 5:63.
view was subject during the period. *Congressional Government* was, in fact, the swan song of Wilson's subordination to his father's teaching. It belonged to a political tradition at odds with the new ideas he was encountering at Johns Hopkins. Wilson's discovery of democracy was something of a delayed reaction to the new influences working upon him. Only slowly did he come to see the world through the eyes of Richard T. Ely. However, once this change had taken place, he was a new man. Wilson made no subsequent regression to the republicanism of his early youth.145

Wilson's other important works from this period were built on the intellectual foundations laid out in his treatise on modern democracy. In "The Study of Administration", for example, Wilson sought to show how the American civil service might be better organised so as to accord with the spirit of democracy. "The end which I have proposed for administrative study in America", he explained, "is the discovery of the best means of constituting a civil service cultured and self-sufficient enough to act with sense and vigour and yet so connected with popular thought by means of elections and constant public counsel as to find arbitrariness out of the question."146 The premise upon which Wilson's study was grounded was that "popular thought" must hold sway in the day-to-day running of the nation. America would not tolerate the rise of "an offensive official class, a distinct, semi-corporate body with sympathies divorced from those of the progressive, free-spirited people whom they would serve, and hearts narrowed to a compass of a bigoted officialism."147 The problem, as Wilson saw it, was how to combine European, autocratic administrative methods with American principles: "It is harder for democracy to organize administration than for monarchy.... We have enthroned

145This is evidenced by Wilson's other writings from the period, which reiterated the themes first expounded in the treatise on modern democracy.
public opinion; and it is forbidden us to hope during its reign for any quick schooling of the sovereign in executive expertness or in the conditions of perfect functional balance in government. The very fact that we have realized popular rule in its fulness has made the task of organizing that rule just so much the more difficult."\(^4\) Wilson's point was that decentralisation in America had led to waste, mismanagement and inefficiency, because public administration lacked reference to deep and abiding principles of operation. Therefore, the object of administrative study, he continued, was "to rescue executive methods from the confusion and costliness of empirical experiment and set them deep upon foundations laid deep in stable principle."\(^5\)

The solution Wilson proposed was similar to the argument contained in the treatise on modern democracy. A special class was needed to interpret and put into effect the will of the people. The masses ought not govern directly, he argued, because this led to the present confusion. Wilson was clear on this point: "The problem is to make public opinion efficient without suffering it to be meddlesome. Directly exercised, in the oversight of the daily details and in the choice of the daily means of government, public criticism is of course a clumsy nuisance".\(^6\) The babble of disparate opinions- and interests- was to be ignored, yet this was no disavowal of democracy. A reservoir of popular wisdom underlay the confusions and passions of the moment, and it was this into which administrators must tap for their guidance and inspiration. "If we would employ [the science of administration]", insisted Wilson, "we must Americanize it, and that not formally, in language merely, but radically, in thought, principle, and aim as well. It must learn our constitutions by heart; must get the bureaucratic fever out of its veins; must inhale much free

\(^{4}\)"The Study of Administration", \textit{ibid}, 5:368.
\(^{6}\)\textit{Ibid}, 5:374-5.
American air." The difference between American and European administration was that the former would be guided by the general will- as opposed to specific wills- of the people, while the latter sought to impose its authority on the people. "The principles on which to base a science of administration for America", concluded Wilson, "must be principles which have democratic policy very much at heart." 

This essay on the study of administration shows that the democratic metaphysic was now at the heart of Wilson's political thought. The governed and the governors were not classes apart, but related components, rather, of an organic whole. While Wilson remained critical of some aspects of the democratic state, he had ceased to criticise democracy itself. Indeed, it was a sign of his new regard for democracy that Wilson now began applying his mind to the task of its improvement. In his Washington Centennial address, Wilson focused on what he saw as another challenge facing democracy in America: the rapid influx of immigrants of non-British origin. "We may boast", he began, "that we have led the modern movement of Politics: that it is at our hands that popular liberty has received its most absolute test and its highest confirmation. Never before we gave them scope of empire had the principles of democratic government received more than a narrow local application." As he had argued in the treatise on modern democracy, Wilson proposed that democracy in America had sprung from the habits and collective character of an organic community: the British race. America did not lead the world in popular government because she had invented a new doctrine, but because she had understood an ancient one. "We are great", he said, "because of what we perfected & fulfilled, not because of anything we discovered". In other words.

151 Ibid., 5:364.  
152 Ibid., 5:379.  
153 Ibid., 6:177.  
154 Ibid., 6:179.
democracy came down to character. Some peoples could have it, yet others—being immature—could not. "It is an organic principle", Wilson continued, "a principle of life, renewed and being renewed. Democratic institutions are never done—they are, like the living tissue, always a-making." Yet Wilson’s new sense of pride in the nation’s past—a development surely linked to his acceptance of democracy—was tempered by concern for the future. American democracy had grown into empire of liberty, his argument ran, because of British habits. How, then, would the politics of the organic community fare as different bloods entered the polity? Would the democracy born of the British race be swamped by the influx of immigrants whose habits were undemocratic? Since 1789, Wilson continued, "we have been steadily receiving into our midst and to full participation in our national life the very people whom their home politics have familiarized with revolution: our own equable blood we have suffered to receive into it the most feverish bloods of the old world." Because of this destabilising presence, Wilson argued, America faced "an ever-increasing difficulty of self-possession with ever-deteriorating materials: for your only reliable stuff in this strain of politics is Character."

The challenge facing the next American century was the incorporation of these immature peoples into the Anglo-Saxon democratic community. "It behooves us once and again to stand face to face with our ideals", Wilson concluded. "The tasks of the future", he pointed out, "are not to be less but greater than the tasks of the past: it is our part to improve even the giant breed of [which] we come— to return to the high-statured ages: to weld our people together in a patriotism as pure, a wisdom as elevated, a virtue as sound as those of the greater generation whom today we hold in special and grateful remembrance". Wilson did not elaborate on

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156 Ibid, 6:181.
158 Ibid, 6:182.
how this welding of Americans into a pure patriotism was to be done. "This is not the place or the occasion for the discussion of policies", 159 he stated. The value of this address lay more in the sort of questions it raised. Here was Wilson already deeply concerned about purifying American life, and the preservation of democracy was his prime goal.

It is important to note that Wilson's understanding of democracy did undergo subsequent modification. A sense of cautious exclusivity pervaded the pieces examined above. While Wilson had undoubtedly come around to democracy, he did not view it as America's mission to bequeath it to humanity. This was the crucial difference between Wilson as a young professor and the campaigning Wilson of 1910, fired with the Bancroftian myths of American nationalism. Yet when Wilson's political point of origin is considered, the changes portrayed in this chapter appear dramatic nonetheless. A fully-fledged republican who once inclined to the Hamiltonian view that the educated and propertied classes of a country ought to govern it had come to embrace popular sovereignty. To be sure, Wilson still had some qualifications and concerns about democracy, but the essence of his mature views was in place.

159Ibid, 6:182.
4. **Wilson's identity crisis and its relation to his intellectual development**

The period with which this chapter has dealt may thus be viewed as an intermediate stage between Wilson the Covenanter republican and the emergence of the Wilson of official history. The following chapter will reveal how Wilson's regard for democracy- and for America's role in its propagation- progressed further. Yet, before leaving this period of Wilson's life, it is first necessary to complete our consideration of the personal drama described at the opening of this chapter. Our understanding of Wilson's turn to democracy may be further enriched by considering the psychological process that accompanied it. This chapter began with an illustration of the Eriksonian identity crisis which saw Woodrow seeking to establish an independent identity. It helps to explain why Wilson underwent this intellectual transformation. The "Anti-Sham" letters and the ill-fated Hattie Woodrow episode were suggestive of a strong ego struggling to break free from old bonds. "Democracy", as Wilson understood it, spoke directly to this deep-seated need. As a political philosophy, it was to be his vehicle to personal greatness in the name of selfless service. This consideration helps to account for Wilson's receptivity to the ideas he encountered at Johns Hopkins. With their emphasis on society, democracy and collective redemption, Ely and Clark represented a break from the strictures of Dr. Wilson's world view. Wilson seized upon the teachings of ethical-historical economics because this new learning symbolised emancipation from parental authority. He had come to Johns Hopkins seeking such an outlet, and the formal intellectual influences to which he was exposed thus became intertwined with his interior life.
The relationship between Wilson and his father began to change the Johns Hopkins period. This stage was both the beginning of a great upsurge in Woodrow's earthly fortunes and the continuation of Dr. Wilson's decline. Woodrow's dependence on his father fell away as he grew more self-assured as a scholar, teacher and husband. In building his own life, it was necessary to dispense with the old, particularly as the old had been so dominant previously. This shift in the familial balance of power is the key to understanding Woodrow's shift from republicanism to democracy.

In early youth, when Wilson's ego had been subordinate to his father's will, his world view was an extension of Dr. Wilson's Covenant theology. However, as Wilson grew more independent- a process which began with his rejection of the legal profession- his world view was transformed. This transformation found symbolic expression in Dr. Wilson's bewildered response to his son's late-1885 treatise on modern democracy: "I have read...with great care [yet] I must complain", he admitted, "that it was not until I was far into the contents of your 90, (odd), sheets, the light dawned upon me as to what it was all about...as a whole it certainly is obscure".160 Schooled in a different tradition, Dr. Wilson was unable to understand the new learning to which Woodrow had been exposed at Johns Hopkins.

As we turn now to an examination of the correspondence between Wilson and his father, this subtle interplay between Eriksonian psychological conflict and Woodrow's changing political thought should be kept in mind. The general impression conveyed by these letters is that Dr. Wilson was beginning to feel increasingly neglected by his son. A note of reproach often crept into the aging preacher's correspondence. In February 1886, shortly after Woodrow's marriage

160From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, December 12, 1885, ibid, 5:92.
to Ellen Louise Axson, Dr. Wilson expressed an inquisitive desire to know more about his son’s new life: “We often and often... look in upon dear Ellie and yourself. Our peeps are indeed not so satisfactory as they would be were we to possess a picture of your rooms.... Can the much-seaming little helpmeet spare an hour to pencil this needed help?”161 He then wrote, as if to imply that Woodrow did not yet understand a doting parent’s pain of separation: “Ah, dearest son, we love, we love you both; and in a way that you will better comprehend one day.”162 Dr. Wilson also asked his son about matters spiritual: “Tell me—what are your church relations? Not yet have you alluded to this subject.”163 There was more than a hint of concern in this last remark. Had Woodrow, in his temporal contentment, begun to overlook his duty to Christ the redeemer?

This letter reveals that a distance of incomprehension had grown between Wilson and his father. It is clear that Dr. Wilson no longer had as intimate a knowledge of his son’s condition as he had enjoyed in the past. The sense of isolation to which he was prone was manifested in subsequent letters. In April 1887, for example, he wrote “Of course I think of you and yours constantly, but now all the more intensely because never was I placed in such solitude as I am now experiencing.”164 He then tried to prick Woodrow’s conscience by remarking “Dont [sic] put yourself to the trouble of writing to me. I simply wished, in my extreme loneliness, to talk, if even for a few minutes only, with one who I have no doubt still loves me, and will say, ah me! in the way of sympathy. Love to dear Ellie & all, if they continue to remember me.”165 The pith of this letter lay in this rather plaintive concluding remark, in which Dr. Wilson openly wondered if Woodrow’s new wife ever spared:

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161 From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, February 17, 1886, *ibid, 5:124.
a thought for parents-in-law. Barbs such as these could not have been included without design. It was Dr. Wilson's intention to make his son feel guilty and thus write home more frequently. Letters were prized because they symbolised a continuing regard and subordination. That Dr. Wilson constantly craved these proofs of affection indicates that a state of insecurity underlay his relations with Woodrow.

As the interval between their letters grew longer, Dr. Wilson was forced to state openly the concerns that had figured implicitly in previous communications: "We are becoming uneasy because of Bryn Mawr's silence. We are of course sure that neither you nor dear Ellie is sick (very), or the well one w'd have written: still our hearts yearn for a little word at intervals not so long. You are no doubt busy as you can be, and so possibly is Ellie, yet a postal (that last resort of the overwhelmed) would be better than nothing."\

166 Some months later, his letter still unanswered, Dr. Wilson reiterated the request in blunter fashion: "Can you or Ellie not find time", he snapped, "to write even a postal? We are hungry for news". An October 1887 letter shows that the situation did not improve. Dr. Wilson's opening remark revealed his preoccupation: "Not having heard from you, or of yours, for now a good while, I have taken it into my heart to feel uneasy."\

167 It is difficult to construct a complete picture of how Wilson reacted to his father's affection-seeking comments. There is an unfortunate dearth of extant letters from Woodrow to his father, and those that are extant do not, in the main, touch upon the subject of their relations. This silence on Woodrow's part was revealing. On the one hand, Dr. Wilson was effusive in his expression of affection and dependence.

168 From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, April 29, 1887, ibid, 5:499.
169 From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, with Enclosure, June 11, 1887, ibid, 5:516.
168 From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, October 24, 1887, ibid, 5:620.
He made no attempt to camouflage his feelings, and frequently called his son "darling", for example. Yet, on the other hand, Woodrow's letters did not share such candidness. They were generally devoid of overt demonstrations of affection. When their correspondence is thus compared, the reader is left with the distinct impression that Wilson had inwardly placed his relationship with his father on a new footing. They were no longer going to relate to one another as parent to infant, but, rather, as adult to adult.

Wilson alluded to this development in a letter from December 1888. This is the only extant letter from the period that directly addresses the subject of their relations, but much may be inferred from it. "As you know," he began, "one of the chief things about which I feel most warranted in rejoicing is that I am your son.... You have given me a love that grows". Yet what was the nature of this "love"? He then explained that it was a love "rooted and grounded in reason, and not in filial instinct merely- a love resting upon abiding foundations of service, recognizing you as in a certain very real sense the author of all I have to be grateful for." Put another way, Woodrow felt he had outgrown the uncritical bond of simple affection that had linked them in times past. It was no longer the sort of love that gripped the heart, but a love more sober that dwelt in the contemplative mind. Here was a detached understanding of "love" that was qualitatively different from Dr. Wilson's reflexive outpourings. The inevitable effect of Woodrow's rationalising remarks was to convey the impression he had stepped back from the kind of unabashed sentiment that saturated Dr. Wilson's letters. Woodrow's very use of the phrase "filial instinct" is itself suggestive of a critical distance. In the future, there was to be no reciprocation in his letters of Dr. Wilson's heartfelt declarations.

169 To Joseph Ruggles Wilson, December 16, 1888, ibid, 6:30.
170 Ibid, 6:30.
Woodrow employed a very different tone in his frequent letters to Ellen. He reserved all emotional effusiveness for her and her alone. When the passionate, flowing style of these letters is compared with the measured and reasoning tone of his letters to Dr. Wilson, the above observation is cast into sharper relief. While his regard for Dr. Wilson was now grounded in "reason", his love for Ellen needed no qualification. Shortly before their marriage, he wrote characteristically "Can it be true that I am to have, as my heart's own most inestimable treasure, the loving wife for whom my life has so long waited? Is Eileen to be my constant companion, my counsellor in all life's little things even?" On another occasion, he exclaimed "The life of the sweetest woman in the world, the life of my Eileen, the lovely little maiden whom I love with all my heart, is by her own heart's willing bound up in my life! Oh, what an unspeakably happy thought that is!" These two extracts convey the general tone of Woodrow's letters to his fiance, and of her replies. She was the focus of Woodrow's affections, and the intensity of their relationship was such as to shut others out. For the time being, at least, they were self-sufficient, able to fulfil each other's emotional needs. On one occasion, Wilson even confessed that this new love was stronger than that for his parents: "My duty towards my dear parents...which has kept me so long away from you at a time when vacation and the warmest desires of my heart invited me to go to you, has been very sweet in the performance because of my intense love for them: I would not escape that duty, if I could! But, all the same, you are infinitely dearer to me than they ever (though I once thought it incredible that I should ever love anyone more than I love them)."

171To Ellen Louise Axson, January 25, 1885, ibid., 4:183.
172To Ellen Louise Axson, March 3, 1885, ibid., 4:325.
Woodrow's courtship of Ellen was an important stage in his emancipation from parental authority, because it heralded a greater detachment from Dr. Wilson. The new relationship was a private world into which he could readily escape from old associations and responsibilities. Ellen represented, among other things, the mastering of destiny. Wilson finally found the romantic success that had eluded him in cousin Hattie. His winning of a fiance therefore symbolised the ego's reprise triumph, whereas Dr. Wilson represented the shadow of a past authority that had kept Woodrow's personality in check. In order to foster a feeling of independence, Wilson found it necessary to keep this authority figure at arm's length. Though Woodrow did not consciously conceive of himself keeping Dr. Wilson's authority at bay, his introspective jottings all point to this. In March 1889, for example, Woodrow informed Ellen that he longer perceived himself as a child: "Have I told you latterly- since I have been [at Wesleyan] a distinct feeling of maturity- or rather of maturing- has come over me? The boyish feeling that I have so long had and cherished is giving place, consciously to another feeling- the feeling that I am no longer young".\(^{174}\) The result of this new feeling, he continued, was a willingness to speak up and challenge received wisdom: "I need no longer hesitate (as I have so long and sensitively done) to assert myself and my opinions in the presence of and against the selves of old men, 'my elders.'"\(^{175}\) Clearly, these "old men" of which Wilson spoke- these "elders" in whose presence he could now assert himself- were representative of Dr. Wilson's authority. As a child, he had "long and sensitively" deferred to the father's authority, but the onset of "maturity" had wrought a change. Woodrow was "no longer young", and this entailed a greater independence of mind.

\(^{174}\)To Ellen Axson Wilson, March 9, 1889, \emph{ibid}, 6:139.

\(^{175}\)\emph{Ibid}, 6:139.
Another indication of Wilson's resistance to paternal authority was his changed attitude toward the South. Though Dr. Wilson was originally from the North, he had come to identify with Southern culture and institutions. During the Civil War, he had been a loyal supporter of the Confederate cause. In 1863, for example, Dr. Wilson once dismissed a congregation with the announcement that women were more urgently required at the arsenal to prepare cartridges for General Lee. In Woodrow's mind, the idea of the South, on the one hand, and his father, on the other, were conceptually intertwined. A growing detachment from the South was indicative too of a growing detachment from Dr. Wilson. This consideration serves to illuminate the following extract. In May 1886, Woodrow confessed (in connection with a recent southern encounter) that "[an uncle's] very Southerness has given me rather mixed feelings in his presence. Why do I notice it- why does some of it grate on my sensibilities- why does it seem to me so much like a reminiscence, if it be not because I have myself become Northernized?" Given that Dr. Wilson had swung many a pulpit flail of rebuke over the heads of northern meddlers, it is significant that Woodrow began to identify more with the North- and its democracy- than the aristocratic South.

Yet perhaps the most important symbol of Dr. Wilson and his authority over Woodrow was the brand of theology he espoused. As a youth, Woodrow gave every indication that he identified both intellectually and emotionally with his father's religion. In the previous chapter, Dr. Wilson's sermons were examined at some length in order to contrast them with Woodrow's religious thought. This comparison revealed that they both claimed to regard Christ as a divine saviour sent to redeem not the world itself, but individual souls. Father and son argued on various occasions that all scripture was given by God to mankind by miraculous

176Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson, 12.
177To Ellen Axson Wilson, May 16, 1886, PWV, 5:232.
inspiration. Theirs was a faith which eschewed all relativism. The Pauline account of man, God and the universe was held to be literally true. Covenant theology was regarded neither as symbol, allegory, nor approximation of the truth- it was, in Woodrow's adolescent eyes, nothing less than the whole truth. Christ's divinity and the kingdom of heaven were- ideally- as "real" to him intellectually as, say, the history of the Roman Empire was "real", or the Magna Carta, or the French Revolution. By the late 1880s, however, such uncritical immediacy had given way to a greater detachment. This important development is evidenced by an unusually candid entry in Wilson's abortive "Confidential Journal" from December, 1889. "I have come slowly", he reflected, "into possession of...insight. Now that I am getting well into my thirties I begin to see my place in the general order of things."178 What Wilson meant by this, of course, was that up until this stage of his life, he had been lacking insight, and had not been able to see his place in the "general order". The obvious implication was that he had disowned past certainties and come to a new understanding. Wilson made this clear in the next sentence he penned: "I used to wonder vaguely", he continued, "that I did not have the same deep-reaching spiritual difficulties that I read of other young men having. I saw the intellectual difficulties, but I was not troubled by them: they seemed to have no connection with my faith in the essentials of the religion I had been taught.

Unorthodox in my reading of the standards of the faith, I am nevertheless orthodox in my faith. I am capable, it would seem, of being satisfied spiritually without being satisfied intellectually."179 Wilson's claim to have "always" seen the "intellectual difficulties" and been comfortable with them simply does not square with the evidence. The tone of Woodrow's religious writings from this early period was far from comfortable, and, indeed, bore signs of turmoil. This diary entry may thus be viewed as a refiguring of the past in the light of current wisdom. The

undergraduate Woodrow had never once admitted that there were "intellectual difficulties" inherent in traditional theology. To what extent these doubts may have played on his subconscious mind, it is difficult to gauge. Wilson's bouts of self-abnegation were perhaps a product of guilt occasioned by doubt. Yet the more important consideration is that Wilson expended a great of mental energy in fighting these doubts, and this serves to show that Covenant theology was of fundamental importance to his personal identity.

The Wilson of 1889 was very different. In fact, he was now a typical liberal Protestant, in the sense that rigorous theology had been discarded. It no longer mattered a great deal whether abstract creeds and formulations were literally true. What was most important to the evangelical liberal sensibility was the beneficent religious feeling. Intellectual difficulties were no longer worth fretting about. The emotion was all. Thus, Wilson's religious outlook had undergone significant change. This religious shift was an important measure of how his relationship to parental authority had also changed. It no longer troubled Woodrow that he might deviate from Dr. Wilson's outlook, because Wilson was now his own man with his own mind. He could admit to himself now what he could never say before: that Covenant theology was perhaps not the last word on spiritual truth.

Whatever Wilson meant by describing himself as "orthodox", it was clearly not the orthodoxy he had previously identified with. Woodrow's religious interests now wider-ranging than was proper for a member of the old school kirk. In early 1885, for example, he attended a Baltimore sermon of Henry Ward Beecher. "I went last night to hear Beecher lecture", Wilson wrote Ellen, "and was splendidly entertained for an hour and forty minutes....His subject was 'The Reign of the Common People' and he sent through it a stream of strong, shallow, noisy, irregular,
evident, picturesque, taking talk. Nobody wanted him to stop; nobody failed to admire the skill and popular force of the man."® Beecher was one of the most important liberal Protestant figures of the era, and, as the title of this particular sermon suggests, his outlook was intensely democratic. Wilson's new political outlook thus bore more relation to the Social Gospel than to Covenant theology.

This change was not lost on others. When Wilson left Bryn Mawr to take up a professorship at Wesleyan University, eyebrows in the family were raised. James Woodrow wrote his nephew in August, 1888: "It sounds queer that any one of the blood should be connected in any way with Wesleyanism."® Wilson's willingness to move in other denominational circles was a tell-tale sign of increasing liberalism. He had lost something of that doctrinal jealousy to which other, more-conservatively minded divines in his Presbyterian family were prone. In late 1889, when Wilson was seeking a post at Princeton, his latitudinarian tendencies were noted with some concern by the board of electors. A letter from President Francis Lindley Patton warned Wilson not to forget that the college's rationale was "the old ground of loyalty to the Christian religion".® Apparently, Wilson had left the board with the impression that he was, perhaps, too secular. "My attention has been called", Patton went on, "to the fact that in your discussion of the origin of the State you minimise the supernatural, & make such unqualified application of the doctrine of naturalistic evolution & the genesis of the State as to leave the reader of your pages in a state of uncertainty as to your own position & the place you give to Divine Providence."® The board wanted Wilson to know "that they expect the high topics pertaining to your chair & that they expect the high topics pertaining to

® To Ellen Louise Axson, January 14, 1885, ibid, 3:608.
® From James Woodrow, August 15, 1888, PW, 5:761.
® From Francis Lindley Patton, February 18, 1890, ibid, 6:527.
® Ibid., 6:527.
Furthermore, they would not look kindly on "such a conception of academic freedom" that sought to justify undue doctrinal divergence. This letter is significant because it indicates that the Presbyterian establishment looked upon Wilson as a potential free thinker. His views, as set out in *The State*, struck automatic discord among orthodox Presbyterians. That Wilson had come down on the side of evolution was enough to separate him from the elders.

While the historiography has viewed Wilson as a staunch theological conservative, his theologically conservative contemporaries evidently did not. Thus, just as Woodrow's views regarding the south symbolised a growing detachment from Dr. Wilson, so too this change in his religious persona. It would be a simplification to suggest that moments of guilt-ridden self-doubt did not accompany this process of emancipation. There were times when Wilson was plagued by a troubling inner debate, and this was undoubtedly due to the persistent ghost of his father's dominance. In the past, Dr. Wilson's authority over his son had been absolute. It was to be expected that traces of this authority would linger on. "My bane, my worst enemy is self-consciousness, self-criticism,—that communion with my anxieties, that impatience of my own weaknesses and faults, which fills my life when I am alone," wrote Wilson to Ellen in April, 1885. "I am too self-analytic." Woodrow's letters to Ellen were broadly illustrative of this confession. In February 1885, for example, Wilson gave expression to feelings of discontent and unworthiness: "The fault of my mind is that it is creative without becoming patient and docile in learning how to create....I am like...a child ready to undertake the care of his father's business....I should make a capital hack-

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writer!" The letter continued in a similar self-deprecating vein. Wilson then concluded with an account to the inner wellspring of this mood. "Excuse this nonsense. I love to ridicule myself now and then", he confessed, "just for the sake of a good laugh at myself. I am such a droll fool in some respects, and it would be a shame to lose all the fun of seeing it! My alter ego must be allowed to enjoy the joke now and then. Besides it is less lonely to have two selves to quarrel with each other." 

In the light of Wilson's boyhood experiences, it would seem reasonable to infer that the impulse which directed him to "ridicule" himself was the stubborn persistence of early role-playing. As many of those who were close to the Wilson family later recalled, young Tommee was frequently the focus of Dr. Wilson's barbed-wit severity. A cousin of Wilson's remembered that "Uncle Joseph was a cruel tease, with a caustic wit and a sharp tongue, and I remember hearing my own family tell indignantly of how Cousin Woodrow suffered under his teasing." When the image of Woodrow suffering under Dr. Wilson's "teasing" is compared with the remark "My alter ego must be allowed to enjoy the joke now and then", it becomes abundantly clear that Wilson's "alter ego" was the father who had dominated his boyhood. Woodrow's choice of the term "alter ego" to describe the critical second self was no doubt prompted- unconsciously, of course- by his father's use of it when describing their relationship: "You are my alter ego", he once remarked to Woodrow. "[W]hat pleases you equally pleases me." Dr. Wilson had left an indelible mark on his son's psyche, and this is what underlay Woodrow's sense of having "two selves". At times, Woodrow would see himself through the alter ego's- that is, his father's- critical eyes, and this provoked feelings of deep

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189 To Ellen Louise Axson, February 13, 1885. ibid, 4:245.
190 Ibid, 4:245.
191 Cited in George & George, Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House, 8.
192 From Joseph Ruggles Wilson, November 15, 1886, PWW, 5:391.
unworthiness. A specific illustration of this was Wilson's description of himself as a potential "hack writer". This stemmed from the harsh methods Dr. Wilson had employed to improve his son's style. After the two had conversed about a given topic, Woodrow would be asked if he had thoroughly understood it. "Yes," he would reply, whereupon Dr. Wilson would send the boy off to write it up. Woodrow would submit the piece for inspection, and the inevitable flaws and ambiguities it contained were then dissected at great length. Very often, Dr. Wilson would have Woodrow make second, third- even fourth- attempts before letting the matter drop.\(^\text{193}\) No doubt this gruelling procedure served to polish Woodrow's style, but it also left him doubting his ability. As a result, the memory of this exacting criticism surfaced later on in the form of self-doubt. Wilson's bouts of depression and self-criticism ought thus be viewed as temporary relapses to the subordination of childhood. His critical second self was a surrogate father-voice.

Such was the dynamic of Wilson's emancipation: two steps forward, and one back. Woodrow's relations with his father and his fiancée formed a tangled web of human dilemmas whose nature none of them wholly understood. Understandably, their proximity to the ongoing phenomenon precluded detached insight. Yet the lesson of modern psychology is that consciousness does not necessarily govern. Wilson would never come to a self-conscious understanding of the Eriksonian drama that accompanied these formative years. Thus, in building up this psychological portrait of Wilson's young adulthood, we must tease out implications from the half-light without resorting to unfounded conjecture. This is a difficulty faced by those who seek to reconstruct a vanished interior life.

As is so often the case, it took a moment of crisis in the family to hurl resentments that had been steadily building over the years into the light. This illuminating moment came on April 15, 1888, when Wilson received a telegram from his brother stating "Mother died suddenly father absent but be home tomorrow morning". Stunned by the unexpected news of his mother's death, Woodrow set off immediately by train to attend the funeral. Yet, owing to the actions of Dr. Wilson, this was not to be. All that greeted him in Clarksville was an empty house and a hastily-scrawled note. From his room in the Arlington Hotel, Wilson reported to Ellen "I arrived here to find the house shut up and father and Josie gone to Columbia with dear mother's body. My first impulse was to follow; but I find that father left word that it would hardly be worth while for me to come after them- the funeral would be over before I could get there." 

As Heckscher has correctly pointed out, "Nothing quite explains this harrowing mischance, but one may see in the hurried departure of Dr. Wilson...the expression of emotions previously concealed." Dr. Wilson's decision to exclude his son from the funeral service should be viewed in the context of what had passed between them since Woodrow's departure for Johns Hopkins. Wilson, bent on finding himself through History and Political Science, had become more self-absorbed than ever before. Paying homage to his domineering father by sending him candid letters was no longer a preoccupation. This development was so unsettling to Dr. Wilson that he openly demanded more news from his absent son. Yet Woodrow was either unwilling or unable to satisfy these demands. Wilson had thus been burning his Clarksville bridges for some time, and his father's hurt and anger finally found open expression in this most stinging of rebukes. Those

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194 From Joseph R. Wilson, Jr., April 15, 1888, PWW, 5:718.
195 Four Letters to Ellen Axson Wilson, April 17, 1888, ibid, 5:718.
196 Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson, 91.
feelings which had simmered in the letters now boiled over. It would "hardly be worth while", as Dr. Wilson bluntly put it, for Woodrow to follow them to Columbia. The clear implication of this remark was that he would be persona non grata. Having made the choice to distance himself from the family, Woodrow forfeited his right to be present at this most intimate of family occasions. It was the prodigal son's lot to endure a stint in outer darkness which had been of his own making. These are the bitter sentiments conveyed by Dr. Wilson's hurried departure with the body of his wife. In what seems very much like retaliation for past grievances, Dr. Wilson would make no time to wait on Woodrow during this dark hour.

Wilson's evolution from republicanism to democracy was linked to this psychological drama. Woodrow's inner conflicts found expression in his intellectual development. Wilson was captivated by democracy because he sensed in it a means to effect the triumph of his will over the checks and balances imposed on it by Dr. Wilson's authority. In carving out an autonomous identity, Woodrow needed a political philosophy to call his own.

The fusion of Wilson's ego with the idea of democracy was most strikingly illustrated in his 1890 address, "Leaders of Men". This address, composed shortly after Wilson was elected to Princeton, was a deeply personal statement about the role of leadership in modern democracy. Leaders of Men may be reckoned a moment of flow during which its author seemed to glimpse his personal destiny laid out before him. Returning in such auspicious circumstances to Princeton, his alma mater, symbolised the end of a personal journey from subordination to

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197 Wilson's younger brother, Joseph Ruggles Jr., had also felt increasingly excluded. In a July 1890 letter, he wrote "It seems a shame, does it not, that we have not exchanged a single letter this summer?" From Joseph R. Wilson, Jr., July 27, 1890, PWV, 6:686.
independence. It was a crowning moment, and this realisation of having come full circle served to fan the flames of personal ambition. Woodrow's envisioned destiny was to be the great leader who stood at the centre of the great organism of society: "The competent leader of men cares little for the interior niceties of other people's characters: he cares much...for the external uses to which they may be put. His will seeks the lines of least resistance; but the whole question with him is a question of the application of force. There are men to be moved: how shall he move them?" 198

The leader, Wilson continued, would channel the course of human passions by putting forward certain broad principles: "The arguments which induce popular action must always be broad and obvious arguments. Only a very gross substance of concrete conception can make any impression on the minds of the masses: they must get their ideas very absolutely put, and are much readier to receive a half truth which they can promptly understand than a whole truth which has too many sides to be seen at once." 199 Armed with fundamental ideas that spoke to the hearts of the mass of men, the leader was thus enabled to exert his will. Wilson's growing fascination with the possibilities of power was obvious: "It is the power which dictates, dominates: the materials yield. Men are as clay in the hands of the consummate leader." 200

Extracts such as these reveal the link between Wilson's discovery of democracy and his psychology. The organic, democratic polity appeared so attractive, so inevitable, because he sensed that it invested powers in its leader that surpassed the power even of kings. Democracy was Wilson's means of turning the tables on

198 "Leaders of Men", ibid, 6650.
199 ibid, 6647.
200 ibid, 6650.
parental authority. Having been subordinate for so long, he would compensate by not merely seeking autonomy, but by obtaining the greatest possible power over others. And yet, Woodrow could not entirely escape the voice of Dr. Wilson's censure. Had he not been taught that pride was the worst of sins? Was not this lust for power a manifestation of spiritual pride? In order to mask his fascination with the prospect of dominating others, Woodrow instinctively sought to rationalise his ambition by expressing it in terms of service. Here we see revealed the fundamental pattern of Wilson's identity crisis. The desire for influence represented two steps forward for Woodrow's ego; the desire to eschew self-interest represented a step back. Thus, he was careful to differentiate between the mere demagogue and the true statesman. The demagogue manipulated others for his own advantage, whereas the statesman did it for the good of society. He was not a manufacturer of ephemeral whims, but an interpreter of the fundamental desires: "The demagogue sees and seeks self-interest in an acquiescent reading of that part of the public thought upon which he depends for votes; the statesman, also reading the common inclination, also, when he reads aright, obtains the votes that keep him in power. But if you will justly observe the two, you will find the one trimming to the inclinations of the moment, the other obedient only to the permanent purposes of the public mind....The one ministers to himself, the other to the race."^201

The following chapter will trace Wilson's development from 1890 to the 1910 gubernatorial campaign. It was only at this late stage of his career that the future Prince of Peace first gave concrete expression to the Bancroftian view of America's role in the world. Having discovered democracy by the mid-1880s, it would be another quarter century before Wilson would conceive of it in the light of American national mythology.

^201Ibid, 6:661.
III

LEADER OF MEN - PRINCE OF PEACE

We now have difficulties confronting us in international matters, and I take it that we are in a position to go to school to those who are more experienced than ourselves. And in the proper temper of men who know how to consult experts, we should forego our ancient Revolutionary attitude toward England and seek to know how she has managed her foreign affairs.... In this way we shall show our mature wisdom. We should be partners with the nation that stands for the things for which we stand.

Woodrow Wilson, January 30, 1904.¹

America...died the power of the British Empire on the ground...that nobody had a right to govern them whom they did not choose to be their government.... At last, after this long century and more of blood and terror, the world has come to the vision that that little body of people, strung along the Atlantic Coast of this continent, had in that far year 1776. Men in Europe laughed at them, at this little body of men who talked dogmatically about liberty. And since then that fire which they started on that coast has consumed every autocratic government in the world.

Woodrow Wilson, September 22, 1919.²

Between 1904 and 1919, Wilson underwent a conversion to the Bancroftian myths of American nationalism. Far from foregoing the "ancient Revolutionary attitude", Wilson made it the basis of his public persona. "I think there is nothing that appeals to the imagination more in the history of men", he claimed in 1919, "than those convoyed fleets crossing the ocean with millions of American soldiers aboard-those crusaders, those men that loved liberty enough to leave their home and fight for it upon distant fields of battle, those men who

²An Address in Reno, September 22, 1919, ibid, 63:429, 441.
swung out into the open as if in fulfillment of the long prophecy of American
history.\textsuperscript{3}

This concluding chapter will trace the development of Wilson's thought from the
early 1890s to 1910, a crucial time in Wilson's intellectual development. It was
during the gubernatorial campaign of that year that the future President first gave
expression to the Wilsonian vision of America's role in the world. This vision
would find its most resplendent rhetorical flowering in 1919. In September of
1919, Wilson embarked upon a month-long transcontinental speaking tour. The
addresses he delivered during this journey across America will serve throughout
this chapter as points of reference to the thematic essence of Wilsonianism. On
the speaking tour, he sought to show that America's destiny lay in joining the
League of Nations. Liberal internationalism became one with American
nationalism in the Eriksonian crucible of Wilson's psyche. The national
mission, he argued, was to recast the world according to American principles.
Democracy was to make spiritual conquest of humanity, and democracy was
accounted to be synonymous with the United States. The President had arrived
at his personal eschatological moment.

A number of scholars have observed that Wilson had a tendency to identify the
maintenance of America's honour with the continuation of human progress.
Harley Notter put it this way: "The final great element of Wilson's foreign
policy, upon which he tried as...President to unify American thought, was his
conception of America and her mission. To Wilson, America was founded
upon ideal foundations with a singular devotion to the principles of democracy
and Christianity and to the well-being of mankind."\textsuperscript{4} As Ambrosius described
Wilsonianism, "Wilson projected the ideals of his nationalism onto the Old

\textsuperscript{3}An Address in the Denver Auditorium, September 25, 1919, ibid., 63:493.
\textsuperscript{4}Harley Notter, The Origins of the Foreign Policy of Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1965),
652.
World....He assumed the universal applicability of his own country's heritage. 5 Wilson's diplomatic style "combined unilateral and universal qualities. His foreign policy took American principles and applied them worldwide." 6 Levin identified the same tendency. For Wilson, "American national values were identical with universal progressive liberal values, and an exceptionalist America had a mission to lead mankind toward the orderly international society of the future." 7

Yet how did Wilson come to hold such views about America's role in the world? In the two preceding chapters, it was shown that young man Wilson was heir to a markedly different political tradition. Born into a mid-century Presbyterian manse, Wilson had at first identified with his father's political views held by his preacher father, which conceived of a world moulded by classical republicanism, and complemented by the Covenantal theological tradition. Democracy was anathema to Dr. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, who once remarked to his son that the owners of a country ought to be its governors. 8 Either suffrage be limited, or anarchy, he predicted, would shortly prevail. 9 For Dr. Wilson, the theological concept of the regenerate few versus the damned majority extended naturally into temporal politics. 10 Progress in human affairs was considered impossible. His sense of history conformed largely to the classical cyclical model: "Human nature", he had told one congregation, was "all the while repeating itself." 11 Changed historical circumstances, continued Dr. Wilson, "produce no radical change in that common humanity which, from age

6Ibid, 81.
7Levin, Woodrow Wilson and World Politics, 3.
8Two Letters from Joseph Ruggles Wilson, April 17, 1879, PWW, 1:477.
9Ibid, 1:477.
10Readers are referred again to the examination of Dr. Wilson's extant sermons undertaken in the first chapter of this thesis.
11Sermon 8, 5.
to age, flows on, like a rock-bound river, in much the same channels: almost never altering".12

One has only to compare such an outlook with the tone of Wilson's Presidential campaign speeches to recognise the extent of the intellectual metamorphosis that had taken place by that time. Wilson abandoned his early republican views and embraced a democratic conception of society. The idea of human progress lay at the heart of this vision. In an address accepting the Democratic nomination, for example, Wilson argued "We are servants of the people, the whole people. The nation has been unnecessarily at war within itself. Interest has clashed with interest.... You see that these multitudes of men, mixed of every kind and quality, constitute somehow an organic and noble whole, a single people.... The rule of the people is no idle phrase. Those who believe in it,- as who does not that has caught the real spirit of America?- believe that there can be no rule of right without it; that right in politics is made up of the interests of everybody".13 "I would preach the salvation of society", he had announced in the opening speech of the New Jersey gubernatorial campaign.14

It was while pursuing graduate study at Johns Hopkins in the 1880s that Wilson first began to undergo this change. There he became greatly influenced by the ethical historical economics of Richard T. Ely (and later, John Bates Clark), whose democratic social organicism led Wilson to accept democracy as the way of the future. During this time, Wilson also came into contact with liberal Protestant ideas that allowed one to think in terms not merely of individual, but of social salvation. Not only was this a time of intellectual metamorphosis, but one of great Eriksonian psychological foment also. The two processes were, in

12Ibid. 5.
14A Speech in St. Peter's Hall in Jersey City Opening the Campaign, September 28, 1910, ibid, 21:190.
fact, symbiotically related. In order to free himself from the unusually severe domination of his father, Wilson sought a new world view with which to identify. Thus, by the time he came to Johns Hopkins, Wilson was ripe for change. By diverging from the strictures of Dr. Wilson’s political and theological thought, Woodrow was able to win for himself a degree of autonomy. The emancipation of his ego thus led Wilson to the discovery of democracy, and also of liberal Protestantism.

Other historians have examined Wilson’s formative years, but none have adequately grasped the full extent of the interrelationship between his psychological and intellectual development. Alexander and Juliette George came closest, and their developmental biography of Wilson and House remains an undisputed classic. Yet their analysis did not extend to what is perhaps the most important issue, namely, Wilson’s discovery of democracy and American nationalism. The preceding chapters have attempted to introduce a new interpretation of Wilson’s early years, that Wilsonianism was not a refined product of his early upbringing and education but issued, rather, from a rejection his early world view. Scholars such as Link and Mulder have tended to trace Wilson’s ideas back to the “Calvinism” or “covenant theology” of his father. In the boy was the man writ small, they contended. Yet, while this was true in some respects, it ignored that which is most interesting about Woodrow Wilson. The story of how this anti-democratic and theologically conservative youth came to graft Social Gospel concepts with American nationalism was, to a degree, the story of Wilson’s generation.

Yet, for all the changes that had undoubtedly taken place by the time Wilson obtained his Princeton professorship, the Wilson of 1890 was still far removed

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15 The Georges’ lasting achievement contrasts with the essentially deplorable outcome of Sigmund Freud and William Bullitt’s case study of Wilson. See Link’s repudiation. See also Cushing Stout’s review article in History and Theory, 13(1974): 522, for a repudiation of the simplistic application of the same oedipal analysis to all historical personalities.
from the Wilson of 1910. His regard for democracy, while totally sincere, was mitigated by the conviction that it belonged only to Anglo-Saxon peoples. Wilson held democracy in America to be "organic" in a Burkean sense, meaning that it was the natural expression of the character of the English race. In 1889, he spoke of "the democracy, or rather the popular government, of the English race, which is bred by slow circumstance and founded upon habit" in comparison with "the democracy of other peoples which is bred by discontent and founded upon revolution." 16 This outlook differed from the ultimate Wilsonian vision in two important respects. Firstly, Wilson had as yet very little sense that all humanity was moving inexorably toward the realisation of the democratic millennium. While it is true that he hinted at this on a few occasions 17, the idea did not occupy a central place in Wilson's world view. Secondly, Wilson still thought more in terms of English civilisation than of America's unique missionary status. American democracy did not stem from American principles, he believed, but from the ancient characteristics of the English race. The Magna Carta meant more to Wilson, at this stage of his career, than the Declaration of Independence as the symbolic historical source of American democracy.

By 1919, however, Wilson had abandoned this early emphasis on the moral unity of English-speaking peoples. He now insisted it was the American people's exclusive destiny to lead humanity forward in the ways of democracy. "I want to say to you tonight", he announced in Helena, "that nothing was more overpowering to me...in Paris than the evidence of the absolutely overpowering unquestioning confidence of the peoples of the world in America...they refused to be d:isabused of their absolute confidence that America could and would do anything that was right for the other peoples of the world. An amazing thing!" 18

16 An Address ("Nature of Democracy in the United States"), May 10, 1889, PWW, 6:231.
18 An Address in the Marlow Theater in Helena, September 11, 1919, PWW, 63:184.
The great question facing the American people, as explained by Wilson in Salt Lake City, was "shall we see it through, or shall we now, at this most critical juncture of the whole transaction, turn away...and decline to complete and fulfill our sacred promises to mankind?"19

The aim of this concluding chapter is to explain how Wilson came to think of America in these terms. Only when this aspect of Wilson's thought is explained can the story of his intellectual development be satisfactorily concluded. Before turning to our subject, mention must be made of Ambrosius' contribution. In his 1991 study of Wilson's diplomacy, Ambrosius made a considered attempt to account for the intellectual foundations of Wilson's world view.20

"Wilson's...liberal internationalism", he concluded, "emerged from the historical context of American progressivism."21 Belonging to the Realist school of American diplomatic history, Ambrosius sought to critique what he considered to be Wilson's "unrealistic understanding of the modern world".22 He sought to enter sympathetically into Wilson's ideological universe, so as to better comprehend "his failure to define an appropriate foreign policy for the postwar era."23 Whatever the merits or weaknesses of the Realist outlook, some of the insights provided by Ambrosius are of value. Among the major influences that helped to shape Wilson's world view, Ambrosius included 1. the "progressive philosophy of history" (i.e., the "frontier thesis" of Frederick Jackson Turner) and 2. the Social Gospel movement.

This list is a useful frame of reference and an essential starting point, but nonetheless it does have certain limitations. It is necessary, for example, to dispel the notion that Turner's ideas led to the vision of Wilsonian universalism.

19 An Address in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, September 23, 1919, ibid, 63:449.
21 Ambrosius, Wilsonian Statecraft, xi.
22 Ibid, x.
23 Ibid, x.
First posited in 1893, the frontier thesis was an attempt to account for the fluid nature of American democracy. Turner was concerned with the American frontier and how this had moulded the character of the American people. On arrival from the Old World, argued Turner, the immigrant had become one with the frontier. He had taken on "the simplicity of primitive society" and the experience had furnished "the forces dominating American character." Democracy was the outcome of this "perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities". In the United States, claimed Turner, "is a new product that is American...the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines."

In other words, unique American conditions had, over time, given rise to a uniquely American democratic polity. Not the essential moral nature of the people who had emigrated, but historical accident had given rise to democracy in America. The frontier thesis belonged to the same intellectual genus as neo-Herderian "blood and soil" explanations of national character then growing increasingly fashionable in Germany. There was nothing in this argument to suggest- even implicitly- that other peoples in other lands would come to share in American democracy. Only by emigrating to America could they hope to partake of it. Such an outlook was at odds with the view expounded by Wilson during his 1919 speaking tour. All humanity, the President argued at every mid-Western podium to which he came, had the innate capacity to follow America’s moral leadership. American principles were the principles to which all peoples aspired. The world was to be recast according to American

25Ibid, 2.
26Ibid, 2.
27Ibid, 4.
principles. All nations would come to democracy under the benign aegis of the League of Nations.

Clearly, the exclusivity inherent in Turner's frontier thesis does not account for the universal inclusivity of Wilsonianism. This is not to suggest that Turner did not figure in Wilson's thought, nor, indeed, Wilson in Turner's. They first met in 1889. Turner was already an admirer of Wilson, whom he called "one of the best historical men in this country." The admiration quickly became mutual, and the pair often settled into long discussions about history and various other subjects. Owing to a process of mental cross-pollination, the frontier thesis began to take shape in Turner's mind. Wilson, whose ideas were inevitably subject to intellectual currents filtering the historical profession, was already beginning to move away from the "germ"- Anglo-Saxon- account of American character. Turner's systematic account thus served to galvanise the young Princeton professor, as it did many other historians. Whatever Wilson had given Turner, he was, in fact, far more mindful of what Turner had given him.

"I devoutly pray my History", Wilson wrote Turner regarding Division and Reunion, "may be what you expect". As indicated by this remark, frontier themes began to appear in Wilson's scholarly output.

Thus, while the frontier thesis did not figure in the essence of mature Wilsonianism, there was a period when Wilson was undeniably influenced by Turner. How, then, to deal with this complexity? As will be argued below in greater detail, Turner's contribution to the development of Wilson was a sense of what might be called "place" patriotism. The frontier thesis did much to put the grandeur of America's west onto Wilson's mental map, a region for which

28Frederick Jackson Turner to Caroline Mac Sherwood, January 21, 1889, PWW, 6:58.
30To Frederick Jackson Turner, December 27, 1894, PWW, 9:120.
he would subsequently hold an almost mystical regard. Just as Wilson discovered democracy in the 1880s, so he discovered America as "place" in the 1890s. His subsequent views about America's role in the world, however, were derived from sources other than the Turner thesis.

One of these sources was certainly the Social Gospel, whose influence on Wilson's thought will be the subject of a subsequent chapter. A movement which encompassed a broad range of ideas, concerns and projects, the Social Gospel was a great turning outward of American Protestantism in response to industrialisation. It valued the collective and the temporal over the individual and the supernatural; its goal was more the redemption of society than the salvation of the eternal soul. 31 Through the practice of selflessness and service, ran the prophesy, a millenarian Kingdom of God would be established on earth. Christ's own ethics would come to govern all social interaction. "Christianizing the social order", wrote one prominent social gospel theologian, "means bringing it into harmony with the ethical convictions which we identify with Christ." 32 Thus were the ethical insights of liberal Protestant theology translated into a concrete programme. The social gospel was not a fringe movement, but one which captivated the mainstream of American Trinitarian Protestantism. Ecumenical in spirit, it sought to unite all denominations in the service of humanity and the progress of mankind.


This drive to Christianise the social order was not by any means limited to the American domestic scene. The world-redemptive myths of high American nationalism were lent a redoubled intensity by Social Gospel theologians. In the writings of George Davis Herron, in particular, may be detected a fusion of religious fervour with classic Bancroftian typology. For Herron, the Kingdom of God meant nothing less the democratisation of humanity by America. Wrote Herron in 1917 of Wilson's "Peace without Victory" speech, "The horizon of history had highly shifted, the whole prospect of mankind had resplendently changed, and the rostrum of the American Senate had become as God's burning altar, when, the address of the President concluded, the reverent wonder of the hour went abroad, encircling the world as a divine visitation."33

Ambrosius has correctly pointed to the high esteem in which Wilson held Herron's ideas, but the intriguing story of their relationship embodies much more in illuminating Wilsonianism as it had evolved by the middle of World War One. During the war, as will be shown in greater detail below, Herron was not only read and admired by Wilson, but entrusted with sensitive diplomatic tasks. For a brief season, this home-spun Hoosier theologian became the President's spiritual vice-regent in war-torn Europe. At Wilson's behest, he conducted numerous informal negotiations with important representatives of Axis powers. His role was to propagate the Wilsonian vision of universal democracy among the forces of autocracy. In this he excelled, until, like Colonel House, the prophet fell from grace with the Prince of Peace.

1. Explaining democracy: Anglo-Saxonism and the Frontier Thesis

For Wilson, the early 1890s was not a time of new intellectual discovery and personal upheaval. In the decade leading up to Wilson's Princeton appointment, however, great shifts had disturbed his mental landscape. The erstwhile Covenantanter and republican had come to identify not only with Ely's social gospel-economics, but with democracy itself. At the same time, through marriage and academic success, he had won partial emancipation from the personal domination of Dr. Wilson. When examining this young man Wilson of the 1880s, much of what Erikson noted about the pattern of the adolescent crisis finds ready correlation. He wrote, for example, in a developmental biography of Luther,

We will call what young people in their teens and early twenties look for...in...dogmatic systems an ideology. At the most it is a militant system...at the least is a world-view which is consonant with existing theory, available knowledge, and common sense, and yet is significantly more: an utopian outlook, a cosmic mood, or a doctrinal logic...What is to be relinquished as 'old' may be the individual's previous life; this usually means the perspectives intrinsic to the life-style of the parents, who are thus discarded contrary to all traditional safeguards of filial devotion.\(^{34}\)

During the 1880s, Wilson was absorbed in relinquishing the old. The 1890s, by contrast, was an interlude of comfortable consolidation. By winning a position at Princeton, Wilson established himself as an important scholar and educator. The son had succeeded where the father had failed. He left the college a callow lad and, ten years later, returned a successful man. The momentous decision to defy his father and quit the Atlanta law practice now appeared fully justified. With an attractive young wife and three daughters, Wilson had also proven his manhood beyond doubt. Previously, as numerous letters to Ellen betrayed, he had felt overshadowed by Dr. Wilson in this respect.

\(^{34}\)Erikson, Young Man Luther, 38-39.
These personal achievements had a temporary calming effect on Wilson's strong Eriksonian drives. Pent-up psychic energy was expended in his teaching duties. From the outset, Wilson's Princeton career was distinguished by an air of easy brilliance. No longer orating to the empty pews of Dr. Wilson's church, his lectures found ready praise and, on occasion, spontaneous applause. Colleagues looked upon him as a natural leader, and he quickly assumed the role of faculty spokesman. Having thus won his independence, further struggle against the old oppressor was rendered unnecessary. Wilson could afford to be generous and conciliatory towards his father, because he now acted from an undisputed position of strength. The cloying atmosphere of repressed hostility disappeared from their relationship, and a role reversal of sorts was effected. Woodrow's worldly achievements were a source of great pride to the aging preacher, and he never tired of telling his granddaughters what a great man their father was. Cut adrift by the death of his wife, Dr. Wilson began to lead an itinerant—faintly "unrespectable"—lifestyle after quitting Southwestern University, and this no doubt contributed to his declining health. Woodrow and Ellen grew increasingly concerned, not least because Dr. Wilson appeared to have entered into a relationship with one Elizabeth Bartlett Grannis, of New York, a publisher of religious tracts.\(^{35}\) He spoke in letters of her amiability and "loving ministries".\(^{36}\) Woodrow privately referred to this development as "undesirable".\(^{37}\)

Eventually, the family decided that the declining southern patriarch should come and live with them at Princeton. He readily agreed. Dr. Wilson had hinted at this prospect some years earlier, but Woodrow, in the grip of his Eriksonian resentments, had always managed to sidestep the issue. The reunification of Dr.

\(^{36}\)Two Letters from Joseph Ruggles Wilson, September 2, 1891, *PWW*, 7:285.
\(^{37}\)To Ellen Asson Wilson, February 1, 1895, *ibid*, 9:149.
Wilson and his son under the same roof aptly symbolised the abatement of Woodrow's identity crisis. Though it was never mentioned within the family, the tables had turned: the erstwhile provider was now a supplicant, and the erstwhile supplicant a provider.

The psychological stimulus which previously lent a searching quality to Wilson's intellectual life were now absent. His discovery of democracy had been the outcome of a personal struggle for emancipation. Once this emancipation of the ego was achieved- as it clearly had been by 1890- the need to fashion new world-views and cosmic moods became altogether less important. Consolidation, not innovation, was the inner requirement of the hour. Princeton's sequestered environment made it all too easy for a temporary tranquility to settle on Wilson's thought. The teaching workload proved a constant diversion. Practical matters also absorbed his attention. Wilson and his wife planned to build their own home, and much emotional energy was expended in the process. Financially pressed, Wilson found it necessary to augment his income with articles for various periodicals and frequent outside lectures. Some of these pieces will be discussed in detail below. Once the house was complete, however, it added greatly to Wilson's store of earthly satisfaction. This stately eleven-room residence was in some respects a most un-Presbyterian symbol of temporal contentment.

This conveys the personal backdrop of Wilson's intellectual life during the early Princeton period. His social, economic and political thought was essentially a continuation of ideas first expressed in the 1880s. Having forged a world-view, Wilson now sought to refine it. Adolescence appeared to be giving way to middle age. In 1891, for example, Wilson produced a lecture on democracy that reiterated ideas present in such earlier works as "The Modern Democratic State"

38Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson, 113.
(1885). This lecture is worth considering in its own right, because he delivered it more often than any other before the general public during the 1890s. It was not of ancient democracy that Wilson claimed to speak, but of the new democracy born of universal suffrage and the modern nation state. Wilson made no attempt to relate this emerging national democracy, in which "the people are sovereign," to the American War of Independence. In contrast to the teleological vision he would consistently relate in 1919, Wilson here spoke of a great philosophical divide between Americans of the present day and those of 1789. "Those who framed our federal government planned no revolution: they did not mean to invent an American government, but only to Americanize the English government." They sought to follow Lockean principles whilst removing narrow monarchical notions. This aim did not equate with democracy, explained Wilson. In fact, the revolutionary generation was republican, in the sense that it considered "[government] ought to be guarded against the heats and hastes, the passions and the thoughtless impulses of the people, no less than against selfish dynasties and hurtful class intrigues." This was the spirit of the Constitution. Modern Americans, Wilson continued, "have in a measure undone their work. A century has led us very far along the road of change. Year by year we have sought to bring government nearer to the people, despite the original plan."

Wilson then described how this new democracy functioned. It was not that the people actually governed. They were, however, the ultimate source of authority for good representational government. Those who governed were guided not by transient opinion, but by the general will. As Wilson put it, "Our wishes are...regarded...in the conduct of government; but we do not govern. All that

39See Editorial Note, PWW, 7:344-345. See also ibid, 8:76-77; 275 and 568-569 for newspaper reports of Wilson delivering this lecture on democracy.  
40A Lecture ("Democracy"), December 5, 1891, ibid, 7:347.  
41Ibid, 7:351.  
43Ibid, 7:351.
we have effected (in what we call our democratic arrangements) is comprehended in new and convenient ways of keeping those who govern and those who are governed in relations of sympathy and mutual confidence.™

Thus, while the masses did not originate measures and shape policies, this was no rejection on Wilson's part of the democratic metaphysic. Mystically indivisible, the general will held sway. Society was not a loose aggregate of interest groups, but an "organic thing".™

Governors and governed were therefore of one mind and virtue, though they had different roles to play. "Let no one make the mistake", he elaborated on this point, "of supposing that the cultivated and thinking class in any community...is in any practical sense the directing and determinant portion of the community, a commission to administer its mind and regulate the courses of its life. Political ideas do not become practicable until they become virtually universal."™

"I believe in the people....The people do indeed govern", insisted Wilson.

"They govern just in proportion as they produce the stuff out of which governors...are made....I believe in [the people] as the wholesome stuff out of which the fabric of government...is woven".™ This belief that the "general will...dwells with those who do the practical thinking and organize the best concert of action"™ accorded with the philosophy of leadership he had set out in "Leaders of Men". From the mass of people come statesmen such as Lincoln, who, in the spirit of sympathetic service, put the general will into effect. As in earlier writings, the belief that democracy was the outcome of character led Wilson to criticize social-engineering. "Observe that my ideal reversing the order of the socialist."™ While the aims of socialism and democracy were quite

™Ibid, 7:356, 357.
similar, he explained, the socialist erred in seeking to change socio-political structures prior to the reformation of character. "I believe", continued Wilson, "that the work must be carried on in the opposite direction. It must begin, not at the end of organization, but as that of character. Organization is a product of character, not an antecedent and cause of character."\textsuperscript{50}

Wilson also repeated his earlier judgement that democracy belonged to the Anglo-Saxon race. "Democratic nations are not made in a day", he cautioned, "and they have never been made at all save in Switzerland, in England, and in the United States." France might possibly attain democracy, he admitted, but only "after...a few more hard lessons in self-control."\textsuperscript{51} Thus, democracy was not a product of doctrine, but the fruit, rather, of character and experience. While Wilson did believe that "we can impart it to the best of those who come to us with other blood in their veins"\textsuperscript{52}, he felt democracy was only secure so long as "that first blood...kept its advantage."\textsuperscript{53}

These were the ideas by which the educated public came to know Wilson during the 1890s. It is noteworthy that the Bancroftian view of American history was absent. Though he did have some vague sense of the world-wide spread of democratic governance, this process was not seen to stem from any moral leadership exerted by America. There was, at any rate, nothing in Wilson's lecture to suggest he believed that 1776 had seen the miraculous inception of a democratic ideal whose destiny was to conquer autocracy. Nor in other works from this stage of Wilson's career did he present America in these Bancroftian terms. Two of these works merit attention for this reason. They serve to highlight the discontinuity that characterised Wilson's views about America.

This bears out the general criticism I have made elsewhere of the historiography,
a criticism worth repeating so as to highlight, once again, the rationale of this thesis:

Various scholars--Link and Mulder among them--have put forward the argument that Wilson's Presbyterian background shaped his understanding of America's mission. They have written more or less as American nationalists; to them it appeared somehow natural and inevitable that Americans should think in these terms. It is implied that Calvinism or "covenant theology" served to refine a world view which must already have been present. Yet this assumption serves to arrogate America and Wilson to an exalted place outside the temporal contingency shared by other nations and leaders. To non-Americans, it does not appear natural or inevitable that Wilson should equate democracy with American nationalism.

Tilting at windmills? Though America's faults undoubtedly pale in comparison with the monstrous systematic evils perpetrated by totalitarian powers during the twentieth century, the debacle in Vietnam remains a blemish. And it was Wilsonianism rampant that led the United States under Kennedy and Johnson into a crusade for democracy in Southeast Asia. Those who automatically assume that Wilsonianism was "begotten not made" therefore must also accept the naturalness, inevitability and intrinsic justice of America's Vietnam War.

54 See also Henry Wilkinson Bragdon, Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years (Cambridge, 1967). "Religion", wrote Bragdon, "was certainly the most pervasive influence in his inheritance." Wilson was led by this "Calvinist background" to conclude that in, "his battles for a... just and lasting peace among nations, he could feel that he was doing the Lord's work and that he was directed and aided by a Power greater than himself." 8-9.

55 American nationalism also impacted on American China policy, as has been shown, with a rare detached grasp of the content of American national mythology, by David McLean. See "American Nationalism, the China Myth, and the Truman Doctrine: The Question of Accommodation with Peking, 1949-50", Diplomatic History, 10 (Winter, 1985), 23-42. As McLean has correctly observed, "These myths concerned the world destiny of the American nation (which) lay at the very core of U.S. nationalism, which derived not from distinctions of language, culture, or common descent but from a liberal utopian vision of America's special destiny. This view of the world, which assumed that American values and institutions had universal application, was informed by a sense of America's affinity with the people of the world, who, it was believed, yearned to be freed from their autocratic governments and to adopt liberal democratic institutions." 26.
Conversely, by treating Wilson's world view as a product of historical forces we may arrive at a more insightful appreciation of the ideology welded to American nationalism. By presenting evidence that Wilson's regard for America underwent profound transformation, the validity of the orthodox appraisal is brought into question. For if it were true that his father's theology shaped Wilson's Presidential consciousness of America's role, it is reasonable to expect that a degree of thematic unity should have marked his pronouncements from boyhood days on.

Yet this was not the case. What had the undergraduate Wilson said on the occasion of the centennial Independence Day? That a process had begun one hundred years previously which would result in the democratisation of humanity? Did he betray any hint that this idea, if not stated explicitly, figured implicitly in his reckoning? No. He had written instead "How much happier she [America] would be now if she had England's form of government [which] is the only true one."\(^{56}\)

Wilson's 1891 lecture on democracy exhibited a view of American history at odds with the ultimate Wilsonian vision of America's role in the world. So too an 1892 essay "The True American Spirit" and a subsequent essay composed in 1893 "A Calendar of Great Americans."

"The True American Spirit" resulted from an invitation. In July 1891, the editor of the Boston Congregationalist had written Wilson "we hope to get two or three articles which will stimulate national and municipal patriotism...we would request an article from you...along this general line."\(^{57}\) Wilson agreed, and the resulting essay was published on October 27 of the following year. Given that the specific aim of this piece was to kindle patriotic feeling, "The True American

\(^{56}\)Shorthand Diary, July 4, 1876, *PWW*, 1:148-149.
\(^{57}\)From Howard Allen Bridgman, July 10, 1891, *ibid.*, 7:240.
Spirit" shed light on what Wilson thought would- or should- appeal to other Americans. Here, then, was revealed his personal understanding of the national identity. Wilson began by claiming democracy in America was "a democracy with a character quite peculiarly its own." Other peoples did not, could not, automatically identify with it. Democracy in America "is not the same either in principle or in practice as the democracy of France or the democracy of a South American republic." This was due to the organic, rather than doctrinaire, character of American democracy:

It is not a democracy which has been thought out, but a democracy which has been lived out to its present development. It has been wrought by struggle rather than by meditation. It rests upon what has been achieved, not simply upon what has been believed. It is, in brief, a continuation of the institutional history of England-English institutions developed upon an American scale and with American modifications.

Thus, the spirit of American democracy was born of the English race, "a race that curbed kings in order that it might act through parliaments, that substituted parliamentary ministries for king's councils, that avoided revolution by having its own way steadily instead of suddenly."

What made Americans American was their English conservatism and thoughtfulness in reform. These habits found expression in a political culture far removed from the virtual mob rule of other democratic polities. In the United States, the majority did not govern directly, but chose their governing representatives. The key to a well-ordered democracy, argued Wilson, was sympathetic leadership. Statesmen emerged "from the general body of the people" and were elected by the people to interpret the general will. They "are chosen with a view to acting for the people rather than for themselves, with an

58 An Essay ("The True American Spirit"), October 27, 1892, ibid, 8:37.
59 Ibid, 8:37.
60 Ibid, 8:37.
61 Ibid, 8:39.
62 Ibid, 8:38.
63 Ibid, 8:39.
eye to their being representative rather than autocratic." The great leader in a democracy was one who could "mold to his own mind the judgements of the...mass of common men."

Wilson concluded with an exhortation. The duty of the ordinary American lay in choosing his leaders and in dispensing with any leader who ceased to act out of regard for the general will. This entailed a constant vigilance. The spirit "that is to keep us true to American ideals is the spirit of temperate but independent and fearless choice....The progress of a democratic nation is made in disciplined hosts...but the hosts may choose their leader and their cause; need not obsequiously submit to authority once wholesomely respected."

This essay reveals, once again, that Wilson had not yet begun thinking in Bancroftian terms about democracy. His definition of the "true American spirit" employed no mention of America's unique mission to humanity. Wilson did equate democracy with the national identity, yet he insisted that this an organic democracy born of racial character and incapable of universal transplantation.

Thus, America was not even akin to the "city upon a hill" whose example would instruct the world in democracy from a distance. Neither the missionary idealism of interventionism nor the related idealism of isolation figured in Wilson's thought. For Wilson, in this essay at least, American patriotic feeling was still freely interchangeable with Englishness. American democracy was not the product of American principle, but, as he stated, an ongoing continuation of English institutional history. By preserving democracy in America, Americans contributed not to the emancipation of all mankind, but to the glory of Anglo-Saxon civilisation. As in other parts of the English-speaking world, the concept

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64Ibid, 8:38.
65Ibid, 8:39.
of democracy had fused in Wilson's mind with pride of race. Reverence for
democratic government became an integral aspect of one's Anglo-Saxonism.
This was entirely different to Wilson's later understanding of the true American
spirit. In 1919, he went before the American people with a vision the reverse of
his earlier views. Democracy was not held up as a mere continuation of English
history, but as something forged anew in America: something with which all
peoples, after looking to America's example, naturally identified. The United
States, he argued, had come into being to spread democracy the world over. As
Bancroft had first proclaimed, God created America the Christ of nations. In
this definition of of the United States, the people of England, no less than the
peoples of the European continent and Latin America, looked to American ideals
as their hope for political salvation.

Wilson's changed attitude toward Latin America was particularly revealing. In
"The True American Spirit", he had argued that "organic" American democracy
was entirely unrelated the mob democracy of South American republics. Later,
however, Wilson would reverse this Burkean judgement. "No covenant of
cooperative peace that does not include the peoples of the New World can
suffice to keep the future safe against war", he said in January 1917, "and yet
there is only one sort of peace that the peoples of America could join in
guaranteeing. The elements of that peace must be elements that engage the
confidence and satisfy the principles of the American governments, elements
consistent with their political faith and the practical convictions which the
peoples of America have once for all embraced and undertaken to defend."67
This sense of the moral unity of American peoples was at odds with Wilson's
original view that they were fundamentally dissimilar. The Latin Americans, he
was now suggesting, had based their democratic revolutions on the model
bequeathed to humanity by the United States.

67An Address to the Senate, January 22, 1917, ibid, 40:535.
Wilson's historical essay "A Calender of Great Americans", while different in some respects from "The True American Spirit", betrayed a similar thematic divergence from Wilsonianism. It was composed at the suggestion of the editor of the Forum, who proposed an essay on the origins of American nationality.68 This essay reveals that environmental explanations of national character had begun to exert an influence on Wilson. English germ theory and frontier themes now coincided rather awkwardly in his account of national character.

It was not that he suddenly rapidly substituted one theory for another in an Eriksonian display of ideological fervour. The passing of the identity crisis had mitigated such tendencies. There would, of course, be critical times when Wilson again had to deal with situations which produced psychological tensions akin to his adolescent identity crisis. Old wounds were to be reopened, old resentments rekindled, the old enemy faced again. During these episodes of renewed personal struggle, such as the end at Princeton and the opening of his political career, Wilson's tendency to fuse ego with ideology would return to the fore.

Yet all this lay in the future. He tended, in the early 1890s, to vacillate between different theories. Later, in his 1902 History of the American People, the emphasis would be placed on the nation's Anglo-Saxon origins. Whether arguing from the "germ" or "frontier" perspectives, however, a similar divergence from the ultimate Wilsonian vision was in evidence. Wilson began his essay on great Americans with the assertion "There is an American type of man".69 This "American type" differed from the English. "We could no more have done without our great Englishmen, to keep the past steadily in mind and make every change conservative of principle," Wilson wrote, "than we could

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68 See Editorial Note, ibid, 8:368.
69 An Historical Essay ("A Calendar of Great Americans"), September 15, 1893, ibid, 8:369.
have done without the men whose whole impulse was forward, whose whole genius was for origination, natural masters of the art of subduing a wilderness. Among America's "Englishmen", Wilson counted Hamilton and Madison. He conceded their political genius, yet "There is a type of genius", Wilson continued, "which closely approaches this in character, but which is, nevertheless, distinctively American." John Marshall and Daniel Webster had exhibited this American genius. What set them apart as Americans was their regard for law as the concrete embodiment of political theory. Whereas the standards of the English statesman were set "not by law, but by opinion", his American counterpart had standards "with which he must square his conduct...set him by a document upon whose definite sentences the whole structure of government directly rests."

The English constitution, being unwritten, was "always a-making." However, in America "definitive laws, selected by a power outside the government, are the structural iron of the entire fabric of politics". Wilson praised Webster and Marshall for having "[saturated] politics with law without grossly discoloring law with politics." America was not the only nation to have had a written constitution, "but no other nation has ever filled a written constitution with this singularly compounded content, of a sound legal conscience and a strong national purpose." Other great Americans included Benjamin Franklin, Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson. The "supreme American of our history", by Wilson's reckoning, was Lincoln. Lincoln was great because he had combined and harmonised all the elements of the country: "The whole country", continued Wilson, "is summed up in him: the rude Western strength, tempered

70 ibid, 8:369.
71 ibid, 8:370.
72 ibid, 8:371.
73 ibid, 8:371.
74 ibid, 8:371.
75 ibid, 8:371.
76 ibid, 8:371.
77 ibid, 8:378.
with shrewdness and a broad humane wit; the Eastern conservatism, regardful of law and devoted to fixed standards of duty."  

A common man, he was also "a common man with genius...for things American, for insight into the common thought".

This understanding of what constituted American greatness differed from Wilson's Presidential vision. Notably, the essay was devoid of any sense that Lincoln saved the Union because America was the last best hope of mankind. An extract from a characteristic 1919 address reveals the extent to which Wilson's views would undergo transformation. The saving of the Union and the recent victory over Germany, he now argued, were related to the upward march of liberty through human history. If 1918 had been the ultimate blow, 1865 had been the penultimate. Wilson spoke of "the glory that is going to attach to the memories of that great American army...that had made conquest of peace for the world- greater armies than sought the Holy Grail, greater armies than sought to redeem the Holy Sepulchre...greater [than redeemed] us from the unjust rule of Britain, greater even than the armies of our Civil War which saved the Union, will be this noble army of Americans who saved the world!"

By contrast, Wilson made no attempt to relate his 1893 essay on great Americans to the fulfilment of a national mission. These men had been great in their different ways, and their greatness was a unique product of the American experience. Yet what had this American greatness contributed to the political redemption of humanity? Wilson nowhere posed such a question, not even in passing. National self-absorption characterised the whole piece. Seemingly unaware of Bancroftian typology, he ignored the grand abstractions in favour of narrow constitutional issues. Wilson's only sense of America's contribution to

78Ibid, 8:378.
79Ibid, 8:378.
80An Address in the Oakland Municipal Auditorium, September 18, 1919, ibid, 63:360-361.
humanity was "Our notable literature of decision and commentary in the field of constitutional law".\textsuperscript{81}

He concluded the essay with a return to the frontier thesis. "The frontier is gone: it has reached the Pacific. The country grows rapidly homogeneous."\textsuperscript{82} Over time, the prudent East and the daring West would blend to create one type of American. "Some day we shall be of one mind, our ideals fixed, our purposes harmonized, our nationality complete and consentaneous".\textsuperscript{83} Wilson made no mention of what the future held for the rest of humanity. He did not in any way imply that America's "purposes harmonized" and "ideals fixed" would bring about the redemption of the Old World. If the idea of America's national mission had played on Wilson's mind since childhood, he would surely have made some reference to it here.

These two essays on the theme of national identity reveal a Wilson whose views about the United States and its role in the world bore no qualitative relation to Wilsonianism. This consideration highlights the importance of the question at hand. If Woodrow Wilson was not recognisably Wilsonian by the early 1890s, when and how did he become Wilsonian? What factors coincided to forge Wilson's ideological alloy of American nationalism and liberal internationalism?

Ambrosius cited "progressive history" as one such factor in the forging of Wilsonianism. This issue will now be addressed, in order to show that Turner's overall importance has been greatly overestimated. Having said that, it is not to be denied that Turner did exert a passing influence on Wilson's understanding of American history. Wilson himself acknowledged this. At an 1896 session of the American Historical Association, he remarked "it is

\textsuperscript{81}A Calendar of Great Americans", \textit{ibid}, 8:371.
\textsuperscript{82}\textit{Ibid}, 8:380.
\textsuperscript{83}\textit{Ibid}, 8:380.
eminently fortunate, it seems to me, that a man should arise like Professor Turner...who has the courage to put American history in its proper setting."84 During the mid-1890s, Wilson often referred to the frontier thesis in his historical lectures and essays. Yet it ought not be inferred from this that Wilson's Presidential vision of America and its role in the world owed its intellectual origin to progressive history.

During the period when Wilson was most influenced by Turner, his views bore no thematic relation to Wilsonianism. An important example of Wilson's use of the frontier thesis was his 1897 essay "The Making of the Nation." This piece was published in the July 1897 edition of the Atlantic Monthly. Wilson rejected the idea that the United States was as yet truly unified, but predicted the ultimate triumph of homogeneity. America, he argued, "is at one and the same time in several stages of development...we still wait for its economic and spiritual union."85 The country owed this disparate development to the frontier. Since the Civil War, continued Wilson, "The 'West' has so magnified its characteristics by sheer growth, every economic interest which its life represents has become so gigantic in its proportions, that it seems...a region apart."86 Wilson defined this 'West' with reference to "Professor Turner's admirable phrase."87 It was not a geographical region so much as "a stage of development, nowhere set apart and isolated, but spread abroad through all the far interior of the continent."88

With the recent closing of the frontier, however, "The old sort of growth is at an end,- the growth by mere expansion."89 A natural process had been initiated

86*ibid*, 10:219.
87*ibid*, 10:219.
88*ibid*, 10:219.
89*ibid*, 10:230.
"by which a various people is to be bound together in a single interest."\textsuperscript{90} Wilson predicted that East and West would knit together as their interests became more intertwined. He called for a new statesmanship "to teach us the triumphs of cooperation, the self-possession and calm choices of maturity."\textsuperscript{91} Government must come to reflect not sectional jealousy but the spirit of national unity. "It is with such machinery that we are to face the future," Wilson concluded, "find a wise and moderate policy, bring the nation to a common, a cordial understanding, a real unity of life."\textsuperscript{92}

This essay demonstrates how Wilson engaged with Turner's ideas by using them as the starting point of his prediction. He accepted Turner's account of Western development as the dominant factor of recent American history. Wilson then drew a line between America's past and future at the point of the frontier's closure. A new nation had come into being as a result of Western development, but it was a nation "unfinished, unharmonized, waiting still to have its parts adjusted, lacking its last lesson in the ways of peace and concert."\textsuperscript{93}

It was in keeping with the insular spirit of Turner's historical writing that Wilson expressed no interest in questions of foreign policy. His view of America's future was limited to America itself. Wilson's call for a new national statesmanship stemmed from his preoccupation with the internal disunity of the United States. The great future leader to which he referred—doubtless with himself in mind—would not be concerned with the condition of other peoples. His purpose would be to effect a spiritual union of America's sections. Yet to what international end was this American union devoted? Such considerations were outside the Turnerian field of view. "The history of the United States",

\textsuperscript{90}Ibid., 10:230.
\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., 10:230.
\textsuperscript{92}Ibid., 10:235.
\textsuperscript{93}Ibid., 10:230.
wrote Wilson, "has been one continuous story of rapid, stupendous growth, and all its questions have been questions of growth." The question of America's mission to the rest of humanity appeared nowhere in this essay. Nor had it appeared in Wilson's 1895 address on "The Course of American History", a piece also composed with the frontier thesis in mind. "The historian is...a sort of prophet", remarked Wilson at the outset, "thus we learn what manner of nation we are of, and divine what manner of people we should be." Yet his view of what the American people "should be" differed in kind from the Presidential exhortations he would utter in 1919.

Wilson depicted the course of American history as the adjustment of Old World peoples to the New World. The first frontiersmen "lacked the frontier heart." Over time, though, "The strange life became familiar; their adjustment to it was at length unconscious and without effort." Not until these immigrants "had turned their backs once for all upon the sea...[and] the mountain passes grown familiar, and the lands beyond the central and constant theme of their hope, the goal and dream of their young men [did they] become an American people." At this moment, "the great determining movement of our history began...all the marks of the authentic type of the 'American' as we know him came into our life." Democracy came into being on the frontier. The "simples of things complex were revealed in the clear air of the New World...all accidentals seemed to fall away from the structure of government, and the simple first principles were laid bare that abide always...social distinctions were stripped off...and every man brought once again to a clear realization of his actual relations to his fellows."

94Ibid, 10:228.
95The Address ("The Course of American History"), May 16, 1895, ibid, 9:257.
96Ibid, 9:263.
97Ibid, 9:263.
100Ibid, 9:266.
For three hundred years, the influence of the democratic frontier gave "Our political, our economic, our social life" its character.\(^{101}\) Yet, of late, "The westward march has stopped, upon the final slopes of the Pacific; and now the plot thickens."\(^{102}\) With the closing of the frontier, the American people must "resume and keep the vision of that time."\(^{103}\) In order to "renew our youth and secure our age against decay", it was necessary to "get the national temperament; send our minds abroad upon the continent".\(^{104}\) Thus, Wilson's vision of the post-frontier era did not include any consideration of America's role in the world. There were no professions of missionary altruism such as figured so prominently in his later addresses. Wilson's concern was with what America's West could teach the East. In 1919, the focus would shift to what America as a whole was teaching the world. In speaking of the need to get "the national temperament", Wilson offered no reason other than the continued well-being of America itself.

It was not for the redemption of humanity that Americans be "liberal as the great principles we profess; and so be a people who might have again the heroic adventures and do again the heroic work of the past."\(^{105}\) Here was a sort of proto-nationalism that did not yet intersect with the philosophy of liberal internationalism. Wilson's early use of the frontier thesis lacked the essence of Wilsonianism, which was marked by the idea of total inclusivity. In 1919, America's fate was held up as the fate of the world, and vice versa. Sentiments of this nature were clearly not derived from Turner's frontier thesis.

\(^{101}\)ibid, 9:266.
\(^{102}\)ibid, 9:273.
\(^{103}\)ibid, 9:274.
\(^{104}\)ibid, 9:273.
\(^{105}\)ibid, 9:274.
It was significant nonetheless that an unmistakable sense of Americanism was now beginning to pervade Wilson's thought. The works examined above embody assertions of romantic patriotism and place-feeling that were not present in his earlier writings. Such romanticism owed its ultimate provenance not to Turner's frontier thesis, of course, but to an older American intellectual tradition. It would appear that Wilson was beginning to connect with those New World followers of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and Coleridge who had thought of America's landscape as a new Garden of Eden offering humanity a chance to regain lost purity and virtue.\footnote{See Merle Curti, \emph{Human Nature in American Thought: A History} (Madison, 1980), especially Chapter 5, "The Romantic Impulse". See also Henry Nash Smith, \emph{Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth} (Cambridge, 1950); R.W.B. Lewis, \emph{The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century} (Chicago, 1953) and David W. Noble, \emph{The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden} (New York, 1968).}

During his childhood and well into adult life, Wilson had looked upon himself as a Scots-Irish exile in the New World. He shared the exile's perennial fixation on lost, distant climes. Wilson's musings were not on the vast reaches of the American continent but for the imagined verdant fields of Britain. He was possessed of no nativist feeling, and his relation to America was typified by a constant undercurrent of psychic rootlessness and alienation. In the summer of 1894, however, Wilson went West for the first time. There he discovered an America just as worthy of romantic idealisation as any region of the Old World. This moment signalled a growing acceptance on Wilson's part that he was, in fact, an American. Such a development ought not to be overlooked entirely. While progressive history did not provide the substance of the ultimate Wilsonian vision, it did play a part in Wilson's initial discovery of America.

It was after visiting Turner in Wisconsin in 1893 that Wilson took a temporary teaching position at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Shortly before delivering "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" to the
American Historical Association, Wilson and Turner discussed its contents at length. Through Turner, Wilson was able to conceive of the West in a new light. He felt a powerful urge to see this frontier for himself, as though to make a personal break with the sectionalism of the past. Writing to his wife shortly after arrival, Wilson spoke of the impact Colorado had made upon him. Seated at his desk, he had only to lift his eyes "to look up to Pike's Peak and these singular mountains." Wilson felt unable to "describe this country yet: it is too unlike anything I ever saw before- and too unlike what I expected to see. Neither my impressions nor my vocabulary have adjusted themselves." After a six day-long rail journey, he was to learn that a third of the continent still lay west. In a subsequent letter, Wilson reported feeling "excited with new emotions- gradually filling up with new ideas and realization of our continent". Here was Wilson in the Western Garden of Eden, undergoing a personal purification. He took every possible opportunity to immerse himself in the terrain. "This morning...I rode out into one the can[y]ons," he wrote on July 25, "and saw sights which I must certainly try to describe to you when I can. They are too much for me as yet." This feeling of powerlessness in describing the West was a common refrain in Wilson's Colorado letters. It bespoke the intensity of the experience. "I want to get among the...great peaks and masses of this stupendous range...and feel their terrible grandeur", he wrote with regard to the Rockies.

Wilson had discovered an America with which the self could merge and be transformed. He secretly resented the demands of Colorado Springs society upon his free time. "These are the penalties of a visit to a strange place" because it kept him from the beckoning sierra by which he was enthralled.

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107To Ellen Axson Wilson, July 23, 1894, PWW, 8:623.
108Ibid. 8:623.
109To Ellen Axson Wilson, July 29, 1894, ibid, 8:632.
110To Ellen Axson Wilson, July 24, 1894, ibid, 8:625.
111To Ellen Axson Wilson, July 26, 1894, ibid, 8:628.
112To Ellen Axson Wilson, July 24, 1894, ibid, 8:625.
Wilson would appear to have undergone a romantic epiphany, forsaking polite salons for the wild mountain passes. "What an eye-opener this extraordinary region is! I shall not miss the Alps so much hereafter", he confessed. It was indicative of Wilson's burgeoning nativist sentiment that he should thus compare the European Alps to the American Rockies. Never before had Wilson elevated the New World above the Old.

When Wilson saw Great Britain for the first time, his identification with America and things American was only strengthened as a consequence. The journey to an imagined homeland is a critical moment in the life of the exile. It can either intensify one's identification with the parent culture or, conversely, induce a sense of alienation. In Wilson's case, the experience left him feeling more American than English. Two years after his month-long sojourn in Colorado Springs, Wilson set sail for Glasgow. From there he toured through Scotland and the length of England. His reaction to green and pleasant Albion appear rather staid and conventional in comparison with his earlier Western revelations and his ardent Anglo-Saxonism. Letters to Ellen revealed that he had found little to excite new emotions or prompt new realisations. Writing from Warwick "in a quaint inn at the heart of the Shakspere [sic] country" he described an England looking much "as I had dreamed it would look".

There was none of the mystical exaltation which had accompanied his first sight of Colorado's mountains. Wilson even wrote his wife "I been homesick for America". He confessed having "seen as much that made me feel alien as that me feel at home since I came to England, and have been made on the whole to love Am. more rather than less,- for all Eng. is so bonny and so full of treasure for the mind and fancy". Wilson's travel experiences reveal that his sense of

113To Ellen Axson Wilson, July 30, 1894, *ibid*, 8:633.
national identity was becoming increasingly rooted in the land of his birth. His
discovery of Turner’s frontier thesis, it is true, accompanied this development.
Yet, although it is of some interest to identify Wilson’s first expression of
Americanism, this does not account for the intellectual basis of Wilsonianism.

As President, Wilson spoke very little of America as a special place. He
referred to the United States more as a special idea. The nation was revered not
in physical terms, but as a spiritual concept. Democracy, according to this
Bancroftian reading, owed its origin not to the influence of the frontier, but to
the democratic aspirations of immigrant peoples who fled from Old World
autocracy. This universal ideal—”liberty”—had found its embodiment in
America. As Wilson argued on September 5, 1919, ”America is made up of the
peoples of the world...and she has said to mankind at her birth: ’We have come
to redeem the world by giving it liberty and justice.’”117

This view of America’s origins differed from the more prosaic Turnerian
emphasis on environmental experience. Wilson’s Presidential nationalism is
therefore not to be conflated with his inchoate, though intense, patriotic feeling
of the 1890s. Underlying the ultimate Wilsonian vision was the idea that
America had a special role to play in safeguarding the interests of humanity.
Wilson simply did not see America in this light during the 1890s, and this can
be shown by considering his response to the Venezuelan boundary dispute.
Wilson’s new identification with America as home or patria did not impact on
his core Anglo-American philosophy of international relations. This
consideration serves to place the frontier thesis and its influence upon Wilson in
proper perspective. On December 18, 1895, Wilson drafted a revealing
memorandum about the dispute. A reporter from the New York Times had
asked him for an interview about President Cleveland’s December 17 message

117 An Address in the St. Louis Coliseum, September 5, 1919, ibid, 63:51.
to Congress. Cleveland had recommended that in order to settle a long-standing boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana, an American special commission be established. He indicated that British retention of the disputed territory might constitute a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. The British government had previously refused American offers of mediation, and had also denied the right of the United States to intervene. Cleveland even hinted at the possibility of war, stating that he was aware of the possible consequences of any unilateral action undertaken by his government.

In the context of these diplomatic developments, Wilson argued that the Monroe Doctrine was no standard by which to measure the worth of American diplomacy: "Whether the policy now being pursued by the President be, or be not, a just and logical inference from the doctrine which Monroe uttered to check the aggressions of the Holy Alliance, it should be discussed and assessed upon its own merits." Wilson disapproved of what he saw as Cleveland's jingoistic adherence to the principle of European non-intervention in the Western Hemisphere: "Do we wish to assume such a protectorate and dictatorship over South America", he wondered, "as always to let the internal rivalries and disorders of that Continent run what course they will, provided no European power have any interest in them, and yet always to interfere, with menace of war if we be snubbed, in every matter, tho[ugh] it be only a boundary dispute, in wh. any European power has part or lot, even when our interference is in breach alike of international law and courtesy? To that question I sh[ould] answer, most assuredly not, if we are to keep our...dignity and self-respect."
restraints in its dealings with other nations. America was not the sole moral
guardian of humanity, but a power among powers. Chief among these powers
was Great Britain. American foreign policy, he argued, must aim to bolster
Anglo-American cooperation at every turn: "Do we wish- ought we to dare,
unless driven by imperative justice and necessity- to bring about a deadly war
between the two branches of the Eng. race, in whose hands lie, if they be
united, the future destinies of the world;...who, if divided, may be ousted of
their supremacy?"120 Such a war would entail laying "violent hands on
civilization itself."121 The "disaster of it...no man can adequately imagine".122

This memorandum was of significance, yet Notter's account of Wilson and the
Venezuela crisis did not include a mention of it. Writing in the mid-1930s, his
access to the Wilson papers was obviously not so ready as the access enjoyed
by those with the comprehensive Link volumes at their disposal. The Venezuela
crisis was an important test because it provoked Wilson's first mention of the
Monroe Doctrine in relation to a contemporary diplomatic issue. His disavowal
of national moral assertion sheds new light on the gulf that lay between the
Wilson of 1895 and the Wilson of 1919.

Wilson's later treatment of the Monroe Doctrine saw it elevated into a national
shibboleth. "We love it", he proclaimed in Reno on September 22, 1919,
"because it was the first effective dam built up against the tide of autocratic
power."123 This reflected his new identification with the Bancroftian myths of
American nationalism. Expunged from his official rhetoric was the ideal of
Anglo-American global stewardship. America alone was the pure evangel of
democracy, and had been since its inception. What Monroe had sought, argued
Wilson, was to keep the Western Hemisphere free of Old World intrigue in
order to strike a blow for the upward march of human liberty. No principle could possibly be accorded more sacred. "The principle of the Monroe Doctrine", proclaimed Wilson in Salt Lake City on September 23, 1919, "is that no nation has the right to interfere with the affairs or to impose its own will in any way upon another nation. President Monroe said to the governments of Europe that any attempt of that sort on the part of any government of Europe would be regarded as an act unfriendly to the United States."\textsuperscript{124}

In 1895, Wilson had given clear precedence to Anglo-American unity even in the face of British interference in the Western Hemisphere. By 1919, however, he decreed that nothing should affect "the validity of the Monroe Doctrine, which says that if any power seeks to impose its will upon any American state in North America, Central America, or South America, it...acknowledges the right of the government of the United States to take the initiative."\textsuperscript{125} Thus, the assumption that America acted for all humanity underlay Wilson's Presidential understanding of the Monroe Doctrine. Throughout the Western tour, he consistently related the Monroe Doctrine to his vision of American-led collective security. The Covenant of the League of Nations, said Wilson, "gives explicit, unqualified recognition to the Monroe Doctrine."\textsuperscript{126} Indeed, he continued, "it does more than that. It adopts the principle of the Monroe Doctrine as the principle of the world."\textsuperscript{127}

This would indicate that the immediate influence of Turner upon Wilson was not such as to produce a Wilsonian response to questions of international relations. When faced with a pressing question of the nation's foreign policy, Wilson did not bring his Turnesian ideas into play. Instead, he gave expression to the ideology of Anglo-American cooperation. During this early period of his career,
Wilson had no grand unifying schema by which to relate America's internal historical development to that of humanity in general.
2. Wilson's emerging philosophy of international relations

The late nineteenth-century rise of Anglo-American cooperation has been well-described by Bradford Perkins.128 Other historians who dealt with this subject include Alexander E. Campbell, Charles S. Campbell, John A.S. Grenville and Ernest R. May.129 Wilson's reaction to the Venezuela Crisis was in part a reflection of this new sense of Anglo-American kinship, which was just beginning to gather force among Eastern elites. The Anglocentric nature of his upbringing fitted Wilson to be in the vanguard of this politico-cultural movement.130

"Toward Great Britain, alone of major powers," wrote Perkins, "the United States became more friendly in the two decades before Sarajevo."131 Many factors underpinned this change. As international rivalry grew apace, it became apparent to many in Britain and America that the two countries should close ranks against challenges from Russia or Germany. Anglo-Saxonism complemented these geopolitical considerations, as did the fact that many Americans became more tolerant of British imperialism once they had acquired

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130As the editors of PWW have noted, "Wilson had been exposed to British newspapers and quarters ever since he could read...All his youthful reflections about politics were based on the assumption that British institutions were superior to American." Editorial Note, 1:492. Significantly, Wilson chose "Our Kinship with England" as the subject for his 1879 senior thesis, now unfortunately lost.
131Perkins, The Great Rapprochement, 8.
an overseas empire themselves. Wilson's horror at the thought of Anglo-American strife captured something of the mood on both sides of the Atlantic.

"'Continental Europe' is not even now a match for the combined strength of the English-speaking peoples," argued a prominent English writer, "and a permanent rapprochement between them would be the best guarantee of the world."\(^{132}\) On the American side, John Hay spoke metaphorically of the American and British flags flying together: "when a breeze came the twin flags unfolded the splendor of their colors, and when a gale blew they stood stiffly out to the air, proclaiming their attachment to every quarter of the sky."\(^{133}\) The growth of American power was instrumental in bringing about this new understanding. Cognisant that the United States had outstripped them economically, the British sought to follow conciliatory policies. With England's security under threat, it was considered vitally important to win American sympathy. "If the Americans choose to pay for what they can easily afford", observed a First Lord of the Admiralty, "they can gradually build up a navy, fully as large and then larger than ours."\(^{134}\) Americans, conversely, felt more secure than ever before, and this mitigated their traditional fear of Britain. "The sensitiveness and uneasy self-assertiveness of the Americans, as a mass, has virtually passed away," suggested one American commentator, thus eliminating an unpleasant characteristic of past relations.\(^{135}\)

Many clubs and societies sprang up, devoted to the fostering of Anglo-American amity. In January 1904, Wilson attended a "most interesting"\(^{136}\) dinner given by one such society—The Pilgrims. He delivered an address in keeping with the effusive mood of the occasion. Held simultaneously in New York and London,
this trans-Atlantic event was connected by means of telegraphic wire.

Expressions of friendship and mutual good-will were flashed across the ocean. "The dispatches as they were received were read to the assembled diners", explained a contemporary news report, "and then the replies were sent back".\textsuperscript{137}

When Wilson's turn came up, he told his London audience "Recent historical study has done a great deal toward restoring cordial feeling and a right attitude of thought between America and England....Historians on both sides of the water, for example, are coming to take the same view of the American Revolution as due, not to the intrinsic badness of English legislation, but to economic, social, and political causes which lay deeper than statesmen knew."\textsuperscript{138} The two nations had reached an understanding, and this was the basis of a sympathetic union. "We know," he concluded, "that our people stand for what you stand for."\textsuperscript{139}

Not all Americans identified with the cause of Anglo-American solidarity. During the 1896 Presidential campaign, William Jennings Bryan had attacked the restrictive gold system of which Britain was the centre. Bryan Democracy campaigned on an inflationary platform of free silver, calculated to ease pressure on debtors and the less fortunate in general. As the perceived ally of eastern financial interests against which Bryanites and Populists rebelled, Britain came in for much stringent criticism. "Let me appeal to your patriotism," Bryan had argued against repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. "Shall we make our laws dependent upon England's action and thus allow her to legislate for us upon the most important of all questions?...Are we an English colony or an independent people?"\textsuperscript{140} Gold monometallism, it was argued, "is a British policy and its adoption has brought other nations into financial servitude to

\textsuperscript{139}\textit{Ibid}, 15:149.
\textsuperscript{140}Quoted in Perkins, \textit{The Great Rapprochement}, 21.
London....It can be fastened on the United States only by the stifling of that spirit and love of liberty which proclaimed our political independence."141

Wilson's initial hostility toward Bryan and his political philosophy ought thus be read in the context of Anglo-American relations. "Chain a man to a ledger and take something off his salary every time he leaves it", he said before a New York audience, "and you can't expect that he will form reasoned opinions about the silver question...or the Venezuelan boundary."142 Those who supported McKinley and gold against Bryan and free silver, Wilson argued on another occasion, belonged to "common-sense elements which are international and not national."143 America "should not at all minimize the vote of the foreign-born population as against the vote of some of the native-born population on the question of silver and gold."144

In 1907, Wilson restated his basic objection to Bryan Democracy. He resented its disregard for "the intellectual geography of the world."145 The implication was that Bryan's anti-British arguments were out of step with the mutual aims of America and Britain. This is an illustration of how the Anglo-American outlook helped shape Wilson's response to domestic political issues, just as the Venezuela affair illustrated his Anglo-American idealism.

Having said that, there was one important occasion when Wilson focused exclusively on America's role. Wilson's response to the Spanish-American War of 1898 was the closest he had yet come to Wilsonianism. Indeed, he made special mention of this episode during the Western tour of 1919, in order to portray the war for Cuban independence as America's debut as missionary on

141Quoted in ibid, 22.
142A Newspaper Report of an Address at the Brooklyn Institute ("Ideals of Democracy"). PWW, 10:8.
143An After-Dinner Speech to the New England Society of Brooklyn, ibid, 10:83.
144Ibid, 10:83.
the world stage. "When we fought the war with Spain," recalled Wilson, "there were many cynical smiles on the other side of the water when we professed a disinterested purpose, when we said we were going to win freedom for Cuba and then present it to her." The forces of autocracy had said of America's motive "Ah, that is a very common subterfuge. Just watch. America is not going to let that rich island, with all its great sugar plantations and its undeveloped agricultural wealth, get out of its grip again." All Europe stood at amaze "when, without delay or hesitation, we redeemed our promise and gave Cuba the liberty we had won for her." America thereby proved its "absolute disinterestedness". Old World diplomats had been forced to ask "Is it true, after all, that this people believes and means what it says? Is it true, after all, that this is a great altruistic force in the world?"

Such remarks would indicate that the memory of the Spanish-American war was of personal symbolic importance to Wilson, and his initial response to the war confirmed that indeed this was the case. For the first time, the future President spoke of American foreign policy in moral terms unrelated to the ideal of Anglo-American cooperation. Despite certain similarities, however, this was not Wilsonianism. Significantly, he did not connect the war to the Bancroftian myths of American nationalism. Though he did speak of America's moral obligation to serve liberty, Wilson did not argue that this was to be the fulfilment of America's destiny.

Notter rightly suggested that "Wilson's treatment of the Cuban situation was scant" but it was not true, however, that "Wilson...maintained an unbroken

148 *ibid*, 63:434.
150 *ibid*, 63:455.
silence" with regard to the Spanish-American War until late 1899.\textsuperscript{152} In August 1898, Wilson composed a memorandum entitled "What ought we to do?" He dealt with the recent conflict and what it meant for the United State's role in the world. Wilson was filled with the sense that some great transformation had occurred: "A brief season of war has deeply changed our thought, and has altered, it may be permanently, the conditions of our national life. We shall be wise to assess the change calmly, if it be indeed inevitable, and to examine ourselves, what it is we intend and by what means we hope to accomplish it. We have passed, it would seem, the parting of the ways: interest and prudence alike turn our thought to the new country we have entered."\textsuperscript{153}

The United States had "left the continent which has hitherto been our only field of action and... gone out upon the seas, where the nations are rivals and we cannot live or act apart."\textsuperscript{154} Yet America sought not to enter the fray of international power politics, but only to vindicate right. It was "a war begun without calculations, upon an impulse of humane indignation and pity,- because we saw at our very doors a government unmindful of justice or of mercy, contemptuous in its every practice of the principles we professed to live for".\textsuperscript{155}

Wilson's treatment of the sinking of the \textit{Maine} prefigured his later justification for war with Germany. As in April 1917, the offence was not portrayed as a threat to America's interests, but as a threat, rather, to liberty itself. Cuba's Spanish rulers were "oppressive and yet not efficient or fit to rule, spoiling men and thwarting the very bounties of nature in fair islands which it had pillaged and not used."\textsuperscript{156} The essence of this great imperialist evil was laid bare by what transpired in Havana harbour. "[Spain's] character seemed of a sudden

\textsuperscript{152}ibid, 103.
\textsuperscript{153}A Memorandum ("What ought we to do?"). August 1, 1898, \textit{ibid}, 10:574.
\textsuperscript{154}ibid, 10:575.
\textsuperscript{155}ibid, 10:574.
\textsuperscript{156}ibid, 10:574.
revealed to us," Wilson argued, "by an act of assassination." Thus were the
American people, "sincere in purpose and just in...motives", spurred to fight:

We did not know, we could hardly believe, that its authoritative
masters had ordered or done the mad and brutal thing that wrecked
our battle ship and sent her unsuspecting crew unwarned out of the
world; but we did know of what sort the men were to whom Spain
was wont to entrust power in Cuba; we somehow felt sure that it was...suitable to the place and its associations of unjust might and
sinister intrigue; it helped us to know what Cuba was, what her people
had seen and endured. It brought us on the instant to look point blank
upon the place and all that it held, and one look direct was enough.
Hitherto we had heard; now we saw.

Wilson depicted the American armed forces as crusaders. They "have strangely
quickened our blood...war seems ennobled when done as they do it,- with a
manifest earnest passion for service, but with no love of slaughter,-with a great
pity, rather, for those whom they destroy,- like the christian [sic] gentlemen we
would have them be".

He was insistent that service, not self-aggrandisement, had motivated America's
participation in the conflict. "No doubt the war pleases the jingoes", complained
Wilson, "but any war would please them, and this war was undertaken, not
because war is pleasing, but because this particular war was just, and indeed
inevitable; and we have not made ourselves a nation of jingoes by undertaking
it." The term "jingo" was in common usage at the end of the nineteenth
century, denoting the new chauvinistic spirit which had pervaded Cleveland's
handling of the Venezuela dispute. It was indicative of Wilson's foreign policy
leanings that he criticised "jingoes" in his response to the Spanish-American
War. His remark, "we have not made ourselves a nation of jingoes", implied an
altruistic view of what American diplomacy should seek. "It is a question", he
stated, "of moral obligation". America had entered a modern world in which

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157 Ibid., 10:574.
158 Ibid., 10:575.
159 Ibid., 10:574.
160 Ibid., 10:576.
161 Ibid., 10:575.
162 Ibid., 10:576.
"civilisation has become aggressive, and we are made aware that choices are about to be made as vital as those which determined the settlement and control of North America....The question is now, Which nations shall possess the world? England, Russia, Germany, France, these are the rivals in the new spoliation".163 As a consequence, the great issue facing America was "What ought we do?"164

It is significant that Wilson's understanding of "we" did not include Great Britain. He was explicit that "Of a sudden we stand in the midst"165 of "England" and other great powers. Wilson had reacted to the Venezuela crisis with statements of Anglo-Americanism. In 1898, by contrast, he referred to America's own moral obligation. He did not connect the war with Spain to the advance of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, but to the future role of the United States in the world. Yet it was not that 1898 saw the sudden emergence of the Wilsonian vision. In 1901, for example, Wilson delivered a commemorative address entitled "The Ideals of America". The occasion was the 125th anniversary of the Revolutionary battle of Trenton. Though certain phrases did anticipate aspects of Wilsonianism, an underlying preoccupation with America's destiny was absent. He treated the Spanish-American War not as the culmination of American history, but as a point of departure. "No war ever transformed us quite as the war with Spain transformed us"166, he said. "The battle of Trenton was not more significant than the battle of Manila."167

Bent "upon service and not mastery"168, the United States was to train the peoples that had come under its tutelage in the ways of self-government. "Let us put our leading characters at the front", he urged, "let us pray that vision may

163Ibid, 10:576.
164Ibid, 10:576.
165Ibid, 10:576.
166A Commemorative Address ("The Ideals of America"), December 26, 1901, ibid, 12:215.
168Ibid, 12:222.
come with power; let us ponder our duties like men of conscience and temper our ambitions like men who seek to serve, not to subdue, the world". 169 This was not Wilsonianism. Though Wilson did speak of a moral imperative in foreign policy, he did not attempt link this ideal to America's destiny. The Bancroftian view of American history was absent, in that Wilson did not equate his philosophy of selfless service with America itself. Wilsonianism, as Levin has pointed out, was a fusion of liberal internationalism and American nationalism, and Wilson's pre-1910 outlook did not exhibit such a tendency. 170

This can be illustrated by comparing Wilson's early treatment of the American Revolution with what he said later. On the occasion of Princeton's sesquicentennial, Wilson delivered an address in which he considered the founding of the college in relation to "the stirring changes which put the revolutionary drama on the stage." 171 While the American Revolution "wrought a radical work of change in the world" in the sense that "it created a new...polity", it "was a work of conservation after all, as fundamentally conservative as the revolution of 1688 or the extortion of Magna Charta." 172 Thus, Wilson saw the Revolution not as a triumph of universal principles, but as a continuation of English development. This was in accord with the conservative interpretation of American history then popular among the Anglo-American Eastern elites. The object of the Declaration of Independence, according to this apocryphal pre-nationalist Wilson, "was the preservation of a body of liberties, to keep the natural course of English development in America clear of impediment. It was meant, not in rebellion, but in self-defense. If it brought change, it was the change of maturity...the appropriate fruition of

170Thorsen did not take account of this vital distinction, and thus made the error of concluding "The basic pattern of Wilson's political thought was formed over the period from the end of Reconstruction to the war with Spain". The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson, 214.
171A Commemorative Address ("Princeton in the Nation's Service"), October 21, 1896, PWW, 10:12.
172Ibid, 10:22.
wholesome and steady growth. It was part of English liberty that America should be free.”

In 1901, Wilson still viewed American independence as a blow struck only for English liberty. “The very generation of Englishmen”, Wilson specified in his address on American ideals, “who stood against us in that day of our struggling birth lived to see the liberating light of that day shine about their own path before they made an end and were gone.” The American struggle, he continued, “had been the first act in the drama whose end and culmination should be the final establishment of constitutional government for England and for English communities everywhere.” When Wilson’s 1919 addresses are compared with these early pronouncements, it is clear that his thought had undergone a transformation in the intervening period. “We promised at our birth to be the champions of humanity”, proclaimed the reconstructed Wilson of the true nationalist gospel. This avowedly universalist interpretation of the American Revolution went far beyond the aim of “constitutional government for... English communities”. Wilson now argued that the Revolution had been fought to secure the liberty of all peoples. “We in America”, Wilson said in San Diego on September 19, 1919, “have stood from the day of our birth for the emancipation of people throughout the world who were living unwillingly under governments which were not of their choice.” Three days later, Wilson devoted the peroration of another Western address to this Bancroftian theme. The world, he said, “has come to the vision that that little body of 3,000,000 people, strung along the Atlantic Coast of this continent, had in that far year 1776. Men in Europe laughed at them, at this little handful of dreamers, this little body of men

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174 “The Ideals of America”, *ibid.*, 12:211.
who talked dogmatically about liberty. And since then that fire which they
started on that coast has consumed every autocratic government in the world”.178

As the above extract reveals, the Wilsonian vision of America’s role was
grounded on a liberal philosophy of history. The liberal interpretation conceived
human history as the story of liberty’s inevitable triumph over autocracy. Thus
did God reveal himself in temporal affairs to accomplish his redemptive design
for all humanity. The liberal ideal of an international society had its origins in the
European enlightenment and found open expression at the time of the French
Revolution.179 In May 1790, for example, when the National Assembly began
to consider questions of foreign policy, Mirabeau said he anticipated a time
"when we shall have only friends and no allies, when there will be universal
freedom of trade and Europe will form one great family”.180

Wilsonianism came into being when Wilson adapted this liberal teleology to suit
the myths of American nationalism. In doing so, it was necessary for him to
balance his deeply-ingrained Burkean conservatism with Immanuel Kant’s
vision of perpetual peace. Although few in number, Kant’s writings on
international relations have exerted a lasting influence.181 He was the chief
exponent of liberal internationalism among great philosophers, and it is
somewhat surprising that the orthodox Wilson literature has neglected Kant’s
contribution to Wilsonianism. The ultimate reason for this neglect, it is to be
suspected, is the pervasive influence of American nationalism, which holds that
the vision of a universal moral order originated in America by divine edict, and
was an expression of an uniquely American moral idea.

178 An Address in Reno, September 22, 1919, ibid, 63:441.
179 See James Mayall, "1789 and the liberal theory of international society", Review of
180 Quoted in ibid, 297.
181 These include, most famously, the pamphlet Perpetual Peace (1795), and also The Idea for a
Universal History (1784); Theory and Practice (1793); The Metaphysics of Morals (1797).
As Kant spoke of humanity "abandoning the lawless state of savagery and entering a federation of peoples in which every state, even the smallest, could expect to derive its security and rights not from its own power or its own legal judgements, but solely from this great federation"¹⁸², so Wilson referred to the Covenant of the League of Nations as "unique in the history of mankind, because the center of it is the redemption of weak nations. There never was a congress of nations before that considered the rights of those who could not enforce their rights."¹⁸³ Kant, like Wilson, held that existing international law and the balance of power impaired the realisation of perpetual peace among men.¹⁸⁴ The following extract prefigured Wilson's critique of Old World diplomacy: "Each separate state," wrote Kant, "so long as it has a neighboring state which it dares hope to conquer, strives to aggrandize itself through such a conquest, and thus to attain a world empire, a polity wherein freedom...would necessarily expire...instead of striving toward a league of nations, a republic of federated free nations, [the nations] begin the same game over and over again, each for itself, so that war, the scourge of humanity, may not be allowed to cease."¹⁸⁵ Wilson would incorporate this liberal critique of anti-democratic militarism, though from the perspective of one who claimed that the ancient scourge was finally cured. "The old order of things was not to depend upon the general moral judgement of mankind," he said in Minneapolis, "not to base policies upon international right, but to base policies upon international power. So there were drawn together groups of nations which stood armed, facing one another, which stood drawing their power from the vitality of people who did not wish to be subordinated to them, drawing their vitality from the energy of

¹⁸²Quoted in Andrew Hurrell, "Kant and the Kantian paradigm in international relations", *Review of International Studies*, 16 (1990), 191.
¹⁸⁴This idea was repeated throughout the Western tour: see, for example, *Ibid*, 63:24-25, 34-35, 187, 259, 291, 329, 335-36, 374, 379-80, 403.
¹⁸⁶Cited in Hurrell, "Kantian paradigm", 190.
great peoples who did not wish to devote their energy to force, but wished to devote their energy to peace. The world thought it was inevitable....The object of the war was to destroy autocratic power; that is to say, to make it impossible that there should be anywhere...a little group of military men who could...say: 'We have perfected a machine with which we can conquer the world. Now stand out of the way, we are going to conquer the world.' That must not be a possibility any more.”186

Grafted onto the Kantian liberal internationalist paradigm was Wilson's identification with American nationalism. Unlike Kant and other Enlightenment figures, he portrayed the American War of Independence as the defining moment in the history of human progress. The League of Nations, heir to the supposed ideals of the American Revolution, was held up as the final victory of American principles over Old World autocracy. Wilson’s historical parables were consistently devoted to the explication of this idea. In 1815, he explained, the reactionary Congress of Vienna had convened in order to "make monarchs and monarchies safe, not only in Europe, but throughout the world."187 Practically "every government represented...was a government like the recent government of Germany, where a small coterie of autocrats were able to determine the fortunes of their people without consulting them."188

The dark forces of autocracy had been startled and disturbed by recent events. There "had been many signs that there was a breaking up of that old order"189. Chief among these signs, specified Wilson, was the American Revolution. It "was not then so long ago that...America had thrown off allegiance to...the crown of Great Britain...on the ground that nobody at a distance had a right to govern them, and that nobody had a right to govern them whom they did not

188 *ibid*, 63:429.
189 *ibid*, 63:429.
choose to be their government". Following the democratic lead of the American people, there had followed "that whirlwind of passion that we know as the French Revolution... a great rebellion of a great suffering population against an intolerable authority that had...used the people as servants." France revolted, "and then the spirit spread." The Congress of Vienna was intended "to check the revolutionary spirit of the time."

Austria and Germany purposed to extend autocracy to the Western Hemisphere, but President Monroe had countered them. When it became clear that the United States would not tolerate Old World interference in the free Western Hemisphere, the long-suffering peoples of Europe were galvanised. It was the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine, according to Wilson, that set the Old World in democratic motion. "The men who constituted the Congress of Vienna, while they thought they were building of adamant, were building of cardboard", he explained. "What they threw up looked like battlements, but presently were blown down by the very breath of insurgent people, for all over Europe the middle of the last century there spread irresistibly, the spirit of revolution. Government after government was changed in its character."

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the will of the people had steadily prevailed over autocratic rule. By 1914, Wilson argued, "there was only one stronghold left for that sort of power- and that was at Berlin." The Great War had been the setting for the final battle between good and evil. Germany’s war aims were "nothing less than the reassertion of that old, ugly thing which the hearts of men everywhere always revolt against- the claim of a few men to determine the fortunes of all men, the ambition of little groups of rulers to

190 Ibid, 63:429.
192 Ibid, 63:429.
193 Ibid, 63:430.
194 Ibid, 63:430.
dominate the world”. When America saw the dark plot for what it was—"beloved America...the chief champion and spokesman of liberty"—she went forth to defend European democracy, her beleaguered child. After the American armies had defeated imperial Germany, "a new congress of peace met to complete the work that the Congress of Vienna tried to stop and resist." A democratic world order came into being, and America’s mission to humanity was accomplished. All that remained was to ratify the treaty. "At last the cycle is completed," Wilson proclaimed, "the free peoples who were resisted at Vienna have come into their own. There was not a single statesman at Paris who did not know that he was the servant, and not the master, of his people."

Wilson’s revised interpretation of the French Revolution and its consequences symbolised his divergence from Burkean thought. Burke said famously of revolutionary France, "The master of the house is expelled, and the robbers are in possession." Either the revolution was destroyed, he argued, or it would destroy Europe. In asserting that all government not democratic was illegitimate, France had transgressed the principles of the law of nations, "the great ligament of mankind", and challenged the fabric of European society. Burke’s objection to militant modernity stemmed from his general political principles. A product of the conservative philosophical tradition, he viewed human society as an organic hierarchy. Rank and degree derived from differentiation, in a form determined by history. Liberty was not a theoretical right established a priori, but an historical right established over time. The “rights of Englishmen”, thus, derived not from metaphysical speculation, but from the latent wisdom of the organic community. This allowed men to act

195 Ibid., 63:430.
196 Ibid., 63:430.
197 Ibid., 63:431.
198 Ibid., 63:431.
200 Quoted in ibid, 209.
properly without being guided by reason alone. Hence, there were no "Rights of Man" capable of universal proscription. Good society depended on sober "judgement based on previous decisions and experiences."²⁰¹

Nature gave the aristocracy the leading role in the constitution of a polity. The only acceptable sort of revolution was one led by them, such as the Glorious Revolution of 1688. American independence, which Burke supported, was not viewed as a sacred festival of humanity. He defended the rebellious colonists on the grounds that their cause was a natural continuation of English development. Other peoples, consequently, had no stake in the outcome. Burke viewed the "grand vicinage of Europe"²⁰² itself as an organic community, of aristocratic polities. In this international society, the great powers played a role similar to that of aristocrats in domestic society. The aristocracy, and the great powers, were especially interested in the distribution of property, or power, because they stood to benefit the most. By defending the system in which all shared, the interests of all proprietors, and all powers, were promoted. Burke was hostile to the French Revolution because it challenged the established aristocratic order. He rejected the idea of a universal empire of democracy. To him, this was against nature. Organic communities would be split asunder, established principle would be overturned, anarchy would be unleashed upon the world.

To the last, Burke defended the aristocratic system in which he believed. "A more mischievous idea cannot exist," he wrote in disgust at the British diplomatic principle of non-interference, "than that any degree of wickedness, violence, and oppression may prevail in a country, that the most abominable, murderous, and exterminating rebellions may rage in it, or that the most atrocious and bloody tyranny may domineer, and that no neighbouring power

²⁰¹Quoted in ibid, 208.
²⁰²Quoted in ibid, 211.
can take cognizance of either, or afford succour to the miserable sufferers."\textsuperscript{203} Burke's call for direct intervention against the French Revolution was taken up by Metternich and the Holy Alliance. The Congress of Vienna was intended to rebuild and preserve against the nationalist movement the solidarist, legitimist model of European order which concerned itself with the sanctity of thrones as well as borders.

At first, Burkean conservatism was Wilson's intellectual model. "I must often unconsciously have been quoting...Burke"\textsuperscript{204}, he wrote Ellen in 1883. This sympathy was a consequence of the education in English political thought he received from his father, Dr. Joseph Wilson. Glimpses of Dr. Wilson's philosophical often strayed into his sermons. At times, he would employ historical metaphor both to illuminate the Gospel message and, by the by, make political statements. "When in 1795", Dr. Wilson remarked in connection with the Pentecost and its thrill of spiritual deliverance, "all the prisons of Paris were filled with wretched men and women- victims of the hideous French revolution- who were expecting, at any next hour, to follow the thousands who had gone before them to the inevitable scaffold; and when the news pierced the walls of their despair that the tyrant Robespierre was dead, and thus that their death was not now possible- is it any wonder that they fell upon each [other] in a paroxysm of joy [?]"\textsuperscript{205} Whereas the French Revolution was "hideous", the order it sought to displace was accounted glorious. Elsewhere, Dr. Wilson compared the value of a redeemed soul to a crown jewel. The faithful were connected to Christ the redeemer just as "in monarchical countries...there are connected with the crown certain gems or other decorations of royalty that have been handed down from a remote period in its history...to be regarded as,
inalienably, that perpetual property of the state which may be added to but never diminished.\textsuperscript{206}

One of Wilson's earliest essays, "Self-Government in France", revealed his intellectual debt to this tradition. "A special illustration of the political temper of the French", he wrote in accordance with Burke, "appears when we compare their revolutionary history with the history of the Revolution of 1688, which ushered in the present state of things in England."\textsuperscript{207} Thus, to "appreciate the French mood we have to note the order and soberness of the English revolution in the completeness of its contrast with any of the many convulsions which have given France a change of masters."\textsuperscript{208} On "one side of the channel", he observed, "we find law supreme; on the other, force...England received a new dynasty to her throne and strode into a new period of constitutional advance; while France did little more than assist despotism to a change of name and dress."\textsuperscript{209}

Wilson's conversion to democracy, which took place in the mid 1880s, did not produce an immediate conversion to Bancroftian universalism and American nationalism. Woodrow's emancipation from his father's authority was a protracted struggle. The final intellectual- and psychological-shift came, as will be shown below, in 1910. For most of his life, however, Wilson understood American democracy in Burkean organic terms. This suggested, in part, the lingering influence of the manse upon his thought. In an 1887 book review, for example, he complained that "We do not care to be so deeply indebted to a past which was not American, and are loath to assign our parentage to 'fathers' who

\textsuperscript{206}Sermon 1, 2-3.
\textsuperscript{207}An Historical Essay ("Self-Government in France"). \textit{PWW}, 1:518.
\textsuperscript{208}Ibid. 1:519.
\textsuperscript{209}Ibid. 1:519.
were monarchical. Our idea has been that we made the United States”. \(^{210}\)

Wilson called for "the rejection of such notions." \(^{211}\)

Wilson's rejection of liberal national mythology found expression in his 1902 history of the American people. When Wilson's rather perfunctory treatment of the revolutionary era is compared with the world-historical effusiveness of Bancroft's account, a great disparity is revealed. A precise understanding of where Wilson's history stood in relation to American historiographical trends may be gleaned from Charles Beard's introduction to An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution. Beard distinguished the orthodox Bancroftian school of interpretation from what he termed the "Teutonic" account of America's origins. Wilson clearly belonged to the latter school, though, at certain times, he would also give expression to the frontier thesis.

The first school, wrote Beard, "may be justly associated with the name of Bancroft". \(^{212}\) It "explains the larger achievements in our national life by reference to the peculiar moral endowments of a people acting under divine guidance; or perhaps it would be more correct to say, it sees in the course of our development the working out of a higher will than that of man....Bancroft constantly recurs in his writings to that 'higher power' which is operating in human affairs". \(^{213}\)

"The hour of the American revolution was come" \(^{214}\), wrote Bancroft at the outset of his fourth volume. True to the spirit of emerging nationhood, "The people of the continent obeyed one general impulse, as the earth in spring listens

\(^{210}\) A Book Review, April 17, 1887, ibid, 5:496.

\(^{211}\) Ibid, 5:496.

\(^{212}\) Charles A. Beard, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (New York, 1913), 1.

\(^{213}\) Ibid, 2.

\(^{214}\) George Bancroft, History of the United States of America From the Discovery of the Continent (New York, 1886), 1V:3.
to the command of nature and without the appearance of effort bursts into
life."215 The Americans, as one, "deduced from universal principles a bill of
rights, as old as creation and as wide as humanity."216 Over the course of
human history, "Freedom had always revealed itself at least to a few of the wise
whose prophetic instincts were quickened by love of their kind".217 In America,
from the outset, "it was the breath of life to the people. For the first time it
found a region and a race where it could be professed with the earnestness of an
indwelling conviction."218 When all "Europe slumbered over questions of
liberty, a band of exiles, keeping watch by night, heard the glad tidings which
promised the political regeneration of the world."219 The Revolution, according
to Bancroft, was "the grand design of Providence".220

Jefferson's heart, whilst composing the Declaration of Independence, "beat for
all humanity; the assertion of right was made for the entire world of mankind
and all coming generations, without any exception whatever."221 In adopting
this immortal declaration as its spiritual platform, "the new republic, as it took
its place among the powers of the world, proclaimed its faith in the truth and
reality and unchangeableness of freedom, virtue, and right."222 Like a divine
harbinger of universal democracy, "it was sure to make the circuit of the world,
passing everywhere through the despotic countries of Europe." The "astonished
nations, as they read that all men are created equal, started out of their lethargy,
like those who have been exiles from childhood, when they suddenly hear the
dimly remembered accents of their mother tongue."223

215Ibid, IV:3.
216Ibid, IV:3.
221Ibid, IV:450.
222Ibid, IV:450.
223Ibid, IV:450.
Bancroft's history espoused the teleology of liberal universalism in order to assert America's national mission. Wilson's history, conversely, was entirely devoid of positivistic reference to this official national mythology. The work, it is true, was composed in haste with magazine serialisation in mind. Yet this circumstance need not have prevented Wilson from making some Bancroftian generalisations, had he been so inclined. Rather, Wilson's ingrained Burkean sensibilities made him antipathetic to the Bancroftian interpretation of American history. Fully aware of Bancroft's centrality, not yet did he sympathise with the national liberal vision of America. In January 1901, for example, Wilson remarked in an essay about American history and historians "Bancroft gave fifty years of his life to his elaborate work....but neither in structure nor in style can it be called satisfactory."

The American Revolution, according to Wilson, was an outcome not of reason but of historical development. It was not Providence, but English provenance, that directed the course of events. As Beard observed, a "second school of historical interpretation, which in the order of time followed that of Bancroft, may be called the Teutonic....The thesis of this school is, in brief, as follows. The Teutonic peoples were originally endowed with singular political talents and aptitudes; Teutonic tribes invaded England and destroyed the last vestiges of the older Roman and British culture; they then set an example to the world in the development of 'free' government. Descendants of this specially gifted race settled America and fashioned their institutions after old English models."

Wrote Wilson of America's origins, "Emigrants went [from England] in families...in associated groups, congregations, and small volunteer

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224 See Editorial Note, PWW, 11:360-365.
225 A Questionaire, June 13, 1900, see ibid, 11:549.
226 An Historical Commentary and Critique, January 1901, ibid, 12:61.
227 Beard, Economic Interpretation of the Constitution, 2-3.
communities."228 From the onset of development, growth was organic. "When they reached the appointed place of settlement," Wilson explained, "they were left to shift for themselves, as they had expected, exactly as they would have been at home; and they insisted upon having the same rights and freedom they would have had there."229 French settlers, lacking that inheritance of liberty peculiar to the English race, were defeated in the "struggle for supremacy"230 of the continent. The "English had been seeking not conquest, but comfort and wealth in busy centres and populous country-sides, where their life now ran as strong and as calm, almost, as if they were still in the old lands of England itself,"231 "The French", on the contrary, "were placed where their government wished them to be...and could hardly be said to have formed independent communities at all."232

Thus, it "was inevitable in the circumstances that their colonial governments should be like themselves, home-made and free from control in the management of what chiefly concerned their own lives."233 By the late eighteenth century, "there was no mistaking the fact that the English colonies had grown to be miniature states, proud, hard-fibred, independent in temper, practised in affairs. That this was a Burkean reading was acknowledged by Wilson, who not only quoted Burke but also made a point of including his portrait in the text.234 "Burke saw", trumped Wilson, "how inevitable, as well as how natural, the whole growth had been. 'Things could not be otherwise,' he said; 'English colonies must be had on these terms, or not had at all.'"235

For Wilson, unlike Bancroft, the War of Independence was not an avowal of abstract, universal principles. More prosaically, it was a bid by transplanted Englishmen "to let the colonial assemblies alone, to rule, as Parliament ruled, by keeping control of the monies spent upon their own governments." Wilson's rather laconic account of Independence Day focused on the Declaration's immediate practical effects. Not yet did he see fit to gild it with wings of teleology. "Even in the colonies where loyalists mustered strongest", explained Wilson, "the government of the crown had in fact almost everywhere been openly thrown off. But by midsummer it was deemed best to make a formal Declaration of Independence." Washington "had urgently prayed that such a step be taken, and taken at once. It would not change, it would only acknowledge, existing facts; and it might a little simplify the anxious business he was about."

Bancroft had asserted that the Declaration sprang from the general will of the American people. They were as one, he argued, in their zeal for the realisation of human liberty. Wilson, by contrast, argued that its issue was intended, and not entirely successfully at that, to counter division. This interpretation reveals, again, that Wilson as yet lacked a Bancroftian historical consciousness. Washington, he wrote, "had an army which was always making and to be made, because the colonies which were contributing their half-drilled contingents to it were enlisting their men for only three months at a time." Sometimes "the men would consent to re-enlist, sometimes they would not." Sections of the country, furthermore, "could not be...purged of active loyalists".

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Faced with apathy on his own side and active opposition on the other, Washington sought a means to galvanize the movement for strategic advantage: "The formal Declaration of Independence which the Congress adopted in July hardened the face and stiffened the resolution of every man who had definitely thrown in his lot with the popular cause, as Washington had foreseen that it would, just because it made resistance avowed rebellion, and left no way of retreat or compromise." Yet, as Wilson was quick to point out, "it also deeply grieved and alienated many a man of judgement and good feeling, and made party differences within the colonies just so much more the bitter and irreconcilable." To Wilson, at this stage of his career, it was not so clear as Bancroft would have it that the Declaration was "the genuine effusion of the soul of the country at that time; the revelation of its mind, when, in its youth, its enthusiasm, its sublime confronting of danger, it rose to the highest creative powers of which man in capable."

When the 1919 addresses are read in the light of Bancroft's history of the United States, it is clear that Wilson was then drawing on this liberal interpretation rather than on his own multi-volume Burkean reading. In other words, between 1902 and 1919 Wilson shifted to the opposite end of the American historiographical spectrum. This examination of Wilson's changing relationship to the different schools of American historical interpretation serves to highlight the central point of the thesis: Woodrow Wilson did not always couch his language in the official rhetoric of American nationalism. The ideas he expressed as a politician did not correspond with his earlier intellectual identity. Those who have previously written about Wilson have tended, in the

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242Ibid. II:248.
243Ibid. II:248-249.
244Bancroft, History, IV:450.
245For further evidence of this point, see An Address, "The Authors and Signers of the Declaration of Independence", July 4, 1907, PWW, 17:248-259. "It is not a question of piety. We are not bound", argued Wilson, "to adhere to the doctrines held by the signers of the Declaration of Independence...We are not here to worship men or a document." 251.
main, to present him in terms of continuity rather than change. It might be
ventured that such histories themselves bear the impress of nationalism, which,
like any suprarational faith, cannot admit the temporal contingency of its sacred
tenets.
3. The Social Gospel and Wilson’s pre-nationalist vision of international morality

Wilson’s response to the Spanish-American War had indicated that his world view was in a state of flux. The future President advocated a moral foreign policy grounded on selfless service, but not yet had he equated this aim with America’s destiny. This consideration enables us to come to a more precise understanding of the Social Gospel’s contribution to the Wilsonian vision.

Wilsonianism was not a natural consequence of Wilson’s identification with the Social Gospel. Wilsonianism was a consequence, rather, of American nationalism working in conjunction with the Social Gospel. Quite late in his career, nationalism led Wilson to interpret the Social Gospel in such a way as to equate America with the redemption of international society.

The Social Gospel, at first, was aligned with the Eastern elite movement for Anglo-American cooperation. As the eminent theologian Josiah Strong had argued in Our Country, "It seems to me that God, with infinite wisdom and skill, is training the Anglo-Saxon race for an hour sure to come in the world’s future...the Anglo-Saxon, as the great representative of...Christian civilization...and civil liberty..., is divinely commissioned to be, in a peculiar sense, his brother’s keeper. Add to this the fact of his rapidly increasing strength in modern times, and we have well nigh a demonstration of his destiny." There was nothing in Strong’s influential book about America’s special destiny. The American and British missions to humanity were entwined; their morality inseparable.

Wilson came to identify with this Anglo-American vision long before he arrived at American nationalism, which viewed America and America only as the fount of human progress and democracy. Wilson's pre-nationalist vision of international morality accounts for his curious response to Spanish-American War, which bore a superficial resemblance to Wilsonianism, and yet differed from it fundamentally. America's role, he suggested, was a question of "moral obligation". Therein lay a superficial resemblance to the rhetoric of Wilsonianism. "The work of war seems ennobled when do it," wrote Wilson in 1898, "with a manifest earnest passion for service...like the christian [sic] gentlemen we would have them be". America, he said on another occasion, was bent in its dealings with the rest of the world "upon service and not mastery".

This insistent emphasis on service, with its explicit linkage to the Christian religion, was a reflection of Wilson's sympathy with the Social Gospel. The Social Gospel in America was part of a developing world-wide interest in social Christianity. Through determined moral effort, it was widely believed, mankind could hasten the hour of the arrival of an empire of brotherhood and peace, the Kingdom of God. Social Gospel ethics stressed the historical Christ's social principles, which could lead society toward the glorious reign of love. In this future order, socialised and enlightened individuals would work for the benefit of all.

The Social Gospel inspired a literature of its own, the most famous example of which was Charles M. Sheldon's In His Steps.247 This best-selling novel exhorted its readers to ask "What would Jesus do?"248 In any situation, ran this parable for the gilded age, one must act as Christ would have done. Thus would society find its ultimate salvation. "What does the age need more",

247 Two other notable works were Henry D. Lloyd's expose of the Standard Oil Company, Wealth Against Commonwealth, and William T. Stead's If Christ Came to Chicago!, a survey of Chicago's social conditions.
248 Charles M. Sheldon, In His Steps (Nashville, 1995), 103.
pondered one of the characters, "than personal sacrifice?" Christianity meant "to imitate Jesus. It is to do as He would do. It is to walk in His steps." During the middle 1890s, the Social Gospel began to exert significant influence upon the American Protestant churches. The intellectual groundwork had been laid by the spread of liberal theology, upon which foundation the Social Gospel was built. Faith in social salvation depended on a positive view of human nature, of "God-in-man".

Liberal theology and liberal history, with its vision of God moving in the flow of earthly time to achieve his redemptive aims for humanity, were closely related. Wilson's identification with both was not coincidental, because the one tended to beget the other. Bancroft exemplified this tendency. The name of Kant, which figured in the above discussion of liberal history, must also figure in any discussion of liberal theology. While the movement arose in the nineteenth century, its antecedents are older. Some, indeed, would say that the difference between the Gospel Christ's humanistic morality and Paul's stern legalism is really the essential difference between liberal and conservative theology. So too the disparity, somewhat later, between Erasmus and Luther. Kant, in his day, did more than any other thinker to place the liberal Christian sensibility on a philosophical footing. For Kant, who rejected all transcendental reasoning, morality was the only ground of belief in God. "Everything outside of a good life by which man supposes he can make himself well-pleasing to

249 Ibid., 234.
250 Ibid., 235.
God", he wrote, "is superstition." 252 God was to be known not by interior speculation but by the progress of humanity toward an ethical commonwealth.

Bancroft and other Americans came into contact with these ideas at the German universities where they commonly studied during the nineteenth century. This exposure was to have a great impact on American intellectual life. As one set of authorities concluded, it was theologians such as Ritschl and Schleiermacher—whose ideas were a religious application of Kantian philosophy—that have "been easily the most potent single factor in shaping American liberal theology." 253 Since his period of graduate study at Johns Hopkins, Wilson's religious thought had been moving in this direction. Social Christianity underpinned the ethical-historical economics of Richard T. Ely and John Bates Clark. Ely's name, in particular, was synonymous with the burgeoning Social Gospel movement. "There was probably no other man of the period," wrote Everett in his study of religion in American economics, "who had as much influence on the economic thinking of parsons and the general religious community." 254 Through his study of political economy under Ely, Wilson was introduced to the world view of applied Christianity. It was held idle "to talk about a belief which does not manifest itself in good works." 255 Seeking an outlet from the intellectual and emotional domination of his Southern Presbyterian father, the receptive student was soon converted to this different world view. "I shall take the more heart in what I have to do because men like yourself are so generous in believing in me" 256, he would write Ely in 1902. 257 The former Hamiltonian Calvinist had become a liberal Protestant democrat.

252 Quoted in Bernard Reardon, *Liberal Protestantism* (Stanford, 1968), 15.
257 "Ely had sent Wilson a congratulatory note on his appointment to the Presidency of Princeton. "It is now about twenty years since I first met you," he wrote, "and during that time you have advanced steadily, step by step....I cannot say that I have been surprised by your career as from the start I expected a great deal from you and for you." *Ibid.*, 12:403.
Similarly, Clark's understanding of Christianity bore little relation to the
covenant theology whose tenets had pervaded Wilson's early religious thought.
"As the fountainhead of the chief moral and spiritual influence," Clark wrote,
"the church should be the great unifier, the principal author of that fraternal spirit
on which higher industrial development depends....A church that openly
appeals to the caste spirit destroys its power to assimilate the multitude for
whose welfare it exists".\(^{258}\)

"I feel under special obligations to its author", wrote Wilson to Clark with
regard to *The Philosophy of Wealth*. "I feel that it has fertilized my own
thought...it has cheered me not a little by its spirit,...its Christianity."\(^{259}\) It was
a measure of Wilson's changing religious- and political- views that he should
now feel "cheered" by Clark's views. His father, by contrast, taught that the
welfare of the multitude mattered little in the cosmic scheme of things. "He is
here in an enemy's country"\(^{260}\), remarked Dr. Joseph Wilson of the Christian's
lot in this world. Nothing "outward is of account, so long as his inner man is
alright."\(^{261}\) Dr. Wilson's sermons embodied that "caste spirit" which Clark so
criticised. No appeal was made to the "fraternal spirit". Only a small minority
of souls would be saved. The rest were "by-and-by to be set aside as of no
account in this universe: each one a nuisance and an obstruction of the world's
chaff...only to be burned".\(^{262}\)

Wilson's wife also set him thinking about social Christianity. Her awakening to
the ethical imperative came in 1885, during a short stay in the turbulent
confusion of New York City.\(^{263}\) It "would take a happier disposition than

\(^{258}\)Clark, *The Philosophy of Wealth*, 233.
\(^{259}\)To John Bates Clark, August 26, 1887, *PWW*, 5:565.
\(^{260}\)Sermon 12, 10.
\(^{261}\)Sermon 11, 9
\(^{262}\)Sermon 12, 2, 6.
\(^{263}\)For a study of urbanisation and its effect on the religious sensibilities of late-nineteenth
anyone ever had," Ellen wrote her then fiancé, "when one first takes up one's abode in a great city- sees its wretchedness without having been hardened to it from infancy." She reported "There is so much that seems to tear one's very heartstrings...we naturally cast our burden upon the Lord but sometimes it seems harder to do the same with the accumulation of burdens." This prompted the question "of what it means to leave all in God's hand; it certainly doesn't mean that we can entirely 'wash our hands' of it all; we may try but we will be no more successful than Pilate...if...some evils...were properly mourned by us they would happen no more". Here may be detected the liberal Protestant basis of Ellen's interest in social reform. In her role as First Lady, she became famous for her philanthropic endeavor in urban slums.

In addition, Wilson read works such as Canon W.H. Fremantle's *The World as the Subject of Redemption*, which argued that "The Christian Church is designed, not to save individuals out of the world, but to save the world itself...Human progress is identical with the influence of the spirit of Christianity....The renunciation of self for the society is the first and absolute requirement". Fremantle's ideas were at the cutting edge of Protestant century Protestants, see Aaron Ignatius Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (Cambridge, 1943).


265 Ibid., 4:666.

266 See Grace Waite Bicknell, "The Home-Maker of the White House, Mrs. Woodrow Wilson's Social Work in Washington", *Survey*, XXXIII (Oct. 3, 1914), 19-22 and Robert J. Maddox, "Mrs. Wilson and the Presidency", *American History Illustrated*, 7 (February 1973), 36-44. See also From Ellen Axson Wilson, July 2, 1913, *PW/W*, 28:20-21. An eminent social activist of the era remarked to the Wilsons' daughter, Jessie, that Ellen had "done more good in Washington in four months than any other President's wife had ever done in four years." She "had completely changed the conditions of life for 12,000 people".

Ellen had other reform interests. A respectful yet somewhat bemused Colonel House noted in his diary on October 30, 1913, "I lunched at the White House. I sat by Mrs. Wilson. She is interested in the betterment of conditions surrounding Government employees, particularly the women." *Ibid.*, 28:476.

267 W.H. Fremantle, *The World as the Subject of Redemption being an Attempt to Set Forth the Functions of the Church as Designed to Embrace the Whole Race of Mankind* (London, 1885), ix. This work was recommended to Wilson by his literary friend Horace Eliisha Scudder, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Scudder was greatly influenced by British liberal Protestantism. A contemporary claimed that Scudder’s transition to Episcopalianism was "aided by the teaching of the late F.D. Maurice....Mr Scudder had for Maurice the devotion of a disciple, and was spoken of among his friends as a Maurician." [V.G. Allen, cited in C.G.
liberalism. Observed one scholar of the subject, they "eventually became staples of the Christian social movement in Britain as well as America." 269 Fremantle, an outsider in his native England, was Wilson's introduction to Kantian ideas regarding world redemption.

Owing to these various influences, the Social Gospel began to pervade Wilson's thought. It was thus a grave error indeed for Mulder to assert out of hand that "Wilson showed little interest in or support for the social gospel movement of his day." 270 In fact, the idea of applied Christianity had become a recurrent motif in Wilson's speeches by the late 1890s. In early 1898, for example, he told Princeton students: "Socialize your religious motives in working for your country; then patriotism will not have to be hastened by speeches." 271 The true spirit of Christianity", he argued elsewhere, "is not love for salvation's sake, but service for love's sake." 272 A man "ought not love the Lord Jesus Christ just to be saved", he told the Trenton Y.M.C.A. "That is selfish...Jesus Christ presents the only perfect example of service for love's sake." 273

Brown, "Frederick Denison Maurice in the United States, 1860-1900", Journal of Religious History, 10:1, 63-]

"Let me ask you, by the way", Scudder wrote Wilson, "if you have ever looked at a volume of Bampton Lectures on The World as a Subject of Redemption by Canon Fremantle? I think I have the title right. The book would set you to thinking and enrich your thought, I suspect, in the field which you have chosen." From Horace Elisha Scudder, June 6, 1886, PWW, 5:288. Wilson replied "I am much obliged for your mention of Canon Fremantle's Bampton Lectures. I shall certainly obtain and read them. I had not known of the book; and I am conscious that my thought needs enriching on that side." To Horace Elisha Scudder, July 10, 1886, ibid, 5:303. "You are, in a sense, my literary Godfather", Wilson would write Scudder on a later occasion. To Horace Elisha Scudder, December 23, 1889, ibid, 6:456.

William R. Hutchison noted in "The Americaneness of the Social Gospel; An Inquiry in Comparative History" (Church History, 1975) that the "relatively ebullient" Fremantle was "received with special enthusiasm in America." 275 The case of Scudder and Wilson furnishes a specific illustration of this general observation.

271A Newspaper Report of an Address, January 17, 1898, PWW, 10:366.
272Notes for a Religious Talk, November 2, 1889, ibid, 11:273.
Patriotism, Wilson said before a gathering of New England educators, "is grounded in what unselfishness is grounded in, namely, a certain energy of character expressing itself outside of the narrow circle of self-interest."274 We "are not so small as to live only for ourselves", he continued. "That is what we say to the world when we prove ourselves true friends; and when we prove ourselves true patriots we are but extending the circle of this principle of friendly interest and of energy expressed beyond the circle of self-interest."275 In a religious address in Philadelphia, Wilson made "a strong plea for greater unselfishness in modern life, through which alone society could be regenerated."276 The Church "is called to a great mission which is to keep the sap of the body politic. It is called upon to keep alive the social instinct which is the instinct of unselfishness and co-operation."277

Wilson’s definition of patriotism stemmed from the Social Gospel.

"Christianity has liberated the world", he wrote in an 1899 essay, "by its revelation of the power of pure and unselfish love."278 Its "vital principle is not the code, but its motive: .Love...is its breath...Christ came...to save the world."279 Accordingly, "We are here to serve our country and mankind, and we know that we can put selfishness behind us."280 A man "is not patriotic because he serves the country, provided he serves it for his own aggrandizement"281, Wilson told the Washington Association of New Jersey.

"He is patriotic if he serves the country because he loves the country and is ready, if the time comes, to sacrifice himself for the advancement of the race".282

274 An Address ("Spurious Versus Real Patriotism in Education"), October 13, 1899, ibid, 11:245.
278 An Essay ("When a Man Comes to Himself"), November 1, 1899, ibid, 11:272.
281 An Address on Patriotism to the Washington Association of New Jersey, February 23, 1903, ibid, 14:366.
Wilson's elevation of the "motive" over the "code" indicated that, along with many of his contemporaries, he had come to abandon conservative theology. He expanded on this point in a 1902 religious talk. "[Wilson] spoke", it was reported, "of the two ideas which the world had concerning a Christian life." 283 The first idea was that a man should shut out the world and live apart from it, whereas "the later idea held that a man must live his life in the world and help his fellow man." 284 Wilson said "the first idea had long since been set aside." 285 The day "of the battle of creeds is past" 286, he argued in a 1902 address to the Baltimore Presbyterian Union. "I do not think there is any subsidence of spiritual power, but there is a great metamorphosis. Men are known today and pointed out...for what they have done...for the uplifting of the human race." 287 At a New York dinner of the Presbyterian Union, Wilson predicted that "a spirit of live and let live was coming", and that he saw "the prospect of admitting...that we all worshipped the same God; that we were really all Christians, and not angry at one another; but that it was a spiritual amusement to split hairs." 288

As the above extract suggests, there was a close connection between the Social Gospel and concern for Christian cooperation. To this end, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was established in 1908. Its express aim was to foster interdenominationalism and thus bring about the redemption of society. A contemporary observer noted "the Council has provided a kind of laboratory or demonstration station for the Protestant churches, in which new ideas in many realms, especially social ethics, might be tried out." 289 Owing to

284 Ibid, 12:274.
286 A News Report of an Address to the Baltimore Presbyterian Union, December 5, 1902, ibid, 14:261.
287 Ibid, 14:261.
289 Quoted in Handy, The Social Gospel, 13.
the orthodox argument that Wilson's views were derived from his father's brand of theology, it has gone unnoticed that this supposed Calvinist was directly associated with the Federal Council. The increasingly ecumenical tone of Wilson's religious addresses reflected, in part, his involvement in inter-Protestant politics. In 1905, the Inter-Church Conference on Federation met in order to draft the constitution of the planned Council. Wilson was not only present, but played a leading role in the debate. In the presence of Social Gospel notables such as the famous Washington Gladden, he delivered an address designed to encourage support for church youth programs. The basis of all youthful effort in society, Wilson argued, was the question "What would Christ have done in our day, in our place, with our opportunities?"

Shortly after Wilson became President, the Federal Council sent him an open letter. Employing many stock sentiments of the Social Gospel, the note exhorted this fellow traveller to strive for the realisation of the Kingdom: "Your warm and sympathetic sense of our democracy; your conviction...that our social

Gladden was a prominent theological populariser who drew on liberal religious thinkers to emphasise the immanence of God. "God dwells in every good man", he argued. The "revelation of essential truth" was to be found "in the social consciousness." To Gladden, it was axiomatic that "the relations of men to one another in society are not contractual, but vital and organic; that we are members one of another; that no man reaches perfection or happiness apart from his fellow man; that no man liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." Accordingly, Gladden held to the Kingdom ideal. "If anything is central in Christianity", he would say in 1916, "it is this obliteration of the lines of divisions between races and nationalities and the inclusion of the world in one brotherhood." Cited in ibid, 28, 29. This was the internationalist milieu to which Wilson belonged by virtue of his association with the Federal Council. For a study of Gladden's social philosophy in relation to that of other Social Gospel figures, see Jacob H. Dorn, "The Social Gospel and Socialism: A Comparison of the Thought of Francis Greenwood Peabody, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch", Church History, 62 (1993), 52-100.

Wilson and Gladden had a high regard for each other's ideas, as is evidenced by their correspondence. See, for example, From Washington Gladden, April 21, PWW, 20:380. Gladden wrote Wilson 'I have just been reading an editorial in the New York Evening Post on your Pittsburgh speech which makes me very desirous of seeing that speech...I am inclined to believe that I should find myself quite in sympathy with you.' The speech to which Gladden referred is printed at April 20, 1910, ibid, 20:373-376. "The colleges of this country", warned Wilson, "are in exactly the same danger that the churches are in. I believe that the churches of this country, at any rate the Protestant churches, have dissociated themselves from the people of this country. They are serving the classes and they are not serving the masses. They serve certain strata, certain uplifted strata, but they are not serving the men whose need is dire."

Notes for an Address- Inter-Church Conference on Federation, November 19, 1905, ibid, 16:227.
order must be fashioned after the kingdom of God as taught by Jesus Christ....lead the churches of the nation to look with confidence to the performance of the serious and solemn duties of the coming years.\textsuperscript{292} It was to be hoped, therefore, "that...with both sympathy and discrimination, with social vision and social emotion, the political forces of the nation, and its moral forces as embodied in the churches of Christ, may feel and serve together for the social and spiritual wellbeing of the people."\textsuperscript{293} Wilson's reply was as prompt as it was positive. "I need not tell you how deeply I appreciate the address of confidence addressed directly to me on the part of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America", he wrote a Council official in late March of 1913, "or how greatly it adds to my sense of being supported and guided to have such feelings and confidence expressed."\textsuperscript{294}

Whereas Dr. Joseph Ruggles Wilson had officiated at the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterianism, his son helped usher in the official organ of the Social Gospel. What better symbol can be drawn upon to illustrate the theological divide that came to separate them?

When read in light of the above evidence, it is clear that Wilson's response to the Spanish-American War was conditioned by the Social Gospel. America, he argued, had fought with a "passion for service." Like many others of his generation, Wilson was here responding to the mythology of late nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism. When this mythology became fused with American nationalism in 1910, the Wilsonian vision emerged. The Kingdom movement of the Social Gospel, like Wilsonianism, prophesied the coming of a universal moral order. Canon Fremantle, whom Wilson had discovered in the mid 1880s, held that "European public opinion is slowly growing, and is feeling

\textsuperscript{292}An Inaugural Address, March 4, 1913, \textit{ibid}, 27:154.
\textsuperscript{293}\textit{ibid}, 27:154.
\textsuperscript{294}To Charles Siedman Macfarland, March 26, 1913, \textit{ibid}, 27:231.
its way towards a method by which the present international anarchy may be placed under the restraint of a higher power." It would be a great step gained towards an international tribunal", he continued, "when the nations who feel that their main interest is peace are willing to submit their differences to arbitration...all Christian Societies which have any wide aims must join in the movement, and by prayer and effort compass the blessed result."296

True Christianity sought "to bind the nations together not by force but by relations and by amity"297 because Christ's "self-sacrifice...had the salvation of the world for its object."298 Accordingly, the purpose "of life disclosed in the Scriptures is not merely to save individuals, but to train...mankind to become the city of God."299 This "city of God" toward which mankind was moving would be "A world in which...the Spirit of Christ's life is generally acknowledged by the public conscience and is gradually moulding the institutions of men, in which almost every great need of mankind has some organisation formed for its relief, in which the sense of unity and brotherhood among men has become an admitted principle."300

This Kantian metaphysic was deeply embedded in Wilson's 1919 addresses. "The principle of justice, the principle of right, the principle of international amity, " he argued in San Diego, "is...that there is not only an imaginary but a real equality of standing and right among all the civilized peoples of the world."301 The principle of equality had had its origin in "that little glimmer of light which came at Calvary, that first dawn which came with the Christian era, [when men began] to awake to the dignity and right of the human soul".302

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295Freeman, The World as the Subject of Redemption, 354.
297Ibid, 357.
298Ibid, 361.
299Ibid, 362.
300Ibid, 362.
301An Address in the San Diego Stadium, September 19, 1919, PWW, 63:379.
302An Address in the Oakland Municipal Auditorium, September 18, 1919, ibid, 63:355.
Wilson’s eschatological addresses portrayed the League of Nations as the final victory of this advancing principle. "The age is opening", he proclaimed, "upon a new era. We are substituting in this Covenant- and this is the main purpose of it- arbitration and discussion for war...You have here a safeguard of the liberty of weak nations, and the world is at last ready to stand up in council and discuss the fortunes of men and women and children everywhere."\textsuperscript{303} Realised at last was "the spiritual purpose of redemption that rests in the hearts of mankind."\textsuperscript{304} These two extracts illustrate how the typology of the Social Gospel underlay Wilson’s vision of human progress.

What set Wilsonianism apart, however, was its conviction that America had a special role to play in this spiritual purpose of redemption. Influenced by American nationalism, Wilson- like Bancroft- equated the realisation of the Kingdom of God with the triumph of American ideals. "America is going to grow more and more powerful", he predicted on September 11, 1919, "and the more powerful she is, the more inevitable it is that she should be entrusted with the peace of the world."\textsuperscript{305} America, Wilson then ventured to say, "is the only national idealistic force in the world, and idealism is going to save the world."\textsuperscript{306}

The salvation of the world was not only America's duty, but its destiny. "I look forward to the day", he said in Seattle, "when all this debate will seem in our recollection like a strange mist that came over the minds of men here and there in the nation, like a groping in the fog, having lost the plain way, the beaten way, that America had made for itself for generations together." The nation would then realise, Wilson continued, "that of a sudden, upon the assertion of the real spirit of the American people, we came to the edge of the mist, and outside lay the sunny country where every question of duty lay plain and clear and where

\textsuperscript{303}An Address in the San Diego Stadium, September 19, 1919, \textit{ibid}, 63:380-381.
\textsuperscript{304}ibid, 63:382.
\textsuperscript{305}An Address in the Marlow Theater in Helena, September 11, 1919, \textit{ibid}, 63:183.
\textsuperscript{306}ibid, 63:189.
the great tramp, tramp of the American people sounded in the ears of the whole
world, and they knew that the armies of God were on their way.\textsuperscript{307}
4. **1910: Wilson's conversion to the myths of American nationalism**

Wilson's discovery of the Social Gospel and its positive view of human progress preceded his conversion to the myths of American nationalism. This can be shown by examining an address he delivered on July 4, 1902. In it, Wilson sought to connect the ideal of applied Christianity to the theme of Anglo-American cooperation. "That flag which we honour in this country", he began, "seems to me sometimes to be composed of stripes of parchment upon which are written the principles of the ancient liberty of the English speaking peoples". Great Britain and the United States, "these two nations", had "stood together to represent.... Liberty." Both had won an empire of the spirit, and "The two nations which have become the imperial nations of the world are as big [spiritually] as their own empires." Like Britain, America had "expanded to the compass of a thing which we never saw, of a nation whose faces we never looked upon, of peoples whom we never visited, and we get that large aspect of mind which goes with large undertakings, and are carried into the sphere of ideals, of conceptions."

Here was expressed a conception of joint imperial purpose, undertaken for the betterment of humanity. Wilson spoke of "a responsibility laid upon us here which is greater than the responsibility of individual salvation...there is a duty to lift other men along with him in that great process of elevation; and that is the patriotic duty just as much as it is the religious duty." What distinguished this from American nationalism is that Wilson did not yet speak of ideals that were specifically American in origin. Not yet did he give expression to a national

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309 ibid, 12:475.
310 ibid, 12:477.
311 ibid, 12:477.
312 ibid, 12:476.
mythology which sought to link the realisation of a "great process of elevation" with America's special destiny. America and Great Britain were still morally conjoined in Wilson's mind. "When you consider what the different nations of the world stand for, keeping in mind the specific purpose of England and America," he said in 1904, "you will see that there is but one course to choose and that is to carry forward in honesty and unselfishness that service to the world which has now been carried too far for us to turn back. The Anglo-Saxon people have undertaken to reconstruct the affairs of the world".  

The stage at which Wilson first gave clear expression to American nationalism coincided with the onset of his political career. In a sense, this was the culminating moment to which the previous chapters of this thesis have been leading. This was the point at which it can be shown that Wilson had become Wilsonian. At this crucial juncture, the Wilson familiar to history emerged from his philosophical hiding place. "For the President", wrote Levin of Wilson, "the United States represented a new departure among the nations in both a moral and a political sense. With the evils of militarism and pre-liberal reaction left behind in Europe, America had an historic mission to disseminate the progressive values of liberal-internationalism and to create a new world order."  

On September 15, 1910, Wilson accepted the Democratic gubernatorial nomination for New Jersey. "We are witnessing a renaissance of public spirit", he said,  

the beginning of an age of thoughtful reconstruction that makes our thought hark back to the great age in which Democracy was set up in America.  

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314 Levin, Woodrow Wilson and World Politics, 2.  
315 A Speech Accepting the Democratic Gubernatorial Nomination, September 15, 1910, PW, 21:94.
In subsequent addresses delivered during the course of the campaign, Wilson would consistently relate contemporary political questions to the Bancroftian idea of America's special destiny. "I think everyone knows that the two greatest figures in history", he remarked on September 29, "were...George Washington and Abraham Lincoln". At the back of the current "cause of reform and of good government", Wilson ventured to say, "lies that ideal impulse of the American people which has so characterized us among the nations of the world." Significantly, he referred to the American Revolution as

The most extraordinary passage in history.

America was born "fully equipped as a self-conscious and self-confident people...banded together for a great and generous purpose. That was the American Revolution." Nationalism, which presents itself as "the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force", typically seeks a return to an idealised past. For nationalists, it is essential to show that the national community has retained its original identity, be it linguistic, ethnic, or, in America's case, ideological. Thus, when Wilson became an American nationalist, he imposed continuity on his new reading of American history. Twentieth-century Americans, Wilson argued, thought in terms identical to the revolutionary generation. "America will feel again", Wilson proclaimed in Elizabeth, "the exhilaration of the age in which politics is a great altruistic undertaking...God send that in the complicated state of modern affairs we may recover the standards and recover the achievements of that heroic age." Each class, accordingly, "must think also of the interest of the rest; they must try to come to a common understanding." Only thus "will...we recover the prestige and hope and accomplishment of American politics."
During the campaign, Wilson employed national mythology to discredit his political opponents. "If they cannot meet us upon this field of high ideals", he said of the Republicans, "then they will be overthrown in the contest, because the American people are now turning back to past policies, the ideals upon which this government was built up".\(^{323}\) Like the first generation of Americans, Wilson argued, the Democrats subscribed to "that ideal which says that Government ought to thrive in every pulse in sympathy for the common people."\(^{324}\) The test of political virtue, in other words, was whether one's policies embodied sacred national principles.

Was not the Democratic platform, Wilson asked, "like recovering some of the breath of that age in which America becomes a nation, when men thought not only in the terms of neighborhoods and trades and occupations, but that of the leadership of the world?"\(^{325}\) He then invoked the example of revolutionary leaders as though invoking the holiest of Scriptures:

> What was in the writings of the men that founded America -to serve the selfish interests of America? Do you find that in their writings? No; to serve the cause of humanity, to bring liberty to mankind. They set up their standards here in America in the tenet of hope, as a beacon of encouragement to all the nations of the world, and men came thronging to these shores with a hope that never existed before...and found here for generations together a haven of peace, of opportunity, of equality.\(^{326}\)

This Bancroftian view bore no relation to Wilson's 1902 history of the American people. Here was a nationalist reading of American history quite at odds Wilson's own pre-nationalist emphasis on discontinuity. In 1889, for example, he had openly stated "it is a long time since 1789, -if time is to be measured by change. Everything apprises us of the fact that we are not the same nation now that we were then."\(^{327}\) America's "Government, founded one


\(^{325}\)A Campaign Address in Elizabeth, New Jersey, October 28, 1910, \textit{ibid}, 21:462.


\(^{327}\)"Nature of Democracy in the United States", \textit{ibid}, 6:221.
hundred years ago, was no type of an experiment in advanced democracy.\textsuperscript{328} According to the 33 year-old Wilson, "it was simply an adaptation of English constitutional government."\textsuperscript{329} While he admitted that "there are certain influences astir in this century which make for democracy the world over", he also insisted that "it was not such forces that made us democratic, nor are we responsible for them."\textsuperscript{330} Those "who planned our constitution", he argued in 1896, "were aware that they were not inventing a new kind of rule. They simply sought to Americanize the English government...We have in a measure undone their work."\textsuperscript{331} Thus, Wilson's early resistance to Bancroftian national ideology contrasted with his later assertion "The example that we set in 1776...set fires going in the hearts of men which no influence was able to quench...one after another, the governments of the world have yielded to the influences of democracy."\textsuperscript{332}

The Americans, Wilson argued in the third week of the campaign, "are...a marked people among the people of the world. We did not start out merely to be rich, we did not start out merely to show what material power we could build up."\textsuperscript{333} The pursuit of self-interest "does not satisfy our ambition", argued Wilson. That, he continued,

\begin{quote}

is not what America is for. America set out to show the nations of the world an example of justice and of a people made happy by fair and equal laws. That is what we started out to do. Our object was not the profits of the rich man but the welfare of the poor man, the welfare of the ordinary man.\textsuperscript{334}
\end{quote}

By 1910, Wilson's thought had conformed to the nationalist doctrine that nations, among which humanity is thought to be naturally divided, may be

\textsuperscript{328}\textit{Ibid}, 6:224.
\textsuperscript{329}\textit{Ibid}, 6:224.
\textsuperscript{330}\textit{Ibid}, 6:224.
\textsuperscript{331}"Ideals of Democracy", 10:7.
\textsuperscript{332}An Address in the Princess Theater in Cheyenne, September 24, 1919, \textit{Ibid}, 63:468.
\textsuperscript{334}\textit{Ibid}, 21:218.
identified by certain innate characteristics. What set the United States apart from other nations, in his view, was its singular devotion to the ideal of democratic liberty. "There is only one way," he argued, "in which a nation becomes unified and single, and that is by giving the same thoughts." For, as Wilson, said Wilson, "seem to us to have queer notions, to have an odd attitude towards affairs and opinions." Americans, conversely, "think alike...upon most fundamental questions". As the above extract reveals, Wilson had come to consider the tie of principle more binding than ties of race. This reflected the ideological basis of American nationalism, and it contrasted markedly with his earlier sense of English-race patriotism. "Men flock to America from many continents", Wilson now claimed. "They unite together in a single community and find themselves engrossed in that thing that we call the American spirit, in that sentiment that we call the national sentiment of America...they still love the dear people whom they have left there at home, but nevertheless feel that they are part of America; no matter where they come from, they imbibe the new spirit and become Americans." "America", Wilson argued elsewhere,

was built as a heart structure...it was meant to be an asylum for those who could not get their rights anywhere else; it was meant as a home for men who could not find opportunity anywhere else; it was meant as a gathering place for [men] of all nations who wanted to have principles, right and equality recognized and applied in their case.

As late as December 1909, however, Wilson's view of these "Men...from all continents" and their contribution to American democracy had been rather less positive. The "problem of this century", he argued in Summit, "is what to do with this force we have created and established. This problem is complicated by

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337*PWW*, 21:317.
the mixture of elements in our land."341 American history had begun with "the establishment of English sentiments", but the present "mixture of bloods- the importance of which is the resultant mixture of thoughts and motives- brings about an economic and social complexity very difficult to make compact in national life."342 From the English "older order" had stemmed an organic respect for law. The "sinews of law are what holds us together," he warned, "and these sinews are being loosened by these newcomers."343

Yet, when Wilson spoke of America's manifest destiny on October 13, 1910, this Anglo-Saxonist strain had been expunged from his rhetoric. "What is the manifest destiny of America?", he asked an Atlantic City audience.

The manifest destiny of America is not to rule the world by physical force....The destiny of America and the leadership of America is that she shall do the thinking of the world....and that there will be throughout her great thought the pulse of the common man, of the average man, of all men- the thought of humanity itself.344

Other peoples, with their present "queer notions", would come to emulate American principles. Thus did liberal universalism become one with American nationalism in the emerging Wilsonian vision. "America is not merely a body of towns", he explained. "America is an idea, America is an ideal, America is a vision....America for the leadership of the world, America for the purification of the world, America for the example of the world."345

This was "the great and generous purpose" that had inspired the American Revolution, which animated the Democratic platform and justified Wilson's desire to attain political power: the redemption of humanity. "America has undertaken to lead the way", he told a Newark audience:

America has undertaken to be the haven of hope, the opportunity

of all men...to hold the lamp of progress up to the nations, not only to guide her own feet with a little lamp of her own kindling, but to guide the feet of all men who seek that which is just.\textsuperscript{346}

In 1904, Wilson argued that the Anglo-Saxon peoples generally had undertaken to reconstruct the world. In 1910, however, he specified that America alone was entrusted with this task, an America, furthermore, composed of men from “all continents”. It was not their ethnic background that fitted Americans to exemplify liberty to the rest of humanity, but their common regard for the universal ideals which had been carried to America by immigrants fleeing Old World autocracy. Wilson’s evocation of America’s history and destiny was an expression of the Bancroftian definition of the nation. Like Bancroft, Wilson now saw the United States not as a contingent product of historical factors but as the embodiment of universal ideals, ideals which all humanity, given the chance, would emulate. Thus, by 1910, the intellectual props of Wilsonianism were in place. The conversion was complete.

An example of Wilson’s Presidential application of the Bancroftian typology was his famous “Peace Without Victory” Senate address. He claimed “I spoke on behalf of humanity” in requesting the belligerents to secure “not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.”\textsuperscript{347} Democracy, he argued, must be the basis of peace. “Only a peace between equals”, intoned Wilson from the rostrum, “can last. Only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit. The right state of mind, the right feeling between nations”.\textsuperscript{348} This “right feeling” consisted of the idea “that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people...every people should be left free to

\textsuperscript{346}The Final Address of the Campaign Delivered in Newark, New Jersey, November 5, 1910, \textit{ibid}, 2:1573.
\textsuperscript{347}An Address to the Senate, January 22, 1917, \textit{ibid}, 40:534, 536.
\textsuperscript{348}\textit{ibid}, 40:536.
determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.\textsuperscript{349}

Having outlined the classic liberal internationalist platform, Wilson then related it to America's destiny. "Perhaps I am the only person in high authority amongst all the peoples of the world who is at liberty to speak and hold nothing back\textsuperscript{350}, he claimed. "I am in effect speaking for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation and of every programme of liberty....These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.\textsuperscript{351} There was no question, furthermore, that "the people and Government of the United States" would join in "guaranteeing the permanence of peace upon such terms as I have named\textsuperscript{352}. The realisation of a just peace was dear to the American heart because it reflected "our traditions" and "our policy as a nation". It was, in fact, the "fulfillment...of all that we have professed or striven for.\textsuperscript{353}

Woodrow Wilson's surrender to national myths was an illustration of the role of nationalism in American politics. "When an opinion has taken root in a democracy and established itself in the minds of the majority", as Alexis de Tocqueville first observed in the 1830s, "it afterward persists by itself, needing no effort to maintain it since no one attacks it.\textsuperscript{354} Those, like Wilson himself, "who at first rejected it as false come in the end to adopt it as accepted.\textsuperscript{355} In a

\textsuperscript{349}Ibid, 40:539.
\textsuperscript{350}Ibid, 40:538.
\textsuperscript{351}Ibid, 40:538, 539.
\textsuperscript{352}Ibid, 40:538.
\textsuperscript{353}Ibid, 40:538-539.
\textsuperscript{354}Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York, 1966), 834.
\textsuperscript{355}Ibid, 834.
democratic society like that of the United States, "it will always be very difficult for a man to believe what the mass rejects and to profess what it condemns."356

Bancroftian ideas were- and remain- integral to America's perception of itself.

As Lincoln proclaimed in the Gettysburg Address, for example,

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal....It is...for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us- that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

There was an element of truth in Emerson's eulogistic assertion that Lincoln had "the pulse of twenty millions throbbing in his heart, the thought of their minds articulated by his tongue."357 Certainly, his addresses- like Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic"- gave expression to a commonly-held perception of America's role in the world.358

Northern Presbyterians, for instance, were swept up by the tide of American nationalism. During the Civil War, service in the Union Army was seen as evidence of discipleship to Christ. A New School leader proclaimed "And while the Union is all in all, the very ark of the covenant, to us and our children, it is everything to the race. It is freighted with better hopes for freedom and humanity than any other nation in existence....If still united, we shall cross the threshold of 1900 a hundred millions strong; and if we fight this battle successfully, what battles for truth and justice and freedom and all good things shall we not then be able to fight?"359 The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. resolved that "that this Assembly...cherish

356bid, 834.
357Abraham Lincoln" (1865).
358See Ernest Lee Tocque, Redeemer Nation (Chicago, 1968), which presents much interesting material.
an undiminished attachment to the great principles of civil and religious freedom, on which our National Government is based". The Federal Government was deemed an agency of human redemption, "the most benign that has ever blessed our imperfect world;... we revere and love it, as one of the great sources of hope, under God, for a lost world." 

By the end of the nineteenth century, a collective hunger for nationalistic identity had secured the predominance of the Bancroftian vision. This was reflected in the public speeches and addresses of William McKinley. At the 1899 Washington Memorial Service, the twenty-fifth President decreed that

The struggling republic for which Washington was willing to give his life...has steadily and wonderfully developed along the line which his sagacity and foresight carefully planned. It has stood every trial, and at the dawn of a new century is stronger than ever to carry forward its mission of liberty...He was the national architect, says Bancroft the historian, and but for him the nation could not have achieved its independence.

Here McKinley not only paraphrased Bancroft, but actually paid homage to his name as well as his vision. This is clear evidence of Bancroft's centrality.

McKinley's speeches were consistently imbued with the idea of the United States' "mission of liberty". His Inaugural Address contained a clear Bancroftian prediction. American history had "exalted mankind and advanced the cause of freedom throughout the world." This process would culminate in the triumph of American ideals:

we shall attain to our high destiny as the foremost of the enlightened nations of the world which, under Providence, we ought to achieve.

McKinley repeated his Bancroftian message in speeches delivered throughout the nation. "We have had more than a hundred years of national existence", he

360 Quoted in ibid, 269.
361 Quoted in ibid, 270.
362 William McKinley, Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley (New York, 1900), 356.
363 Ibid, 10.
364 Ibid, 10.
remarked on one occasion. "Those years have been blessed ones for liberty and civilization....When the fathers established this government the population was only a little more than a million in excess of Iowa to-day. They started with three million nine hundred thousand...Our lines have indeed fallen in pleasant places. The ship of state has sailed uninterruptedly on its mission of liberty; and one thing that can be said of this nation, for which we should all give thanksgiving and praise, is that it never raised its arm against humanity, never struck a blow against liberty, never struck a blow except for civilization and mankind. And now that we are seventy-five millions of people I do not think we have lost our vigor, our virtue, our courage, our high purpose, or our patriotism."365

Wherever "we have raised our flag", he said in Cedar Falls at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War,

we have raised it...not for national gain, but for civilization and humanity....This is the Union we have now, and the North and the South are vying with each other in loyalty, and are marching side by side in the pathway of our destiny and the mission of liberty and humanity.366

The American flag, according to McKinley, "represents more than any other banner in the world the best hopes and aspirations of mankind."367

Theodore Roosevelt had also given expression to the rhetoric of national ideology when it proved necessary. On the fortieth anniversary of Antietam, he waxed Bancroftian whilst addressing veterans of the bloody battle:

You men of the Grand Army by victory not only rendered all Americans your debtors for evermore, but you rendered all humanity your debtors...we must keep in mind that the Revolutionary War would have been shorn of well-nigh all its results had the side of union and liberty been defeated.... If the Union had been dissolved, if the great edifice built with blood and sweat and tears by mighty Washington and his

365Ibid. 309.
366Ibid. 305.
367Ibid. 370.
compeers had gone down in wreck and ruin, the result would have been an incalculable calamity, not only for our people... but for all mankind.\footnote{368}

Every "friend of liberty," continued the Bull Moose, "every believer in self-government, every idealist who wished to see his ideals take practical shape, wherever he might be in the world, knew that the success of all in which he most believed was bound up with the success of the Union armies in this great struggle."\footnote{369}

Wilson entered politics less than a decade after McKinley and Roosevelt identified themselves with American national myths. Desirous of becoming not only a state governor but a national leader, he had little choice but to adapt to the same vision, lest he offend against the central ideas by which America defined itself. To cite de Toqueville's judgement again, "The mass has no need of laws to bend those who do not agree to its will. Its disapproval is enough."\footnote{370} In democratic societies, "public favour seems as necessary as the air [men] breathe, and to be out of harmony with the mass is...no life at all."\footnote{371} No candidate, then as now, could afford to appear out of step with public culture. For Wilson, given the nature of his earlier world view, this consideration was particularly pressing, and hence the peculiar intensity of his late conversion.

Unlike McKinley, a Northerner who had fought on the Union side during the Civil War, Wilson had not come to internalise the Bancroftian vision of America. His father had been an important figure in the "Old School" Southern Presbyterian church, and Woodrow was consequently raised on the Hamiltonian republicanism of an older, vanishing order. Dr. Wilson's relationship to the myths of American nationalism, by contrast to his "New School" Northern

\footnote{368}{Theodore Roosevelt, Presidential Addresses and State Papers, II (New York, 1904), 484-485.}
\footnote{369}{Ibid, 484-485.}
\footnote{370}{Toqueville, Democracy in America, 834.}
\footnote{371}{Ibid, 834.}
counterparts, was that of an antipathetic outsider. He rejected the idea that America was founded as a haven of democracy for men of all races, and remained a republican English race-patriot to the last. This he transmitted to his son, as was shown in the first chapter.

In an 1878 review of Green's *A History of the English People*, Woodrow had written "It is a grateful thought that this History of the English People is a history of the American people as well [it is] a high and solemn thought that we, as a lusty branch of a noble race, are by our national history adding lustre or stain to so bright an escutcheon. We profess to be building upon the grand principles of liberty in whose development nine centuries have been consumed. With what diligence, then should we guard so precious a legacy of privileges!"\(^{372}\) Wilson's view that American history was a subplot in the greater story of English development stemmed from his intellectual inheritance. Like his father, Wilson tended to consider the rapid influx of other bloods into the country as a danger to the organic polity. Hence, in the 1902 history of the American people, Wilson had made some rather uncomplimentary remarks about the forebears of millions of voting Americans:

...but there came multitudes of men of the lowest class from the south of Italy and men of the meager sort out of Hungary and Poland, men out of the ranks where there was neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence; and they came in numbers which increased from year to year, as if the countries of the south of Europe were disburdening themselves of the more sordid and hapless elements of their population, the men whose standards of life and of work were such as American workmen had never dreamed of hitherto.\(^{373}\)

The Chinese, he concluded, "were more to be desired, as workmen if not as citizens, than most of the coarse crew that came crowding in every year at the eastern ports."\(^{374}\)

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\(^{374}\)Ibid, V:213.
When Wilson embarked on a political career, it was suddenly necessary for him to take account of the numerous ethnic divisions that had opened up in the nation's politics. From 1850 to 1880, roughly 2.5 million immigrants had arrived per decade. During the 1880s, that figure more than doubled. 5.25 million came then, followed by 3.75 million in the 1890s. Not only did the actual numbers increase, but, more crucially for Wilson, there came a shift to immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Previously, immigrants had tended to come from Britain, Ireland, Germany or Scandinavia. In the nineties, however, the proportion of immigrants from areas such as Italy, Poland and Russia leaped to more than 50 per cent.

By 1910, it was not uncommon for a quarter of the population in major urban centres to be of foreign birth or parentage, and in greater New York this applied to eighty per cent of residents. Of the male population of America's eighteen largest cities there were nearly three times as many of foreign birth or parentage as there were of the older stock. Confronted by this complex demographic mix, Wilson was obliged to take up a rhetorical position from which he could pay homage to the pedigree of all American citizens. Bancroftian language was well-suited to this purpose, because its vision of national homogeneity was ideological rather than ethnic. To be considered a true American, according to Bancroft and the campaigning Wilson of 1910, one needed only to identify with the universal principles on which the United States was founded.

"You know", Wilson suddenly conceded in multi-ethnic Perth Amboy on November 4, "in the history of great nations those have been most powerful that have had the greatest combination of strong bloods in them. I know that a great many people, not knowing history and not knowing what really constitutes the strength of nations, have been jealous of our process of compounding a nation

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Blum, National Experience, 467.
out of a store of national elements, not knowing that that was the way America
was compounded at first, and that in a community like Perth Amboy the
American process is being repeated all over again, of the contribution of scores
of nations to a rich compound that makes for...a nationality rich in its elements
and powerful in its purposes."376

Immigrants from all parts of the world were to be welcomed, on the grounds
that they too identified with the abstract ideal of human liberty of which America
was the living embodiment. "I am glad to meet the people of this new and
promising State", McKinley had said in South Dakota. "Every step of our
journey, as we have passed through this commonwealth, has been one of warm
and hearty and generous greeting from all the people...not from the native-born
or the naturalized, but from all I have felt the touch of warm hearts and the glow
of gracious greeting....I have...felt that there was a great future for this
commonwealth in such hands, and for the whole nation...those who have come
from outside have brought their best conscience and best judgement to help
build up this country."377 Even Taft, who was less prone than his political
contemporaries to employ Bancroftian terminology, said on one occasion "we
haven't any Germans, we haven't any French, we haven't any Italians or
Mexicans, but we only have Americans."378 Though divisions threatened to
appear, there was an "American spirit"379, he said, which overcame it.

Wilson's 1910 willingness to embrace the orthodox national liberal ideal can,
with some justification, be viewed as an attempt to pre-empt criticism of his
earlier position. During the lead-up to the Presidential campaign, Wilson's
political enemies- among them the publicist William Randolph Hearst- would

377 McKinley, Speeches and Addresses, 299.
378 William Howard Taft, Presidential Addresses and State Papers of William Howard Taft, 1
(London, 1910), 348.
379 Ibid, 348.
cite the "coarse crew" passage from his history as evidence of "Toryism of the blackest type".\textsuperscript{380} Wrote one indignant critic, "It is not a history of the American people, but a history of Woodrow Wilson's admiration for everything which the radical democracy now seeks to change".\textsuperscript{381} Wilson found this extremely unsettling. He "was concerned", Link judged, "with halting the overwhelming tide of opposition to his candidacy that developed among the foreign-born voters as a result of Hearst's campaign."\textsuperscript{382}

As Wilson had feared in 1910, the powerful ethnic lobby groups of New York and Chicago now evinced a hostile attitude toward him. "As Mr. Wilson has shown that he is narrow and unjust in his attitude toward the Poles", read a resolution adopted by the United Polish Societies of Manhattan, "we, Polish American citizens,...strongly and unanimously oppose his possible nomination."\textsuperscript{383} Groups representing Americans of Italian and Hungarian descent were equally vehement. The Italian-American Civic Union of New York, for example, opposed Wilson's nomination on the grounds that his writings had revealed "a prejudiced and narrow mind of very limited intelligence."\textsuperscript{384} A prominent Hungarian leader claimed that Wilson's opinion of Hungarian immigrants was "not only a gross libel on our people, but an insult, wanton and gratuitous."\textsuperscript{385} In order to overcome this growing hostility, Wilson wrote many conciliatory letters to immigrant representatives. "I beg that you will judge", he wrote an Italian-American editor, "the passage in Volume V, of my 'History of the American People,' to which you allude, in connection with its full context, and not by itself. I yield to no one in my ardent admiration for the great people of Italy, and certainly no one who loves the history of liberty should fail to accord to Italians a great place in the history of political

\textsuperscript{380}Quoted in Link, \textit{Wilson The Road to the White House} (Princeton, 1947), 381.
\textsuperscript{381}Quoted in \textit{ibid}, 381.
\textsuperscript{382}\textit{ibid}, 384.
\textsuperscript{383}Quoted in \textit{ibid}, 384.
\textsuperscript{384}Quoted in \textit{ibid}, 385.
\textsuperscript{385}Quoted in \textit{ibid}, 385.
freedom....the Italians I have known and honored have constituted one of the
most interesting and admirable elements in our American life."386

It was even suggested by a Polish-American group that Wilson have an
apologetic erratum slip placed in unsold copies of his history and that,
furthermore, he should rewrite the offending passages for the next edition. "I
think with you", replied an acquiescent candidate, "that it would be best for me
at the earliest possible moment to rewrite the passage referred to in my history.
I shall get into communication with my publishers and ascertain the feasibility of
doing this at an early date."387 Immediately thereafter, he wrote to Harper &
Brothers expressing an urgent desire to reconsider and rewrite one or two
passages.

Though Link and others have already remarked on some of Wilson's immediate
tactical responses to immigrant criticism, the point has not been made- until
now- that his 1910 conversion to the Bancroftian myths of American
nationalism was related, more generally, to the same political imperative of self-
reinvention. While Link was prepared to concede "It is difficult to believe that
Wilson was... sincere in these fawning letters" to immigrant groups388, he was
unwilling to consider whether Wilson's underlying commitment to American
ideals was anything but natural and inevitable.

For Link and other representatives of national liberal scholarship, it was
inconceivable that Wilson should have undergone a "conversion" to American
"nationalism" in 1910. Seen from their perspective, he was giving spontaneous
expression to the "ideals" with which all Americans "naturally" identify. An
example of this national liberal interpretation appeared in a recent biography.

386Quoted in ibid, 385-386.
387Quoted in ibid, 386.
388Ibid, 386.
"Wilson completed the change...in his public persona", wrote Heckscher in connection with the gubernatorial campaign, "begun when he first responded to the lure of the New Jersey race."\(^389\) It was not that Wilson "reversed himself on positions previously held", but that he "pushed them to a logical extreme, beyond the caution with which they had previously been framed. The break with Princeton had, in a way, liberated him. It had emboldened him to be a full-fledged progressive or nothing."\(^390\) The implication of these remarks is that Wilson had always seen the world the way he would see it as President. Circumstances might have kept him from giving clear expression to his ideals, but the ideals were there nonetheless, according to Heckscher.

Wilson's expression of American ideals has been deemed not merely spontaneous, but heroic too. "Wilson faced foreign problems of greater magnitude during his tenure in the White House", wrote Link, "than any President since the early years of the nineteenth century. He carried out policies, whether wisely or unwisely, that were firmly grounded upon a consistent body of principles and assumptions that supplied motive power and shaped policy in the fields of action in diplomacy as well as domestic policy. These principles and assumptions were deeply rooted in Wilson's general thinking about God, ethics, the nature and ends of government, and the role of the United States in advancing democracy and the cause of human rights throughout the world."\(^391\) While it would be pointless to deny that Woodrow Wilson was, in some respects, an heroic figure, this need not preclude consideration of the actual process by which Wilson came to identify with the world view he later championed. The evidence presented throughout this thesis

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\(^{389}\)Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson, 214.

\(^{390}\)Ibid, 214.

\(^{391}\)Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace (Arlington Heights, 1979), 4. See also Arthur Walworth, Woodrow Wilson (Boston, 1965) and earlier works such as A. Maurice Low, Woodrow Wilson an Interpretation (London, 1919); Charles Seymour, Woodrow Wilson and the World War A Chronicle of Our Own Times (New Haven, 1921); William Allen White, Woodrow Wilson the Man, his Times, and his Task (Boston, 1924).
contradicts the basic national liberal assertion that Wilson had always sympathised with "American ideals". In order to eliminate any confusion or doubt surrounding this point, Wilson's response to the 1876 Independence Day celebrations must be cited once again: "I venture to say", he had predicted, "that this country will never celebrate another centennial as a republic. The English form of government is the only true one." Wilson scoffed at the idea of a government "founded upon the notion of abstract liberty", claiming that America would be happier with the English form than with its present "miserable delusion."

While it cannot be shown that Wilson had always been an American nationalist, it can be shown that he had long been fascinated by the power and influence that would accrue to a leader who presented himself as the embodiment of a national community's guiding axioms. In "Leaders of Men", for example, he had stated with utmost candour "The arguments which induce popular action must always be broad and obvious arguments. Only a very gross substance of concrete conception can make any impression on the minds of the masses; they must get their ideas very absolutely put".392 A leader, therefore, "must have such sympathetic and penetrative insight as shall enable him to discern quite unerringly the motives which move other men in the mass."393 This insight "need not pierce the particular secrets of individual men: it need only know what it is that lies waiting to be stirred in the minds and purposes of groups and masses of men."394

Some twenty years later, Wilson would draw on this philosophy of leadership during his gubernatorial and Presidential campaigns. Bancroftian themes were utilised as the "broad and obvious arguments" with which he, as a "leader of

392 An Address ("Leaders of Men"), June 17, 1890, PWW, 6:647.
393 Ibid., 6:649.
394 Ibid., 6:649.
men", would move the American people. When the 1876 diary entry and "Leaders of Men" are taken together, it would seem absolutely clear that Wilson's 1910 addresses were not a reflection of long-held ideals but a recognition, rather, of what was expected of him by the voting American public. After all, "Men are not led by being told what they do not know", Wilson had remarked. "Persuasion is a force, but not information; and persuasion is accomplished by creeping into the confidence of those you would lead. Their confidence is not gained by preaching new thoughts to them. It is gained by qualities which they can recognize at first sight, by arguments which they can assimilate at once: by the things which find easy and immediate entrance into their minds".395

In 1908, Wilson restated these ideas in his last book, Constitutional Government in the United States:

He [the President] can dominate his party by being spokesman for the real sentiment and purpose of the country, by giving direction to opinion, by giving the country at once the information and the statements of policy which will enable it to form its judgements alike of parties and of men...Let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no other single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him. His position takes the imagination of the country. He is the representative of no constituency, but of the whole people...If he rightly interpret the national thought and boldly insist upon it, he is irresistible.396

In Wilson's deft wielding of national mythology may be detected an application of this principle. He sought to win the confidence of the American people by paying homage to the myths of American nationalism. Here were arguments that could be assimilated at once, and things that could find easy and immediate entrance into their minds. Yet, for all that Wilson manipulated, it cannot be overlooked that he, in turn, was manipulated. This process exemplified the

395Ibid., 6:682.
"strange power" of public opinion in a democratic society. Wilson's conversion to the myths of American nationalism was a consequence of his having to view himself in relation to the collective identity of the American people. "The citizen of a democracy", as de Toqueville perceived, "comparing himself with the others feels proud of his equality with each. But when he compares himself with all his fellows and measures himself against this vast entity, he is overwhelmed by a sense of his insignificance and weakness." Public opinion "uses no persuasion to forward its beliefs, but by some mighty pressure of the mind of all upon the intelligence of each it imposes its ideas and makes them penetrate men's very souls."

The above discussion has outlined some aspects of Wilson's concession to expediency, but it remains to be shown how Wilson interpreted this concession to himself. What constituted psychic reality for him? That he was, in fact, a manipulator? An office-seeker? At no stage was Wilson ever prepared to admit of this possibility. Anything that smacked of egotism, pride or resentment clashed with the self-image on which he had come to rely. Wilson genuinely thought of himself as an altruistic statesman whose bounden duty it was to interpret the general will and then champion it against all odds or opposition. This was a mentality which interpreted all opposition to his will as an offence against the universal ideals- and the divine Providence- he purported to represent. To disagree with the judgement of Woodrow Wilson was to disagree with the judgement of all humanity.

The following passages from "Leaders of Men" reveal the thought process by which Wilson inwardly sanctified his political ambitions:

Let us fairly distinguish...the peculiar and delicate duties of the popular leader from the not very peculiar or delicate misdemeanours

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397 Toqueville, Democracy in America, 557.
398 Ibid., 557.
399 Ibid., 557.
of the demagogue. Leadership, for the statesman, is *interpretation*. He must read the common thought: he must test and calculate very circumspectly the *preparation* of the nation for the next move in the progress of politics. If he fairly hit the popular thought...are we to say that he is a demagogue?...The legislative leader must perceive the direction of the nation’s permanent forces, and must feel the speed of their operation. There are *old thoughts*, but a progressive *application* of them.\(^{400}\)

Both the statesman and the demagogue made appeals to the "common thought" of the nation, but only the statesman did so in order to achieve a higher goal. It was not ambition that motivated him, but the desire to serve:

This function of interpretation, this careful exclusion of individual origination it is that makes it difficult for the impatient original mind to distinguish the popular statesman from the demagogue. The *demagogue* sees and seeks self-interest in an acquiescent reading of that part of the public thought upon which he depends for votes; the *statesman*, also reading the common inclination, also, when he reads aright, obtains the votes that keep him in power. But if you will justly observe the two, you will find the one trimming to the inclinations of the moment, the other obedient only to the permanent purposes of the public mind. The one ministers to himself, the other to the race.\(^{401}\)

Wilson was driven to deny that self-aggrandisement underpinned his conduct.

This tendency stemmed from the circumstances of his upbringing. So severely had Dr. Wilson dominated his son that no open expression of dissent or resentment was ever possible. Woodrow belonged to that type of child who, as Alexander and Juliette George noted, "are afraid to express such negative feelings openly, commonly out of fear of what reprisals the parent would take if he knew. Sometimes the child is so terrified that he dares not even recognize the existence of such feelings within himself".\(^{402}\) A consequence of Woodrow’s total subordination was his total identification with Dr. Wilson’s republican world view. Thus, Wilson’s late conversion to democracy during his time at Johns Hopkins reflected the onset of an adolescent identity crisis. As Erikson has noted, this crisis commonly occurs "in that period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some

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\(^{400}\) Leaders of Men*, *P.W.*, 6:659.
\(^{401}\) Ibid. 6:661.
working unity, out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood".403

Unable to rebel openly against his father, Wilson did so unconsciously by coming to identify with a divergent world view. He sought, on the one hand, to vindicate his ego and yet, on the other hand, avoid recognising the existence of such feelings within himself. This process was the microcosm of a later macrocosm, in that Wilson developed a compensatory urge to dominate others, and yet could only bring himself to express that urge indirectly. The self-styled Leader of Men who once remarked "Men are as clay in the hands of the consummate leader" sought, when he entered politics, to become a Prince of Peace. Thus, just as he had melded his ego with the cause of democracy, ethical-historical economics and the Social Gospel in the mid-1880s, so did Wilson literally identify with the myths of American nationalism in 1910. Wilson's conversion to the Bancroftian ideas which had extinguished Dr. Wilson's beloved Confederacy represented the ultimate divergence from his father's world view.

"The happy circumstance of this journey", he said during the Western Tour of 1919, "is that I have not come out to advocate anything personal to myself, and I have not come out to seek the fortunes of any man or group of men, but to seek the safety and guarantee of peace everywhere. We undertook a great war for a definite purpose."404 By becoming the warrior prophet of Bancroftian ideas, Wilson made the triumph of these ideas a reflection of his own power and influence over the life of the world.

An opposite illustration of Wilson's identification with the myths of American nationalism was his friendship with George D. Herron. In October 1917, as

403Erikson, Young Man Luther, 12.
Ambrosius has noted, Wilson wrote the publisher Mitchell Kennerley thanking him for "sending me the little volume, 'Woodrow Wilson and the World's Peace,' by George D. Herron". He claimed to have "read it with the deepest appreciation of Mr. Herron's singular insight into all the elements of a complicated situation and into my own motives and purposes."  

Herron was a leading Social Gospel figure in whom the fusion of the Kingdom movement and the myths of American nationalism was particularly pronounced. Based in Geneva, he had composed a series of articles for European readers relating Wilson's statesmanship to the goal of humanity's temporal salvation. These articles formed the basis of Woodrow Wilson and the World's Peace.

The following passage, illustrative of the work as a whole, referred to Wilson's "Peace without Victory" address:

Woodrow Wilson has dared to believe divinely; and his faith that a federate world is possible, and the challenge of that faith to the nations, is the most creative collective act since the French Revolution. By his faith he has set a goal from which mankind can never take its eyes; he has sent forth the word that can never return. If the continuation of man upon the earth is inevitable, the final fulfillment of this word is inevitable. By the projection of one man's faith, humanity has been made to turn an unexpected corner, and there to depart irrevocably from the paths of its past ongoing. The horizon of history had highly shifted, the whole prospect of mankind had resplendently changed, and the rostrum of the American Senate had become as God's burning altar, when, the address of the President concluded, the reverent wonder of the hour went abroad, encircling the world as a divine visitation.

America's mission, according to Herron, was to be "in deed and in truth real democrats and servants of mankind". Wilson, he continued,

beholds this vision, he follows this faith, because he is both sturdily and mystically Christian in his view of our common life's collective possibilities. The uttermost democracy, the democracy that scales the whole human octave, is to him the certain issue of the idea for which Jesus lived and died. This man conceives...that the mind of mutual service, the literal and general application of the law of love, is the only practicable social basis, the only national security, the only found-

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405To Mitchell Kennerley, October 1, 1917, ibid, 44:287.
408Ibid, 76.
ation for international peace. He cunningly hopes, he
divinely schemes, to bring it about that America, awake at last
to her national selfhood and calling, shall become as a colossal
Christian apostle, shepherding the world into the Kingdom of
God. 409

The significance of Wilson’s curious enchantment with Herron has not yet been
subject to discussion. 410 Though Ambrosius has cited the aforementioned letter
and, indeed, other examples of their wartime correspondence 411, much remains
to be said about the matter. Increasingly throughout 1918, Herron carved out a
role as the President’s unofficial envoy in the heart of war-torn Europe. "Is
Professor Herron a representative in Switzerland", cabled the puzzled Vice
Consul at Zurich, "of President Wilson?" 412

The episode is worthy of recollection, because it evidenced Wilson’s need to be
viewed as the great, selfless leader who would realise America’s destiny.
Herron was admitted to the President’s trust and affection because he was able
to portray Wilson as he most wanted to be portrayed. Wilson needed such
reassurance because his personality was racked by unacknowledged doubts and
conflicts. Never could he extinguish that inner voice of censure which accused

409 Ibid, 77. Herron was not alone among Social Gospel thinkers to view Wilson in this light.
The prominent theologian Walter Marshall Horton embodied the era’s linkage of liberal
theology, American nationalism and Wilson. Recalled Horton, “One of the most impressive
religious experiences I have ever had came to me, not in church, but...in a New York theater,
where John Drinkwater’s Abraham Lincoln was then playing. As scene succeeded scene, and
the soul of Lincoln was more and more completely revealed...I found myself at last looking
upon the stage with the eyes of a worshipper, and I said to myself ‘This is God...the spirit that
is bound to win’...And then the theatre could not contain it. I looked out beyond the stage
into the tangled world, and I saw that spirit, embodied in the message of President Wilson,
putting an end to a great war, and arousing fabulous hopes in the hearts of all the peoples—
and chaos and despair rushing back upon the scene when that spirit which had governed us in the
war failed to get incorporated in the treaty of peace.” Cited in Wieman and Meland, American
Philosophies of Religion, 173. For an examination of Wilson’s political support base among
liberal Presbyterians interested in social reform, see Betty J. Brandon, “A Wilsonian
410 See, for example, Robert W. Tucker, “An Inner Circle of One- Woodrow Wilson and His
Advisers”, The National Interest, Spring 1998 (3-26). Tucker has covered Wilson’s interaction
with familiar figures such as Bryan, Page, Lansing and House. Yet he made not a single
mention of Herron, and this omission renders the article somewhat incomplete.
411See Ambrosius, Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition (Cambridge,
1987), 12-13, 119, 129, 131, 139. See also Ambrosius, Wilsonian Statecraft (Wilmington,
412James Clifford McNally, quoted in Hugh Robert Wilson to Robert Lansing, February 23,
1918, PWW, 46:428.
him of being ambitious merely for the sake of self-aggrandisement. Herron's ringing prophecies allowed Wilson to repress these lingering doubts and take comfort in the image of selfless statesmanship he had created for himself. By appealing to Wilson's egotistical altruism, or altruistic egotism, Herron won a measure of influence over the deliberations of a wartime President. Then, by opposing Wilson's judgement after the war for "democracy" was won, he, like Bryan, Lansing and House, would be sent to outer darkness.

Herron had been active in the Kingdom movement of the Social Gospel since the 1890s. Wilson came to hear of the European-based theologian through a letter sent him on January 22, 1917, by Charles Ferguson, a newspaper editorialist and ally. "I forward the enclosed letter to you", wrote Ferguson, "at the suggestion of the writer George D. Herron- a man of extraordinary faculty- most loyal to you- on the chance that he may possibly be of further use to the Administration in his present place- the meeting-place of so many currents of European opinion." This letter was Wilson's first impression of Herron.

What was said in the letter made a strong impression on the President, because Herron subsequently enjoyed a special place in his thoughts. On the last day of 1916, Herron had written Ferguson from Geneva "By a curious and extraordinary chance, I find myself being placed, all at once, in the position of Dr. Wilson's defender and interpreter, in this part of the world." Herron then said of the corrupt Old World, "I found great misunderstanding of Wilson, and great hostility to him, and a preposterous idealization of Roosevelt." In order to correct these perceptions, Herron "undertook to explain Wilson to my

413See Robert T. Handy, "George D. Herron and the Kingdom Movement", Church History, 19 (1950), 97-115. [Handy's other contributions to the understanding of American Protestantism in the Progressive era also include "Christianity and Socialism in America, 1900-1920", Church History, 21 (1952), 39-54; "Survey of Recent Literature: American Church History", Church History, 27 (1958), 161-165 and "The Protestant Quest for a Christian America", Church History, 22 (1953), 8-19.]
414From Charles Ferguson, with Enclosure, January 22, 1917, PW, 40:540.
415George Davis Herron to Charles Ferguson, December 31, 1916, ibid, 40:541.
416Ibid, 40:541.
friends." He asked him to write about Wilson's ideas for a Swiss weekly, he had done so. To his great surprise, "the article attracted immediate and incredible attention all over Europe." It even "came to the attention of governments, and a messenger came from Paris to talk about it." Herron was quick to disassociate his own ego from the proselytising enterprise. So as to assuage Wilson's perennial suspicion of office-seekers and flatterers, he wrote "I find myself in the astounding and terrifying position of being treated as an authority on Wilson all over Europe. Heaven knows I never dreamed of such a situation....I am not at all the sort of interpreter he would choose." Herron, like House, had perceived that in order to win Wilson's confidence, it was necessary to defer to his virtue and wisdom. "I have held fast, for years," he confessed, "to a certain ideal of him. I have trusted that it was he who would redeem democracy and organize freedom. And I undertook, when urged to do so, to set forth this ideal in French print."

Instantly impressed, Wilson (without a hint of self-irony) agreed to Ferguson's suggestion that Herron be put to some use. Thereafter, Herron met with various representatives of the Central Powers to discuss the possibility of peace and, more importantly, impress upon them the moral imperative of President Wilson's war aims. In early 1918, for example, he met with a senior Austrian official, the international jurist Heinrich Lammash. Emperor Charles had offered Lammash the Premiership in the summer of 1917, but the latter would only agree to this proposal if Austria be permitted to conclude a separate peace with the Allies. The increasingly desperate Emperor, his armies collapsing, accepted these conditions. Lammash then sought out Herron, who he saw as a

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417 Ibid, 40:541.
418 Ibid, 40:541.
419 Ibid, 40:541-542.
420 Ibid, 40:542.
421 Ibid, 40:542.
conduit to Wilson, for the purpose of extending informal peace feelers. On February 4, 1918, Hugh Robert Wilson, then attached to the American legation at Berne, despatched a confidential memorandum of Herron's conversation with Lammasch: "Well, to begin with," Herron noted, "I made it perfectly clear to Lammasch that I had no kind of official mandate....Of course he replied then as a matter of courtesy that he had no official mandate, which he proceeded to disprove right away. He told me just how he had come solely for the purpose of this interview. The Emperor...wanted to find some way of getting a confidential message through to President Wilson that would not be known by Germany".

What Lammasch had to say was therefore "what the Emperor wants to get through to President Wilson, and Secretary Lansing of course, and by narrow a channel so as few as possible shall know of it." What the Emperor sought, according to Lammasch, was to effect "a great change in the constitution of the Monarchy" and to get "extricated from Prussian hegemony". During the conversation, a liberal platform was outlined as the basis of Austria's plans for postwar reorganisation. Yet Herron remained dubious of Austrian motives. The "whole attitude of the Emperor and even of Professor Lammasch", he concluded, "is that of wanting to capture and use the new order, and not to serve the new order." It was inconceivable, therefore, that Wilson would agree to participate in such an arrangement. What America sought was the establishment of genuine democracy, not "a benevolent autocracy in place of the old Hapsburg autocracy."

A separate peace was thus a moral impossibility. Herron said he "could not see that [Lammasch] understood, that there was anything that indicated he understood the programme which President Wilson had presented to the world of wanting, of literally making the world a world of democratic peoples, of free, self-governing peoples."\textsuperscript{428} It was patiently explained to the Austrian representative that "not in the whole history of the world has the world so looked to a nation as it now looks to America.... And so the world has never looked to a man as it now looks to President Wilson and has never trusted a man as it trusts President Wilson."\textsuperscript{429}

On reading the above memorandum, Wilson wrote Lansing "This is, indeed, extremely interesting, and confirms my impression of Herron. I agree in toto with his analysis and conclusions".\textsuperscript{430} Having won Wilson's favour by virtue of such artful flattery, Herron was permitted to hold similar discussions with representatives of the Bulgarian, Hungarian and Bavarian governments, as well as the Holy See.\textsuperscript{431} The real purpose of these meetings was not to broker peace so much as to portray Wilson as the incarnation of democracy and American ideals. Wilson's susceptibility to Herron's flattery was a reflection of his innermost self. Herron, like Dr. Wilson, spoke with a voice of religious authority. Unlike Wilson's father, however, Herron did not seek to discipline and correct him, nor to warn him of pride, nor to restrain his ego, but only to glorify him in terms of unrestricted praise. This, fundamentally, was what Wilson most desired.

"The peoples are trusting you to speak the word that shall gather them all into one fold", Herron wrote Wilson on May 31, 1918. They "do not greatly trust

\textsuperscript{428}ibid, 46:246.  
\textsuperscript{429}ibid, 46:247.  
\textsuperscript{430}To Robert Lansing, February 16, 1918, ibid, 46:357.  
either the wisdom or the integrity of their governments and governors: they do
trust you: they do trust America."432 Already, he continued, "your messages,
the hope of the principles they expound, have become the very texture of the
political mentality of European peoples. If you will make this a war not only
against the German dominion,—against the universal spiritual death that must
issue from such dominion,—but a war for the establishment of the Society of
Nations, a war for the creation of a new earth, then they are with you to the
death. They will follow you as never mortal man was followed; nor will rulers
or diplomats or financiers dare say them nay. Not in the whole history of
mankind, dear Mr. President, has the world turned to one man as it now turns to
you...no hand but yours can open the door of this unprecedented and
predestinative opportunity."433

Wilson, to whom such praise was sweet music, sent this letter to House for his
perusal. "I wish you would read the enclosed very remarkable letter from
Herron", he wrote his most trusted adviser, "and tell me what you think of
it."434 Sensing what Wilson wanted to hear, House dutifully replied "Thank
you for giving me the pleasure of reading Herron's letter...there is no denying
that there has recently been a great acceleration of the thought and desire for a
League of Nations. This thought has crystallized around your name, and I
believe you are wise in giving it immediate and thorough consideration."435 So
long as Herron continued to give his unreserved praise, he could do no wrong
in the President's eyes. "I am glad to have seen this letter of Herron's", he
wrote Lansing with regard to the Bulgarian question. Herron was of the
opinion that America ought to declare war at once on this "unmoral nation"436,
owing to its alliance with the great challenger to American national honour.

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432From George Davis Herron, May 31, 1918. ibid, 48:211.
434To Edward Mandell House, July 8, 1918, ibid, 48:549.
435To Edward Mandell House, July 11, 1918, ibid, 48:592.
436From Robert Lansing, with Enclsure (George Davis Herron, "Ad Interim and Bulgaria"),
September 4, 1918, ibid, 49:436.
Wilson said he agreed "with every word of what he says about what our attitude should be towards Bulgaria, and I think it would be well to...tell Herron that he might say to any Bulgarian who may approach him that we will entertain no suggestions which separate her fate from that of Germany with whom she has chosen to make common cause against mankind."437 The President, equating America's honour with the betterment of humanity, was "all but persuaded by Herron's argument to advise the Congress to declare a state of war with Bulgaria."438 Though it is true that he stepped back from this proposed measure, Wilson's initial response was itself of some significance. Herron's influence upon his thought was so great as to produce the serious contemplation of a declaration of war.

The chimerical bubble of their relationship was burst, however, when Herron expressed disappointment with the peace settlement. Wilson, as the Georges noted, "could brook no interference....He bristled at the slightest challenge to his authority." This characteristic of his personality "might well have represented a rebellion against the domination of his father, whose authority he had never dared openly challenge. Throughout his life his relationships with others seemed shaped by an inner command never again to bend his will to another man's....He seems to have experienced men who were determined to make their viewpoints prevail against his own...as an unbearable threat....They seem to have stirred in him ancient memories of his capitulation to his father and he resisted with ferocity."439 The Georges cited Wilson's dealings with Dean West of Princeton, Senator Lodge and, ultimately, Colonel House, as evidence of this psychological pattern. The case of Herron's fall from grace, which the Georges did not mention in their study, also serves to correlate this observation.

437Four Letters to Robert Lansing, September 5, 1918, ibid, 49:447.
439George & George, Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House, 11-12.
"My feeling about the Conference is one of frank and profound discouragement", wrote Herron to Wilson on April 21, 1919.\textsuperscript{440} The "great ends for which you have labored, and which I in my poor way have so ardently supported, have been either so baffled or compromised that nothing now can save European civilisation from utter disintegration... and I think that America, unless the peoples are made to understand the burden divinely laid upon them better than they now do, will inevitably be drawn into the pit into which Europe will soon be descending."\textsuperscript{441} Wilson's tersely polite reply - "I am sorry that you are so deeply discouraged about the work of the conference"\textsuperscript{442} - belied the raising of inner hackles. A mutual disaffection set in. The inevitable break came in May of 1919, when Herron voiced his support for Italy's irredentist claim on Trieste.\textsuperscript{443} In a private letter to the Serbian foreign minister, he wrote "Peace has not been made on the basis of the Fourteen Principles, but on a basis of compromise. And the peace being actually what it is, and being made on the basis of compromise by all other nationalities, I feel that Italy is receiving the greatest injustice. Why should Italy's claims be settled by one law and the claims of all the other nations settled by another law?"\textsuperscript{444}

Herron also wrote to a Rome newspaper, expressing the same view about "a grave injustice" being done to Italy.\textsuperscript{445} Wilson came to hear of this gesture through House, who seized a long-awaited opportunity to eliminate this dangerous rival for the President's confidence. "I took occasion", House recorded in typically understated terms, "to tell him of his end George D. Herron. He looked somewhat embarrassed and said with some asperity, 'I am

\textsuperscript{440}From George Davis Herron, April 21, 1919, \textit{PWW}, 57:570.
\textsuperscript{441}\textit{Ibid}, 57:570.
\textsuperscript{442}To George Davis Herron, April 28, 1919, \textit{Ibid}, 58:204.
\textsuperscript{444}George Davis Herron to Ante Trumbic, May 1, 1919, \textit{Ibid}, 59:69.
through with him.\footnote{From the Diary of Colonel House, May 12, 1919, \textit{ibid}, 59:68. Though he knew better than to say so to Wilson, House loathed Herron. Ever since Herron established contact with the President, House had set about blackening his reputation behind the scenes. See, for example, Sir William Wiseman to Arthur Cecil Murray, September 14, 1918, \textit{ibid}, 51:9-10: \textquote{I do not think you ought to take Herron too seriously...House gets all Herron's reports and reads them and finds most of them rather nonsense.}} Wilson was as good as his word. After May 20, when Herron sent Wilson a missing letter, the two had no further contact.

Some three months later, Wilson embarked on the Western speaking tour in defence of the League of Nations and his status as a national leader devoted to the realisation of America's destiny. A life-long inner voyage found symbolic expression in this final journey across the United States. This thesis has sought to depict that inner voyage. Unable to make open expression of his need to dominate others, Wilson attempted to make the triumph of his world view the sublimated triumph of his will. Ultimately, this tendency led to the fusion of Wilson's ego with the programme of liberal internationalism. Finally, it is left for readers to ask to what extent Wilson's moral condition embodied the psyche of a wider national community.
Conclusion

This thesis has sought to trace the evolution of Woodrow Wilson's world view, and to account for his conversion to the myths of American nationalism. The contribution of such a study lies in the revised understanding it offers both of Wilson and the national ideology which his diplomacy and postwar aspirations came to embody. What has been disclosed is that American national mythology was-and remains-an artificial construct providing a sense of common identity and shared experience in the modern world. The American people, according to the national myth, are united not by race or language but by a thirst for liberty and the desire to bequeath democracy to all nations.

As Michael Hunt has noted, very little work has been produced which has attempted to deal analytically with the nature and role of national ideology in the history of American foreign relations. This ideology is either accepted uncritically, dismissed as a chimerical abstraction or viewed as a subterfuge for strategic and economic motives. Yet, national mythology, moral codes and political ideas are integral to the self-perception of societies as of individuals. To neglect ideology, therefore, "may be to omit a crucial step in setting US foreign policy on a new basis."1

Contrary to the orthodox reading put forward by Link, Mulder and others, it was neither natural nor inevitable that Wilson came to view America as a special nation charged with a providential mission to bring about the political redemption of the world. In fact, Wilson's early outlook on human affairs did not correspond with the philosophy that underpinned his Presidential world view. A product of Southern Presbyterianism and the classical republican tradition, he was convinced that human nature must remain forever tainted and that genuine moral progress was impossible. Fearing the collective depravity of mankind, he rejected the principle of

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popular sovereignty and the Bancroftian idea that America had been founded in order to bring about the political salvation of humanity.

It was only during the mid-1880s that Wilson came to accept the idea of popular sovereignty. Unable to make open expression of his desire for independence from his father's unusually severe authority, Woodrow came to identify with a different world view from that of Dr. Wilson. As a graduate student at the Johns Hopkins University, Woodrow was exposed to the democratic social organism of ethical-historical economics and the Social Gospel. This provided him with a model of intellectual divergence and of personal emancipation. The identity crisis of early adulthood found a sublimated expression in the form of Wilson's delayed transition from Covenant theology and classical republicanism to liberal Protestantism and democracy.

By 1890, Wilson had come to embrace democracy, but it was a definition of democracy that stemmed from Burkean Anglo-Saxonism. It was not considered a political philosophy suitable for all peoples everywhere. According to Wilson, America was democratic only because of its English race heritage. He did not identify with the Bancroftian nationalist view that the United States had a special role to play in the establishment of universal democracy. At times, Wilson also gave expression to Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier explanation of the American character, which held that unique American conditions had, over time, given rise to a uniquely American democracy. Immigrants from the Old World, whether, English-speaking or not, had been forged anew as democratic Americans on the frontier. The frontier thesis, insular and inherently exclusive, was as unrelated to Bancroftian typology as was Anglo-Saxonist "germ" theory. Turner held that American democracy was the product of specialised circumstances and did not pertain to the aspirations of all humanity.
During the late 1890s, Wilson became more deeply influenced by the Social Gospel and was led to mingle his residual sense of Anglo-Saxonist exclusivity with a more positive view of human progress and a more universalist definition of democracy. Not yet, however, had he come to view the redemption of international society as synonymous with the fulfilment of America's special destiny. Instead, he conceived of a joint Anglo-American mission to the world. Only in 1910, at the onset of his political career, did Wilson first give expression to the Bancroftian vision by which he is known to history. As a consequence of having to assess his own world view in relation to the collective identity of the American people, Wilson underwent a conversion to the myths of American nationalism. Having melded his ego with the Bancroftian vision of America's role in the world, Wilson would champion this nationalist gospel to the very end. Shortly before his death, the ailing ex-President addressed the American people one last time on Armistice Day, 1923, from his home on Washington's S Street. "The only way in which we can worthily give proof of our appreciation of the high significance of Armistice Day", he announced over the airwaves, "is by resolving to put self-interest away and once more formulate and act upon the highest ideals and purposes of international policy. Thus, and only thus, can we return to the true traditions of America."  

By presenting the story of Woodrow Wilson's intellectual development in terms of transformation rather than continuity, it is possible to arrive at a more detached and considered understanding not only of Wilson, but of the pervasive ideology which has influenced the United States' dealings with the rest of the world. Wilson's identification with "the true traditions of America" was not the inevitable consequence of fixed and immutable laws, but an outcome of historically contingent psychological and social factors. The deeper significance of Wilson's centrality is that his personal intellectual transformation was a microcosmic reflection of America's own unacknowledged metamorphosis from the sceptical republican

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2Quoted in Gene Smith, When the Cheering Stopped the Last Years of Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1964), 229.
tradition to a liberal democratic order and the vision of universal temporal redemption. America’s persistent sense of mission to recast the world in its own image had no miraculous inception in 1776, but resulted from a crisis of identity in the modern age.
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