



# Government and the Bible

## Chapter 1: The U.S. Constitution and Religion

Over two hundred years ago an important assembly of delegates met in Philadelphia. Authorized by Congress, their mission was to revise the Articles of Confederation of 1781, which had resulted in a weak central government. Instead, they discarded the Articles and formed a plan for a new government.

George Washington was nominated and installed as the President of the Convention. For the most part, he sat quietly in a chair in front of the room, facing the delegates, but no doubt he influenced the proceedings by his presence and by his informal, more private participation with the delegates.

After four months of struggle, they completed their task. On September 17, 1787, 39 men signed the document outlining their design for a stronger central government. But before the new plan could be put into effect at least nine states were required to ratify it. Although the Constitution was ratified in 1788, many feared that a more powerful government might over step its bounds. The freedom-loving people pressed for a bill of rights to be added. This led to the proposal and adoption in 1791 of the first 10 amendments. This Bill of Rights is considered by many to be the most important part of the Constitution.

In 1887, British statesman William Gladstone called the century-old Constitution "the most remarkable work known to the modern times to have been produced by human intellect at a single stroke, so to speak, in its application to political affairs." One hundred years later, people are echoing his praise. The U.S. Constitution is the world's oldest governing constitution and has served as a model for other nations. Its system of checks and balances, republicanism, and limited government are certainly worthy of admiration. But other nations, especially Britain, had governments acting upon these principles. Amid all the praise of its political wisdom, Americans have lost sight of perhaps the Constitution's greatest and most unique contribution: THE PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. Our readers in America can thank God that they live in a country that grants them the liberty to worship as they please!

We quote from Bro. Paul S.L. Johnson, former editor of the predecessor of *The Bible Standard*, "The Herald of the Epiphany," July 15, 1940 issue:

"Do you know that, next to Israel during the Jewish Age, America has been God's national favorite?"

"Do you know that the Bible in one of its prophecies addresses America—'Ho! land of shadowing wings [land of God's special protection], which is beyond [west of] the rivers [the

Nile's mouths] of Ethiopia [Improved Version; also ASV]<sup>1</sup>—in language that indicates its being a special object of Divine care (Is. 18: 1)?

"Do you know that America's history demonstrates that of all modern nations, it has been the one most favored by God in material, social, international, civil, political and religious aspects?

"Do you know that the special favor of God upon America has been due to the fact that America's principles of human liberty in harmony with the law, and of human equality before the law, believed in and acted out by Americans generally as the fundamental principles of Democracy, more nearly than the principles underlying any other form of government express God's highest ideal of the principles that should underlie government, as can be clearly seen in God's making these principles the expression of Israel's government between man and man under the Mosaic law, and as was exemplified in Israel's history until, rejecting God's highest ideal of government for them, they insistently demanded from, and were reluctantly given by, God a monarchy?

"Do you know that America, apart from the government in Israel before the Israelitish monarchy, has had the most noble, righteous, beneficent and glorious government ever instituted—a government of the people, for the people and by the people?

"Do you know that it was because America lived truer to these ideals than any other modern nation, that God made her His special ward among the modern nations, and that this accounts for His giving her independence from Britain, His freeing her from the destruction of the Napoleonic wars ... His bringing her safely as a nation, made wholly free, out of the trying experiences of the Civil War, His making her a beacon light to the nations, a refuge to the oppressed, a helper to the helpless, a cornucopia to the industrious, and the headquarters and the main field of activity for the greatest religious work ever carried on in this earth since the days of Christ (Is. 18: 1-7)?

"Do you know that among these ideals are those expressed in the Bill of Rights embodied in the U.S. Constitution, and that not the least of these ideals is the Constitutional provision guaranteeing the separation of state and church ... ?"

## *THE CONSTITUTION*

Considerable research has been required to provide the following information for our readers and we wish to thank those who cooperated in this effort. We trust that both our U.S. and foreign readers will be interested in the important subject of various governments, and especially the government of the coming Kingdom. We therefore feel it profitable to devote considerable space to it. Also, we desire to praise God for His providence in this matter. We pray that God will bless this presentation to our readers.

We begin with some comments on the safeguarding of religious freedom in the Constitution (and its Bill of Rights), followed by a discussion on its background and development, and its unusual character, in that God's hand was unquestionably involved in its preparation (Rom. 13: 1). We will continue with thoughts on Adam's dominion, various governments of Israel, church governments in the Apostles' day, the influence of the Bible for good government, and the previous attempts at good government. We will close the discussion with comments on the perfect Millennial Kingdom, for which we pray (Matt. 6: 10).

Two provisions therein safeguard religious freedom. The first provision, in Article 6, paragraph 3, states that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States." Although the wisdom of this law is taken for granted today, it was not favored or practiced by all the states at the time. In fact, 11 American colonies had required the Protestant faith of its public officials. But after 1776 many states had abolished the test. Yet some states feared that Catholics, Jews, or infidels might be elected. A North Carolina delegate even feared that the Pope could become the President of the United States. On the whole, ministers supported the Constitution in its ban on religious tests. For example, Isaac Backus said: "In reason and in the Holy Scripture, religion is ever a matter between God and the individual; the imposing of religious tests hath been the greatest engine of tyranny in the world."

On the other hand, other states did not think the prohibition of a religious test went far enough; at least five states proposed an amendment more clearly to protect religious freedom. This led to the making of the First Amendment, which states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This became the second provision safeguarding religious freedom.

The world had had little experience with the separation of church and state. The early Christian church was indeed separate from the state. They were a persecuted minority because they refused to worship the emperor. This began to change with the conversion of Constantine. Christianity later became the official state religion of the Roman Empire. The emperor, the self-proclaimed religious leader of the empire, assumed the right to call church councils to decide doctrine. The state used force to convert the unwilling heathen and to punish heretics.

The ambition of the papacy created a power struggle between the church and state for supremacy. The pope gained in power, appointing and dethroning kings. The ecclesiastical power reached its height with Pope Innocent III in the 13th century. The papacy was clearly supreme over the state by the late Middle Ages. This was the age of religious intolerance, the Inquisition, the Crusades.

The Protestant Reformation weakened the Catholic Church's control over the state. But the union of church and state was continued by merely substituting a Protestant church for the Catholic church. Religious persecution continued. Protestants fought Catholics over state control in The Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Ironically, those who had come to America to escape religious persecution were just as ready to persecute those who did not agree with them. The

Puritans in New England banned Quakers on the threat of death. The Quakers of Pennsylvania by law required church attendance on Sunday. Nine of the colonies each had an established church.

But gradually the spirit of tolerance developed. "The pioneer of religious liberty in America," Roger Williams, was exiled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony because of his espousal of freedom of conscience. He went on to found Rhode Island, which became a haven for those seeking religious liberty. In England, the Act of Toleration in 1689 ended decades of political and religious strife, although the state continued to support the Church of England. After 1776, most of the former colonies moved toward disestablishing their churches. A number of Protestant groups, especially the Baptists, argued for the complete separation of church and state. Also, the large number of unchurched did not favor the state support of any church.

Two Founding Fathers stand out as advocates of religious liberty: Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. The two men were chiefly responsible for establishing religious freedom in Virginia. In fact, Jefferson thought so highly of the achievement that he requested to be put on his tombstone the words: "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia." He was a firm advocate of the separation of church and state. In fact, the phrase "wall of separation between the church and state" is derived, not from the Constitution, but from a letter Jefferson wrote to a Baptist association in 1802.

Perhaps the most energetic supporter of religious freedom was James Madison. When only 25, he proposed in 1776 an amendment to the Virginia constitution granting religious freedom, which was defeated. A few years later he fought hard for the passing of Jefferson's bill and this time religious freedom was won. Madison was the main force behind the passage in the House of Representatives of the Bill of Rights, which contained the First Amendment on religious freedom. Years later, in 1822, when the effects of religious liberty were visible, Madison wrote:

"It was the belief of all sects at one time that the establishment of religion by law was right and necessary; that the true religion ought to be established in exclusion of every other; and that the only question to be decided was, which was the true religion. The example of Holland proved that a toleration of sects dissenting from the established sect was safe, and even useful. The example of the colonies, now States, which rejected religious establishments altogether, proved that all sects might be safely and advantageously put on a footing of equal and entire freedom. ... It is impossible to deny that in Virginia religion prevails with more zeal and a more exemplary priesthood than it ever did when established and patronized by public authority. We are teaching the world the great truth that governments do better without kings and nobles than with them. The merit will be doubled by the other lesson: that religion flourishes in greater purity without than with the aid of government."

And many nations have learned the lesson and have reduced their direct involvement with their churches. With the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, religious tolerance became international law.

## CONSTITUTION HAS NO REFERENCE TO GOD

The Constitution contains no reference to God, thus breaking tradition with previous American political documents. The first constitution of America, The Mayflower Compact, began with the words "In the name of God, Amen." Most colonial charters and state constitutions expressed allegiance to the Christian religion and required religious tests for public officials. The Declaration of Independence refers to "the Supreme Judge of the world," "God," "Creator," and concludes with the words, "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine providence."

The Articles of Confederation states that "it pleased the great Governor of the world to incline the hearts of the legislatures we severally represent in Congress to approve of, and to authorize us to ratify, the said articles of confederation and perpetual union." Thus Christians were surprised to discover that the newly written Constitution failed to acknowledge God.

According to one story, perhaps apocryphal, a minister met Alexander Hamilton on the streets of Philadelphia shortly after the Constitutional Convention ended. He said, "Mr. Hamilton, we are greatly grieved that the Constitution has no recognition of God or the Christian religion." Hamilton replied, "I declare, we forgot it!" George Washington, in answering a group of ministers who regretted this omission of religion, wrote that "this important object is more properly committed to the guidance of the ministers of the gospel." The omission has prompted proposals for a "Christian Amendment," including a proposal supported by John Anderson, later a candidate for President.

Not only did the delegates believe in the existence of God, many held that religion and morality were indispensable to a successful government. The Constitution of the Confederacy invoked "the favor and guidance of Almighty God," but in the words of church historian Philip Schaff, "the name of God did not make it more pious or justifiable."

With perhaps one exception, religion did not enter the discussions at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. After weeks of heated debate had caused some to despair of reaching a solution, Benjamin Franklin eloquently addressed the delegates:

"I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I lived, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it possible that an empire can rise without his aid?" He noted that while the Congress in 1776 had opened each session with prayer, they had neglected to do so. Therefore Franklin moved that they call in clergymen to open each day with prayer. Some Christian writers have marked this motion as the spiritual turning point of the Convention, after which the Convention began with prayer. However, the truth is different, for after some discussion, the session adjourned without the motion ever coming to a vote. A story, again about Alexander Hamilton, has it that he opposed prayer because the convention did not need "foreign aid." Franklin recorded that "the Convention, except for three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary."

Unlike the Revolutionary clergy, the delegates did not quote the Bible to buttress their arguments. Instead they appealed to contemporary political thinkers and ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. This practice was continued in *The Federalist Papers*, the series of articles defending the Constitution.

Nevertheless, delegates believed that God was directing the events of the new nation. After the Constitution was ratified, Benjamin Franklin said:

"I am not to be understood to infer that our General Convention was divinely inspired when it formed the new Federal Constitution; yet I must own that I have so much faith in the general government of the world by Providence, that I can hardly conceive a transaction of so much importance to the welfare of millions now in existence, and to exist in the posterity of a great nation, should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenced, guided, and governed by that omnipotent and beneficent Ruler in whom all inferior spirits live, and move, and have their being."

George Washington in a letter to the Governor of Connecticut wrote: "We may with a kind of pious and grateful exultation trace the finger of Providence through those dark and mysterious events which first induced the States to appoint a general convention, and then led them one after another, by such steps as were best calculated to effect the object, into an adoption of the system recommended by the general convention, thereby, in all human probability, laying a lasting foundation for tranquillity and happiness, when we had too much reason to fear that confusion and misery were coming upon us."

Although reference to God is absent from the Constitution, and negligible in notes from the Convention, by insuring religious liberty the Constitution has done more for religion than official words of religious allegiance ever could have produced.

## *RELIGION AND THE FOUNDING FATHERS*

American historians have differed over the private religion of the founding fathers. Some, in comparing them to Moses and Jesus Christ, have idolized them as Christian saints. Others have regarded them as freethinkers, precursors of modern-day humanists.

The Founding Fathers lived during "The Age of Reason." According to Immanuel Kant, the leading German philosopher of the 18th century, man should use his own reason without relying on the authority of the creeds, the Bible, or the state. This movement of "The Enlightenment" created a tension between reason and religion. Some, like the French thinker Voltaire, rejected religion as incompatible with reason. Others tried to find a meeting ground between reason and religion: for example, John Locke in his book, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.

One popular compromise between traditional Christianity and rationalism among the educated was Deism. (For an extensive discussion and refutation of Deism, please see Epiphany

Vol. 1, *God*, pages 416-454.) Beginning in England in the 17th century, Deism spread to America in the second half of the 18th century.

Deism summed up religion in three articles of faith: God, virtue, and immortality. It denied the inspiration of the Bible, miracles, the Trinity, and the atonement. Its emphasis on individual reason caused a broad spectrum of beliefs. The Founding Fathers were influenced by the movement of Deism. Many were reluctant to express their religious convictions in public, which makes it difficult now to gain a clear picture.

Religion had lost much of its potency since the Puritans first settled in America. According to church historian Martin Marty, "Very few Americans belonged to, attended, or supported religious organizations in the 1770s through the 1790s." Today, the U.S. has a larger percentage of churchgoers than at the time the Constitution was written. The Founding Fathers valued religion because of its usefulness to society.

"The Father of the Constitution," James Madison, kept extensive notes of the Convention and drafted much of the Constitution. One Madisonian historian describes him as "probably America's most theologically knowledgeable President." Of the important Founding Fathers he had the most formal education. To gain admittance to the College of New Jersey (later Princeton), he translated the Gospels from Greek to Latin. There he later studied theology under Presbyterian clergyman John Witherspoon, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Madison no doubt was taught the fallen nature of man, and the need to restrain the degree of power. We have already seen Madison's contribution to religious freedom in America. However, his silence on his personal beliefs has led scholars to speculate that he too adhered to Deism.

One of the more outspoken Fathers, Benjamin Franklin wrote in his autobiography: "But I was scarce fifteen, when ... I began to doubt Revelation itself ... I soon became a thorough Deist." "I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; and though some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as *the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc.*, appeared to me unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday being my studying day, I never was without some religious principles."

In his autobiography, Franklin described his system of daily self-examination, choosing each week a certain virtue and noting each day's progress. Although a friend of the evangelist George Whitefield, Franklin could not be persuaded by him toward conversion. At the age of 84, Franklin wrote to a minister:

"You desire to know something of my religion; it is the first time I have been questioned upon it. Here is my creed: I believe in one God, creator of the universe; that he governs it by his Providence; that he ought to be worshipped; that the most acceptable service we render to him, is doing good to his other children. As to Jesus of Nazareth, I think his system of morals, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity."

Some scholars have asserted that most Founding Fathers belonged to Freemasonry. Most of the Continental Congress were Masons, as were 52 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence. Masonry did not officially condemn or support Christianity, but did consider it a Divine revelation. Due to Masonry's use of secrecy and symbolism, its history and practices are shrouded in mystery. Its fundamental beliefs include a Divine Creator, morality to one's fellowmen and country, and humanistic and Deistic principles. The most famous Founding Father who adhered to Masonry was none other than the Father of His Country and President of the Convention, George Washington. It is reported that he participated in a Masonic parade in Philadelphia in full Masonic uniform.

Two important Founding Fathers did not attend the Constitutional Convention: John Adams, ambassador to England; and Thomas Jefferson, ambassador to France. But they both played a role in the making of the Constitution. Adams had written a book published that year entitled *A Defense of the Constitution of the United States*. This book was read by many of the delegates. Later the second President of the U.S., Adams at first studied for the ministry, but after exposure to the ideas of Deism, he decided on law. Yet throughout his life he was intensely interested in theological writings. He writes: "Before I was twelve years of age, I necessarily became a reader of polemical writings of religion, as well as politics, and for more than seventy years I have indulged myself in that kind of reading ... I have endeavored to obtain as much information as I could of all the religions which have ever existed in the world." In his later years Adams corresponded with Thomas Jefferson. These letters reveal the possession of a wide theological knowledge that would surpass that of most Christians today. Adams wrote to Jefferson:

"I have more to say on religion. For more than sixty years I have been attentive to this great subject. Controversies between Calvinists and Arminians, Trinitarians and Unitarians, Deists and Christians, and Atheists, have all attracted my attention."

Adams very much admired the Unitarian Joseph Priestley, and wrote: "Statesmen may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone which can establish the principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. A patriot must be a religious man."

When Jefferson, in Paris, heard who would attend the Convention, he referred to them as "demigods." When he first saw the draft of the Constitution he regretted that it did not contain a law protecting religious freedom. He was influential in formulating the Bill of Rights. Jefferson later became the nation's third President. Perhaps of all the Founding Fathers, he is best known for his Deism. His views earned him the descriptions, "infidel," "anti-Christian," and "Virginia Voltaire." Although a professing Christian, he avoided official ties to any denomination, believing that creeds are "the bane and ruin of the Christian church." He denied the Trinity, and predicted that the Unitarian Church would soon become the majority religion of the United States. In Jefferson's view, the essence of religion was not doctrine but ethics. He believed Jesus to be a great moralist, but could not accept His other teachings. He created his own version of the New Testament "to pick out the diamonds from the dunghills," omitting references to the virgin birth, miracles, and the resurrection.

But not all of the Founding Fathers were Deists. Some were conservative Bible-believing Christians. A prominent example is John Jay. With Hamilton and Madison, Jay was one of the authors of the Federalist Papers, which supported ratification of the Constitution. Afterwards he was influential in the ratification of the Constitution in the crucial state of New York. Washington appointed him the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Jay was an active church member throughout his life. A student of the Bible, he was interested in the modern fulfilment of Bible prophecy. He opposed the teachings of infidels such as Thomas Paine. Later in life he became an early president of the American Bible Society. In his annual addresses to the Society he revealed his strong Christian faith. He believed in the Divine origin of the Bible, and that man was created perfect, but fell from grace. Believing that Christ is the Savior of the world, and that He commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel to every nation, Jay encouraged the wide distribution of the Bible throughout the world. Although he disagreed with the Deism of other Founding Fathers, he shared their dedication to religious freedom.

Later periods have seen the Founding Fathers through different lenses. The religious 19th century remembered their remaining Christian faith; the secular 20th century remembers their unbelief. Today, some politically active conservative Christians portray them as orthodox Christians. But if the Founding Fathers were alive today, they probably would not feel comfortable in the pews of right-wing fundamentalism—their reason could not accept its creeds. However, they would likely be displeased with modern society and its materialism, moral laxity, and public apathy. The Age of Reason was no Golden Age, and neither is the age in which we live.

The Constitution had its weaknesses. The original document failed to abolish slavery and it lacked a bill of rights. These weaknesses have been corrected by amendments. But changing conditions have created new questions: Should the electoral college be abolished? Should the length of the term of office be changed? These and other questions have led to calls for a modern-day Constitutional Convention. It is unlikely that statesmen of the caliber of those delegates of 1787 could be found today.

And, no matter how intelligent and well-intentioned men may be, they cannot produce a perfect form of government. What the world needs is a perfect Lawgiver. In the next issue we will describe the coming world order as depicted in the Bible.

# Government and the Bible

## Chapter 2: Biblical Thoughts on Government

*The most widely read book of pre-Constitution America was the Bible. What does this book have to say about the constitution, organization, or form of government? What was its influence on American government? What is its vision of the ideal government of the future?*

Government traditionally has assumed three forms:

- (1) monarchy, or government by an individual;
- (2) aristocracy, or government by the few;
- (3) democracy, or government by the people.

Democracy can be either direct or indirect. In a direct democracy, all the citizens individually participate in the various functions of government. This is practical only when the citizenry is small, such as the city-states of ancient Greece.

In an indirect or representative democracy, the people elect individuals to represent them. A representative democracy is also called a republic. A republic is a form of government in which the supreme power of the state rests with the people, the citizens, those people who have a right to vote.

An example of a republic is the U.S. government. The Constitution, in Article 4, Section 4, states that "the United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government."

The Bible mentions many human governments, but few of them receive Divine approval. Three are referred to as a "kingdom" of God. The first was the pristine dominion of Adam; the second, ancient Israel; the third, the Christian Church, is explicitly designated as the kingdom of God (Luke 17: 21; 22: 29).

### ADAM'S DOMINION OVER THE EARTH

In the first chapter of Genesis, God declares His purpose concerning His earthly creation and its government: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish [fill, NASB] the

earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1: 26-28).

Thus, it appears that the dominion of the earth was placed in the hands of the human race as represented in the first man Adam, who was perfect, and therefore fully qualified to be the lord, ruler or king of the earth. This commission to multiply, and fill, and subdue, and have dominion over the earth was not to Adam alone, but to all mankind: "Let *them* have dominion." Had the human race remained perfect and sinless, this dominion would never have passed out of its hands.

### *REPUBLIC—A "NATURAL" GOVERNMENT?*

It will be noticed that in this commission man was not given dominion or authority over fellowmen, but the whole race was given dominion over the earth. Had the race remained perfect, and as it grew in numbers, it probably would have been necessary for men to consult together, to coordinate their efforts, and to devise ways and means for the just and wise distribution of the common blessings. And as in the course of time, it would have been impossible, because of their vast numbers, to meet and consult together, it would have been necessary for various classes of men to elect certain of their number to represent them, to voice their common sentiments, and to act for them. If all men were perfect, mentally, physically and morally, and if every man loved God and His regulations supremely, and his neighbor as himself, there would be no friction in such an arrangement.

Thus it would appear that the original design of the Creator for earth's government was republic in form, a government in which each individual would share; in which every man would be a sovereign, amply qualified in every particular to exercise the duties of his office for both his own and the general good.

This dominion given to mankind in the person of Adam was the first establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. But man's disobedience to the Supreme Ruler forfeited not only his life, but also his rights and privileges as God's representative ruler of earth. Then speedily the kingdom of God on earth ceased. Since then, God has permitted man to exercise the dominion of the earth according to his own ideas and ability.

### *CONDITIONS BEFORE THE FLOOD*

From the fact that the earth was not divided up into private property until in the day of Peleg [*divider*] after the flood (Gen. 10: 25); from the fact that the first human government was organized by Nimrod (Gen. 10: 8-10); and from the fact that the first business transaction on record is that of Abraham's purchase of the field and cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23: 3-20), we infer that before the flood there was no private ownership in property, no governments among the people, and no competition in business. In other words, society seemed to be organized on a

more or less communistic basis somewhat after the manner of the social organization of the North American Indians.

It was this peculiar social arrangement combined with man's increasing selfishness and sinfulness and the greater selfishness and sinfulness of the giant offspring of the angels (Gen. 6: 4) that made the earth—society—"corrupt" (Gen. 6: 5, 6, 11-13). Thus, the order of affairs before the flood—the angels in charge of the race and the race organized on a sort of communistic basis—proved to be a failure, as far as concerns the reformation of man from sin and his restoration to his Edenic perfection.

### *THE REPUBLIC OF ANCIENT ISRAEL*

The kingdom of Israel is the only one which God ever recognized as in any way representing His government and laws. There had been many nations before theirs, but no other could rightfully claim God as its Founder. In the main, Israel's form of government was a Divine autocracy, a theocracy; for the laws given by God, through Moses, permitted of no amendments—Israel could neither add to nor take away from the Mosaic statutes.

But in many ways Israel's form of government encouraged democracy. While Israel as a whole constituted one nation, yet the tribal division was recognized after Jacob's death. Each family, or tribe, by common consent, elected or recognized certain members as its representatives, or chiefs. This custom was continued even throughout their long slavery in Egypt. To these chiefs (also called elders and judges) Moses delivered the honor and power of civil government. They stood as interpreters and administrators of a government for the people and by the people.

At God's command Moses charged the people to select their elders and judges and to make them leaders of tens, fifties, hundreds and thousands, so that they might act as the civil rulers, as representatives of the people, to try cases and to render Divinely pleasing decisions (Ex. 18: 13-26; Deut. 1: 9, 12-18).

These leaders numbered in the thousands. Moses was to act as a court of appeals in the cases that these judges considered too hard for them; but they, not Moses, were to decide which cases were to be referred to him. Additional to these rulers, and from among them, Moses selected a group of 70 to assist him in teaching and leading the people (Num. 11: 16, 17, 24-30). These received a special spirit or power from God, were already recognized leaders and served on a higher level in a more general way by prophesying, *etc.* (v. 25). After Moses' death many cases were brought to the high priest for a direct decision by God through the Urim and Thummim, which we believe were a part of the High Priest's breastplate.

These democratic elements persisted in Israel for almost 500 years, until at the insistence of the people and the elders, against God's expressed preference, they were set aside for a monarchy. Often the authority was derived from the community or the people (2 Sam. 2: 4; 1

Kings 12: 1-20). Thus under the theocratic-democratic government, Israel had several departments under God:

1. Moses, as chief magistrate was responsible for general administration;
2. Aaron and the under-priests, the chief spiritual leaders;
3. The 70, who were especially spiritual leaders;
4. The rulers of tens, fifties, hundreds and thousands;
5. The Levites, who assisted Aaron, and also acted as Scribes of the law, and as somewhat of a court system in administering the cities of refuge (Num. 35);
6. Later, the Prophets, independent of Israel's administrators, had an extremely important role in defending the rights of the people and restraining the ambition and disregard of God and His arrangements by the rulers.

### *FROM DEMOCRACY TO MONARCHY*

Israel's national organization in the times of the Judges was merely a voluntary one. In reality each tribe managed its own affairs within its own border, and the heads of the tribes constituted its judges in ordinary affairs. The only thing which cemented the union between these tribes was the oneness of their speech and blood; but above all, the oneness of their hope toward God. However, from time to time Israel desired a king rather than judges. For example, after the miraculous victory over the Midianites, Israel desired Gideon to rule over them, but he refused (Judges 8: 22, 23).

Under Samuel's wise judgment the Israelites were greatly blessed; but with their returning prosperity came the ambition to be like the nations round about them—to be a united kingdom under the dominion of a king who would lead them in war and rule over them as an entire nation and centralize their power and energy.

From every worldly standpoint the people decided wisely, but from the Divine standpoint unwisely. They appealed to Samuel as God's representative, to anoint over them a king, and thus establish in their midst a central authority. "Distance lends enchantment to the view," is a common adage, which was true in Israel's case. As they looked at the nations round about them they beheld the glories of the king, his armies, his officers, his chariots. Such kings were warlords to their people, and more or less the dignity, authority and power of these kings represented these qualities in the nations under them. The Israelites saw not the grievous burdens under which many of the people labored as a result of such kingly dignity and glory.

As we look into the matter from the Divine standpoint, we recognize that the people made a poor choice when they preferred to have a kingdom rather than a republic under a Divine King. The Lord had forewarned them through Moses of the results if they should at any time choose a monarchical government rather than the one He had arranged for them (Deut. 17: 14-20). From this standpoint we can see that the republic under Divinely appointed judges tended to develop the Israelites individually, while the kingdom, no doubt, would tend to develop them along national lines. However, the individual development, through exercising liberty and individuality, would no doubt have prepared the people the better for the coming of Messiah and a proper acceptance of Him. In the Lord's promise of future blessings He declares, "I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning," (Isa. 1: 26) thus clearly intimating that the republican form of government under Divine supervision was superior to the subsequent kingly regime.

At God's insistence Samuel explained to the people how their rights and liberties would be disregarded, and how they would become servants by such a change; yet they had become infatuated with the popular idea, illustrated all around them in other nations. (1 Sam. 8: 6-22).

In Samuel's recounting to Israel the manner of a king (1 Sam. 8: 11) we are not to understand that the Lord or Samuel His mouthpiece meant that the description given would be the proper one for a proper king; but rather that it would be the general course of a king, of any man raised to such a place of imperial power as the kings of olden times enjoyed. The wrong course of kings is traceable to three conditions:

1. All men are imperfect and fallen, hence any king chosen would be so, and it would be merely a question of the measure of imperfection and tendency to pride and selfishness and the abuse of power.

2. The imperfection of those over whom they reign is a factor, for the recognized imperfection makes possible and to some extent makes reasonable the usurpation of great power.

3. Satan's derangement of all earthly affairs, putting light for darkness and darkness for light, often makes it seem to rulers and to the ruled that an abuse of power is necessary and really to the advantage of the ruled.

Thus, with the establishment of a kingdom, the republic of the nation of Israel came to an end. Nevertheless, Israel's monarchy was never absolute—ruler and ruled alike were subject to the Law, and the people retained certain rights.

Historians, in beginning the history of democracies with ancient Greece, overlook the republic of ancient Israel. But according to the Encyclopedia Americana (1937), the first known republic in world history is the Israelitish Commonwealth, beginning under Moses and ending with the anointing of King Saul. The Encyclopedia states that "all the people, young and old, rich and poor, male and female, had a voice in public affairs and the privilege of political preferment. This is the

earliest record of choosing rulers by elective franchise." Thus the republic of ancient Israel antedated the democracies of ancient Greece and Rome by possibly as much as a thousand years.

## DEMOCRATIC CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Jesus Christ proclaimed the arrival of the kingdom of God. But Christ's kingdom was not of this world. Hence, the New Testament has little to say about the form of civil governments. Rather the *church* that Jesus established was the kingdom of God.

It is relevant to examine the form of government of the early church. 1 Cor. 12: 28 refers to "governments" in the early church, which apparently were organized along congregational lines. These governments consisted of certain arrangements, chairmen and committees which assisted the churches in conducting their business, which fell into several categories.

The churches formed by the Apostles managed their own affairs and that at the direction of Jesus and the Apostles. The Apostles advised and sanctioned the churches electing their own officers and appointing them to their service.

These officers consisted of two groups: (1) the deacons—*e.g.*, the seven deacons (Acts 6: 1-6) and deacons of the churches, to collect and carry their contributions to the poor saints at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8: 19, 23; *cheirotoneo*, here translated "chosen," means elected by stretching forth the hand); and, (2) elders (Acts 14: 23; here *cheirotoneo* is mistranslated "ordained" in the KJV; also translated "appointed" in some revised versions; "show of hands"—Weymouth).

Under Paul's advice the churches decided other matters of business; for example, to contribute to the poor saints and to appoint the agents to administer the collection and delivery of the gift. (2 Cor. 8: 1-24).

Again, at Christ's charge (Matt. 18: 15-17) the administration of discipline was in the hands of the church, and Paul's accepted exhortation to the Corinthians unanimously to apply discipline to the incestuous brother (1 Cor. 5: 1-13) proves that the church exercised its own discipline. Its later receiving by vote this brother when repentant (2 Cor. 2: 5-10) proves that the church decided whether it should fellowship people or not.

Additionally, the churches made arrangements for their meetings (Matt. 18: 19, 20; Heb. 10: 25). They also sent out missionaries (Acts 13: 1-3). These facts prove that under the Lord each church was manager of its own affairs. This doctrine is also proven by the doctrine of the priesthood of consecrated believers (1 Pet. 2: 5, 9), which implies the equal priestly rights of the individual members of the Church of Christ, the Little Flock, and the consequent right of their settling their common interests by unanimity or majority consent; in other words, congregational rule.

Thus each church is by Divine institution a democracy in its government, yielding equal rights to all its members before the bar of church law, which facts are thoroughly compatible with the diversity in talent, attainments, and functions held by the various members in the church.

# Government and the Bible

## Chapter 3: The Bible's Influence on Government

The Bible has been the beacon light of civilization. Beacon lights serve a double purpose: they warn against dangers that lurk unseen in the deep; and they guide the mariners amid lurking dangers safely through them in their journeys in the seas. And the Bible has done this in the advancement of civilization, pointing out its evils unto their overthrow and avoidance, and leading it into the paths of uplift and progress. But since for most of the Gospel Age the Bible has been a more or less inaccessible book by reason of its scarcity and its confinement, for the most part in non-vernacular languages, some may ask, How could this be true of it?

Our reply is that God's people have been the special custodians of the Bible and its contents; and as such they have shed forth its teachings and their spirit in such ways as have mightily influenced society against its evils and in its progress toward good. As the salt of the earth (Matt. 5: 13) they have, through the Bible's teachings and their spirit, been a nourishing, preserving and seasoning power in human society. As the light of the world (Matt. 5: 14) they have taught the Bible's principles of justice and love in ways deeply influential in setting aside wrong and in establishing good—mentally, morally, and religiously. As the Spirit's channel of reproofing the world of sin, righteousness, and the coming judgment (John 16: 8-11), they have created conditions resulting in many giving up evils and doing good.

The influence of Bible principles on governments has been in the way of uplift. The Bible certainly favors democracy as the ideal government, just as Satan has in his empire favored autocracy. As the influence of the Bible increasingly spread the spirit of freedom, it also spread the spirit of democracy, even though through the inexperience of some nations, it favors for them, until they are ripe for democracy, such forms of government as their conditions require; for be it ever remembered that the Bible spreads its influence not revolutionarily against unideal conditions; but slowly by an educational process it fits individuals and nations in character for the more ideal conditions. Its influence has ever been to treat inferior nations and races helpfully and upliftingly, despite the selfish course of exploiting nations toward an opposite condition.

The Bible's influence certainly was in the interests of education of the masses, as well as the classes, and it prevailed to the extent of nearly banishing illiteracy from Protestant countries, while the papal countries, because of opposing many Biblical principles, have succeeded in keeping the bulk of the masses in illiteracy, as can be seen in Spain, Portugal, and Latin America. Under its influence the liberalizing of government continually increased; and the franchise was given the people in every Protestant land, and in most papal lands, in all of which constitutions were granted the people limiting the power of rulers and increasing the liberty and power of the people. Its influence on the laws of Christendom was always an uplifting and ennobling one. And, finally, as a result of the Bible's influence, governments increasingly charged themselves to

advance the physical, mental, moral and religious prosperity of their people. Verily, the Bible is a powerful reformer of governments.

In our previous issue, the relationship between religion and the U.S. Constitution was examined from the standpoints of the document itself, the Convention, and the lives of the framers. The relationship between the U.S. Constitution and religion will now be examined from a broader perspective.

## THE BIBLE AND EARLY AMERICA

The most widely read book of pre-Constitution America was the Bible. What was its influence upon American government? A number of U.S. Presidents have testified to the Bible's influence:

George Washington: "It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible."

Andrew Jackson: "That book [the Bible], sir, is the rock on which our republic rests."

Ulysses S. Grant: "The Bible is the sheet-anchor of our liberties."

Some may slight such testimonies as merely hollow words spoken by shrewd politicians to garner votes. But is there substance to their words? We will examine the Bible's influence on the early U.S. government, especially in its republican form, beginning with the influence of the ancient Hebrew government, that of Christianity—especially Protestantism—and, lastly, the influence of Congregationalism.

### Hebrew Law and the Puritans

In colonial America, the group most influenced by the government of ancient Israel was the Puritans. Calvinistic in outlook, the Puritans received their name through their efforts to "purify" the Anglican church of remaining Catholic practices. Careful students of the Scriptures, they sought to apply its principles to all areas of life, including government and civil law. The 1640 Massachusetts code of laws and 1650 Connecticut Code cited the Bible as authority. The Connecticut Code was charged with preferring the Mosaic law over the English common law.

The zenith of Hebraic influence was reached with the New Haven Code of Laws of 1655. Of the 47 out of 79 laws that have Scripture citations, half are taken solely from the Old Testament. Puritan minister John Eliot, in his book, *A Christian Commonwealth*, set forth a civil government based on the Bible.

But the early American Puritans took their enthusiasm for the Mosaic law to an extreme. Believing it to be binding upon all nations, they united church and state in a theocracy that punished sinners and heretics. In this they were mistaken: the Mosaic law was given only to ancient Israel because of their special covenant relationship with Jehovah. Moreover, the

Puritans were ruled not by a democracy, but a theological aristocracy. Nevertheless, they helped to sow the seed for the later development of religious liberty and democracy.

### **The Sermon**

The influence of Old Testament Israel continued into the 18th century, conveyed mainly by means of the sermon.

In colonial America, the sermon was the prime means of communication and education. Few newspapers were circulated, and aside from the Bible, books were scarce. The clergy, often the most educated members of the community, exercised a great influence upon the people. According to Yale Divinity School Professor Dr. Harry Stout, the average colonial New Englander would hear 7,000 sermons in his lifetime. The typical length of the sermon was one to two hours. Its influence extended beyond the sphere of religion into politics.

Alice M. Baldwin in the book, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution*, confirms this: "Men of the time asserted that the dissenting clergy and especially the Puritan clergy of New England were among the chief agitators of the Revolution and, after it began, among the most zealous and successful in keeping it alive."

### **Election-Day Sermons**

It was common practice for a minister to deliver a sermon on election day. A copy of the sermon would often be delivered to each member of the legislature and then be printed and distributed to members of the community. These sermons were termed "textbooks of politics." A common topic of the election sermon was the government of the ancient Hebrews.

Perhaps the most influential election sermon in colonial America was that delivered by "the father of American democracy," Thomas Hooker (1586-1647). A New England clergyman, he criticized the government of Massachusetts for limiting the right to vote to church members. Disliking the autocratic form of government, in 1636 Hooker and his congregation were among the hundred that left Massachusetts for Connecticut.

In 1638, Hooker delivered a sermon to the general court of Connecticut based on the text Deut. 1: 13, "Take you wise men and understanding ... and I will make them rulers over you." In explaining the text, Hooker said that "the choice of public magistrates belongs to the people by God's allowance" and that "they who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power, also, to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them." According to Hooker, "the foundation of authority is laid ... in the free consent of the people." In 1639, the Constitution of Connecticut was adopted, based upon the principles set forth by Hooker.

Samuel Langdon, President of Harvard College, delivered an election sermon before the Congress of Massachusetts in 1775. He said: "The Jewish government, according to the original

constitution, which was divinely established, if considered merely in a civil view was a perfect republic."

Dr. Langdon on June 5, 1788 delivered the election sermon before the New Hampshire legislature. The subject of his sermon was "The Republic of the Israelites an Example to the American States." A few weeks later New Hampshire voted in favor of the Constitution.

Simeon Howard before the Massachusetts legislature in the year 1780 preached the election sermon. He expounded the government of the Israelites as given in the Old Testament. He said: "This is asserted by Josephus and plainly intimated by Moses in his recapitulatory discourses, and indeed the Jews always exercised the right of choosing their own rulers; even Saul and David and all their successors on the throne were made kings by the voice of the people. "

### **"Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God"**

The Bible's influence was so pervasive that even the infidel Thomas Paine cited it to bolster his arguments. In his book, *Common Sense*, he supported democracy as the best form of government. Paine gave from the Bible a detailed history of Israel's demand for a king and the warnings against it. He concluded: "That the Almighty hath here entered his protest against monarchical government is true, or the Scriptures are false." His widely read book helped to ignite the flames of the American Revolution.

When looking for a seal to represent the revolutionary spirit of the newly formed United States, the Continental Congress appointed a committee made up of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson to propose a seal. They turned to ancient Israel for their inspiration. Adams wrote that "Dr. [Franklin] proposes a device for a seal: Moses lifting up his hand dividing the Red Sea, and Pharaoh in his chariot overwhelmed with the waters. This motto, 'Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God.' Mr. Jefferson proposed: the children of Israel in the Wilderness, led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night . ..." Although no action was ever taken on the proposed seal, Jefferson later used this same motto for his personal seal.

John Adams, a student of the history of republics, wrote: "As much as I love, esteem and admire the Greeks, I believe the Hebrews have done more to enlighten and civilize the world. Moses did more than all their legislators and philosophers."

In conclusion we quote from British historian Paul Johnson. Mr. Johnson is author of the books, *A History of the Jews* and *The History of Christianity*. In the September, 1987 issue of "The World and I," Johnson in his article on "The Organic and Moral Elements in the American Constitution" traces the three elements that influenced late 18th century American political thought. According to Johnson, the first element is the French Enlightenment, and the second is English common law. He continued:

"There was a third element, perhaps as important as the common law tradition, and equally organic—what I call the biblical spirit. Early America was a society saturated in the Bible and in

the constitutional lesson that the Bible taught, especially in its popular historical books, Samuel and Kings. This lesson underwrote Whig conspiracy theory: It taught that kings or governments might be necessary, but that they had a natural propensity to evil and had to be curbed by prophets like Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha; in the Bible, God, through his prophets, forms the constitutional opposition to overweening executive power. The biblical spirit went even deeper, for it stressed that man is not merely a civic animal but also a moral one; his public acts—his politics—take place within an ethical, indeed, religious, framework. God is the primal legislator and the ultimate ratifying party of any constitution."

## THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Not only the Hebraic influence upon American government but the Christian influence has also been neglected. Modern histories of the Constitution emphasize the secular philosophers of the Enlightenment as the main source of political thinking. But many of these secular philosophers based their arguments on Biblical principles.

John E. Eidsmoe, in his book, *Christianity and the Constitution*, cites a study of political writings from 1760 to 1805, compiled by Donald S. Lutz and Charles S. Hyneman. They found that the most frequently cited work of the period was the Bible, with a total of 34 per cent of all citations. Eidsmoe analyzes the thought of other frequently cited authors such as Montesquieu, Blackstone, Locke, Grotius, Pufendorf, Vattel, and Sidney. He shows that these men were Christians and that they viewed civil law in the light of natural law which God had ordained. Historians frequently cite the British philosopher Locke as the major influence upon American thought. Yet they usually fail to notice the great influence that Christianity had upon Locke.

Paul Johnson, in a discussion forum on American religion published in the book, *Unsecular America*, said:

"Looking at the tripod of democracy, capitalism, and Christianity, one can say that both democracy and capitalism have their roots in Christianity. Democracy is something inherent in Judeo-Christianity in this sense. The Jewish religion, as developed in pre-Mosaic and Mosaic times, was a communal religion based upon the notion of equality."

"In all Christian societies there is the root belief in the equality before God of all men. Once you have equality before God in a religious sense, ultimately you get it in a secular and a political sense too."

### Protestantism and Colonial America

During the formative years of the American republic, records of the time show that 98 per cent of church-going Americans were Protestant. Few Jews or Catholics had yet immigrated. Most of the earliest settlers, who shaped the culture and formed the original governments of the American colonies, were Protestants. By the time of the Constitution Convention of 1787,

American political ideas and institutions had already been molded by the 150 years of previous experience in government. It should not be surprising therefore that the democratic form of U.S. government would bear the marks of the religion of its first settlers—Protestantism.

The French Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu in his book, *The Spirit of Laws* (1745), was perhaps the first to trace the effect of culture upon the laws of a nation. Decades before the formation of the United States, he wrote, "The Catholic religion is better adapted to a monarchy, Protestantism the better suited to a republic."

Clinton Rossiter, in his book *The Seedtime of the American Republic*, documents the contribution of colonial American Protestantism: "In its best aspects and moments Protestantism was a main source of these great political principles of American democracy: freedom of thought and expression, separation of church and state, local self-government, higher law, constitutionalism, the American Mission, and the free individual."

Protestants were generally agreed on the priesthood of all believers and the right of the individual to private judgment in religion, and that salvation is open to all regardless of social standing. A number of Protestant groups were especially influential in the growth of republicanism and liberty. One such group, the Quakers, settled for the most part in Pennsylvania and were prominent in Philadelphia, the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. They preached freedom of conscience, justice for all, social equality, and democratic church government.

Of all the Protestant groups, the Baptists were the most energetic supporters of separation of church and state. They also practiced a democratic form of church government. Most influential were the Puritans. They believed in the law of nature, and that it could be written down. The Puritan emphasized individualism, the right of private judgment, and that salvation is open to all men regardless of social standing. They also held that all should read the Bible, and thus stressed education. As a result, the Puritans had a high literacy rate, which is needed in a democracy.

The doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings was used to bolster the authority of the monarchs. This doctrine states that the king's power comes directly from God, and not from the people. Therefore the king had absolute power. Therefore the people must submit to his rule, because the king is not accountable to the people for his actions.

The Divine Right of Kings was based on the misapplication of certain passages from the New Testament recommending obedience to the civil power. Against this doctrine, Protestants preached the view that the power of the ruler is based on the consent of the governed and that the people have the right to rebel against a ruler that has violated the trust implicit between him and the people. While in England, for example, Roger Williams, judged by some as America's first champion of religious liberty, wrote that "the people were the origin of all free power in government."

### **The Influence of Congregationalism on American Government**

Another influence upon American government was the democratic form of church government practiced by many Protestants—that of Congregationalism.

M. Emile de Laveleye, in the Introduction to Oscar Straus's book, *The Origin of the Republican Form of Government of the United States*, wrote that "the influence which religion exercises on man is so profound that its constant tendency must be to shape State institutions in forms borrowed from religious organization."

The types of civil government of monarchy, aristocracy, democracy have been compared to the types of church government of episcopality, presbyterianism, and congregationalism. Monarchy, which is rule by one individual, is similar to episcopality, or rule by one bishop. Aristocracy, rule by the few, is similar to presbyterianism, rule by a few elders. Democracy, rule by the people, is similar to congregationalism, rule by the congregation.

Congregational minister John Wise (1652-1725), "the first great American democrat," was unique among colonial clergy in seeing a relationship between church and civil governments. His book of 1717, republished in 1772, *A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches*, attempted to prove that "Democracy is Christ's Government, in Church and State." Since Wise, other writers have seen the relationship and have asserted the influence of Congregationalism upon American government. We cite some examples below.

Clinton Rossiter: "The Puritan theory of the origin of the church in the consent of the believers led directly to the popular theory of the origin of government in the consent of the governed. The doctrine of popular government held in many a Massachusetts village was largely a secularized and expanded Congregationalism."

Harry Stout: "Congregationalism, by its very nature, grants sovereign power to no one. So we find people in New England in these churches playing democratic politics from the start, without ever calling it that. As a matter of fact, I think if you were to stop the average New Englander in the early 18th century and mention the word politics, they would know that word, but would think instinctively of church politics."

Richard B. Morris, a professor in American history at Columbia University, writes: "Just as the church was created by covenantors, so, too, the political order comes into existence as a voluntary creation of the covenanting members of society—the 'We the People' of the Preamble to the Constitution. One can trace a direct movement from biblical covenant to church covenant (Congregationalism) to constitutions, whether state or federal. "

## LIMITATIONS OF REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT

In a republic all men are equal before the law. Each citizen is a sovereign; and these sovereigns, by their votes, appoint some of their number to be their representatives and servants. This is a

theory, an ideal, but we all know that it is more or less defective. It is in vain to claim that all men are born free and equal when we know that there are great inequalities of birth, of character, of talent, and will power.

But this highest type of government can be thoroughly appreciated only by intelligent people, and can work the highest good only in the hands of intelligent and conscientious people, submitted to the divine regulations. While, therefore, a republic would be the ideal condition for perfect men, it only partially meets the requirements of the case so long as man is imperfect.

God, who has arranged for each nation (Rom. 13: 1-7) that form of government best adapted to its political ideals, development, and condition, wisely did not arrange for all nations, individually or collectively to have so highly a developed form of government as America in its individual states and as a whole, *i.e.*, as the United States; because to certain nations such democratic institutions would be fatal.

Therefore He arranged that some nations, because of their extreme inexperience in political ideals, development, and condition, should have an absolute monarchical form of government; that some nations, because not quite so inexperienced in these respects, should have a limited monarchy; that other nations, rather progressive in their political ideals, development, and condition, should have a semi-democratic government; that more progressive nations in these respects should have an almost pure democracy; and that the most progressive nations in these respects should have a pure democracy, as the United States has.

It is proper, therefore, from the standpoint of God's "ordinance"—arrangement—in this matter for a nation that has outgrown the form of government once well adapted to its (at present outgrown) condition, to change that outgrown form of government. Hence it was not only right before man, but also before God, for our forefathers to expel Britain and to establish their own government of, for, and by the people.

It is a Divinely, as well as a humanly, true principle that governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed; for a nation is a mutual political association of many kindred people for their common political interests. God, therefore, arranged that those who consent to an absolute monarchy should have it, that those who consent to a limited monarchy should have it, that those who consent to a semi-democracy should have it, and that those who consent to an almost pure democracy should have it, and that those who consent to a pure democracy should have it.

### *FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN GOD'S KINGDOM*

In view of the danger of placing great power in the hands of a ruler and the advisability of the republican form of government of the people, by the people, and for the people, the question arises, How will it be with God's kingdom? This great government will be, not a republic, not a

socialistic arrangement in any sense, but a monarchy. Nay, it will not even be a limited monarchy, but an imperial and autocratic one.

Instead of giving humanity more power and leaving everything to be settled by the popular will and vote, Messiah's kingdom will do the reverse. It will lay down the law, punish every infraction of the law, and point men to the fact that they are not qualified to govern themselves and that, therefore, God has decreed the establishment of Messiah's kingdom to rule over humanity, while they are in the imperfect condition, and to bring them up by restitution to full perfection, when they will be able, as originally designed, to all be kings; or, failing to come up to this standard, they will be destroyed as incorrigible, lovers of iniquity.

Its regulations will be far more exacting than those of any previous government, and the liberties of the people will be restricted to a degree that will be galling indeed to many now clamoring for an increase of liberty. Liberty to deceive, to misrepresent, to overreach and to defraud others, will be entirely denied. Liberty to abuse themselves or others in food or in drink, or in any way to corrupt good manners, will be totally denied to all. Liberty or license to do wrong of any sort will not be granted to any. The only liberty that will be granted to any will be the true and glorious liberty of the sons of God—liberty to do good to themselves and others in any and in every way; but nothing will be allowed to injure or destroy in all that Holy Kingdom. (Isa. 11: 9; Rom. 8: 21). That rule will consequently be felt by many to be a severe one, breaking up all former habits and customs, as well as breaking up present institutions founded upon these false habits and false ideas of liberty. Because of its firmness and vigor, it is symbolically called an iron rule— "He shall rule them with a rod of iron."

Jehovah our God will be the Autocrat and His will shall be enforced in the earth; and all who will not gladly and heartily obey His righteous laws when granted ample knowledge and ability, shall be cut off—shall die the second death, have life forever extinguished.

### *MESSIAH'S KINGDOM NOT A TYRANNY*

In alarm some may ask, Would not that be a most dangerous condition of things? Could any royal family, however noble and generous, be entrusted with such autocratic power without fear of its being misused for the enslavement of the people, for the aggrandizement of the rulers? Have we not learned this in the history of the past six thousand years? Do we not see the necessity for curtailing and controlling the power of the kings and governors? Are we not more and more brought to realize the necessity that the people shall rule?

If this kingdom were of the same character as present governments, operated upon the same selfish principles, it would be all the worse for the increase of power. But it will be based upon other principles. Not injustice and selfishness, but principles of justice and love will be the foundation of that throne. And backed, as it will be, by Divine wisdom and power, good results, everlasting blessings, will result to the upright in heart. All its power and all the wisdom of its

rulers will be exercised lovingly and justly, for the good of the fallen human family, for the elevation to perfection of all the willingly obedient.

### THE CHARACTER OF THE KING

Nevertheless, no one who understands the matter need have any fear, as He who is to take the throne to be the Emperor of the World is Jesus Christ, the one who so loved the world as to give Himself a ransom for all. Instead of His empire being one of selfishness, which would ruin its subjects for its own aggrandizement, He has shown His Spirit to be the very reverse of this, in that He left the glory of the higher courts and humbled Himself to a lower nature and became man's substitute, a ransom for man's penalty, and "tasted death for every man." It is this One who is now highly exalted and appointed Heir of all things.

### CHARACTER OF THE ARISTOCRACY

There will be an aristocratic class then, too; a class whom the great Autocrat will exalt to power and great glory and distinction, and to whom He will commit the ordering of this world's terribly disordered affairs. This class is the Church of God, of whom Christ Jesus is Lord and Chief. All power will be claimed and exercised (Matt. 28: 18; Rev. 2: 26; 11: 7, 18); and infallible laws will be rigorously enforced. Then every knee must bow and every tongue must confess.

Let us remember also that the Church selected from the world during the Gospel Age is composed only of such as have their Master's Spirit and delight to lay down their lives for the brethren and for the Truth in cooperation with their Lord and Head and Bridegroom. Let us remember that according to the Divine predestination none shall be of that elect class save those who are copies of God's dear Son, and that the tests of discipleship are such as to prove them—their love and loyalty to God, to the brethren, to their neighbors, yea, also to their enemies.

As assistants of Jesus and the Little Flock, the Lamb's Wife, in the spiritual or invisible phase of the Kingdom, will be the Great Multitude, described in Rev. 7: 9-17 and 19: 1-9. This class consists of those who were called to be members of Christ's Bride, but who more or less came short of the prize of the High Calling. They are nevertheless rewarded for their measurable faithfulness by being invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19: 9). They are not given a place *in* the throne, but *before* it (Rev. 7: 15), as antitypical Levites and Noblemen. The Great Multitude as antitypical Levites are to "serve God day and night in his temple."

While the Kingdom class proper—Jesus and the Church—will during their reign be invisible to mankind, they will be visibly represented throughout the earth by certain human beings—the Ancient Worthies and the Youthful Worthies—even as Satan and his angels have during their reign been visibly represented by certain human beings, such as oppressive rulers, false religious teachers and predatory aristocrats. But the Ancient and Youthful Worthies, before being made the visible representatives of the reigning Kingdom of Heaven in this earth (Gen. 13: 14, 15; Acts

7: 5; Heb. 11: 39, 40), will have demonstrated, through their faithfulness while on trial in this life, their loyalty to Truth and righteousness. Hence they will be suitable and dependable representatives of the invisible Rulers in the next Age. They will be the princes—not kings—that will rule in judgment—truth and righteousness (Isa. 32: 1). The Ancient Worthies will be princes—not kings—throughout the earth (Psa. 45: 16), and therein will have as their associates the Youthful Worthies (Joel 2: 28; Heb. 11: 38). These Ancient and Youthful Worthies will be the subordinate rulers under Christ, while the world will then not only not rule at all, but will be subject to these Worthies. The Ancient and Youthful Worthies will stand before the world as the latter's visible rulers, and as such will be recognized and obeyed by the world.

Associated closely with the Worthies and subordinate to them will be the subordinate princes and captains, typed in Num. 1: 5-16; 31: 14. The latter princes or captains represent the *Quasi*-elect, among them the Consecrated Epiphany Campers, who will be helpful according to their several abilities in assisting the non-elect up the Highway of Holiness as they go everywhere converting the people to God's Word and work. These servants will assist in bringing peace to the people (Psa. 72: 3). This is a result devoutly to be desired!

Who need fear an autocratic government in the hands of such glorious rulers? Indeed, we may say that such a government will be the most helpful, the most profitable, that the world could possibly have—wise, just, loving, helpful!

## AGES TO COME

The social organization in the Ages to come is not revealed to us, but the fact that the Bible teaches us that all on earth will be "kings" (Rev. 21: 24), even as Adam was in the beginning the king of the earth, and the further fact that the equality implied in all being kings, combined with the idea of convenience, would seem to imply that the government would probably be of a democratic character—certain members of the race being elected by the others to carry on such governmental functions as will be necessary for the maintenance of an orderly operation and progress of things among mankind. Further than this we are unable to say what the character of the social organization of that time will be; but we do know that it will be sinless; for it will be based upon the principles of wisdom, justice, love and power, even as St. Peter tells us that in the new earth righteousness shall dwell (2 Pet. 3: 13).