

EIGHT

“WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS:” Christian Ideas of Man and Government in the Constitution

Many of the general principles and specific ideas contained in America’s Constitution, and previously set forth in the Declaration, come directly from the Bible. In this chapter, we will discuss some of the internal principles that are implicit in the Constitution and America’s frame of government. Biblical principles that influenced the external form of our Constitution will be discussed in the next chapter.

Importance of the Internal Basis of Government

Unlike today’s one-dimensional focus upon government’s external form, a Christian structure based upon God’s Biblical principles is always more concerned about the internal basis of government. The spirit of the law, as opposed to merely the letter of the law, is what transforms a government structure into either a liberty enhancing body or a liberty confining body.

The Bible contains numerous passages that focus on this internal dimension or inward character of government. For example, Isaiah 10:1-2 gives this admonition:

Woe to those who enact evil statutes, and to those who constantly record unjust decisions, so as to deprive the needed of justice, and rob the poor of My people of their rights, in order that widows may be their spoil, and that they may plunder the orphans.

Leviticus 19:15, instructs leaders as follows:

You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.

Because such internal character of leaders and government was so important from a Biblical perspective, the Bible also carefully stipulates that the character of the people we place in authority must be Godly. Contrary to the assertions of some people in recent national elections, character is very important, far more important than the economy or other external circumstances. Notice the words contained in Exodus 18:21:

You shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

Internal Basis of America's Constitution

Our Founding Fathers were greatly concerned about the need to retain the internal basis of our Constitution — Biblical and Christian principles with God as the ultimate authority. The often repeated words in the Founders' writings that referred to this essential basis were "religion (or piety), morality (or virtue) and knowledge (or learning)," by which they meant the Christian religion, Christian character, and a Biblical world view. Without this Christian basis, they knew our Constitution would be only a "hollow shell."¹ Indeed, early Americans, in general, believed that good government was a logical extension of the exercise of inward Christian character.² Daniel Webster, one of our early leaders, perhaps captured the thoughts of most Americans during this period when he observed the causal connection between the inward qualities of our citizens as produced by the Bible and the success of our nation.

If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.³

This connection noted by Webster certainly applied to the thinking of our early leaders. James Madison, on June 20, 1785, wrote that "religion [is] the basis and Foundation of Government."⁴

George Washington repeatedly emphasized the foundation of religion in our nation. These are not the statements of men who intended to separate government and religion or even to make government neutral toward religion. Religion, at least that based on the Bible, was too important to the success of government for government to take a neutral stance toward the matter.

These men were not saying anything new or unusual. They were simply echoing a Biblical truth: “[w]here the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17). This is one of those universal truths that will stand the test of time. It holds true regardless of time in history or place on earth. Even a cursory glance at recent history confirms this truth. Behind the veil of the former “iron curtain” nations where communism ruled, government was based on a man-centered philosophy that excluded God’s principles from the public square. Those nations were characterized by a complete absence of liberty, and a great presence of oppression. The nation best known for liberty and freedom in the world, America, was the one that initially sought a Biblical basis for its government. The connection was not coincidental.

With that background in mind, let us now review specific internal Biblical principles that are implicit in America’s Constitution.

Internal Principle No. 1: Man is of Divine Origin

Beliefs about man’s origin lie at the heart of the difference in much of our current debates on governmental issues and solutions. If you believe, as the public schools now teach and liberal scholars insist is rational, that man is here through an evolutionary process devoid of a Creator, then you must conclude that individual man has no intrinsic value. Man is only a biological coincidence or accident. As such, man has no purpose, no standards, no lofty goals. Man is no different than a rock, or a slug crawling on the ground. This is the ultimate conclusion you must draw if you insist that man was not God created, but created by an evolutionary process from matter that has always existed. Lofty ideas of liberty or freedom could not exist if man had no intrinsic value. Liberals who decry apartheid and racism have no basis for declaring such social acts morally wrong if they do not accept the truth that man was created by God, because man would have no value.

It is only through the acceptance of our divine origin that man has intrinsic value that demands liberty and freedom for all. Only through the Christian world view, that man is created, that he is made in the image of God and has greater value than a rock or a slug, can we decry apartheid or racism or other social ills. “And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Thus this principle of man’s divine origin, and hence our individual worth, upon which America’s Constitution is based, stems from the Bible.

Jesus taught that all persons are created by God with dignity and inherent value, *independent of what they may contribute to society*.⁵ The four Gospel accounts repeatedly show Jesus affirming the value of people *who were out-*

cast by their society: women, children, lepers, tax collectors, and Gentiles. He alone noticed the poor widow's mite over and above the more ostentatious offerings of the rich. Jesus affirmed people, not their position in society.

A non-Biblical, pagan view asserts that man's value is based upon what he can contribute to society. Therefore, if a baby is born mentally or physically handicapped, his value is seen as greatly diminished and he can be extinguished through abortion or infanticide. The same is said for the non-contributing elderly by those who support euthanasia or so-called "mercy killing." This pagan, or secular view connects decisions about whether a person should live or die to their likely "quality of life." But this view focuses completely on the physical part of life and ignores the spiritual. We were not created to have a good time and pursue our selfish interests, although God allows us to if we choose. We were created to honor God. How Christians respond to poor "quality of life" situations is often the best way of honoring God and demonstrating His spiritual truths. To encourage a person to take his or her life because he or she will likely have a poor "quality of life" may be taking away their opportunity to honor God. More important, it may take away their chance to accept Jesus Christ as their savior, thereby gaining the best "quality of life" for all eternity. Therefore, to tie life to its physical "quality" is contrary to what God intends for us. Over the last few years, this pagan view of man's worth has gained influence in America over the Christian world view, but it wasn't a part of the beliefs of our Founding Fathers.

Only as an intentionally and purposefully created being, made in the image of God, can man have any value. The evolutionary teaching, if based on the idea that there is no God, leads to only one conclusion about man; an accidentally created being with no purpose can have no real value over anything else. The Biblical idea of man's divine origin is the cornerstone of our Constitution, for absent that view, man is not deserving of "domestic tranquility" or any of the other lofty purposes for which the Constitution was written.

Internal Principle No. 2: Man Has Individual Value

Not only does the Bible provide us with the basis for man's value in a general sense since we have a divine source, it also gives us the basis for believing that each individual is important. In 1 Corinthians 12:14-18, God tells us the following:

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

This passage demonstrates that each person has a unique purpose and that God gives us our purpose. Thus, whatever talents you have, they are important because they are God-given.

Indeed, in all of God's creation, we can see God's desire for individuality. With the rare exception of identical twins, no two people look alike and no two personalities are the same, each snowflake is unique, the multitude of types of animals, plants, and topography all scream loud and clear of the principle of individuality. All are described in the Bible. Thus, the world, and all it consists of, reflects the nature of its source, Almighty God. Moreover, the world, and all it consists of, contradicts the idea that we arrived here by evolutionary accident.

Recognizing that man has value as an individual is one of the reasons why individual liberties were so important to the authors of the Declaration and our Constitution. This recognition was contrary to what the Greeks and Romans taught. Their ideas of democracy and freedom extended only to a select class of people, while the lower classes were denied basic individual rights.⁶ This was consistent with the pagan world view which dominated the world at that time. Historian Richard Frothingham's comment is illustrative:

At that time, social order rested on the assumed natural inequality of men. The individual was regarded as of value only as he formed a part of the political fabric, and was able to contribute to its uses, as though it were the end of his being to aggrandize the State. This was the pagan idea of man. The wisest philosophers of antiquity could not rise above it.⁷

Certainly the wise philosophers Aristotle and Plato couldn't rise above it. Neither man attributed the source of rights to God, the Creator, nor did they believe that men were created equal. In fact, not only did Greek polytheism declare that all men are inherently unequal, but Aristotle believed that some men should be slaves.⁸ The principle that each person has value apart from what he or she contributes to the State cannot be found in either Greek or Roman history.

Internal Principle No. 3: Government Exists to Serve the People

This Biblical principle of individuality and worth affects our view of the purpose of government. Government in America was established to be an aid and assistance to individual citizens, not a ruler over them. Government was set up *for the people*, not the people for the government.

In the book of Romans, chapter 13, God reminds us that there is no power on earth that is not from God. Thus, “the powers that be (including government) are ordained of God.”⁹ It then goes on to set forth man’s duty to obey the rulers or government leaders. Why? Because they are “the minister of God *to you* for good.”¹⁰ Hence, according to a Biblical view of government, government leaders are considered “ministers” or public servants of the people **for the people**. While we have largely tossed away this Biblical basis for our law and government, some vestiges still remain. Today, we often hear politicians, when they decide to run for public office, describe their decision as a desire to go into “public service.” It has become common for Western nations to call their chief rulers “ministers” or “prime ministers,” or even “public servants.” Each of these terms, and the governmental principle behind them, reflect the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Along this same line of thought, Christ taught that man is superior to the government and that government exists to serve the public, not the other way around. Paganism teaches just the opposite — that the State is paramount to the individual. This third principle is set forth in Matthew 20: 25-27, where Jesus called his disciples to Himself and said:

You know that the *rulers of the Gentiles* lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave

Jesus was telling his disciples that the ungodly civil rulers they knew did not use their offices properly. Jesus wanted Christians to know that when the day came when they were able to rule, they were to see themselves as public servants. This teaching was revolutionary. Caesar and practically every other monarch in history never saw themselves as servants of the people. In both ancient Egypt and the Mesopotamian civilizations, individuals were considered the servant of government.¹¹ They existed to serve their government, not the other way around. A person’s individual importance was directly linked to the perceived significance of his contribution to his local government.¹² It clearly was not inherently tied to man’s being created by God and in His image . The theories advanced by Plato and Aristotle and the

practice of Greece and Rome were therefore nothing to admire. This direct correlation between individual worth and contribution to the State¹³ would have been repugnant to the authors of our Constitution. Rome also treated the government as the grantor of rights instead of God, whereas America treated government as the securer of those rights. Thus, in Rome, what the government grants, government can deny. These philosophies were diametrically opposed to the principles the authors of our Constitution worked hard to protect.

Internal Principle No. 4: The Source of Individual Rights is God, Not Government

This principle was also contrary to the prevailing, non-Biblical world view. Going back to the Greeks, law did not have its source in God, but in man.¹⁴ Thus whatever rights man had were determined by the state. Both Socrates and Plato believed the source of rights was the state.¹⁵ By removing God as the source of law, a society automatically removes the unalienable characteristic of that law. Since all Greek and Roman laws were seen as derived from government, they were alienable, and could be taken away by government.

The Founders believed that individual rights derived from God, not man. Hence, in the Declaration of Independence, they declared that we had certain “inalienable” rights, and that God was their source. God-given rights are much more secure than government granted rights, for what is granted by God, no man or government can lawfully deny. The Declaration also stated that since man was created, in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6), man had value. As a creature with God-given value, he was entitled to the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Thus, human rights have their origin in the Bible.

The specific rights listed in the Declaration are also Biblically based. The Biblical command “Thou shalt not kill,” found in Exodus 20:13, signifies a right to life. The command not to kidnap or enslave others, found in Exodus 21:16 and Deuteronomy 24:7, signifies a right to liberty. Finally, the commands “Thou shalt not steal” and “Thou shalt not covet,” found in Exodus 20:15 and 20:17, signify a right to be secure in the ownership of property. Life, liberty, and property rights, all cornerstones in our Constitutional framework, are derived from the Bible.

There can be no basis for believing in human rights absent the Biblical view that demonstrates the worth of individual man and the source of our rights. Thomas Jefferson echoed this thought with these words:

God who gave us life, gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?¹⁶

Thus, the Founders understood, far better than we do today, that individual rights are God-given. Governments do not give rights, nor do they have the authority. Governments can only “secure” rights that have already been given by God.

Our Constitution recognized this Biblical distinction. In the Preamble, it declares that government is designed to “*secure* the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” If the writers of our Constitution did not recognize that our rights had already been given to us by God, they would have had to create, not secure, those rights in our Constitution. Inalienable rights do not come from an evolutionary, atheistic world view. The true author’s style and characteristics are evident. Moreover, the use of the term “blessings” is another indication that the Founders were extending their belief that our rights come from God, a belief they publicly announced in the Declaration of Independence only twelve years earlier.

Not only does our Constitution place a general emphasis on individual rights consistent with the Bible, it also contains many specific protections of liberty and property. For instance, Article I, section 9 establishes protections of individual rights through the right to petition for writ of habeas corpus and the right not to be prosecuted by bills of attainder or ex post facto laws. Article III, section 2, paragraph 3 ensures that people shall have a right to trial by jury for all crimes other than impeachment proceedings; Article IV, section 2 provides for the privileges and immunities of persons to be protected; and of course, the Bill of Rights is filled with protections for individual rights. All of these protections are a direct extension of that Biblically-based idea that man has intrinsic value as a created being made in the image of God, and that our rights are God given and can only be “secured,” not “created,” by government.

Internal Principle No. 5: God is Sovereign Over Government

A further principle of godly self-government taught by Jesus was that God is sovereign over government and that God delegates His power to men.¹⁷ Pontius Pilate did not understand this truth when he asked if Jesus realized that he had the power to crucify him. Jesus’ response must have been startling to the Roman leader, for Jesus answered him thus: “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”¹⁸ Neither Pilate, nor any other ruler would even hold their government office

or any political authority had it not been granted to him by God. Thus government structures exist at the will of God and operate under His authority.

Historical scholars have concluded that “the founders specifically designed a government that would be accountable to higher sovereignties.”¹⁹ Under the American system, the people are the “proximate sovereign,” while the people “affirm the higher sovereignty of God.”²⁰ This is the fundamental reason why our Founders required public officials to swear a religious oath before taking office. They had to acknowledge a supreme power above themselves.

Internal Principle No. 6: All Men Are Created Equal

This idea, too, originated with the Bible. In the Book of Acts 10:34, scripture tells us that “God is no respecter of persons.” In Galatians 3:28, it says that in Christ, “there is neither Jew nor Greek.” In fact, the entire legal code in the Bible demonstrates equal justice under law.

When Jesus said that government exists to serve the public, he implied that it exists for the *common good of all men*; not just a special or select class of men. As we have discussed, in Greece and Rome, under a pagan view of government, only the upper classes were granted all the privileges of free men; they never became available to all men. According to Dr. Gary Amos, “[t]he Greeks, and later the Romans, believed that some men by nature were superior to others and had an inherent right to rule others.”²¹ But the view of government taught by Jesus brought liberty to all and removed all class distinctions.²² The teachings of Christ and the Bible were unique to the principles of liberty, such as this basic concept of equality we all take for granted today. Perhaps this is why Benjamin Franklin, who was not a Christian, declared, “*He who shall introduce into public affairs the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world.*”²³

The ancient Greeks have been given far more credit than they deserve in terms of their great thinkers and philosophies of man and government. Greek ideas could never have provided a government structure that recognizes that all men are created equal. For example, “[n]either Aristotle nor Plato believed that all men were created, or that they were created equal, or that they were endowed by a Creator with rights, or that such rights were inalienable.”²⁴ Greek philosophy, based on polytheism, declared that all men are unequal and that such an unequal state was inherent.²⁵

Nor does a system of government based on evolution lead to the concept of equality for all people. Darwin’s evolutionary theory is coupled with the “survival of the fittest” mentality, which concludes that the stronger species

are superior, while the weaker are less deserving. Recall that Hitler espoused the evolutionary idea that the Aryan race was superior to that of Jews or other mixed races. His belief system was not Bible-based, and as a result, millions of Jews lost their lives. Only the absolute standards of the Bible guarantee equality for mankind.

This does not mean that all people are entitled to the same economic standards of living. Policies for redistributing wealth, for instance, would have been shocking to the Founders' Biblical view of equality. They realized that people who work harder or take greater risks and responsibilities are entitled to greater material rewards as the natural fruit of their labors. Equal treatment under the law was the goal, not equal rewards.

The Founders incorporated this Biblical view of man's equality into our Constitution. For instance, our Constitution prohibits the government from granting titles of nobility in Article I, section 9, paragraph 8. This provision is contrary to the practice of numerous other nations which were not organized under a Biblical view.

Internal Principle No. 7: Civil Government is Dependent Upon Successful Self-Government

Self-government is "the ability to restrain oneself and follow a right course without someone else always overseeing and directing one's life."²⁶ It is the goal every parent has for his or her children. Simply put, it is maturity under the authority of God's morality. Throughout the Bible, it teaches that man must learn to govern himself according to God's law before he is ready to govern others. Only then can society flourish in peace and happiness.

In Scripture, this principle is seen in many places. For instance, in a text which deals with leadership, 1 Timothy chapter 3, verses 2-5 set forth the principle as follows:

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?).

Therefore, if the individual is out of control, it will affect his ability to govern in all other spheres. In his work *The Law of War and Peace*, Hugo Grotius echoed this Biblical sentiment.

He knows not how to rule a kingdom, that cannot manage a province; nor can he wield a province, that cannot order a city; nor he order a city, that knows not how to regulate a village; nor he a village, that cannot guide a family; nor can that man govern well a family that knows not how to govern himself; neither can any govern himself unless his reason be lord, will and appetite her vassals; nor can reason rule unless herself be ruled by God, and be obedient to Him.²⁷

Each person must learn to rule himself first, in obedience to God and His laws. Ruling ourselves by our own laws is not self-government, but licentiousness, just doing what we please. Proverbs 16:32 gives similar instruction: “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, (who is self-governed) than he who captures a city.” This principle is clearly a Biblical one.

Self-government, or self-control, must begin with the mind and the control of our thoughts. In II Corinthians 10:5, the apostle Paul admonishes us that we must take “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” For “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”²⁸

The early founders of America took these Biblical principles and applied them to their form of self-governing bodies in the New World. For example, when William Penn established the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania, he had no desire to be an autocratic ruler. Instead he assured the people that they “shall be governed by laws of your own making, and live a free and, if you will, a sober and industrious people.”²⁹ Our Founders recognized that self-governing bodies are the best means of assuring liberty. As noted by Robert C. Winthrop in 1852:

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.³⁰

Internal Principle No. 8: Government and Law Are Based Upon Moral Absolutes

There are only two choices we have when we contemplate the nature of morality. Either morality is absolute, as stated in the Bible, or it is relative, as stated by current liberal scholars. There is no middle ground, unless you deny that there is a morality at all. So, let’s examine these two choices to determine which one was the principle incorporated into our Constitution.

Like a religious mantra thoughtlessly repeated ad nauseum, today’s liberal scholars claim that there are no moral absolutes and that all truth is relative. The ultimate conclusion of their claim is that we have no right to say

that anyone is right or wrong about anything. Just because you think an activity is wrong does not mean it is. Evil, like beauty, is therefore strictly a subjective concept, limited to “the eye of the beholder.” There is no objective basis to claim that anyone or any activity is “wrong.” That kind of moral judgment is not absolute, but relative. This was the philosophy of John Dewey, who is called “the father of modern education.” He claimed that there are no eternal truths or moral absolutes (except of course for his own absolute statement). He built modern education on this statement:

Faith in the prayer-hearing God is an unproved and outmoded faith. There is no God and there is no soul. Hence there are no needs for the props of traditional religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable truth is also dead and buried. There is no room for fixed, natural law or moral absolutes.³¹

Notice how many moral absolutes Dewey includes in his own belief statement that there are no absolutes! As a result of his philosophy, values clarification courses were introduced into public schools throughout America, and all public school children were indoctrinated with Dewey’s belief that there are no moral absolutes and all right and wrong is relative. If the words of today’s liberal censors were applied to Dewey, he was “forcing his beliefs” upon malleable young minds.

Aside from the obviously contradictory nature of a belief (which is absolute) that there are no moral absolutes, there is a more dangerous ultimate consequence: society loses its ability to claim that any activity is wrong. In preparation for the Nazi war crime trials at Nuremberg, Germany, prosecutors faced a perplexing defense which was the natural result of Dewey’s philosophy of moral relativism. The Nazis accused of war crimes claimed that they had done nothing wrong in murdering six million Jews. They claimed they acted in conformity with their own moral culture, the dictates of their own consciences. Since morality is relative, who are you, they challenged, to place your morals on us?³² The only way the prosecutors were able to avoid this defense was to rid themselves of the nonsense that morals are relative. They had to claim that morals were indeed absolute, although they never mentioned the source of those absolute morals!

Ted Bundy was executed in Florida for committing a series of heinous crimes in the late 70’s and early 80’s. He raped, then killed and mutilated several young women, all who had many hopes and dreams for the future which he destroyed through terror and violence. Was he wrong? He couldn’t be if morals are only relative. Who are we to place our moral judgments upon him? Sound ludicrous? Of course it is, yet that is what Ted Bundy claimed.

According to him, “[W]hat you call wrong, I call attempts to limit my freedom.”³³ That is exactly the end result of the moral relativist argument. During his terrorizing of one of his victims, he tape recorded the event. Here is part of what he told his victim before he raped and killed her:

Surely, you would not, in this age of scientific enlightenment, declare that God or nature has marked some pleasures as ‘moral’ or ‘bad.’ Let me assure you, my dear young lady, that there is absolutely no comparison between the pleasure I might take in eating ham, and the pleasure I anticipate in raping and murdering you. That is the honest conclusion to which my education has led me — after the most conscientious examination of my spontaneous and uninhibited self.³⁴

Is this the moral foundation upon which our Founders set our Constitution? The answer is obvious. They rested the Constitution upon the Biblical view that morals are absolute and universal, as affirmed by the Declaration of Independence. How else could our Founders claim that the laws of nature and nature’s God were superior to the laws of England and the King? The principles of liberty and justice were absolute and universal. Likewise, murder, rape, racism, and other moral standards are wrong absolutely and universally, in Germany and America, in Laos and Russia. The same moral standards given to us by our Creator apply to all of His creation everywhere on earth. By tying the Constitution to our common law heritage, the Founders intended for the people to look to God as the supreme source of all law. Moreover, they recognized that good government could not be separated from Christian character based on those moral absolutes taught in the Bible.³⁵ Certainly our second President, John Adams, recognized this truth when he made the following observation:

We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. *Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.*³⁶

Internal Principle No. 9: Man’s Nature is Sinful

In contrast to the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau and other Enlightenment thinkers who viewed man as naturally good, the Bible teaches that all men are sinners and tend toward disobedience to God. In Jeremiah 17:9, it says that “(t)he heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Thus, placing government in the hands of the general will without checks and balances could be dangerous

since the general will could be wrong. Moreover, placing great amounts of power in the hands of a few would be dangerous, for those few men are sinful in nature and thus cannot be trusted to always act in the best interest of their constituents.

Governmental philosophies such as socialism or communism ignore this absolute truth. Thus, neither system could work in America, and as history has demonstrated, neither system works well anywhere else.

In contrast, the Founders accepted the Biblical view of man, succinctly stated in Romans 3:23; “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” This “Biblical view of man drove them to develop a form of government that would neither depend blindly upon the will of the masses nor give absolute power to one man.”³⁷ Thus, they sought to form their government based upon their belief in the sinful nature of man. This struggle and intent is described in *The Federalist No. 51* wherein James Madison stated the following:

But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.³⁸

Constitutional provisions such as separation of powers and checks and balances are all rooted in the Biblical idea that man is not to be trusted. Limits on government authority likewise recognize this truth.

Internal Principle No. 10: External Forms are a Result of Internal Power

Following His resurrection from the dead, Jesus was with His disciples for forty days, instructing them and emphasizing “the things concerning the kingdom of God.”³⁹ This emphasis, along with the undeniable proof that He was the Messiah spoken of by the Prophets, led the disciples to anticipate that the prophecies of external liberty were ready to be fulfilled at once, for they asked: “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”⁴⁰ For years we read the Lord’s response to their question in an incorrect manner. We, and many others, had always thought that Christ looked upon their “carnal” question with an attitude of disdain and simply avoided addressing their desire for external liberty. But in reality, He did address their concern. He did not rebuke them or tell them never to expect external

liberty; He simply said that the “time or epoch” for that event was not to be their concern. External liberty would come in the timing of God, not only to Israel, but “to the remotest parts of the earth,”⁴¹ but it must first arise through, and be a consequence of, Christ’s internal liberty.

Jesus Christ did not ignore external liberty. He merely focused the disciples’ attention upon the proper method by which God would bring about external liberty — it would involve a progression from *internal change to external change*. This is God’s principle of power and form. External forms are only a result of internal power.

But you shall receive power (*internal*) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses. . . .⁴²

Under God’s plan, the only way to attain external liberty is to first allow the Holy Spirit to bring people internal liberty from sin and selfishness. Only then are people released to attain external liberty through self-government and Christian character.⁴³ This process eventually creates a people who are capable of exercising externally free government, but they must have their minds renewed with the Biblical principles of liberty we see in this chapter. If we teach “all” that Jesus commanded, the nations will be disciplined and transformed.⁴⁴