

Biblical Worldview Scope for *United States History, 6th ed.*

This document is our attempt to answer the question, “What must a student understand and value in order to comprehend US history from a biblical worldview?” What follows is a list of the themes that we believe are essential for students of US history to understand and internalize. We anticipate that early in the course students will be required to *recall* and *explain* these themes. However, as these themes recur, we plan to require students to *evaluate* ideas within these themes, *formulate* a Christian understanding of them, and *apply* what they have learned about these themes to real-life situations. We hope to achieve high levels of internalization whenever students are required to apply their learning.

This textbook presents United States history from a biblical worldview. This does not mean that it tries to make the history of the United States more Christian or religious than it really was. But it does seek to highlight Christian and religious aspects of American history that secular textbooks leave out. **Religion** is therefore a major theme in this book.

This textbook also recognizes that Americans are characterized by certain core values: **Freedom, Individualism, Equality, and Growth**. These core values can be conceived in biblical and unbiblical ways. Many conflicts in United States history stem from different understandings of these values or tensions that exist between them. These tensions and conflicts form fertile ground for worldview evaluation.

The tensions between the core values often raise questions of **justice**. This is an important—and debated feature of American history today. It is important that students develop a biblical view of justice as they study American history. Because Americans are sinners, there will be numerous instances of injustices that the Christian student of American history must study. However, **gratitude** is an important virtue for the Christian student of American history. It is essential for fostering Christians who seek to preserve what is best about their nation and cultural expressions even while seeking to address the nation’s sins.

Justice

Creation (Recall, Explain)

According to the Bible righteousness or justice is conformity to God’s character and the creational order than conforms to God’s character. To ensure justice is to ensure conformity to God’s creational order in the sphere of persons and their relationships to one another. Because humans are made in the image of God (a fact of the created order) certain actions towards them are unjust. Rights emerge from the recognition of these injustices. For instance, it is wrong to murder or enslave people (because they bear God’s image), thus humans have a right to life and freedom from enslavement. Governments are instituted to ensure justice (1 Kings 10:9; Ps. 72:1-7; Prov. 29:4). Students should be alert to the ways in which the government in America has ensured justice over the centuries.

Fall (Evaluate)

The Fall has twisted justice in a number of ways. Americans commonly have emphasized rights, but they have untethered them from the creational order. A tendency has also existed to emphasize rights but to neglect the duties that must accompany them.

In pluralistic societies the attempt has been made to find neutral ways to determine what is just—methods that do not require moral judgments.¹ However, none of these approaches can avoid moral judgments. To pretend to implement neutral approaches to justice, while actually smuggling in worldviews, only increases social tension.²

Students should be able to identify differing views of justice in American history and evaluate them in light of the biblical definition. Students should also identify instances of injustice in American history and evaluate those situations from a biblical worldview.

Redemption (Formulate, Apply)

The Christian stands within his given historical situation, observes how society has been bent in a fallen direction away from creational norms, and presses for reforms that will move society in a direction back toward creational norms. Christians should recognize that before the return of Christ pressing society in a redemptive direction, while important, is only partial.

Students should identify historical Christian responses to injustices in American history. They should also propose alternative courses of action in other situations where injustices occurred. Students should also apply the lessons they learn to contemporary injustices and propose biblical responses to them.

Examples

- Identify aspects of the American constitutional order that ensure justice.
- Critique antebellum slavery from Scripture.
- Formulate Christian positions on important moral issues in American society, such as abortion laws, transgender transgender and other sexual expressions, racial justice, religious liberty, etc.

American Core Values

The American core values *freedom, individualism, equality, and growth* are our attempt to capture the collection of values that together are prominent in American culture. Students should understand why Americans value freedom, individualism, equality, and growth and how these values have shaped and continue to shape the United States. Students should also be able to analyze how different factions in the United States understood these values, how different understandings led to conflict, and how the values themselves stand in some tension with each other. Students should also be able to evaluate these different understandings of American core values from a biblical worldview, and they should be able to formulate ways in which these American values should be embraced or modified in their own lives. We especially want students to understand how unbiblical views of freedom, individualism, equality and growth may have already unconsciously influenced their thinking and to use a study of US history as a means for self-examination and worldview formation.

1 “One says justice means maximizing utility or welfare—the greatest happiness for the greatest number. The second says justice means respecting freedom of choice—either the actual choices people make in a free market (the libertarian view) or the hypothetical choices people would make in an original position of equality (the liberal egalitarian view).” Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 260-61, cf. 19-20. But these allegedly neutral ways of determining justice must still decide what human welfare is, why human freedom is the ultimate good, or what constitutes fairness—all worldview questions.

2 “Many of the most hotly contested issues of justice and rights can’t be debated without taking up controversial moral and religious questions. In deciding how to define the rights and duties of citizens, it’s not always possible to set aside competing conceptions of the good life. And even when it’s possible, it may not be desirable. Asking democratic citizens to leave their moral and religious convictions behind when they enter the public realm may seem a way of ensuring toleration and mutual respect. In practice, however, the opposite can be true. Deciding important public questions while pretending to a neutrality that cannot be achieved is a recipe for backlash and resentment. A politics emptied of substantive moral engagement makes for an impoverished civic life.” Sandel, 241-43.

Freedom

Creation (Recall, Explain)

Biblical freedom is the ability to obey God and to fulfill all the purposes that He has for a person to fulfill (Ps. 119:45).³ In a biblical worldview liberty is not an end but a means to an end. The ultimate end of freedom is to “know, obey and enjoy” God, the Creator and to “enjoy all the happiness with and in his fellow creatures” that a person is able to enjoy.⁴ Student should be able to identify figures in American history who held to a biblical vision of freedom.

Fall (Evaluate)

A common unbiblical idea of freedom is that freedom is the ability to do whatever a person wants to do. Freedom is therefore defined in terms of the absence of authority or freedom from constraints.⁵ Students should be able to identify instances of this view of freedom in American history and critique it from a biblical worldview.

Because liberty is not the absence of all authority or constraints, students should learn to evaluate appeals to freedom with the question, “freedom to do what?” Student analysis of this question leads them to identify both positive and negative appeals to freedom within American history.

Redemption (Formulate, Apply)

In the face of fallen conceptions of freedom, students should formulate how a biblical view of freedom would reshape arguments and positions significant to US history. For instance, students should be able to create arguments that seek to counter the arguments of those who argued for the freedom to own slaves or the right to choose an abortion, and these biblical arguments should aim to reorient how freedom is conceived from an unbiblical to a biblical viewpoint. Students should also reflect on their own conception of freedom, assess whether they hold a biblical understanding of freedom, and apply their new understanding to their assessment of American history and current public policy.

Examples

- Distinguish Puritan views of freedom from those based on Locke and Tocqueville.⁶
- Distinguish between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans on freedom.⁷
- Assess how differences regarding freedom played into the debates over popular sovereignty and slavery.⁸
- Evaluate the impact of the Cold War on American conceptions of freedom.

3 Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton* (London: James Nisbet, 1874), 18:110.

4 Isaac Backus, *An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty against the Oppressions of the Present Day* (Boston: John Boyle, 1773), 4.

5 See John Winthrop as cited in Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New-England, from its first planting, in the year 1620, unto the year of our Lord 1698* (Hartford: Silas Andrus & Son, 1853), 1:127.

6 See David D. Hall, *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (New York: Knopf, 2011), xii; Hugh Hecllo, *Christianity and American Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2007), 14.

7 See Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815*, Oxford History of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 310.

8 “Most of all, Lincoln condemned popular sovereignty because it tried to dodge the moral issue of slavery. . . . Liberty was not an end in itself, as popular sovereignty seemed to claim; it was a means, and it was intended to serve the interests of the natural rights that Jefferson had identified in the Declaration of Independence—life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. Otherwise liberty would itself be transformed into power, the power of a mob to do whatever it took a fancy to.” Allen Guelzo, *Fateful Lightning: A New History of the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), Kindle loc 1853.

- Formulate responses to American views of morality and freedom which developed in the 1920s and 1960s.”

Individualism

Creation (Recall, Explain)

God created humans as simultaneously individuals and members of communities. Every human has individual responsibility for his thoughts, ambitions, and actions (Eze. 18:4; Rom. 10:12-13). He or she will stand before God’s judgment to give account for what he or she has done—not for what others have done. God also designed for every human to be born into a community: a family and a nation. Students should understand that wise policies require citizens to take responsibility for their actions while also taking into account the realities of families, churches, and other groups. Students should be able to identify areas in which a biblical view of individualism or a biblical view of community influenced periods of key events in American history.

Fall (Evaluate)

A common unbiblical individualist idea is “the illusion that moral obligations are somehow weaker if they’re not chosen.”⁹ This view rejects the importance of enduring family obligations, weakens marriage obligations, and discounts government authority if it is not rooted in direct democracy.

Another of one of the dominant presuppositions of American culture today is “expressive individualism,” the idea that each individual’s self-realization (salvation) is accomplished by the creation and expression of a personal identity. The great evil (fall) in this worldview is “surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority.”¹⁰ Students should be able to evaluate expressive individualism from a biblical worldview, and they should be able to trace its antecedents in American history. They should be able to explain why such a view is plausible in American culture. Because fallen worldviews exist in a rationalist/irrationalist tension, expressive individualism leads to an expansive government and thus to a more collectivist view of government.¹¹ Students should evaluate the collectivist strain that has arisen at various points in American history.

9 Greg Forster, *Joy for the World: How Christianity Lost Its Cultural Influence and Can Begin Rebuilding It* (Crossway, 2014), 74. Forster explains the danger of this view: “the whole point about obligations is that you have to do things that aren’t intrinsically attractive to you. You have to discipline yourself for actions that cut against your desires.” *Ibid.*, 75.

10 Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age* as cited by Carl Trueman: “[P]sychological categories and an inward focus are the hallmarks of being a modern person. This is what Taylor refers to as expressive individualism, that each of us finds our meaning by giving expression to our own feelings and desires. For Taylor, this kind of self exists in what he describes as a culture of authenticity, which he defines as follows:

The understanding of life which emerges with the Romantic expressivism of the late eighteenth century, that each of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one’s own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority.

This shift to psychological man and to expressive individualism is far reaching in its implications, as I argue in future chapters.” Carl R. Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 46.

11 “While the liberal state is supposed to refrain from judging the goodness of people’s choices and while it claims benign neutrality toward the various options lying before its citizens, it cannot overlook the unequal consequences that follow from exercising these choices.... When these undesirable consequences do occur, rather than acknowledge that the quest to validate all lifestyle choices equally is a utopian one doomed to failure, fifth-stage liberals increasingly call on government to counteract such consequences so they can continue to engage in this fruitless quest. This inevitably leads to an expansion in the scope of government that is difficult to contain within any boundaries whatever.” David Koyzis, *Political Visions & Illusions: A Survey and Christian Critique of Contemporary Ideologies*, Second Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019), 50, 52.

Redemption (Formulate, Apply)

In the face of fallen ideas about individualism, students should recognize the importance of communities and institutions to form and develop character. They should look for ways to strengthen institutions such as family, church, Congress, political parties, etc. They should examine themselves to see whether they are more focused on self-expression than being formed into a good citizen, a good family member, or a Christlike Christian. Students should also appreciate a biblical kind of individualism that resists cultural pressure to abandon biblical truth and to place loyalty to Christ even above family attachments. Students should examine their lives for areas in which they are more conformed to an ungodly culture than distinct from it.

Examples

- Identify how individual responsibility and innovation enabled economic growth.
- Compare the stereotype of the rugged American individual with the importance of industry and voluntary associations in early America.
- Assess how institutions like Congress have moved away from being formative institutions into platforms for personal expression.
- Develop a plan for maintaining personal integrity and adherence to a biblical worldview in the face of cultural pressure.

Equality

Creation (Recall, Explain)

God created a world in which both equality and orders of authority are part of the creational order. God created man, male and female, in His own image (Genesis 1:27). All humans equally bear the image of God, and God also created humans within an authority-submission structure. Humans were created with authority over the rest of creation. But even more significantly, humans “were created to submit. . . . In order for a human being to exercise perfect authority, he must perfectly submit to God.”¹² God is not the only authority that humans are to submit to. He has authorized some humans to exercise authority over others. Husbands exercise authority in the marriage relationship (Eph. 5:22–24), fathers and mothers exercise authority over their children, (Eph. 6:1; Prov. 1:8), government exercises authority over citizens (1 Peter 2:13–17; Rom 13:1–7). Authorities that conform to the creational order (which is reflected in God’s law) exercise their authority to enable others to flourish. Students should be able to identify figures and periods in American history in which biblical views of equality and authority led to the flourishing of the nation.

Fall (Evaluate)

Sin has twisted the structures of authority and equality in the creational order in a number of ways.¹³ In the face of these realities, it makes sense to emphasize equality.¹⁴ The pursuit of absolute equality as the solution to very

12 Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 146.

13 For Christians, “even those three hallmark American principles of rights, equality, and freedom become Trojan horses.” These values need definition: “Shall we affirm the *right* to an abortion, marriage *equality*, and the *freedom* to define one’s own gender?” Jonathan Leeman, *How the Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age* (Nashville: Nelson, 2018), 35.

14 C. S. Lewis likened equality to a medicine that is needed to address an illness. He warned, however, against making it an ideal. “When equality is treated not as a medicine or a safety-gadget but as an ideal we begin to breed that stunted and envious sort of mind which hates all superiority. That mind is the special disease of democracy, as cruelty and servility are the special diseases of privileged societies.” C. S. Lewis, “Equality,” *Present Concerns*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, 1986), 17.

real abuses of authority, results in its own injustices.¹⁵ Fallen people also tend to be skeptical about authority and its appropriate role in their lives. This leads people to seek to deconstruct the systems of authority that God has built into the creational order. Adherents to a fallen view of equality seek to level differences and attempt to set the different parts of society against each other in an effort to obtain an elusive equality. Students should critique the various forms of fallen equality as they appear in American history: anti-elitist rhetoric, democracy without limits as the solution to democracy's ills, feminist and identity politics' efforts to reshape foundational institutions, arguments for same-sex marriage, and the attraction of some to socialism.

Redemption (Formulate, Apply)

In response to unbiblical ideas about equality, students should formulate a Christian alternative which recognizes a world in which diversity and authority exist alongside equality of humans as humans. Instead of slavery, segregation, abortion, and euthanasia, students should argue for the equal value of all human life. In response to arguments for so-called "marriage equality," students should observe that gender differences are God-ordained and are thus relevant for who can marry. Instead of identity politics, which attacks privileged categories of people, students should make the case for working together for the common good.

Examples

- Explain the distinction between equal liberties and unequal abilities common at the founding.
- Critique unbiblical inequalities in American history (e.g., slavery, segregation).
- Critique unbiblical equalities in American history (e.g., feminism, LGBTQ+).
- Formulate a response to the concerns about income inequality that reflect a biblical worldview.

Growth

Creation (Recall, Explain)

God created a world that would develop and grow as mankind was to spread from the garden to fill the entire world (Gen. 1:28). The Creation Mandate, as a cultural mandate, also presupposed the growth of culture as well as the numeric growth and territorial expansion of the human race. Students should be able to explain how the spread and growth of civilization in America (beginning with American Indians and continuing to the present) is an outworking of the Creation Mandate.

Fall (Evaluate)

Growth is often twisted by the Fall. The spread of the United States across the continent involved many injustices against Native Americans. It also involved unjust wars such as the Mexican- American War. Economic growth has at times come at the expense of workers through unjust wages. Most notably, slavery characterized a significant part of the US economy in the antebellum period.

Because of these injustices growth can be seen as an evil in itself. By rejecting the creational goodness of growth, fallen ideologies have developed. Some, in the name of protecting oppressed workers, have promoted socialism, which is hostile to the creational good of private property. Socialism also tends to be counter-productive, limiting the very economic growth that lifts people out of poverty. Some environmentalists, contrary to the Creation Mandate, have sought to limit population growth.

¹⁵ "Social peace, prosperity, and stability are more important for everyone [than equality], and are often not well served by the pursuit of equality—especially because true social equality is ultimately an unachievable goal." Yuval Levin, *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Right and Left*, (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 83.

Redemption (Formulate, Apply)

Students should formulate a biblical view of growth that accords with the Creation Mandate while avoiding historic injustices. They should be able to formulate alternative paths at key points in American history and potential policy positions for just growth. Students should formulate ideas for how good creational economic and even territorial growth could take place without injustices against other nations, workers, or slaves. They should formulate biblical alternatives to socialism and corrupt capitalism.

Examples

- Identify the benefits of the green revolution.
- Evaluate Manifest Destiny and related military conflicts.
- Critique the effort to limit population growth in the 1970s.

Religion

Creation (Recall, Explain)

True religion is a response of worship to God in submission to His revelation. Since “culture is worldview exteriorized,” there is no aspect of life that is not religious.¹⁶ This means that every government will exercise its rule from one religious perspective or another. Indeed, governments too are accountable to God first of all for the way they rule, for they rule as His servants.¹⁷ For much of its history American culture and government have been influenced by true religion, and this has been for the benefit of the American people. Students should learn to recognize this influence.

Fall (Evaluate)

Historically, Americans have been religious and very patriotic, making civil religion a strong temptation. Civil religion is “the appropriation of religion by politics for its own purposes.”¹⁸ American civil religion is “selectively derived from Christianity,” but it is not Christianity because it often excludes Christ.¹⁹ While American civil religion is influenced by Christianity, it in turn has influenced American Christianity. Bellah notes that civil religion has overshadowed church life in America, causing a greater emphasis on activism than on doctrine.

The United States has moved steadily in a secularist direction since the late 19th century. Secularism is not atheism. Secularism is the belief that religion should remain in the private sphere and that public life (government, business, education, etc.) should be conducted on neutral, non-religious grounds.²⁰

16 Daniel Strange, *Their Rock Is Not Like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 68-69.

17 Jonathan Leeman, *Political Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 207.

18 Ronald Beiner, *Civil Religion: A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1. Note also Tocqueville on civil religion: “From a purely human point of view, religion is useful for societal well-being, and ‘the great usefulness of religion is even more apparent among egalitarian peoples than elsewhere’ (444). This utility of religion is recognized even by the unbeliever, according to Tocqueville: ‘The unbeliever, no longer thinking religion true, still considers it useful. Paying attention to the human side of religious beliefs, he recognizes their sway over mores and their influence over laws.’” John Bolt, *A Free Church, A Holy Nation: Abraham Kuypers’ American Public Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 34–35.

19 Robert Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” in *Dadalus* 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967), 7. “Ever the wordsmith, Jefferson, in his first inaugural address, gave an apt description of the civil religion he helped to create. He said that Americans were ‘enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter.’” Gregg L. Frazer, *The Religious Beliefs of America’s Founders: Reason, Revelation, and Revolution* (University Press of Kansas, 2012), 227.

20 Hunter Baker, *The End of Secularism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 19.

Both secularism and civil religion are made plausible by religious pluralism. As Americans hold to different religious beliefs an allegedly neutral public square is seen as necessary to preserve peace and to maintain equity. However, secularism is not neutral. It rules opposing viewpoints out of court by definition.²¹ Secularism's intolerance breeds resentment because of its intolerance of viewpoint diversity.²² Students should be able to evaluate important American religious movements as well as civil religion, religious pluralism, and secularism.

Redemption (Formulate, Apply)

Students should formulate how the Christian religion should function within American society and government. Students should develop arguments against secularism that open the way for Christian participation in the public square *as Christians* promoting distinctively Christian ideas that are proposed for the benefit of all citizens. Students should wrestle with the need to avoid civil religion while still maintaining a place for true religion in government. Students should also reckon with the difficulties that religious pluralism creates for Christian influence in government. They should formulate an approach to religion that enables Christians to influence government and culture while also protecting their freedom to practice the Christian religion in all spheres of life. Students should also reckon with the social influence of various false religions throughout American history, account for their influence on American culture and evangelical Christianity, and formulate appropriate responses to that influence.

Examples

- Identify the positive influences of true religion on American culture and government.
- Critique the use of civil religion in motivating Americans to fight in World War I.
- Formulate an approach for navigating religious pluralism in the 21st century.

Gratitude

Creation (Recall, Explain)

Thankfulness in every circumstance is one of the key marks of a Christian (1 Thess. 5:17-18). It is a recognition of God's providence and his continually blessing the evil and the good far beyond their desert. Students should develop a spirit of gratitude for the blessings God has providentially brought about in America. Americans have long enjoyed rule by law, durable institutions, the recognition of a God-ordained creational order resulting in certain inalienable rights, the sanctifying effects of the gospel and true religion, and much more. Students should identify the areas in which the United States has conformed to creational norms in its history and should explain the blessings that this conformity to God's law has brought to Americans.

Fall (Evaluate)

The Fall has twisted gratitude. For nations, twisted gratitude can express itself in jingoism or nationalism. The ideology of nationalism is not simply gratitude for a nation's values, customs, and shared memories. It idolizes them, often at the expense of other nations and ethnic groups. By adopting the attitude of "my country, right or wrong" people end up being grateful for the sins of the nation as well as its virtues. Students should evaluate instances in which American responses during war, in response to increased immigration, and at other periods have manifested a fallen form of gratitude.

21 Baker, 107. "Imagine an airport security metal detector that doesn't screen for metal but for religion standing at the entrance of the public square. The machine beeps anytime someone walks through it with a supernatural big-G God hiding inside one of their convictions, but it fails to pick up self-manufactured or socially constructed little-g gods. Into this public square the secularist, the materialist, the Darwinist, the consumerist, the elitist, the chauvinist, and, frankly, the fascist can all enter carrying their little gods with them like little whittled wooden figures in their pockets. Not so for the Christians or Jews or Muslims. Should they enter and make a claim on behalf of their big-G God, the siren will sound like a firetruck. What this means is that the public square is inevitably slanted toward the secularist and materialist. Public conversation is ideologically rigged." Leeman, *How the Nations Rage*, 35.

22 Baker, 112; Sandel, 241-43.

The condemnation “neither were thankful” characterizes those who should be able to see God’s eternal power and divine nature all around them, but are blinded by their own sinful, foolish thinking (Rom. 1:21). Sometimes people refuse to be thankful because they think that gratitude breaks the resolve to fight for justice in a fallen world. In reality, a refusal to be grateful perpetuates injustice. Those who are not grateful for what is good tend to sweep away the good with the bad. Students should evaluate radical political and social groups that have developed at certain points in American history in light of the importance of gratitude.

Redemption (Formulate, Apply)

Biblically-oriented gratitude should result in an appropriate love for and devotion to the United States upon the part of its citizens. While not unaware of its sins and shortcomings, gratitude for what is good should prompt public and community service. Students should formulate an approach to politics that arises out of gratitude. They should be alert to how the practice of this virtue can have a positive impact on civic life, political discourse, and even public policy. They should present this as an alternative to unbiblical approaches to justice which seek to raze the foundations of society and begin anew.²³

The virtue of gratitude is another reason why students should learn to prefer reform to revolution. Students should relate this to a certain form of conservatism.

23 “To my mind, conservatism is gratitude. Conservatives tend to begin from gratitude for what is good and what works in our society and then strive to build on it, while liberals tend to begin from outrage at what is bad and broken and seek to uproot it.” Yuval Levin, “[Bradley Prize Remarks](#),” June 12, 2013. There is a need to uproot what is bad and broken (as Levin acknowledges), but this destructive work needs to progress as part of larger project of conserving and extending what is good. One reason for this is the recognition that due to human fallenness, “we don’t imagine we could do better starting from scratch.” Ibid.