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(A Seasonal Catechism for the Study of Western and American Civilization)

America's Christian Pluralism --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 432-440)

This religious climate, in its many Protestant expressions, dominated early America, encouraging relative toleration and shaping relative moral consensus in the land? On the eve of the Revolution, in fact, most Colonies/States had established churches, although the establishments were milder and more welcoming of dissenting sects than in the beginning. Tocqueville, visiting the new U.S., found agreement on the desirability of religion for the sake of order in both soul and society, nurturing non-chaotic liberty.

The Commercial Revolution --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, pp. 4-7)

This economic tidal wave bridging the Old and New Worlds centuries in the making (beginning in the 1300's) ironically stimulated both slavery and abolitionism? The wave was wrought by transcontinental exchanges of goods and money dependent upon colonial production of raw commodities (sugar, rice, tobacco, cotton) by slave labor. Curiously, the new fortunes of the business elite also led to new theories of man's natural right to improve or reinvent his life, a right deemed incompatible with slavery.

The Great Divide --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, p. xxiii)

This title describes aptly the 19th-century Civil War era in America, a time of crisis when the character and course of the country were fundamentally altered? The alteration was sensed even before the war ended by no less than Lincoln, who in 1865 noted that both North and South "looked for... a result less fundamental and astounding" than they got. The war parted the sea through which Americans would cross slowly to modernity, leaving behind the Old Republic on the way to an imperial New Nation.

The Slavery Conundrum --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, pp. 1-4)

This title suggests there has been no consensus among generations of scholars on the relative benevolence or malevolence of the antebellum South's "peculiar institution"? The confusion stems partly from the vastness of the institution (about 4 million bondsmen scattered among 15 states) and its variable conditions (field, household, factory labor, etc.). Moreover, biases with respect to racial equality and partisan political use of racial tensions have shrouded the issues and amplified disagreements.

Christian America's Constitution --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 432-440)

This heading suggests that our Constitution's 1st Amendment safeguarded the people's Christianity in their various States as well as personal religious rights? No national church was conceivable given the regional configuration of Protestant sects, although State churches remained and were sheltered from federal interference. The underlying spirit of the law, as Justice Story explained in his *Commentaries* (1833), was both favorable to Christianity and as tolerant as possible of man's rights of conscience.