

more significance for our times—“that all efforts made to destroy the foundations of our holy religion, ultimately tend to the subversion also of our political freedom and happiness. Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all the blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.”

The *spirit* and the *letter* of our Constitution can also be described as the *nature and essence* and the *structure and framework*. There is a Biblical basis for both.

The *nature and essence* of our Constitution—the *internal* or *spirit*—includes: *property*, *Christian self-government*, and *union*. Two of these aspects we have already indicated as having an internal, Christian basis in our consideration in the foregoing lessons of *Christian self-government* and *property*. We shall deal with *Biblical Christian unity* in the last principle.

The *structure and framework*—the *external*—or *letter*—of our Constitution includes:

*The Principle of Representation*  
*The Separation of Powers*  
*The Dual Form of Our Government*

We shall consider these three aspects of our Constitution in their Christian form and origin.

We often hear it explained that ours is a representative government. Where does the principle of representation come from and what are the qualifications for one to be a representative?

In the first chapter of the book of *Deuteronomy* we are told that Moses was instructed by the Lord God to:

*“Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you . . . captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.”*

We find that this was the text chosen by the Rev. Thomas Hooker, May 31, 1638, for a lecture leading the way to the *First written constitution in America*—that of *Connecticut*. Excerpts from the *Fundamental Orders of Connecticut* can be found on pages 253–257 of *Christian History*. On page 250 of *Christian History* can be found Dr. Hooker’s development of the political principles of representative government taken from the text in *Deuteronomy*:

- I “That the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God’s own allowance.
- II “The privilege of election which belongs unto the people, therefore, must not be exercised according to their humors, but according to the blessed will and law of God.
- III “They who have power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is their power, also, to set the bounds of the power and place unto which they call them . . .

The Biblical basis  
of Representation

Our first written  
constitution

KEY TO  
EXPANDING  
PRINCIPLES

“Eight months later, the fundamental laws embodying these principles for the first time in human history, were ‘sentenced, ordered, and decreed’. It is impossible not to recognize the Master hand.”

The separation of the powers of government—more commonly known as the *three branches of government*—legislative, executive, and judicial, we take very much for granted. But where did the principle of the separation of powers originate? Turning to *Isaiah 33:22* we find these words:

*“For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king . . .”*

Governmental  
action begins  
with individual  
action

These three governmental actions are accepted in the New Testament wherein Jesus Christ is recognized as the *Judge* and *King*, and God as the *Lawgiver*. It is because our forefathers understood that they were under the authority of God through Christ, that they *embodied* these three characteristics of individual action in their respective spheres of government—*local, state and national*.

When the individual Christian prays to know and do God’s will he, figuratively, *legislates, executes, and judges*. Thus he literally fulfills the three functions of government by carrying out God’s purpose in his life.

Can we expect these three governmental actions to operate correctly if we, as individual Christians, do not know the source from which they were derived, and what was their purpose? In our ignorance today we are tempted to believe that the power of the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of our government resides in those individuals who *staff* these offices. Yet, upon consideration of the Biblical base and purpose, we can see that the power or control resides *not in the staffing but in the electorate which these offices represent*. It resides in each individual Christian as he allows Christ to rule his life.

Our  
national-federal  
structure

Seldom today do we hear mentioned one of the most unique aspects of our Constitution—our dual form of government—the *state* and the *nation*. This refers to the *national-federal* structure of our Constitution. There is not a country today on the face of the globe that embodies this Christian principle of government—and we ourselves have allowed it to deteriorate.

The Biblical base of the dual form of our government is the two commands of our Lord when asked by the lawyer which is the greatest commandment of them all?

*“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”* Matthew 22:37–40

Our *national* sense, as *Americans*, is predicated upon our willingness to be God-governed—the first commandment. This is the basis for Christian Self-Government. Our *federal* sense, as *Californians, Washingtonians, Oregonians, etc.*, is predicated upon the second commandment.

The individual's relation to God and to man are hereby stated, and for the Christian, there must be consistency in his behavior—whether he is dealing with one neighbor—or two hundred million.

This statement by John Ponet, written in 1556, and quoted in the works of John Adams, states the principle of the dual form of our government:

*“This rule is the Law of Nature . . . set further in writing in the decalogue or ten commandments: and after reduced by Christ our saviour into these two wordes: Thou shalt love thy lorde God above all things, and thy neighbour as thy self. The latter part whereof he also thus expoundeth: What so ever ye will that men doo unto you, doo ye even so to them. In this lawe is comprehended all justice, the perfit way to serve and glorifie God, and the right meane to rule every man particularly, and all men generally: and the only staye to mayntayne every commonwealth. This is the touchstone to try every manes doinges (be he King or beggar) whether they be good or evil. Bi this all menes laws be discerned, whether they be juste or unjuste, godly or wicked.”* John Ponet, “A Short Treatise of Politike Pouur”, 1556

God's law the  
“touchstone”

## The Christian Idea of Man and Government

It is important to plant the seeds of our Christian form of government early in the student's experience to learn how these principles function. The classroom provides many wonderful, natural opportunities.

The concept of having someone represent, or re-present us, is one which begins in the Old Testament, which we have referred to in our discussion of the *Fifth Principle*. In the beginning of the development of political government it was recognized that although everyone took part in the lawmaking function of government, every single person could not take the time to go to the place where the lawmaking body was meeting. So it was decided to choose someone to stand-in-the-place-of, or represent, a certain number of individuals. In this way members of a local community took turns being the lawmaking body and taking an active part in making decisions which affected all the other non-present individuals. They were representing the interests of themselves and of those who were not present and who had chosen them to stand in their place—as though they were there.

Someone to  
re-present us

Our colonists were very explicit to instruct those individuals to whom they had delegated the power of representation. They indicated how these representatives should vote on many important matters. They were also very sure of electing men of integrity—who could also stand for their own integrity and character.

Whenever the teacher in the classroom sends someone to the office, or on an errand, for the class, this individual becomes, in effect, the *representative* of the class. While the teacher very often *appoints* these individuals, when there is time

to do so, it would be instructive to *choose* or *elect* representatives and to determine what their job of representation is. Evaluation of how individuals perform their errands of representation might help students to see how important such opportunities are for *responsible action*. There might also be opportunities for the teacher to relate these simple classroom activities to the periodic elections which are held locally, and for state and national offices.

Many classrooms have special weekly assignments for such tasks or responsibilities as 1) cleaning blackboards after school 2) simple housekeeping tasks such as straightening up bookcases, desks, etc. 3) responsibility for playground equipment—taking out or bringing in balls, bats, etc. Here again there are opportunities for taking time to elect different members of the class to these jobs or offices and learning how to *select* and evaluate how they carry out their elected positions.

Classroom government can also begin by electing officers to perform weekly or monthly governmental functions which involve decisions affecting every member of the class.

This principle of the separation of the powers of government into its three parts—legislative or lawmaking, executive or putting law into action, and judicial, deciding whether law is in accordance with our Constitution, can be taught as *individual action*.

Legislating or  
planning action

When we contemplate doing any action—we are, in essence, *legislating* or *planning how* we will perform this action. For example, the child who is starting to walk home from school plans which route he will take. He may decide to walk on the sidewalks, cross the highway with the traffic light, and go home in an orderly manner. Or, he or she, may decide to cut across several front yards, scoot across the highway when there are no cars, regardless of the light, and go home any old way. This planning, which seems often unconscious, can be made to become *conscious action* for the purpose of helping students learn that each individual is governed in some way. Either he or she is governed by the laws of God and of man—or he is lawless. So whenever one contemplates action—this is one's *legislative function*. Just how an individual plans any action is, in effect, his lawmaking function.

Executing or doing  
the action

Putting plans into action and *doing the action*, or executing the plan, becomes our *executive function*. Again, a good executive carries out the laws and does not make up laws to govern his own behavior. In this function particularly, we have many opportunities to instruct our students in the need for each one to determine if actions are in accordance with God's laws. As we *review* action already taken, or contemplate action which we propose to take, this becomes our *Judicial* or *judging function*. A Christian has the Bible as God's law upon which to base his judgment of action. As an American citizen he has the laws of the local community, the laws of the state, and the laws of the nation upon which to base his action. As the Constitution is the law of the land, in the same way the Bible is the law of the individual.

Judicial or  
judging the  
action

The chart on page 270C is a useful illustration for primary students to look at

for they can clearly see that the Pilgrim in this picture is consulting his Bible to instruct him how to govern himself in both church and society.

The two commandments of our Lord are the basis of our dual form of government. How one acts as an American—the first commandment—represents one's duty to God. The second commandment is the basis of the relation of the individual states to each other—our relation to our neighbor. These two aspects of our Constitutional form of government can be taught in the classroom activities. The individual might consider his first relation to his school—and his second to his fellow-students. He would let the two commandments found in the New Testament be his guide to these two aspects of his action. In this way he would be learning the dual form of his own individual Christian self-government.

THE CHRISTIAN  
FORM OF OUR  
GOVERNMENT

The State and  
the Nation

## The Law and the Gospel as the Basis of Our Government

*“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty” 2 Cor. 3:17*

*Read Text, Christian History, Dedication Page, I*

This page is dedicated to “the Christian principle upon which this nation is founded”. Where can we find the record of the Law and the Gospel upon our nation?

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 182–183*

Here we find reference to the Pilgrims and the Puritans who brought the Christian principle to these shores. Remember, the Puritan held to the *letter* of the Old Testament. The Pilgrim, on the other hand, lived the New Testament precepts and permitted others to do so also.

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 28A, 28B, 25–28*

When Wickliffe first translated the Bible into English he began the Reformation. This was the impetus which, by opening the Bible to the individual, launched the recognition of evangelical liberty and political liberty. As the Pilgrims found evidence in Scripture for the local self-governing church of the New Testament, they were impelled to break with the centralized Church of England and to count the cost of liberty of conscience.

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 245–248*

This review of the importance of Plymouth and of the influence of Bible-loving and Bible-living Christians helps us remember the beginnings of our nation. The rock upon which the Pilgrims founded their laws, their institutions, and their hope, was the Rock, Christ.

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 248B–252*

The first American Constitution was founded on the Word of God and became an important link in the Chain of Christianity.

*Read Text, Christian History, page 375, second paragraph*

Congress orders  
Bibles

This Order of Congress, directing the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 copies of the Bible, is an important indication of the recognition by the patriots that they could not fight a Revolution without the Bible. They called it their *political textbook*.

American  
Christian  
education

The Founding Fathers of our nation were well aware that in order to keep our Christian Liberty—we must have “true and useful knowledge”. To this end they established schools—schools so that each student could, first of all, learn to read the Word of God. They knew that “the Old Deluder”, Satan, was the enemy of liberty—and therefore it was imperative that each Christian know the Word of God in order to keep free from sin and evil.

Jedidiah Morse, one of the early Christian ministers and educators in America, wrote in 1795:

*“On the early and proper education of children depend, in a great measure, their own happiness, that of their parents, their country, and posterity. The continuance and security of true Religion, and of civil liberty, among any people, must result from their being enlightened by true and useful knowledge. The foundation of this knowledge is laid in Schools and Families, where its rudiments are, or should be taught.”*

*Read Text, Christian History, page 240B*

The foundation of Harvard College, as were other colleges, was for the glory of God—not of man. The whole purpose of education, at every level, was to “lay Christ in the bottome, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and Learning”.

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 405–410*

The Declaration of Independence, Washington’s Farewell Address, and the Constitution of the United States, should be studied by the youth of our country, as their *“political scriptures.”*

Our forefathers were convinced that one of the best deterrents to tyranny was a knowledge of history. The individual who knew history would know the price which must be paid for liberty. Furthermore, a knowledge of history would reveal how

important is the character of men, and of the need to safeguard Liberty with Virtue!

Emma Willard, a pioneer Christian educator, and a student and author of American History, felt that the study of our American history was vital to maintaining our republic.

Most important of all, Emma Willard discerned that Christian principles formed the foundation of all true education. “Moral improvement is the true end of the intellectual”, she said, and when instructing young teachers, she admonished them to “bring God into all subjects”, that their pupils might begin to see His wonderful government of the universe in all its aspects.

## A Government Resting on Moral Principles

*Read Text, Christian History, page 47*

“ ‘Dominion’, said Wickliffe, ‘belongs to grace’; meaning, as I believe, that the feudal government, which rests on the sword, should yield to a government resting on moral principles.”

A government  
resting upon  
God’s laws

While, it is true, we are a government of *laws* and not a government of *men*, still it is men and women, who constitute a nation, and who in turn become its leaders. And so, a government resting on moral principles must be supported by true Christian virtue and morality in its people.

*Read Text, Christian History, page 364B*

As one reads John Locke’s famous definition of Liberty—not Licence—and sees these reflections in the writings of Samuel Adams, it is not hard to realize why the Founding Father generation knew that a government must be founded on moral principles and that these principles must be expressed in the lives of its citizens.

Liberty not  
licence

*“He therefore is the truest friend to the liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue, and who, so far as his power and influence extend, will not suffer a man to be chosen into any office of power and trust who is not a wise and virtuous man. . . . The sum of all is, if we would most truly enjoy this gift of Heaven, let us become a virtuous people . . .”*

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 396–397*

The qualities of a good ruler are also the qualities of those who are governed in a republic.

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 416–417*

Here is defined briefly some of the qualities of George Washington, whom God raised up to lead the thirteen colonies in a seven years war for their liberation from tyranny.

*Read Text, Christian History page XIV, second paragraph.*

## The Pulpit and American Independence

Benson J. Lossing,  
*Washington and the  
American Republic*

“The writer of these letters, then a chaplain in the Leacock battalion, many of whom were members of his congregation, was afterward the revered pastor of the old church at Freehold, New Jersey, wherein William Tennent had preached. He was also chaplain at Valley Forge, to which place he repaired with every male member of his congregation; for in those days politics were preached in the pulpits, and men were led to action on the side of freedom by faithful pastors. The eminent General Muhlenberg was one of this stamp. When the war for independence was kindling, he was a clergyman in Virginia, and at the close of 1775, he concluded a sermon with the words of Scripture: “There is a time for all things—a time to preach and a time to pray;” but those times, he said, had passed away; and then, in a voice that sounded like a trumpet-blast through the church, he exclaimed: “There is a time to *fight*, and that time has now come’ “. Then laying aside his sacerdotal gown, he stood before his flock in the full uniform of a Virginia colonel. He ordered the drums to be beaten at the church door for recruits; and almost the entire male audience, capable of bearing arms, joined his standard. Nearly three hundred men enlisted under his banner on that day.”

Patriotic clergy

“*What Can the Righteous Do?*” This question was mightily answered in the courage and integrity of the American clergy—north, south, and in the middle colonies—both before, during and after the American Christian Revolution. For 150 years prior to the revolution the men of foresight and conviction in the American pulpit preached the principles of Christian government. They contributed much to the righteous government of the times and to the clear understanding of the principles of the Christian form of our government.

*Read Text, Christian History, pages 372–390*

The Political Sermons contained in the pages referred to above represent a fine understanding of Christian government. Many of these pastors realized that some of their brethren of the cloth frowned on their forthright stand for preaching against the political evils of the time and for taking such an active part in the struggle for independence. But the men who express their ideas here so forcefully, are representative of a large number of Christian Ministers who saw their duty to

God and their country in a clear light of fundamental Christianity. Sincere and devoted to God, these men could not shut their eyes to the stirring challenges of the times—and they considered it their Christian duty to use their talents, given to them of God, to defend Christian Liberty from its enemies within and without.

An example of the attitude of the clergy during our Revolutionary period can also be found in the following quotation from the Reverend John Witherspoon, a member of the Continental Congress, in his Fast Day sermon of May 17, 1776—a Fast Day called for by Congress:

“Upon the whole, I beseech you to make a wise improvement of the present threatening aspect of public affairs and to remember that your duty to God, to your country, to your families, and to yourselves is the same. True religion is nothing else but an inward temper and outward conduct suited to your state and circumstance in Providence at any time. And as peace with God and conformity to Him, adds to the sweetness of created comforts while we possess them, so in times of difficulty and trial, it is in the man of piety and inward principle that we may expect to find the *un corrupted patriot*, the *useful citizen*, and the *invincible soldier*,—God grant that in America *true religion* and *civil liberty* may be *inseparable*, and the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both.”

The “un corrupted  
patriot”