



Principle Approach® Education

THE CHRISTIAN ROOTS OF OUR CONSTITUTION

by Verna M. Hall

The record of America as a Christian nation resides in the documented history of her founding. This record has been deliberately obscured in order to deprive the American of his Christian heritage of individual liberty. The rediscovery of the Christian foundation of our country and its form of government can restore Christian Leadership to America. But in order to return America to Christianity, this knowledge must be the background of every individual engaged in the education of American youth—parents, clergymen, and educators.

THE PRINCIPLES OF AMERICA'S CONSTITUTION

It is now clearly apparent that if we would preserve both LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE and CIVIL FREEDOM for every individual in America, we must begin to understand the *principles* upon which our American Christian Constitution is constructed. Today there are vast amounts of literature flooding the country, and, in an effort to keep abreast of the times, individuals spend a large proportion of each week reviewing many publications and books. But there are still too few efforts to pursue, either individually, in families, or in study groups, positive programs for learning the *principles* of America's Constitutional form of government.

Once the individual becomes informed and aware of the dangers confronting our nation, it then becomes critically important to take effective action to reconstruct and rebuild Constitutional liberty. This cannot be accomplished by merely uncovering the problem. Human knowledge and human reason are not able to provide the insight and wisdom needed. Unless the American understands his Christian history and the Christian principles of his Constitutional form of government, he is not equipped to assume his unique, God-ordained responsibility in meeting today's challenge to the freedom of mankind.

Once again, as in the founding period of our nation, we must reunite our knowledge of the Holy Scriptures—the great political textbook of the patriots—with the history of America and its Constitution. The battle today is for men's hearts and souls. It is not a battle for men's minds. The mind will believe what the heart accepts. The battle can be won only in the CONSCIENCE, the CHARACTER, and the LIFE



of the individual American. This is the primary battleground, an *internal* battleground, as it has always been throughout the centuries as Christianity has worked its way ever westward in its march around the world, bringing with it wherever accepted, the only true freedom for the individual.

This is why the battle is not primarily economic or political, but solely for the survival of Christianity. Only as the American Christian remembers that America can never be separated from the chain of Christianity moving ever westward, will he understand how to defeat socialism which has permeated every avenue of our once Christian way of life. As long as he believes the battle is primarily political, economic, or military, he will be ignorantly a tool *for the advance of socialism*.

The Tree of Liberty must be nourished with our attention to what **constitutes** the Constitution. This has to do with CONSCIENCE and CHARACTER, and we must—in the home, church, and school—restore Christian conscience and Christian character as the keystone to the foundation of liberty and freedom.

As Christian educators in all fields, and at all grade levels—from the consecrated kindergarten teacher to the Doctor of Theology in a University or Seminary; from the teacher of the alphabet to the professor of zoology—as these educators draw upon their own love of Christ and country they will discover many new ways in which to build a living curriculum from the Christian treasury of the founding of our nation. And in turn, as the student sees his own relationship to Christianity and to America he can be helped to put into practice Christianity's own form of government—Christian self-government. It then follows, that a generation so educated would begin to restore this nation to its original course and purpose. We submit that there is no other way—any other method is but expediency.

CHRISTIAN FORM

Why is the Constitution of the United States of America a Christian document setting forth the Christian form of civil government? Simply because its nature and essence, its structure and framework are to be found in the Word of God, the Holy Bible. This does not mean that we have a Theocracy, but it does give us a Christian republic. There have been many republics in the history of government, both before and after the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, but only the United States of America can claim to have been founded as a Christian Republic.

INTERNAL

From the time the *Mayflower* arrived at Plymouth, until the memorable day of September 17, 1787 when the Constitution was formed, the Bible was the political textbook of the colonists. In the Bible they found the principles of government, both ecclesiastical and civil. It is true that some aspects of our Christian Republic had been developing in England and some areas of Europe, but it was not until the Pilgrims crossed the wide ocean in their frail craft, that in God's time-table of events, the true base of government was implemented. For with the signing of the Mayflower Compact, the power of government was recognized as *internal* instead of *external*. The power of government—sovereignty, was seen to be



within the individual as he yielded to the authority of God through Christ in his life; and from this position civil government could be *delegated* to different spheres of activity—but the power of sovereignty always *remains* with the God-governed individual, and this is CHRISTIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The counterfeit of this primal point is unfortunately prevalent today among the conservatives—the belief that self-government means man’s government of himself without regard for God or Christ, without regard for the Bible as the standard of political reference.

To understand where the power or sovereignty of government resides, is a leading point in understanding America’s *Christian* Constitution. Unless this point is accepted, the Constitution becomes like other constitutions, and government is treated as a force, an entity outside the individual, against which he must forever war or contend. This is essentially the European or Asian concept of government.

Where a people believe the power of government to reside determines whether they believe that *man exists for the state* **or** that *the state exists for man*. If it is believed that the power resides in the government, and a people dislikes what the government is doing, they resort to mob action such as we are seeing all over the world, and sadly to relate, in our own country as well. We are but reaping the harvest of false teaching and education concerning the history of our country and its form of government.

When our founding fathers were approaching the Revolutionary War, in 1765—two hundred years ago—they could have resorted to the kind of mob action we are experiencing today, but they did not. They were tempted to do so, of course, and small disturbances took place, but Richard Frothingham, in his *Rise of the Republic* tells us,

On the day the new acts went into effect, there was posted under ‘Liberty Tree,’ in Boston, a paper calling on the ‘Sons of Liberty’ to rise and fight for their rights, and saying that they would be joined by legions. This incident drew from James Otis, the moderator of a meeting held in the town on that day, a spirited denunciation of mobs. He said, that

were the burdens of the people ever so heavy, or their grievances ever so great, no possible circumstances, though ever so oppressive, could be supposed sufficient to justify private tumults and disorders, either to their consciences before God, or legally before men; that their forefathers, in the beginning of the reign of Charles I, for fifteen years together, were continually offering up prayers to their God, and petitions to their king for redress of grievances, before they would betake themselves to any forcible measures; that to insult and tear each other in pieces was to act like madmen.

This speech was printed in the newspapers, and was heartily indorsed. “Our cause,” it was said, “is a cause of the highest dignity; it is nothing less than to maintain the liberty with which Heaven itself has made us free. I hope it will not be disgraced in any colony by a single rash step. We have constitutional methods of seeking redress, and they are the



best methods.” . . . Aiming to avoid any thing like insurrection, and repelling the idea of revolution, they unfurled their banner under the noble aegis of law. They hoped to build up their cause on the foundation of an intelligent public opinion. This was a new and an American method of political agitation. (*Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America*, Vol. I: *Christian Self-Government*, compiled by Verna M. Hall. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1960, p. 304–305)

To the colonists, civil government was understood to be a mirror of the people’s ability to be self-governed; to show forth how little or how much self-government they lived.

As we consider the *form* of government our Constitution sets forth, we find that it has three essential elements: 1) Representation, 2) Three branches—legislative, judicial, and executive, and 3) The Dual aspect of the state and the nation. Upon these pillars is erected the *superstructure* of our state and national constitutions. And because these elements did not originate with an external government, but are the Biblical admonitions to the individual desiring to live the life of a Christian, we find these pillars of government in every aspect of our American life.

As we understand that these elements find their roots in Scripture, we can unequivocally state that the Constitution of the United States of America is the Christian form of civil government. The determining fact, we submit, is not whether Christians formed the Constitution, but whether the form is Christian according to the Word of God.

Let us first consider REPRESENTATION. Our Scriptural authority and stipulation for this governmental activity is Deuteronomy 1:13–15, wherein we are told that Moses was instructed by the Lord God, to

Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you . . . So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

We find that this was the text chosen by the Rev. Thomas Hooker May 31, 1638, for a lecture leading the way to the first written constitution in America, that of Connecticut. Rev. Hooker states that the doctrine found in this text is: 1) That the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God’s own allowance. 2) The privilege of election which belongs unto the people, therefore, must not be exercised according to their humors, but according to the blessed will and law of God. 3) They have the power also to set the bounds of the power and place unto which they call them.

The second element or pillar is that of the three branches of government—legislative, judicial, and executive.

For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King. (Isaiah 33:22)



When the individual Christian prays to know and to do God's will, he figuratively legislates, judges, and executes. Thus he literally fulfills the three functions of government by carrying out God's purpose in his life. Can we expect these three governmental actions to operate correctly in the civil, external sphere, if we as individual Christians do now know the source from which they were derived? The power of the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of our government—at all delegated levels—resides in the individual Christian as he allows Christ to rule his life—not in the individuals who staff the offices.

The usurpation of power we now see in Washington has come about through the default of Christian Americans, in their Conscience and Character—not because of any aggressiveness of any elected or appointed officials.

Our DUAL form of government, the national-federal structure, is little understood today—witness the whole matter of states rights, civil rights, Congressional re-apportionment. All of these situations have come about because of our failure to understand and live the Biblical principle involved—the two commandments of our Lord, when asked by the lawyer, which is the greatest commandment of all:

Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The individual's relation to God and to man are hereby stated, and for the Christian there must be consistency in his behaviour, whether he is dealing with one neighbor, or infinite millions. Both commandments must be lived by each Christian and in their stated sequence—in extension they become the national-federal concept of our Constitution, self-government with union. For our nation, they become the Monroe Doctrine.

We submit these facets of our Constitution as illustrative of its Christian nature and form.

HOME

If the premise we have submitted be accepted, that government is but a mirror of the people's ability to govern themselves, where is the first sphere? It is the home. It is there where the foundations of Christian character are laid; where Christian self-government is learned and practiced. Here, too, the American Christian has lost by default—not by the aggressiveness of progressive education.

If Christian parents will but reclaim their Biblical parental authority and restore the family altar, they will also rekindle the watch fires of Christian patriotism and government.

SEMINARIES

Because for over a hundred years our seminaries have not been teaching *the Bible as America's political textbook*, because *the Christian history of America* is not taught, we are not receiving the same leadership



from the clergy of today as did the people of the founding generation from their clergy. Therefore, we are challenging those who have anything to do with our Christian colleges and seminaries, to look at the curricula and see if it is preparing our young clergymen to once again assume their proper role of responsibility for this nation's government: a *leadership from the Pulpit*. And again, in this so important area, we are losing by default—it is not the aggressiveness of modernism, liberal theology, or secular education in our seminaries—it is the American Christian's failure to remember CHRIST—*His Story of America* and her form of government.

May we suggest, that the simple elementary answer to *our concern with socialism today, is to, first, restore the unity of the Bible and the Constitution*. This unity begins with *Christian education in the home* where the love of Christ and country are learned. It is strengthened by the Bible-based Christian church, and it is extended and made practical in the Bible-based Christian School, College, and Seminary. There is no other way. To restore Christian Constitutional government and the vitality of our American Christian heritage, the Bible must be our chart of life and our supreme statute book of government.

It then follows, that there will be restored to this nation the internal government of God as the conscience and character of the individual, through salvation in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Robert Winthrop warned in 1848:

All societies of men must be governed in some way or other. The less they have of stringent State Government, the more they must have of individual self-government. The less they rely on public law or physical force, the more they must rely on private, moral restraint.

Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled, either by a power within them, or by a power without them; either by the Word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible, or by the bayonet.