raised children as members of patriarchal families modelled after the royal household; as adults, individuals achieved social status and a political voice through government grants of land or titles. During the second period identified by Wood, ‘Republicanism,’ advocates of virtue and disinterestedness co-opted and challenged monarchical society. Classical notions of civic responsibility helped America’s gentry define itself at the same time as geographical mobility, population growth, new commercial opportunities, and a breakdown in traditional family order transformed its world. Wood contends that many Americans were cheered by the possibilities this presented for the future but the rapid change also bred paranoia; anxiety about political and social decay, which characterised republicanism, caused colonists to question British policies of patronage. According to Wood, the War of American Independence was the result of differing interpretations of who in America were the proper social leaders. The new nation’s founders established a republic that they hoped would turn British subjects into American citizens who would embrace the leadership of a public-spirited aristocracy but this faltered from the start. The third section, ‘Democracy,’ recounts the failure of the founders’ vision as Americans put less stock in love and sociability than in material advancement and individualism. The belief in equality, according to Wood, was the most powerful and radical ideological force in American history. The power of this revolutionary realisation became especially apparent during the first decades of the nineteenth century, with the rise of interest-based democracy, the popularisation of the image of Benjamin Franklin, the mocking of the notion that any sort of natural aristocracy might exist showing the strength of equality as an ideology, not just a principle.

Wood’s original book, The Creation of the American Republic (1970), emphasised the prevalence of republicanism in early America. With other studies from the same time that highlighted the importance of virtue, disinterestedness and agrarian self-sufficiency, his book helped to constitute the ‘republican synthesis’ that replaced Lockean liberalism as the revolutionary era’s dominant interpretative framework. Wood’s latest book provides a framework for synthesising the recent scholarship on the new nation’s political ideology in which the intellectual traditions of liberal, forward-looking America and a classical, republican history can co-exist. According to Wood, the republicanism of the founders gradually gave way to what Wood termed ‘democratisation’ but would perhaps be better termed ‘liberalisation.’ There is disagreement between, for instance, Banning (1978), McCoy (1980) and Appleby (1984) as to when the change occurs, although all three agree with Wood that the revolution was the defining moment for the American psyche. This is disputed by Watts (1987) in The Republic Reborn, who argues instead that America came of age more suddenly, and that maturation had little to do with the American War of Independence. Watts characterises the War of 1812 as a departure that sprouted the seeds for a more open, modern America. Like Appleby, believes that a new social order germinated in the 1790s which consolidated the market economy and society. In Appleby’s account, republicans embraced these new opportunities for enterprise and personal freedom, while Watts’ republicans were more sceptical. The War of 1812 promised something better by channelling this into a positive, constructive outcome. Liberal Republicans, angry at British harassment of American shipping, appealed to traditionalist anxieties by portraying the war as an opportunity to promote internal commerce and Old Republicans came to accept that war was needed to assert the social vitality and civic strength. This process saw Liberal Republicans accelerate the departure of ideology and political economy from traditional republicanism and transformed republicanism into nineteenth century liberalism.

The most important political implication of the emerging market is the way it permanently shaped public culture through the rise of assertive individualism. Citizens came to view themselves as consumers of political ideas, manufactured goods and identity itself. Nineteenth century Americans enjoyed the unprecedented opportunity to define themselves and the power to choose became seen less as a luxury, more as a right. Nathan Hatch explores this in his work, The Democratisation of American Christianity (1989). For example, after 1800 many individuals chose to abandon Episcopal and Congregational churches and joined upstart denominations led by charismatic evangelicals. Hatch terms this phenomenon as religious ‘democratisation.’ The process described by Hatch is actually the opening of the religious marketplace. The elitist Congregational and Episcopal churches were ill-prepared to compete with evangelicals.

This levelling impact can also be seen in the manners, dress, furnishings and homes of expanding circle of citizens, according to Richard Bushman (1992). In the colonial period, only the gentry had been able to assert its status.
**What was the economic condition of the US at the start of this period?**

The future of the American economy in the years of the revolutionary war and the achievement of independence seemed uncertain. There was a reasonable degree of prosperity in most states and if transportation problems could be overcome, primarily by canals, the economy had possibilities for growth and development. The economy of 1800 was primarily agricultural, dependent on the British economy for many manufactured goods and was affected negatively by the British Navigation Acts. The military and trade dislocations caused by the revolutionary war kept per capita income of the US, especially the southern states, well below pre-revolutionary levels for a decade or two.

Over the antebellum period, the share of the labour force in agriculture fell but even on the eve of the Civil War, more than one-half of the population lived in rural areas producing primarily agricultural goods. The share of labour in manufacturing rose after 1820 but even in 1860 did not exceed one-sixth of the overall labour force. The north-eastern share of the American labour force in agriculture declined sharply and the share in manufacturing and services rising, while in the south and newly settled areas of the Midwest, the labour force remained primarily agriculture in 1860. It is probable that the growth of per capita income between 1820 and 1860 rose at a higher rate than that of the colonial period. In per capita income, the US was second to England in major world economies.

The nineteenth century saw exceptionally high rate of population growth, which was accompanied by geographic expansion westward. In 1790, the south’s population was generally located in seaboard states and tobacco and rice. By 1860, cotton had long been the south and the nation’s major export crop and about half the southern population resided in the newer states of the lower south. In the north, agricultural migration and migration to industrial areas left parts of New England desolate. More native-born individuals moved westward into new agricultural regions, while most immigrants located in urban areas of the Northeast and Middle Atlantic States. Internal migration was the result of decisions by individuals in order to better themselves; Tocqueville’s characterisation of the US as a land of opportunity was a widespread contemporary opinion.

Most of the goods produced in the US were sold in domestic markets, with foreign trade accounting for 10-12% of GNP. Exports were predominately agricultural goods, grains and livestock from the North and tobacco and cotton from the south. Cotton in the antebellum period accounted for one-half of American exports, with most sold to England. The US was more politically independent of the UK but flows of trade resembled those of the international period.

**How did the economic condition of the US change in this period?**

The first half of the nineteenth century has been considered the period of ‘The Cotton Kingdom’ of the slave south. After the invention of the cotton gin, cotton output grew from about zero to account for over one-quarter of southern agricultural output by 1860. The south did produce other crops with slave labour but these were concentrated in limited geographical areas; tobacco in Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky, rice in coastal south Carolina and Georgia and sugar in Louisiana.

The south in general did produce enough corn and livestock to be self-sufficient. The importance of cotton was its ability to grow in many parts of the south; profit-seeking planters migrated with or purchased slaves and moved to more productive land in the south and the west. Slaves made up 40% of the southern population and only one-third of white families owned one or more slaves. Non-slaveholding whites were generally involved in agricultural production, mainly producing food, with some cotton and tobacco. Slavery remained profitable and expanded up to the civil war, with slave prices peaking in the 1850s; slavery was clearly not going to die out quickly.

The economic structure of the north can be divided into two regions.

**North-eastern states:** saw manufacturing expanded, based on a labour force of women and children initially, before being replaced by immigrants. This area benefited from water power, early development of capital markets and
not ‘countervailing churches’ were responsible for shaping America’s national character and assumed that religious outsiders absorbed Protestant values but not vice versa. In short, Ahlstrom’s focus remained on traditional Protestants. Ahlstrom ended up reinforcing Baird’s emphasis on consensus. This view did demonstrate the power of nineteenth century Protestants on American culture; most politicians, business leaders and university professors were evangelical Protestants but, in doing so, belittled and ignored large segments of the population, like slaves, free blacks, Native Americans, immigrants, southerners and women. All these authors feared that America’s democratic experiment would collapse without the support of a common faith and as Protestants themselves, had both theological and political reasons for emphasising unity.

Martin E. Marty’s Righteous Empire: the Protestant Experience in America (1970) was one of the first and most influential attempts to move beyond the consensus tradition but his work still stands between the older history of unity and the newer history. Like the traditions, Marty focused on Protestantism and emphasised that mainstream Protestants wielded most power. Marty did, however, emphasise Protestant divisions more than unity, examining the regional, racial and class divisions. Marty pointed to the bitter arguments over slavery that caused branches of Protestants to divide on regional lines and argued that the closing decades of the nineteenth century were marked by controversy and dissent, not unity.

Albert Raboteau in Slave Religion: the ‘Invisible Institution’ in the Antebellum South (1978) argued that large numbers of slaves converted to Christianity and thus created a vibrant religious culture of their own. Although most slaves were Protestant, especially Methodist and Baptist, they deliberately set themselves apart from the values of the white ‘righteous empire.’ Instead of building an interracial Protestant consensus, they fought with white masters over the meaning of religious liberty. Raboteau argued that blacks and whites read different meanings in biblical stories, especially Exodus; for whites America was Canaan, the promised land of milk and honey, while for blacks it was Egypt, the land of captivity and oppression.

William G. McLoughlin in Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839 (1984) explained that Native Americans were exposed to Christianity in the early nineteenth century and fused these ideas with their own traditional religious beliefs. Many Cherokees borrowed parts of Christian theology without even announcing seasonal religious festivals, communal living and conjuring so as not to lose their distinctive way of life. Like slaves, Native Americans adapted Protestantism to suit their distinctive needs by altering it along racial and class lines. McLoughlin emphasised the importance of Native Americans in shaping American culture by arguing that interaction between Cherokees and missionaries was two-way.

Scholars also sought to examine the role of religion in the lives of American women. These women were the majority of members, founded charities and orphanages. More than one hundred evangelical female preachers crossed the country between 1841 and 1845 and beginning in the 1850s, Spiritualist women spoke as mediums who communicated with the dead. Female exclusion from positions of official leadership meant historians overlooked their significance. Much scholarship on women has examined their religious resilience and creativity, which women used to subvert the fact that they could not vote or, until late in the century, be ordained. Evangelical female preachers used gendered and domestic religious language to justify their activities, while spiritualist women claimed their feminine virtue qualified them to speak publicly and vote. Women thus managed to find a more liberating, egalitarian message in their faith.

Historians have also looked at religious ‘outsiders.’ Like Ann Braude (1989), who used the Spiritualists to examine nineteenth-century attitudes toward marriage, the women’s rights movement and the medical establishment, other historians have examined other sectarian movements. Jan Shipps (1985) argued that Mormons’ religious concerns linked them to many other antebellum Americans; like the Disciples of Christ, were primitivists who hoped to recapture the purity of the early church but eventually moved in more radical directions but, ultimately, their history was rooted in the religious disorder of the 1820s and 30s. Historians have also explored how religious ‘outsiders’ tried to preserve their distinctive identities within a largely Protestant culture e.g. Reform Jews tried to make their worship more modern and Protestant by abandoning traditional dietary and Sabbath laws to build a ‘Jewish
American culture’ that also enabled them to keep their ‘sense of self.’ In short, Catholics and Jews may have assimilated into the dominant culture but they did not believe being American meant being Protestant.

R. Laurence Moore, in Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans (1968), argued that American religious experience began as dissent and invented oppositions remained the major source of liveliness in American religion. Moore thus saw ‘outsiders; as key to understanding America’s religious vitality and emphasised that pluralism, competition and conflict were intrinsic to American religion, with every American religious group initially gaining popularity by dissenting from the establishment.

Historians have questioned the association of America with New England and explored instead how the unique cultures of the South and West also shaped American identity. Maffly-Kipp (1994) criticised earlier historians for treating eastern patterns of religiosity as normative for religious developments in other regions and argued that the West should be seen as a distinctive area contributing unique but related pieces to the wider picture of American religion. The chaos of the gold rush forced the adaption of traditional Protestant ideas around the values of self-control and ethical behaviour so that decades before the late nineteenth century controversies between conservatives and modernists, California goldminers had begun to articulate a more liberal understanding.

The religious movement could be deemed to have created a national identity by bringing together isolated people and giving them a form of entertainment. Although there are many different branches and preachers, the movement was theologically liberal and branches used the same methodology and language. This is essentially a populist American sub-culture that helps create a unified national experience by including those of different races and gender. The concept is so successful that political parties copy this format and mass party politics can be said to have evolved out of the Second Great Awakening. The Second Great Awakening is influenced by and influences other fundamental tenants of American society; for example, it predisposed America to be liberal, competitive and market-driven as people relied on their church and expected little from government.

- Black Methodists in 1787 was 2,000 but this was 40,000 in 1843

What progressive or social change did American Religion bring about?

The emphasis on the impending Second Coming of Christ meant that there was a drive for social change to prepare the world for his coming. The Temperance movement looked to hasten social and economic change and emphasised the interwoven nature of economic and moral progress. Religious leaders often attempted to better their community by establishing free school systems for poor children, libraries, colleges and Sunday schools.
Poor Statemanship and Political Breakdown (Revisionism and Neo-Revisionism)

Revisionist view (Craven, 1939 and Randall, 1945): the failures of individual politicians and generals were critical, with northern abolitionists, radical republicans and southern fire-eaters particularly guilty; better statesmanship could have averted the war. This argument lacked a solid logical foundation. Revisionism assumed that the failures of the statesmen produced the sectional crisis, thus failing to confront the possibility that the sectional crisis caused the failures of statesmanship.

It is highly improbable that the various states of the Deep South by coincidence ended up agreeing on immediate secession each for essentially different, often contradictory, reasons.

Holt focuses on the timing of the secession crisis: why did the lower south secede immediately whereas the upper south delayed? Holt explains this by pointing to the lack of party competition in the Deep South left voters highly responsive to sectional agitators who urged secession. By 1850, it became clear that many states would secede if the Wilmot Proviso were passed; even those pledged to defend the Union against the southern extremists made this threat. Lincoln’s election saw a president who was utterly committed to the principle of free soil; this amounted to a far greater threat than the passage of a single piece of legislation a decade earlier. The secession of the lower south was guaranteed with Lincoln’s election; the delayed secession of the upper south owed to the party manoeuvrings of the previous decade. In the Deep South, the feeling was that slavery was the basis of a different and superior social system, which diverged with and clashed with a society based on free labour. This view was less prominent in the upper south due to the lower concentration of slaves there.

Holt’s argument is that of neo-revision and focuses less on why there was sectional disagreement and more on why this disagreement came to dominate politics in the 1850s in the form it did. He claims that the answer lies in the failure of the second party system in the 1850s to offer voters a genuine choice. Holt however located the problem in the political/ideological structures of the nation, though at the same time noted that division over slavery was not sufficient to bring about war in itself, thus implying that war could have been avoided. His work is a combination of structural and accidental factors. The claim that sectional extremism and division where party conflict between Democrats and Whigs was weakest is true but could it not also be true that southern commitment to slavery and fears of northern attacks defined the potential for party conflict? Holt suggests that voters were irrational and paranoid. Holt asks what political parties could it not be the 1850s able to neutralise the issue of slavery by saying different things either side of the Mason-Dixon line and that the crisis of the mid-1850s was brought about by widespread cynicism with the political process but refuses to correlate these issues. Why did the evasion of the slavery question not contribute to the mood of cynicism? The traditionalist response to his findings: the different stances on slavery could be tolerated so long as slavery was not the major question but when it became the key issue voters wanted a platform that did not dodge or straddle, thus causing the sectional polarisation of the 1850s.

Other historians emphasise institution breakdown, lack of conflict management of southern psychology. The breakdown of political parties meant the country lost the means to accommodate compromise. A strong Democratic Party had the capacity to link North and South but its breakdown in 1860 meant the US was without a national institution to manage the secession crisis. Other scholars believe southern planters and white southerners were in conflict within themselves about the morality of slavery and, fearful about the outside threat to slavery, they used abolitionists as scapegoats and over-reacted to the election of 1860, precipitating the secession compromise.

James G. Randall, David Donald and the needless war school believe that the war goals were not worth the cost of war and the Civil War could have been prevented except for human error. This group blames the extremism of abolitionists. The anti-compromise stance of the Republicans in the 1850s is seen as reprehensible for tipping the balance towards war. David Donald argues that the American social process had produced an ‘excess of democracy’ in which the political system was controlled by a leaderless mob ad was unable to form reasonable solutions to problems. Abolitionists, suffering from status anxiety, felt compelled to latch onto a moral cause, as were the Southern fire-eaters. Holt (1978) suggests that issues of temperance, immigration restriction and anti-Catholicism united the Republican party as much as opposition to slavery. The Democratic Party came to stand for local authority