

energies of the American people from turning in upon themselves destructively.

Here was a new country without an aristocracy, without therefore any code-making group that could tell the population as a whole, as the European aristocrats told their masses, what to do and how to do it. Here was a new country where the people themselves had to make the codes. Tocqueville felt that this could result in anarchy, and his feeling about religion in America was that it prevented the anarchy from arising. Religion was one of the ways in which codes were made and maintained. But he felt there was another religion in America, even more important than the church religions. He did not quite find a name for it, but he spent considerable time describing it. I have myself called it "Civic Religion." Tocqueville was speaking of the American feeling of commitment to institutions, a feeling of participation in the life of their communities, a feeling of respect for the fabric of political and institutional life. He found this particularly true in New England, but he found it true elsewhere as well. Whereas in Europe the Catholic clergy were deeply committed to the fusion of church and state, Tocqueville noted that in America the Catholics respected the separation of church and state. They had become, he felt, infected by the climate of opinion in the country as a whole. He gave this as an example of what Montesquieu, his great teacher, had called "the spirit of the law," and the extent to which the spirit of the institutions characterized the nation as a whole. With great prescience Tocqueville saw how rapidly Catholicism would grow in America, but he felt also that its growth would be maintained within the general framework of the spirit of American institutions.

About the American Negroes Tocqueville feared a great disaster awaited us, that we would have to pay heavily in reaping the harvest of what we had sown. He thought the disaster would come after the slaves had been freed. He said that only after a people gets its freedom, only after it learns the taste of a different life, does it begin to make demands for total equality. As a result of these demands of the Negroes Tocqueville foresaw a bloody struggle between blacks and whites, one that would take place in the Southern States where the slavery institution was strongest. This bloody struggle that he spoke of--he really meant a bloody one--has not taken place. Yet the prescience was there. Thus we see how the American tradition was operating in the eyes of perhaps the most subtle and acute observer of American life and institutions.