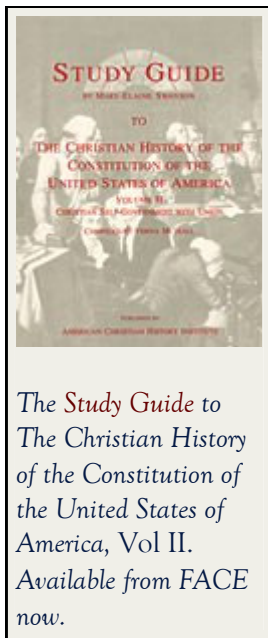


Introducing "With Union"

The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States Of America Volume II

Compiled by Verna M. Hall

Feature Article by Mary-Elaine Swanson



Since the publication of *The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America*, Volume I: *Christian Self-Government*, compiled by Verna M. Hall, many thoughtful readers have rejoiced in rediscovering their unique American Christian heritage as revealed in its pages. What they learned often confirmed deeply held convictions about the Christian foundations of our self-governing institutions. Its scholarly documentation helped teachers and students to understand (sometimes for the first time) the profound influence of Christianity upon our early Founding Fathers and upon the Framers of the United States Constitution.

Now, since the celebrations of the Bicentennial of the Constitution (1787-1791/1987-1991), there seems to be an increased desire to learn how our American union came into being and what our Founders intended to achieve in the unique national/ federal system of government they gave us. There also appears to be a renewed desire to learn more about the *character* of the men who gave us our Constitution.

Finally, there is an awareness that if we are to hand down to the next generation the unique blessings of liberty, self-government and union that our forefathers bequeathed to us - and which they saw as the work of Divine

Providence - we must understand the Christian origins of these blessings.

It is surely appropriate that during this Bicentennial period a *Study Guide* should at last appear for Volume II of the *Christian History of the Constitution* series— *Christian Self-Government with Union*, also compiled by Miss Hall, the Founder of the Foundation for American Christian Education in San Francisco. This rich collection of historical documents dealing with the development of American union extends the work she began in Volume I, which dealt primarily with the development of self-government on the North American continent.

As Felix Morley explained in his Introduction to Volume II: "Although a unit in itself, Volume I was, in a sense, a preliminary compilation. Its documentation of the development of self-government begins with the Christian idea of the nature of man and terminates with the Declaration of Independence."

When, in 1965, Rosalie J. Slater wrote her book, *Teaching and Learning America's Christian History: The Principle Approach*, it added a new dimension to the usefulness of Miss Hall's compilation. In *Teaching and Learning*, Miss Slater used the historical materials in Volume I to teach students *seven fundamental principles* by which our forefathers lived. Her book also gave the reader two valuable courses for adults. (See *Teaching and Learning* T & L, p.59 and p.303)

In 1978, Rus Walton, President of Plymouth Rock Foundation, produced *Fundamentals for American Christians*, a Study Manual which documented Biblically some of the principles that were presented in Miss Slater's book. Mr. Walton emphasized the direct link that exists between Biblical principles and precepts and the individual American's liberty, self-government and right to hold property; the Bible as "the political textbook" of early Americans; and the need for American Christians today to restore and rebuild the

republic's eroded foundations under God's guidance.

In 1981, the Mayflower Institute published *The American Covenant - the Untold Story* by Marshall Foster and Mary-Elaine Swanson which traced the covenantal roots of the Constitution, utilizing the historical documentation found in Volume I. The book dealt with several of the principles outlined in *Teaching and Learning - God's Principle of Individuality, the Christian Principle of Self-Government, "Conscience is the Most Sacred of all Property,"* and *The Christian Form of OUT Government*. The goal of the authors was to prepare thousands of Americans to think more deeply about how the Hand of God and the truths of God's Word contributed to our early American character and our Constitution and to offer practical suggestions on how to restore the foundations of both the American character and the Constitution to their original Biblical basis.

The circulation of the books produced by Plymouth Rock Foundation and the Mayflower Institute have increasingly opened up new avenues for the study of Volume I and its companion book, *Teaching and Learning* - in Christian day schools, home schools and adult study groups in churches and homes.

Now, James B. Rose, President of the American Christian History Institute, has published his *Guide to American Christian Education*, as the fruitage of his many years of teaching the Principle Approach to parents and children, while Headmaster of the first Principle Approach school and later through his adult seminars and institutes. His book will enable parents and teachers to take hold of this unique teaching method predicated upon America's Christian history and government and put it to work in the home and the school.

Meanwhile, however, there has remained a rich vein of historical research in Volume II that has been largely untapped, but which is equally vital for Americans to understand before the original basis of our American union can be restored. As Felix Morley explained: "Now, Volume II carries this promising undertaking a stage farther. While its predecessor concentrated on the development of the idea and practice of self-government, this book is primarily concerned with the growth of the spirit of unity among Americans. It is a unity, the reader will soon discover, that is built from the ground up in the setting of Christian fellowship." (See Introduction, p. XXI)

Over the years since Vol. II first appeared in 1962, there have been suggestions that a Study Guide be produced enabling the student to explore its riches and apply its lessons to our time. It is perhaps providential that this has not happened until now. It has taken time for *Christian History*, Vol. I, to leaven and permeate the thinking of American Christians on the important *first lesson* our Founding Fathers had to learn (one which should be no less important to us today) - the principle of Christian Self-government

Those who have studied Vol. I understand that there is no better time than now, during these Bicentennial years, to study the *second important lesson* our Founding Fathers learned so well: *the Biblical balance between Christian self-government and union*. The United States of America was founded as a union that acknowledged and protected individual liberty and self-government under law. It also protected the integrity and independence of the individual states at the same time as it enabled them to act together cooperatively *for their general concerns*.

The Christian spirit of unity in defense of Christian self-government, as expressed in our early history, is beautifully documented in Vol. II. In its pages we learn that this spirit of unity enabled Americans to bring forth their unique national/federal union under the Constitution.

Excerpt from the Study Guide to *The Christian History of the Constitution*, Vol. II: *Christian Self-government with Union*, by Mary Elaine Swanson. Published with permission by the American Christian History Institute.