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William Apess, Pequot Pastor: A Native American Revisioning of Christian Nationalism in the Early Republic

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Academic Editor: Mark T. Edwards

Received: 29 September 2016; Accepted: 11 January 2017; Published: 27 January 2017

Abstract: Pequot Native and Methodist Minister William Apess has received growing recognition among historians as a unique voice for Native Americans—and minorities in general—during the early Republic. This essay began by inquiring into Apess’s relationship with the Christian nationalism of his day. Extensive readings of Apess’s works, scholarship on all aspects of Apess’s life, and analyses of Christian nationalism during the early Republic initially revealed severe conflict. Apess is fiery in his critique of Anglo American society and religion; he questions the integrity of Christians who treat Native Americans with a double standard. Analyzing Apess’s critiques and his proposed solutions in depth, however, shows that his main problem rests with faulty implementation of genuinely good ideals. Apess’s solutions actually rest on revising and enforcing, not destroying, the main components of Christian nationalism. This essay concludes that Apess should be read as advancing his own revised form of Christian nationalism; his plan for the future of America and national unity embraced establishing a more perfect Christian union.

Keywords: Christian Nationalism; William Apess; Pilgrims; Puritans; Divine Providence; common law; Methodism; Jacksonian era

In the opening chapters of his monumental work *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville observed how “the social condition of the Americans is eminently democratic; this was its character at the foundation of the colonies, and it is still more strongly marked at the present day” ([1], p. 47). Tocqueville identified the settlement of New England by the Pilgrims and Puritans in the 1620s as demarcating the beginning of a social trend toward democracy. By highlighting this democratic national heritage established in Protestant faith, Tocqueville illuminated one aspect of a greater early Republic campaign to reimagine colonial and revolutionary American history. As a cultural and political project emanating from the second Great Awakening, as well as the fears of political division, numbers of lettered men and women were “reinventing” the United States as a Christian nation [2]¹. Outspoken Christian nationalists like Justice Joseph Story joined Tocqueville in solidifying the Pilgrims and the Puritans as the foundation of religious and political liberty present in antebellum America ([2], pp. 187, 194; [3], pp. 220–21).

As historian Steven Green has recently explained, the establishment in the early Republic of the Pilgrims as American’s religious forbearers forms the first of what may be termed the four key pillars of Christian nationalism. The second pillar was constructed by the Christian nationalist movement through the composition of countless hagiographies of the supposedly great Christian leaders of the newly-founded nation, the Founding Fathers. Working their same interpretive magic on

¹ For American nationality as an unanswered question being debated instead of a solid entity being reinforced, see Haselby, *The Origins of American Religious Nationalism* [2].

America's heritage of religious and political liberty, second-generation Americans identified the third pillar, American common law tradition, as having emerged from Christian principles. The success of these three pillars was credited to and codified in the fourth pillar: Divine Providence guiding the nation ([3], p. 201)². Taken together, these four pillars form the backbone of Christian nationalism in the early Republic. Mark Noll, John Fea, George Marsden, George McKenna, and Nathan Hatch are a few historians who have revealed the building process behind America as a Christian nation. As Fea makes clear in his work, America was not founded as a Christian nation; the attempted construction of such a nation was advanced during the early Republic by evangelicals ([4], pp. 4–5).³ Tocqueville's commentary on America demonstrates how this new history was gaining traction. He, a foreigner, was convinced of the veracity of this new national narrative. Nevertheless, there were some native born Americans who recognized the mythical portions of the new national history.

One such critic was the Methodist Reverend and Pequot native William Apess. In his most famous speech, "Eulogy on King Philip," presented on 8 January 1836, Apess added a darker side to the Christian nationalist narrative, specifically to the Pilgrims' noble settling of America.

[In] December . . . 1620, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, and without asking liberty from anyone they possessed themselves of a portion of the country, and built themselves houses, and then made a treaty, and commanded [the Natives] to accede to it. This, if now done, it would be called an insult, and every white man would be called to go out and act the part of a patriot, to defend their country's rights; and if every intruder were butchered, it would be sung upon every hilltop in the Union that victory and patriotism was the order of the day ([5], p. 280).

Apess here is concerned with highlighting the hypocrisy practiced by the Pilgrims. They would fight to destroy any perceived threat to their land or livelihood, but they did not grant this same right to their neighbors, the Native Americans. Moreover, by relating the historical incident to the potential reaction of his audience should such an event occur to them, Apess demonstrated that New Englanders would respond in the same manner as his Native American ancestors did. Clearly, Apess was highly skeptical of the narrative of a Puritan heritage of liberty.

This vocal criticism typifies the fiery Pequot preacher. Apess scholars have documented his wide-ranging assault upon the racist hierarchies and histories of his Christian contemporaries, like Justice Story.⁴ To many of his contemporaries and to present-day scholars, Apess was the antithesis of Christian nationalists. They established the past as sacred; he labeled it a degrading myth. They used their authority to conduct missions, build churches, and educate; he deemed their authority morally bankrupt and exposed the failures behind their endeavors. While as a minister Apess championed spiritual revival through the Methodist church, he does not appear remotely fond of the nation-building portion of Christian nationalism. For these attacks, Apess has rightly been understood as an opponent of the Christian nationalist project.

Because of the jeremiad of Apess's preaching and lecturing it becomes tempting to read Apess as a strident voice for some sort of innovative Indian Nationalism. Apess, however, criticized the old project in order to offer up a revised one. Apess did fight to restore Native Americans to their place, both geographically and politically. In "Eulogy," Apess constructively reworked the contemporary historical understanding by proposing his own nation-building heritage. In *Indian Nullification*, he documented the fight of the Mashpee for their rights by appealing to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the broad common law tradition of the country. However, in both his written

² While Steven Green provides the framework for this essay, John Fea, Mark Noll, Nathan Hatch, and George Marsden also contribute heavily.

³ Christine Heyrman's work *Southern Cross* provides an excellent example of scholarship attempting to understand how evangelicals fought to build a certain nation and how those efforts changed the very format of evangelicalism itself.

⁴ For some striking examples see the following: [6–9].

works and his political deeds, Apess advanced his nationalistic vision for America rooted still in Christianity. This essay contends that despite—or rather, because of—his vicious attacks on Christian nationalism, Apess should be understood as offering not a competing history of and for the United States but as reforming the Christian nationalist one.

Despite never explicitly using the term “Christian nationalism,” Apess throughout his works incorporated each and every one of the four major pillars. Like his contemporaries, Apess was deeply worried about the current state of America and used a new history and his preaching as a salve to soothe the wounds of the country. Investigating Apess’s relationship to Christian nationalism reveals numerous fundamental differences of interpretation, but it also illuminates a shared goal and similar means to accomplish said goal. Here, Linford Fisher’s understand of the strategic affiliation of Natives with white Christian America cogently applies ([10], pp. 86, 88–89, 101, 106). While William Apess was blisteringly critical of white America and her sins, he nonetheless supported the emergent understanding of Christianity’s role in America. By embracing a Christian vision for America and rooting that vision in a new history, Apess showed himself to be a sincere Christian nationalist concerned with advancing America as a Christian nation.

1. Understanding Christian Nationalism in the Early Republic

Before explicating Apess’s stance on America as a Christian nation it is necessary to survey the landscape of Christian nationalism as established in the antebellum period. On a general level, the propagated idea of America as a Christian nation simply means that the majority population, Protestant evangelicals, defined America as such ([4], pp. 4–5). With their emphasis on personal conversion, “evangelicals specialized in . . . providing rhetoric about the United States as a Christian nation where piety was free to grow” ([11], p. 77). On a deeper level, early American Christian nationalists were convinced that God had been and was still working in unique ways throughout America; only Divine Providence could adequately explain the awesome success of the Founding Fathers ([4], p. 5; [12], p. 108). Christian nationalism in the 1830s was at its most basic an outgrowth of the domination of popular culture by Protestant denominations, their influence in the present, and their ability to define the past ([11], p. 101).⁵

Why was there a press for national unity during the antebellum era? Why did this nationalizing project become essentially Christian? Barely fifty years old in the 1830s, the American nation was on shaky ground. Three main concerns haunted American politicians (and ministers): fear of national division; the shifting, unstable American demographic; and the breakup of the religious establishment ([12], pp. 110–11). Examining these concerns will contextualize Apess’s work, reveal more clearly the nature and form of 1830s nationalism, and clarify the shifting makeup of Christianity in the early Republic.

The fear of national divide was fundamentally manifested as “mistrust of the other party.” Admiration for the storied success of General Washington was matched in America by worry surrounding the current political climate. While the nation had survived the election of 1800, it emerged bitterly divided between Jefferson’s Democratic-Republicans and Adams’ Federalists. This conflict transformed politics as parties fought each other for support of various demographics, popularizing mass politics ([11], pp. 48, 76–77). After the collapse of the Federalists, the Whig party attempted in the 1830s and 1840s to secure the integrity of the nation “by lyrical invocation of America’s origins” which were in turn mixed with their agenda to provide a hopeful vision for the future ([16], p. 110). The Whig agenda appealed to the common roots of Puritan heritage, championed connection through markets, and advocated for increased infrastructure development to bind the nation

⁵ For a broad survey of Protestantism consider ([13], esp. Ch. 2: “A Complete Christian Commonwealth”); ([14], esp. Part IV, *Americanization*); ([15], esp. in conversation with Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*).

together ([4], p. 7; [16], pp. 114–15).⁶ What made this Whiggish nationalism Christian was not only an appeal to the romantic religion of the Puritans but also a vision of American culture as fundamentally Protestant ([4], pp. 7–8; [16], p. 108).⁷ This Whiggish Christian nationalism project was set in opposition to the Democratic version of a nation separated from the past by revolutionary ideas and destined (not divinely provisioned) for greatness through “democracy, equality, and individualism” ([16], pp. 106–9).

Adding to this political split, a shifting demographic, both ethnically and regionally, contributed to growing political instability as new states quickly gained power. Harkening back to Washington and the Revolution as a glorious event that established America should therefore be seen as a response to the climate of political hostility and regional fracturing that threatened unity ([12], p. 111).

A final negative component underpinning the nation-building process was the denominationalizing of American Christianity. Evangelical Protestantism split in this period between more traditional Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches and the “upstart sects” of Baptist and Methodist movements intent on saving all of America ([16], pp. 79, 100; [17]). The rising diversity of American Christianity was stimulated by “the competing claims of old denominations, a host of new ones, and of supremely heterodox religious groups; people veering from one church to another; and the unbridled wrangling of competitors in what Joseph Smith called a ‘war of words’” ([12], p. 112). While most states did have a declared Christian affiliation, the nation at large possessed no unifying idea of how religion should function in the United States in the early Republic ([4], p. 146). Protestant evangelicals were bitterly divided over the role of religion in America, with Christian nationalism forming only one movement [2].⁸

Despite the divisiveness of sectarian squabbles, the evangelical movement involved members of all denominations ([16], pp. 3, 81).⁹ This unifying tide “helped to make irrelevant the theological differences” between Protestant sects. McKenna identifies significant people (Francis Asbury, Charles Finney, and Lyman Beecher) rather than specific denominations as driving forces behind theological, social, and political advancement ([16], pp. 81–83). The 1830s, then, becomes a tricky time for “American Christianity” as religious pluralism protected by the First Amendment diversified it while the evangelical movement of the Second Great Awakening unified it. For the purposes of this essay, “Christian nationalism” is Christian because of the belief that evangelizing the nation and establishing a country of church-going people (who are free to disagree about theological specifics but united under Protestantism) will provide needed stability and identity to America. Thus defined, Christian nationalism emerged in the first 40 years of the 19th century as Americans attempted to accurately understand the incredible events surrounding the birth of their nation, most notably the underdog victory of America over Britain in the Revolutionary War. The positive construction aspect of a specifically Christian vision for national identity was jumpstarted by the death of George Washington in 1799. Almost immediately, the beautification of General Washington began. He was compared to Moses, Joshua, and King David for his role in delivering America from Britain’s grasp. His dedication to God, virtue, and his fellow man was lauded for years ([3], pp. 201, 205). While Washington’s contemporaries—Thomas Jefferson in particular—wondered about the faith of this “quiet” man, second-generation Americans spared no mental expense in venerating their fallen hero as God’s primary instrument. For many living in the 1830s, George Washington represented not only an exemplary American but also embodied the essence of the nation. Consequently, any religious motivation Washington experienced would have profoundly affected the birth of the nation ([4], pp. 171–75).

⁶ The idea was that farmers taking goods to market along new roads would begin to conceive of the world as more than their community, as a nation.

⁷ Fea and McKenna describes this Whiggish idea of Protestant culture as one “where slavery did not exist, alcohol use was under control, and Sunday was kept as a day of Sabbath rest” and where Divine Providence summons America to greatness.

⁸ Haselby’s entire book is dedicated to exploring the contest of ideologies and denominations in the early Republic.

⁹ McKenna does believe Methodists deserve a place of honor in the movement, however.

Washington's role as God's instrument dovetailed nicely with the growing idea of America as God's tool to advance His Kingdom. God's implementation of America in His grand plan was reinforced by postmillennialism, forged by the Second Great Awakening. According to this understanding, a tactile "Kingdom of God on earth" would arise in America. This "Kingdom" would be a "golden age" of love, prosperity, and virtue ([16], p. 94). Before the Revolutionary War, America had been compared to Israel as a nation wandering listlessly in the desert. In the early 1800s, America was still being compared to Israel but now in reference to themselves as the chosen nation of God. The hope in God's utilization of America led to a renewed effort to instill morality and virtue in the American population at large. The most common method for accomplishing this moral regeneration was found in reform organizations and laws which would help God accomplish His will in the fledgling country ([3], pp. 211–19; [11], p. 77).

The reformers did not have to look far to find the material needed to bolster the morality of God's chosen people; they simply rededicated America's common law as primarily beholden to and mutually reinforcing Christian principles. Justice Joseph Story, for instance, contended that "the obligatory force of the law of nature upon man is derived from its presumed coincidence with the will of the Creator." Story's work in tying America's legal virtues to Christian influence in no small way shaped the understanding of America as a *fundamentally* Christian nation, especially in the legal and political sector ([3], pp. 220–21). Story and his contemporaries did not end their historical examination of the roots of America's legal system at the virtues of the Revolution, however. They reached further back to establish one of the greatest trademarks of American Christian nationalism: the righteous settlement of America by the blessed Pilgrims and Puritans ([3], p. 227).

Primarily originating in New England, the early nineteenth century movement to codify the Pilgrims and Puritans as the bedrock for future American societies enjoyed great success. Daniel Webster was a key ophthalmologist behind opening America's previously blind eyes to envision their influential Pilgrim ancestry. From 1820 onward, Webster sought to establish the Pilgrims as the forefathers of Americans. He traced the highly-held American values of self-governance, social compacts, republicanism, and religious liberty back to the Pilgrims. After delivering "The First Settlement of New England," Webster's idea of the Pilgrims as national progenitors was reiterated by John Quincy Adams and George Bancroft, among others, who further expanded the Pilgrim's national influence. Nathaniel Hawthorne took the rise of pro-Pilgrim sentiments and directed them to the Puritans as well, celebrating their hardiness and virtue. In this way, "the Puritan/Pilgrim saga became the cornerstone of the emerging national identity narrative" ([3], pp. 227–38).¹⁰

The Christian nationalism of the early Republic should be seen as originating from the base fears and motives of politicians who saw a fractured, not unified, state, religious leaders who worried about the shifting populace and denominations, and the intelligentsia who desperately desired a national heritage and myth on which to build a history of the United States. While Noll and his contemporaries have done justice to the various building blocks of the Christian nationalists, more recent works by Amanda Porterfield, Steven Green, and Sam Haselby have exposed the ruthlessness of the era. Porterfield illuminates the almost commercialization of doubt and worry by American churches in the early Republic. The political atmosphere was as much Christianized by denominational conflict and sectarian squabbles as it was by a noble Christian history. Green ruthlessly exposes the hidden aspirations and impulses behind the Christian nationalist movement. Haselby highlights the intense conflict between frontier revivalists and national evangelists, revealing how Christian nationalism was at times a tool for advancing particular denominational concerns over a general Protestant narrative. Operating within this sphere of New England evangelicalism, Apess's contribution to Christian

¹⁰ It is of course necessary to note that Hawthorne also offered substantial critiques of the Puritans. His was not a blind endorsement, but it was nevertheless an endorsement.

nationalism in the early Republic further underscores the varieties and conflicts within this already contested area.

However, despite the reality of conflict, the construction of this myth frequently takes a positive tone. Architects like Noah Webster and Daniel Webster are hopeful about what God has done and will continue to do in their nation. This optimistic bent is perhaps best represented by the recognition of America's Pilgrim heritage, which embodies the other three positive constructive forces discussed. As with Washington, Pilgrims and Puritans had hagiographies composed about them. Divine Providence features heavily in the narratives of the Pilgrims survival. Puritan moral codes were credited with ensuring a Christian common law and legal system. In this way, constructing the Puritan/Pilgrim myth encapsulates and represents the positive constructive force of Christian nationalism. This reality makes the brutal lambasting of the Puritans by Rev. William Apess even more astonishing.

2. Life and Letters of William Apess

Apess's attacks on this myth flowed from his childhood in New England and his experiences with the hypocrisy of Christian Anglo Americans. Born in Colrain, Massachusetts, in 1798, William Apess was of mixed descent: his paternal grandfather was white; his paternal grandmother was a Native descended from, Apess claimed, King Philip of the Pequot ([18], pp. 3–4).¹¹ After suffering abuse at the hands of his maternal Native grandmother, Apess was taken in by the white Furman family as an indentured servant where he received some education. After living with two other families (the Hillhouses and the Williams) as a servant, Apess ran away with his friend John, enlisting into the Army at the age of fifteen. One of the reasons for Apess leaving the families was his feeling of helplessness and enslavement. In his autobiography, Apess demonstrated the historical precedent for such action by claiming, "If my consent had been solicited as a matter of form, I should not have felt so bad. But to be sold to and treated unkindly by those who had got [sic] our fathers' lands for nothing was too much to bear" ([18], pp. 7, 15, 16, 25).¹² After serving during the War of 1812 and deserting—he was denied his pay and decided this breach of contract merited his desertion—Apess wandered around the Northeast region of America and into Canada, holding down odd jobs and struggling against alcoholism and other "degrading practices" ([18], pp. 30–33; [6], pp. 112–13).

After his post-war travels, Apess reunited with his family. He lived with his aunt for several months before travelling to see his father. While with his father Apess received two vocations. First, his father taught him how to make shoes. Second, and much more importantly, he received a call from God to "preach the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." It was during a Methodist camp meeting in December 1818 that Apess felt the Spirit call him to ministry. Throughout his life, Apess had struggled with finding his voice; now, the Spirit gave him the eloquence he needed to preach. He was baptized soon thereafter, although the struggles to obtain a license to preach followed him for a few years ([19], pp. 31–33).¹³ In addition to the fact that Methodism was one of the only denominations willing to license non-white men, Apess would have been drawn to the Methodist belief that grace and the power of the Spirit mattered more than learning and to their flexible, loosely regulated method of evangelizing in general ([17], pp. 22, 29, 71–73, 109–10).¹⁴ From here until the time of the publication of his autobiography *A Son of the Forest* in 1831, Apess continued

¹¹ In reality, Philip was sachem of the Pokanoket tribe in Rhode Island, not the Pequots as Philip Gura ([19], p. 45) and O'Connell ([20], fn. 2, p. 4).

¹² By "treated unkindly" Apess is referring to the numerous accusations and beatings he received as a child. He was whipped in an attempt to drive the devil out of him. He was called a "dog" by his masters. He was punished for joining Methodist revivals by his more conservative Christian masters.

¹³ Apess would have been one of ~1 million Americans who attended camp meetings annually in 1818 ([17], p. 97; [15], p. 257, n. 1).

¹⁴ Curiously, Wigger ([17], p. 192) contends that Methodism possessed very little appeal among Native Americans, citing one article as an example of the problems Methodism faced among Natives. Apess's story shows that Wigger glanced over this relationship too quickly.

to travel and preach throughout New England, with or without the approval of denominational leadership ([18], pp. 40, 42, 43, 46, 47–52).¹⁵

Although Apess ended his autobiography at a relatively stable point in his story, his life was about to take a turbulent turn. While ministering in Boston, Apess encountered a few Mashpee tribal representatives who had come to the capital to protest their government. This protest was part of six-year legal battle between the tribe and Massachusetts over issues of Native sovereignty. By 1833, the tribe had made little headway ([19], pp. 71–73). When Apess heard about this contest, he “resolved to visit the people of Marshpee” in order to investigate their condition for himself.¹⁶ After preaching one sermon in the official church, Apess found a vast majority of the Natives worshipping in another place and preached to them. After his message, Apess opened the floor for the Mashpee to share their grievances with him. Apess was incensed to learn that the governor and the state leadership had never allowed the Mashpee to officially file their complaints. After his speedy adoption by the Mashpee tribe, Apess helped them draft a series of resolutions which powerfully resolved “that we, as a tribe, will rule ourselves, and have the right to do so; for all men are born free and equal, says the Constitution of the country.” After issuing the resolutions and believing them to be granted, the Mashpee issued their own Declaration of Independence which stated that “said resolutions will be enforced after the first day of July, 1833” ([21], pp. 169, 171–73, 175, 179–80).¹⁷

In the hailstorm of newspaper articles, court proceedings, imprisonments, and appeals that followed, Apess’s bitter irony and scathing critiques of white Americans became more polished ([22], p. 121). In *Indian Nullification*, Apess’s work that documents the “revolt” of the Mashpee and the “nearly hysterical reaction” it provoked, Apess at one point quotes an article from the *Boston Advocate* which examines the regulatory laws governing the Mashpee Natives: “a Board of five Overseers [exists] . . . vested with full power to regulate the police of the plantation; to establish rules for managing the affairs, interests and concerns of the Indians and inhabitants” ([20], p. 164; [21], pp. 206–11). The law even allowed the Overseers to “bind out [Mashpee] children to suitable persons” if they deemed it necessary. After observing the immense amount of power held by outside men over the Mashpee, Apess questions the New Englanders, asking “generally how their fathers bore laws, much less oppressive, when imposed upon them by a foreign government” ([21], pp. 208–11). This clear reference to the Revolutionary War, and the overthrowing of oppression that occurred in it, is representative of one of Apess’s main tactics in *Indian Nullification* and his other works: ironic criticism. With this tactic, Apess sardonically highlights the double standards of white Americans, forcing them to confront their hypocrisy. In this instance, Apess boldly claims the ideals of the Declaration to justify the Mashpee revolt. By establishing Natives as equal to Anglo-Americans in this way, Apess confronts the Anglo-Americans with their “hypocritical observance of their proclaimed ideals” ([20], p. 164).

Eventually, as noted in the *Daily Advocate* and cited in *Indian Nullification*, the Massachusetts’ state government agreed to begin a process of “restoring the rights of self-government, in part, to the Mashpee Indians, of which our legislation has deprived them for one hundred and forty years...” ([21], pp. 241–42). The Mashpee success is one of the few positive results of legislation between Natives and government in the Jacksonian era. In large part, the Mashpee owe their success to the effective public relations campaign led by Apess who used his talents to convince Massachusetts’ citizens that if they truly detested the forced removal of the Cherokee by Jackson then they should also stand up for the Mashpee ([23], p. 3). Hence, in a petition sent to the Overseers of the tribe at Harvard

¹⁵ Apess’s autobiography follows the general outline of a typical conversion experience narrative popular in these times ([20], p. 1). Porterfield notes that “evangelicals made admission of [religious doubt] a step in conversion that could be revisited to rekindle belief whenever trust in God faltered” ([11], p. 13). The fact that Apess’s autobiography follows this pattern exactly serves to demonstrate his acceptance of standard Methodist religious practice.

¹⁶ Originally the tribe was known as Marshpee. Today, and in academic circles, they identify as the Mashpee tribe.

¹⁷ One of the sparks of controversy was that the Mashpee Indians had unknowingly been in contact with the lieutenant governor, not the actual governor. Thus the Mashpee had to endure court cases and hearings for months before their resolution was adopted.

and published in newspapers in the surrounding area, Apess and the Mashpee wonder if “perhaps you have heard of the oppression of the Cherokees and lamented over them much, and thought the Georgians were hard and cruel creatures; but did you ever hear of the poor, oppressed and degraded Marshpee Indians in Massachusetts, and lament over them? If not, you hear now” ([21], pp. 175–77).

After the success of the Mashpee Revolt, Apess fell out of favor with his adoptive tribe for unknown reasons.¹⁸ This was one of the contributing factors that led to his decision to relocate to Boston and continue his ministry there. In early 1836, Apess delivered his “Eulogy on King Philip” at the Odeon Theater in Boston ([19], pp. 101–7). It was met with some acclaim, but more public interest originated from those who were enticed by the idea of witnessing a performance by the eloquent Native responsible for all the recent Mashpee commotion ([24], p. 50).¹⁹ He repeated the address multiple times in several locations, culminating in his transcribing the speech as a short book. It would prove to be his final work. Apess spent the next two years until the end of 1837 traveling and speaking between New York and Boston. At the end of 1837, Apess disappears almost completely from the record, leading some to suggest he was debilitated, like many others, by the Panic of 1837. He died from “apoplexy” in 1839 at the age of 41 ([19], pp. 114–15, 132–33).

Despite his death in relative obscurity (a sprinkling of papers made mention of his passing), Apess in 1837 was “one of the country’s most important Native American intellectuals, having published more than any other indigenous writer before the twentieth century...” ([19], p. xiii). In his comparatively voluminous writings, Apess was ultimately trying to challenge the current Anglo-centric historical and cultural narrative with his own “cross-cultural written history” ([25], p. 165). The rest of this essay will contend that Apess’s unique history should be read as reforming and advancing a Christian nationalist position. An examination of his writings reveals that he addressed, explicitly or implicitly, every major plank of Christian nationalism, from George Washington to the splintering of denominational unity. Given Apess’s goal to “articulate the presence and being of Native Americans as an active part of American society,” this is to be expected from the era’s most prolific Native voice ([20], p. lxi).

3. William Apess: Revisionary Christian Nationalist

Apess is most well-known for his bold irony and shameless appropriation and rededication of traditionally white images of cultural superiority. His utilization of the eminent George Washington, and the other three pillars of Christian nationalism, is no exception. From 1799 to the 1820s, General Washington had become immortalized in the pantheon of democratic heroes to the point that Whig politicians believed his legacy and reputation as the foremost mason of the Christian foundation of America secure. In the 1830s, interest in Washington reached fever pitch with the coming of his centennial. By 1835 when Apess delivered his “Eulogy,” George Washington had become a ubiquitous reference point for any political speaker. Washington had also become a cultural icon. He represented the very best of the republican virtues responsible for founding the nation. He was also credited with driving Natives out of Northeast U.S. during his time in the British army and as President. Apess knew about Washington’s actions, as is clear from his introduction to “Eulogy” ([24], pp. 52, 54, 58). Nevertheless, Apess decided to use Washington as a foil for Philip, King of the Pequots (Pekanokets). Apess described his subject Philip as “a noted warrior, whose natural abilities shone like those of the great and mighty Philip of Greece, or of Alexander the Great, or like those of Washington—whose virtues and patriotism are engraven on the hearts of my audience.” A few lines later, Apess declared that Philip is held in the same esteem by Natives as Washington is by “every white in America” ([5], p. 277).

¹⁸ Multiple sources including local newspapers mention this falling out. No known source has a definitive reason for it.

¹⁹ The common belief at the time was that Natives could be eloquent but only in the way a child can be. The idea of a sophisticated, smart, engaging, and witty Native American would have seemed oxymoronic to many in Apess’s audience. O’Connell notes that Apess threatens whites simply by knowing how to read and write! ([20], p. xlii).

Apess's usage of Washington incorporated his status as Christian nationalist icon while subtly chipping away at the mythological portions of his biography. What better way to establish King Philip as a noteworthy personage in North America than by comparing him to the most significant North American? As he recognized Washington's renown, however, Apess's very presence on the stage in Boston testified to the mythological components of Washington's legacy: Washington failed to completely erase the Native American presence in the northeast, like it had been supposed ([24], pp. 41, 49). By comparing Philip to Washington—and by his own heritage—Apess reinserted Native Americans into the history of the founding of America, where they belong.

On a deeper level, Apess was engaging throughout "Eulogy" in "mimicry," ascribing to "the hierarchical ranks of cultural conflict" for the purpose of "reproducing that rhetoric's assumptions" in order to slyly undercut them ([26], pp. 15, 46). At first glance, Apess was simply acknowledging the beloved place that Washington held in the hearts of all Americans. However, as he continued to exalt Philip, Washington was shunned to the wayside. "As a man of natural abilities, I shall pronounce [Philip] the greatest man that was ever in America" ([5], p. 308). By treating Philip as nobler than the great General George Washington, Apess set Philip's war of independence against encroaching Pilgrims equal with the Revolutionary War. In so doing, he ensconced Philip with Washington into America's pantheon of nationalist heroes ([24], p. 60).²⁰

While Apess did laud Philip as a greater forefather than Washington, a fairly overt denigration of Washington from the perspective of his audience, nowhere did Apess explicitly attack Washington's reputation as founder of a Christian America. He used him as a foil, but he did not abuse him. Of course, Apess knew about Washington's record with Native Americans and no doubt saw it reflected in the ethnocide of Southeastern tribes by President Jackson's policies. However, Apess's main tactic in mentioning Washington was to argue that Native Americans deserve as much credit for the current shape of the nation as white settlers do ([21], p. 240). In this way, Apess attempted not to remove Washington as a pillar of Christian nationalism so much as to argue for inclusion of Philip as another key founder alongside Washington. Apess's utilization of Washington touched on a common theme within his writing: the inclusion of Natives into America as a sovereign people.

Historically, the relation of Native Americans to the dominant culture in the antebellum period has been defined as a dichotomy between assimilation and authenticity, authenticity here understood as a rejection of the dominant culture in favor of one's own minority culture ([27], p. 1).²¹ Apess revealed how false this dichotomy is. Apess's status as a Methodist has led some scholars to question whether he could be authentically committed to the Natives he ostensibly represented ([27], pp. 5–6). However, at the same time, Apess's radical critiques of America have led other scholars to state that he in no way desired straight assimilation ([8], p. 147). Instead of authenticity or assimilation, Apess is better characterized by the ideas of "affiliation" and "religious engagement" as established by Fisher ([10], pp. 8, 63–64, 67, 190). Apess affiliated with the Methodist church in order to gain enough authority to preach and lecture ([17], pp. 104–10).²² This manner of religious engagement, forming a symbiotic relationship with religion to advance a particular cause, is typical of Native American interaction with Christian religion throughout the history of the United States ([10], pp. 86, 88–89, 99, 101, 106, 211). By utilizing the dominant culture's idolization of Washington as the greatest American, Apess defied cultural assimilation into the American nation and remained allegiant to his heritage. However, by placing Philip with Washington as a key political influence, Apess reintroduced Natives into the history of the nation. By balancing this tension between assimilation and authenticity, Apess charted a third way of religious engagement and affiliation with the American nation that characterizes his collective works ([27], pp. 11–12).

²⁰ Vogel goes so far as to conclude that Apess credits Philip with inspiring the Revolution and Washington himself.

²¹ Apess scholars Krupat and Brumble have proposed two such theories which fail to reject this dichotomy.

²² In this section, Wigger discusses how and why Methodism granted authority to "unqualified" preachers.

While Apess's utilization of Washington introduced the tension he felt with regards to nationalism, his treatment of the Puritans and Pilgrims, a critical Christian nationalist pillar, reflected his unwillingness to accept its mythical components. In Apess's praise of Philip as the greatest "American," he ended with a comparison of Philip to the Pilgrims: "I shall pronounce [Philip] the greatest man that was ever in America; and so it will stand... to the everlasting disgrace of the Pilgrims' fathers" ([5], p. 308). The Puritans and Pilgrims constituted the main antagonists for Apess in his writing. Apess's disillusionment stemmed mostly from the false Christianity, as he saw it, of the Pilgrims: "For be it remembered, although the Gospel is said to be glad tidings to all people, yet we poor Indians never have found those who brought it as messengers of mercy, but contrariwise." He continued to assert that 22 December, the agreed upon date for the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, should be remembered with tears instead of joy ([5], p. 286). The Puritans and Pilgrims were frequently seen as stalwarts of prayer, appealing to their Lord for guidance and protection. Apess, however, revealed a much darker side of this virtue: "it was a common thing [during King Philip's War] for all the Pilgrims to curse the Indians. . . . It is also wonderful how they prayed, that they should pray the bullet through the Indians' heart and their souls down into hell. . . . If this is the way they pray . . . I hope they will not pray for me" ([5], p. 304).²³ By attacking the Puritan's prayer life and their other lauded traits, Apess attempted to redefine the core virtues (and historical understandings) of his audience. Based on historical misrepresentation, this pillar of Christian nationalism was an unacceptable heritage; in its place, "the Puritan legacy, as told by Apess, was one of intolerance, deceit, and conquest" ([9], p. 688).

Apess was familiar with Daniel Webster and Nathaniel Hawthorne and was therefore well-versed in the pro-Pilgrim and pro-Puritan Christian nationalist arguments espoused by them ([22], p. 112; [27], p. 4). While Apess disagreed markedly with Daniel Webster, Noah Webster, Samuel Gardner Drake, and other revisionist historians on the correct reputation of the Pilgrims, he did agree that current Americans and the nation they inhabit are a product of the Pilgrims' actions. Throughout "Eulogy," Apess addressed his audience as "sons of the Pilgrims" ([5], p. 306). However, Apess ensured that this moniker was not something to be desired. As he related the tale of his ancestor Apess made sure that the history he was constructing was not only his history; his white audience was intimately connected to it as well given the role their forebears played as the antagonists. Throughout his speech Apess wove past and present together in such a way that his audience was forced to confront their guilt in the Indian Removal under Jackson and the poor plight of the Mashpee. In *Indian Nullification* he challenged his sensible white readers to balance their disgust with Jackson's policies and the Georgians' actions with their disregard for the Mashpee living among them ([21], p. 177).

In engaging with the history of the nation to make claims about the current state of affairs, Apess fit perfectly into the ranks of other Christian nationalist authors like Webster. By using this history not to bolster national unity but rather as proof that America was built upon systematic exclusion and injustice, Apess challenged the common notion of the progress of liberty in America in much the same way as current scholars like Amanda Porterfield. America was not living in a golden age of religious freedom as established by the Puritan forefathers; instead, injustice and ethnocide were still very present in the land of liberty ([7], pp. 68–69). However, Apess did not just attack the actions of the Puritans, he attacked the conception of Divine Providence that undergirded much of the reasoning behind their success and subsequent establishment of God's chosen nation.

In "An Indian's Looking Glass for the White Man," Apess questioned a third main Christian nationalist pillar, the narrative of God's blessing of America. He inquired of his reader, "can you charge the Indians with robbing a nation almost of their whole continent, and murdering their women and children, and then depriving them the remainder of their lawful rights, that nature and God require

²³ Apess continues later on the page to quote a number of Scriptures that clearly show how Christians should pray for their enemies' forgiveness, not their damnation.

them to have?" ([28], p. 157). In this and many other similar refrains, Apess redefined the taming of the continent as rooted in human design and evil, not as any sort of manifest destiny.

In an even more pointed attack, Apess questioned his readers, "did you ever hear or read of Christ teaching his disciples that they ought to despise one because his skin was different from theirs?" A few paragraphs later he uttered perhaps his most controversial statement of all: "If the Lord Jesus Christ, who is counted by all to be a Jew—and it is well known that the Jews are a colored people . . . if he should appear among us, would he not be shut out of doors by many, very quickly?" ([28], pp. 159–60). Not only was God not responsible for the spread of the original settlers, but these devout Americans descended from the champions of Christian virtue, the Pilgrims, would completely fail to recognize the Lord Christ because of his skin color. Apess contended that neither Divine Providence nor Christ-likeness were on the side of Anglo-Americans because of their horrendous treatment of Natives.

In his remarks on General Washington, Apess wavered between criticism and idolization. In his criticism of Divine Providence and the Puritan Myth, he appeared Samson-like, knocking down two critical pillars supporting the Christian nationalist temple. Apess struck a different chord, however, with his treatment of the common law based upon Christian dogma. He was fully supportive of this notion, although he was skeptical of how successful Americans were in following the law they so proudly claimed as their own.

Similar to his affiliation with Washington, Apess did not attack the original law. In fact, he regarded the American common law, the final pillar of Christian nationalism, as the standard for how white Americans should treat Native Americans. Apess focused his critique on the political powers behind the law responsible for twisting it to serve their own purposes and oppress Native Americans. This failure to uphold the original law of God and country formed a key theme of *Indian Nullification*. Responding to the original Mashpee Declaration of Independence, the county Sherriff told the Mashpee that "merely declaring a law to be oppressive [can] not abrogate it." The Sherriff subsequently urged the Mashpee as "good citizens" to go through the normal channels of the law to resolve their dispute. In response, Apess noted "surely it was either insult or wrong to call the Marshpees citizens, for such they never were, from the Declaration of Independence up to the session of the Legislature in 1834" ([21], p. 183). What makes this simple recommendation even more insulting is the fact that the Mashpee had been trying to get a hearing with the governor for years to address their grievances, as good citizens should, but the governor had refused to meet with them ([21], p. 173). While Apess continued to relate the restrictive and unjust nature of the laws binding the Mashpee and document their struggle to overcome these laws, what is important for this essay is how Apess engaged with the law itself, especially the Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

In the early Republic, the Constitution and Declaration of Independence joined the Bible as the second and third members of the Christian nationalists' textual trinity. Apess's first reference to the Constitution was emblematic of his overall treatment: he claimed the Truth undergirding the Constitution firmly for himself and his tribe. This first reference occurred in the "Indian Declaration of Independence" which adopted three resolutions. When the first resolution declared the right of self-government for the Mashpee, it did so on the authority that "all men are born free and equal, says the Constitution of the country" ([20], p. xxxvi; [21], p. 175). After issuing this seminal proclamation forming their own independent government, Apess admitted that he mistakenly wrote to the lieutenant governor. Turning this error to his advantage, Apess asserted that "our mistake was not greater than many that have been made to pass current by the sophistry of the whites, and *we* acted in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, unless that instrument be a device of utter deception" ([21], pp. 179–80, emphasis added). Here Apess boldly contended that the greater common law tradition supported himself and his allies over and against white Americans who were condemned for selectively enforcing it. Again, when the Mashpee's initial efforts were ignored by many of the well-to-do of society, Apess commented in response that the "governor, senators, and representatives were arrayed against us, . . . we Marshpees account all who opposed our freedom, as Tories, hostile

to the Constitution and the liberties of the country" ([21], p. 204). Thus, when the state leadership opposed the cause of the Mashpee they were simultaneously opposing the essence of the Constitution.

Apess's adoption and adaptation of the Constitution paralleled his implementation of the Declaration of Independence. In addition to naming the document of revolt after the Declaration, Apess frequently alluded to the Revolutionary War and the overthrow of laws believed to be unjust by the Founding Fathers. After detailing the nature of many of the repressive laws instituted by the Massachusetts' government against the Mashpee, Apess addressed his readers directly. "I will ask [the reader] how, if he values his own liberty, he would or could rest quiet under such laws. I ask the inhabitants of New England generally how their fathers bore laws, much less oppressive, when imposed upon them by a foreign government" ([21], p. 211). While Apess's description of British laws as "much less oppressive" may have been insulting to some of his readers, his overall request to be judged by the same standard white Americans hold for themselves was apt.

Apess accomplished a number of goals by incorporating the Constitution and Declaration of Independence into his arguments for Mashpee self-governance. On a general level, he was appealing to the cultural icons of his audience. More specifically, he used America's common law tradition, one of the main planks in the Christian nationalists' platform, as justification for the Mashpee Revolt. On an even deeper level, however, Apess implicitly supported the events and reasoning behind the Revolution. In fact, he oftentimes asserted that the current generation of Americans had failed to merit the great gifts they received in the founding of America: religious liberty, a noble common law, and the chance to control one's own destiny. Apess did not request these gifts be taken away from white Americans; rather, he demanded that Native Americans be allowed to share in the spoils of Revolution. "The [Mashpee] Indian soldiers fought through the [Revolutionary] war; and as far as we have been able to ascertain the fact, from documents or tradition, all but one, fell martyrs to liberty, in the struggle for Independence." Moreover, what was their reward? "Often and often have our tribe been promised the liberty their fathers fought, and bled, and died for; and even now we have but a small share of it" ([21], pp. 238–40). While appealing back to the virtues of the Revolutionary War and the common law it engendered, Apess explicitly demanded inclusion for the Mashpee—and Native Americans at large—in the freeing post-Revolution atmosphere of America. With regards to the common law of America in the 1830s, Apess affiliated wholeheartedly: Native Americans deserved full protection under the law, and any unjust laws should be repealed and recompense made.

Apess's affiliation with the four constructive pillars of Christian nationalism was multifaceted. While he demanded full inclusion in the common law, the backbone of the nation, he derided the glorification of the Pilgrims, broached numerous problems with Divine Providence, and implemented General Washington and the Founding Fathers as a foil for King Philip. While it has been established that Apess belongs to the nation-building intellectuals of the 1830s, what needs further elucidation is the nature of the nation Apess is constructing: what future did Apess envision between Native Americans and Anglo Americans specifically and the nation of America in general? Leaving for a moment the firebrand political activist, we must unpack Apess the Methodist preacher and "precociously devout Christian" ([27], p. 6).

4. William Apess, Millennial Methodist Missionary

In *A Son of the Forest* and *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians*, Apess established his conversion to Methodism as the key event between his previous, debauched life of wandering and his current life of political activism with a spiritual bent.²⁴ As with other aspects of Apess's writings, he used his

²⁴ Current scholars disagree as to the nationalizing effect of Methodism in the early Republic. Amanda Porterfield sees Methodism as having the most profound impact upon popular culture and as being the main solidifying force of the young nation ([11], pp. 101–6, 162–75). Sam Haselby acknowledges that Methodism did become nationalizing but contends that this development occurred after the early Republic. He points out that early Methodist doctrine, tracts, and sermons were largely devoid of nationalistic or patriotic language—he contrasts this absence to the nationalist movement of New England

spiritual autobiography as a way to subvert the current Christian establishment. Concerning genre, Apess was dancing to the tune of his time in composing a spiritual autobiography; he did not hold back in detailing his sinful life and many failings. He did break from convention, however, in his attribution of some of those fears and failures to historical Christian precedent. Apess's autobiography "ultimately becomes an account of the shortcomings of the church and of individual Christians, and a theological argument for an alternative." Apess's sincere Christianity and minority perspective led him to the conclusion that Anglo-American Christianity had failed in its task ([29], pp. 162–70). He explored the nature of this failure and charted a way forward in his later sermons and discourses.

Apess developed his voice in his autobiographies, realizing that he could imbue it with great power by drawing on the "strategic power of Christian rhetoric;" Apess's later writings offered testament to his success in this endeavor ([29], pp. 149–50). In his only published sermon, "The Increase of the Kingdom of Christ," Apess condemned the failures of white Christian America and offered a hopeful new vision for the future of the Christian faith and nation.²⁵ After explaining how God must judge the heathen and the sinner, a sentiment his audience would second, Apess quickly revealed his intent to strategically agree with their ideals in order to critique their actions when he asserted the following:

[Has] not the great American nation reason to fear the swift judgments of heaven on them for nameless cruelties, extortions, and exterminations inflicted upon the poor natives of the forest? We fear the account of national sin, which lies at the doors of the American people, will be a terrible one to balance in the chancery of heaven. America has utterly failed to amalgamate the red man of the woods into the artificial, cultivated ranks of social life ([30], pp. 106–7).

Americans, Apess contended, will have to face God with blood on their hands for their treatments of the Natives.²⁶ Apess was dealing in double entendre when he mentioned the failure of Americans to integrate with the Natives. First, he was accusing them of not even making the effort but rather just focusing on "extermination." Second, he was contending that Americans should not actually try to fuse with Natives; instead, Americans should respect Natives' sovereignty.²⁷

The authority for this barrage of criticism was found in two places. First and foremost, Apess was convinced that true Christian doctrine forbids such horrid treatment of one race by another; Christ died for all men equally, a truth that binds all races together ([32], p. 608). However, more vital (and curious) for his argument was the notion of Indians as descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Apess defended his belief in this notion simply by saying that "many eminent men with apparently high presumption, if not unquestionable evidence, believe [this dogma]" ([30], p. 106). Apess explained this theory more fully in the appendix to his autobiography. Some scholars believed Native Americans descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel because of the similarities in custom, religious rituals and rites, appearance, and linguistics ([18], pp. 74–76). For Apess, linking Native Americans back to Israel accomplished a number of purposes. First, it meant that Natives should not be outright "amalgamated"

evangelicals of more Reformed background ([2], pp. 121–37). For Apess, I see Methodist doctrine inspiring first his political activity and attacks on Anglo American Christian hypocrisy which in turn birthed his concern with nationalism. Perhaps Apess can be read as a middle ground between the two scholars. To say Methodism gave him his nationalizing bent would be too simplistic. To say it was not a key influencing factor would be too extreme.

²⁵ Notwithstanding his considerable frustrations with Anglo American implementation of Divine Providence, Apess's hope comes from this Methodist belief which imparted confidence in the ultimate triumph of good. See ([11], pp. 143–46).

²⁶ This paper might benefit from a more detailed examination of the wrongs perpetuated upon the Native Americans. For such a treatment see [31].

²⁷ I do not want to oversimplify the incredibly complex history of Protestant missions to the Native Americans. Apess is in fact mistaken when he asserts that an effort was never made. The New England Protestants' missions movement, which kicked into high gear after the collapse of Federalism in the 1810s, began "with the best of intentions" to see Native American's fully nationalized into the country ([2], p. 297). This intention collapsed under the pressure from Andrew Jackson when New Englanders were forced to choose between nationalization and Native American missions as popular pressure and Jackson's rise made the two antonymous. For a detailed breakdown of this process see ([2], esp. chapter 7).

into the American nation. After Apess commented on the failure of white Americans to settle down well with Natives, he credited this failure to the Israelite blood in Native veins that demanded freedom. Second, if Natives were descended from Israel then they were even more connected to Christ: not only were they both people of color but they were also the same ethnicity. This connection ensured God's covenant protection and required Natives to take the initiative in fighting for the increase of the Kingdom of Christ ([30], p. 107).²⁸ Presenting Native Americans as the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel was a significant component of Apess's Christian nationalism because it explained why Natives should be allowed to govern themselves *within* the setting of Christian America.²⁹

While Apess's sermon did highlight the failures of white Americans and discuss the true identity of Native Americans, its ultimate purpose was to shed light on how the Kingdom of God could be furthered in the world. As a Christian minister, this was not a surprising doctrine for him to promote. What matters for the purpose of this paper is that Apess deemed this process of Christianization as a thoroughly nationalistic one. He spoke in terms of nations, national sin, and national duty throughout the whole sermon. While Apess spent significant time criticizing the church, he concluded on a hopeful note: "There is a great light of glory descending upon the American church. Revivals follow revivals, and the deep brown wilderness is vocal with the shouting and songs of the delivered tribes, long slaves to error but now emancipated and brought out of the wilderness of sin into the Canaan of Gospel liberty." In addition to the continued utilization of Israelite language, Apess's hope for the future of the church was startling in its equivocation of "American church" and "delivered tribes." To even speak of an "American church" was surprising given the incredibly divisive time he inhabited ([2], p. 191). He had personally experienced the division when his masters forbid him from attending the unruly Methodist sermons ([18], pp. 12–21). His classification of the church as American therefore reflected his bent towards Christian nationalism. For Apess to declare that "tribes of the wilderness" would be the ones to "conquer the world for Christ" was as shocking as his hope that these tribes could constitute part of the American church ([30], pp. 108–11). As the Methodist revivals continued to spread across the country—specifically through and amidst Native tribes—the *American* church as a whole would be glorified ([30], p. 111; [33], pp. 33–34). In this way, Apess linked the virtues of Native Americans with the spreading of the Gospel and the revivification of the American church as a whole, allowing for the possibility of Christian Native Americans coexisting with Christian Anglo Americans ([33], p. 37).

This hopeful tone amidst the overall bleak representation of American Christianity in Apess's writings can be credited to his belief in Millennialism. Like many Christians (and Christian nationalists) of his time, Apess was convinced that the full establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven was imminent ([20], p. 99; [30], pp. 107–9). If Apess's religious convictions in this regard are sincere, his prescription for the path forward takes on not a fanciful or dreamy hue but a strident and urgent tone. The Kingdom is coming; white Christians need to repent. White and Native Christians alike need to work together to build Christ's Kingdom before his coming. With this in mind, the national language of Apess is compelling. He advocated openly for unity in America between Natives and whites as Christian sisters and brothers. Apess's religious request as a pastor, therefore, was for repentance of misdeeds by all followed by national unification around the preparatory building of a Christian house for Christ to inhabit.

²⁸ Of course, Apess does not think of Natives as being *Jewish* but only Jews. In other words, he connects them ethnically but not religiously; Apess is still a firm Christian believer. On another note, in *A Star in the West*, Elias Boudinot uses the Ten Tribes idea to argue that Natives should be sent to Palestine ([2], p. 218)! Apess implements his mimicry once again by drawing on this popular doctrine but completely reversing its intended purpose. He uses it to argue for inclusion and respect where it had previously been cited as another reason why Natives do not belong in America.

²⁹ As a Christian minister, Apess would have assumed that the "Jews" of America would accept the truth of Christianity when it was presented to them. He certainly was not a Zionist.

With the impetus for religious respect established, Apess's prescriptions for the political realm can be better understood. After critiquing the different planks of Christian nationalism and describing the wrongs of white Americans, Apess concluded that "justice demand[s] that the relationship between natives and newcomers be revived on an equal and honorable basis" ([6], p. 92). The foundation for this new relationship would be the construction of a "cross-cultural written history of the region . . . to assert the vital presence of Native Americans." His history would provide the grounds for inter-ethnic respect and foster national unity ([25], p. 165). This essay has argued that the first piece of evidence supporting Apess as a Christian nationalist is his interaction with the four main pillars of the movement. The second critical support is Apess's incorporation of these pillars into his new cross-cultural history. Concerning Philip and Washington, Apess's version of history respected and honored both. He clearly believed Divine Providence to have been abused in the past, but the possibility of God's Divine Blessing still existed for present Christians. As for the hated Puritan myth and misuse of the common law, Apess magnanimously offered to "bury the hatchet and those unjust laws and Plymouth Rock together and become friends." He went on to ask "will the sons of the Pilgrims aid in putting out the fire and destroying the canker that will ruin all that their fathers left behind them to destroy?" If so, then "let us have principles that will give everyone his due . . . Give the Indian his rights, and you may be assured war will cease" ([5], pp. 306–7). In this oft-quoted appeal, Apess offered friendship and the possibility of a mutually cooperative nation under "one general law" where Native and Anglo American alike can respect and live alongside each other by the grace of God ([5], p. 310).

If an American Christian nationalist is simply someone who believes that God will fuel their nation's growth and success, then Apess was certainly a Christian nationalist. However, many of the Christian nationalists of the 1830s believed not only in a bright Divinely-blessed future but in a Divinely purposed past, something Apess challenged. However, while Apess warned of potential damnation because of gross injustices, he did find God's blessing and providence in a few aspects of history, especially the general principles of the nation solidified in the Constitution. He credited rebellious, misguided people with the current state of affairs, not an absent God. In his sermons and autobiographies, Apess attempted to convict his audience of their faults, drive them to repentance, and restore their relationship with God. In his speeches and political tracts, he once again highlighted the injustices, but he also proffered a new future of friendship and cooperation. This new future was based on replacing the old mythical history with a new history, one that was not as comforting as his audience would prefer. It was a multi-ethnic history of fears, failures, massacres, and mutual hatred. Apess hoped that this bleak history would spark a desire for love and cooperation that had been absent. He trusted in God to accomplish this task of conviction, repentance, and renewal. Apess yearned for national conversion back to the ways of God, who had been there all along; it was this pursuit that made him a Christian nationalist.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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