



OUR GREAT POLITICAL TEXTBOOK

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding and I shall keep Your law; Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Psalm 119:33-34

Most American Christians are concerned about the state of our nation. Many now seek various ways, programs and affiliations in their desire to pull these United States out of the deadly quagmire of atheism, humanism, dialectical materialism -- and political duplicity and arrogance.

That is all to the good. Indeed, it is imperative if our nation is to survive as a republic,

But, a vital truth must be kept front and center -- and constantly in mind in all that is done -- if we are to restore the spirit and the promise of America:

"Except The Lord build (rebuild) the house, they labor in vain that (re)build it; except The Lord keep the (nation), the watchman waketh but in vain." (Psalm 127:1)

So, as we seek to serve The Lord by working to rebuild the foundation which He laid for this land at its beginning, we must be sure that He has pre-eminence in all things. Idolatry is idolatry whether it be of the left, right or center.

We have no King but Jesus!

Our heart's longing is that America might once again be worthy of finding favor in His sight. Thus, we pray and work to repair the breach between God and government and to restore the paths of right-living in the land (Isa 58:12).

For us, who are so inclined, there are lessons in Christian statecraft to be found in the lives of the early American colonists and patriots ... those who were used of Him to establish and develop the American Christian foundations and refine the basic philosophy and mechanics of self and civil government.

The tasks of statecraft facing today's American Christians are not unlike the tasks God set before those early colonists. The late Verna M. Hall in her *The Christian History of the American Revolution*, underscored the responsibility God placed upon those early Americans.

"The colonists of two hundred years ago had the responsibility for establishing the model of Christian civil government as a testimony of the power of Christ in the life of the individual."

That is: self-government in Christ according to God's principles and precepts, knowing that people with such an godly internal (self) government will produce a godly external (civil) government.

Today's American Christians have much the same responsibility:

To restore that which was originally established; to rebuild that model of Christian civil government; to realign the foundation stones, and to regain the integrity and power of the original structure -- one nation under God.

And, so we work to achieve -- to regain -- in this day and time, that which was done in the beginning:

As a testimony to the power of Jesus Christ in the life of the individual.

"You are the light of the world ... Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt 5:14-16).

Letter from PLYMOUTH ROCK/2

In other words, we are to externalize the internal.

As we are transformed by the power of Jesus Christ, we are to become transformers for Him (Rom. 12:2).

Scripturists

What can we learn from the Pilgrims and the Puritans and the other early American Christians? Consider the first essential:

Those early American Christians were *Scripturists*...Scripturists in the full sense of the term.

They searched the Scriptures for the details of life and living — in their personal life, their family life, their church life, community life and (when time came to found a new nation under God) the life of the nation.

In all things, they made The Bible their textbook for life -- and living..

John Palfrey in his *History of England* (1859) set forth just what it meant to those men and women of God to be Scripturists:

"... he cherished the scheme of looking to the word of God as his sole and universale directory. The Puritan searched the Bible, not only for principles and rules, but for mandates — and, when he could find none of these, for analogies — to guide him in precise arrangements of public administration and in the minutest points of individual conduct."

The Great Political Textbook

For the early American Christian, the Bible was "*the great political textbook*".

Political meaning a manual for establishing and administering civil government;

Political meaning those efforts taken to establish and maintain right government ... not right self and civil government based on man's appetites and compromise -- but *right* civil government according to Biblical principles of good citizenship and Biblical statecraft as set forth in both the Old and New Covenants and given to God's people.

"*This Book, is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.*"

With those words, John Wycliffe asserted the vital role and scope of The Bible in the affairs of men. Wycliffe was God's man, used by Him to deliver the first English translation of His Holy Word. Years later, when writing of Wycliffe, Professor William Lechler observed:

"Not merely in the ecclesiastical sphere and that of religion and morals, but in the whole circle of human existence, including civil life and the State — all law, according to Wycliffe, ought to order itself according to the law of God."

"... *in the whole circle of human existence...*" Thus it was, during those early years within this land, this "new" world, that The Bible was

- the guide for individual deportment in all things
- the basic text for the young (in the home the church and school)
- the word from the pulpit (to broadcast the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to teach God's law and the Biblical principles of self and civil government)
- the standard for morals and conduct
- the key reference for language and definitions in dictionaries and articles of state
- the great lawbook for jurists (and juries)
- the basic code for public officials (those "ministers of God unto you for good"), and
- the manual for right dealing in business and commerce.

Because that was so, The Lord God could use those Pilgrims and Puritans and other early Christian settlers and civic leaders to found and build a nation.

"*Their hearts were right; their minds were strong. They had gained intelligence from the diligent study of The Bible, and all were honest and earnest believers in the Christ of the New Testament.*"

(And, is that not an excellent job description for today's American Christians who would go forth to rebuild the republic?)

To change the world ...

Salt and Light -- and Service in His Name

Dr. Richard C. Halverson *

The true influence of the Church is the aggregate of Spirit-filled Christ-loving men and women, gathering for worship, instruction, fellowship and prayer ... then dissolving into the society around them with what William James called "benevolent infection".

The work of the Church is outside its establishment -- outside the church, in the world. And it takes every member to do it! The mandate of the Church is clear: She must go to the world. All that happens within the church is preparation for work in the world.

In reality, the work of the ministry -- the work of Christ -- belongs to the man in the pew, not the man in the pulpit

... and it is the holy obligation of every member, wherever he is, whatever he is doing. Every Christian is called of God to be a witness for Christ in every area of life. His vocation is the fulfillment of Christ's mission in the world, irrespective as to how he makes his living.

The false dichotomy of the sacred and the secular is a devastating hindrance to Christian influence, and we must abandon the spurious notion that the business of the Church is sacred, while the business downtown or in the marketplace [ED: or statehouse], is secular; that teaching the Bible is sacred while teaching in the public school is secular, that worship is sacred while work is secular.

For at least half of Jesus' lifetime on earth He worked as a carpenter, and His public ministry lasted only about three years.

Was He involved in sacred activities only during that three year period? The answer is painfully obvious! Everything He did was sacred.

The late Dr. Richard Halverson was one of the most dynamic and effective ministers in California from the 1940s to the 1960s. He then served as pastor at Washington's Fourth Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, and went from there to serve as Chaplain of the United States Senate. His words are especially pertinent as the followers of Christ consider their salt, light, servanthood role in regard to Y2K

The authentic purpose of the Church is vividly pictured in three simple but colorful New Testament words:

Salt. Light. Servant.

Jesus said: "*Ye are the salt of the earth ...*" To be effective and fulfill its purpose, salt must completely lose its identity and become part of what is seasoned -- it is of no earthly good as long as it remains in the shaker. But as it is absorbed into the salted object and becomes a part of it, the very character of the object is transformed and takes on the flavor of the salt.

Again, Jesus stated, "*Ye are the light of the world...*"

Light serves no purpose of itself but to illuminate something else. Actually, we take little notice of the light source unless it is inadequate. When it illuminates properly, we are least aware of it. Normally, we observe and pay attention to what is lighted, not the light itself.

As for the work of a servant -- no incident in the Gospel story so colorfully portrays the servant role of the Church as does the account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet following the last Passover supper. Yet, in spite of this classic example of selflessness, we are far more inclined to make the gospel serve us -- to use it as a protection against the realities of life ... as though Christ died to preserve the status quo, or to make us more comfortable, or to make the world a better place in which to live.

The extrovert God of John 3:16 does not beget an introverted people.

"God so loved ... that He gave ..."

If this God is in His church, this love will be clearly seen and demonstrated. And the church will be compelled by this love to go out to that world in love with the message and ministry of love.

This is the work of the Church -- the work she has been left in the world to fulfill. Here is the prime example of authentic relevance. (Even more so should the threat of the Y2K debacle come to pass!)

Is the Bible really important to the nation? Why is it also the very foundation, the vital starting point, for those who would rebuild a nation as it was to those who built it in the beginning? Dr. George Dollar has pointed out that "Because of The Bible, America chose the high road of morality and idealism ...

"For The Bible, American was willing to throw off the shackles of tradition and tyranny. Under control of The Bible, Americans demanded that her leaders believe in and follow God, and her teachers teach the word and ways of God."

Contrast Dr. Dollar's observations with the place of The Bible, and the state of our nation, in this day:

Without The Bible, America flounders — it has denied its Guide and lost its way.

Tradition is junked and tyranny encroaches. Leaders put polls ahead of principle and popularity before God's laws. The Bible is taken out of the classroom and His word erased from the courtroom walls.

Small wonder justice lies bleeding in the street and truth is an outcast -- that abortion wears the seal of government approval and euthanasia pre-empt's God's scope and time.

Well, God is not mocked. The glory that was once the land of the free no longer shines 'round about.

God First!

If America is to be saved, God's must once again be first in the hearts and lives of her people

If American Christians are to work to rebuild this nation, is it important that they, like the founders, become *Scripturists*.

First things first. Without the word of God written into the tablets of our hearts, without the power of The Living Christ writ supreme in our lives, the external will overcome the internal. His light will not shine when confined under the bushel of self-centeredness; it is adulterated by the secular, shuttered by the sensuous. The things of the world (the external) are internalized and the laws

of man are held pre-eminent above the love and laws of God.

The late Bob Jones, Senior, once wrote:

"For a Christian, life is not divided into the secular and the sacred. To him, all ground is holy ground, every bush is a burning bush, every place is a temple of worship."

Every place a place of worship. every bush a burning bush. Every day a day for Him. All to Him we owe.

If today's saved Americans are to save America, we must become Scripturists. Thy word, Lord, will we hide in our hearts. Thy works, Lord, we do for you are our Master and our purpose in life.

We would do well to spend more time in God's written word and less time scanning political manuals and checking opinion polls. We would do well to consider the opening words of Psalm 1 -- consider them, and take a lesson from them, a mandate as it were:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth he meditate day and night."

Consider the fruitage of such a walk and such a delight:

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Talk about the formula for *true* victory -- the kind that does not cater to the flesh but seeks the Truth and serves the Spirit; the work that is faithful, that endures; that does not fade away the day after the votes are cast and counted; the work that serves God and thus truly serves man!

If we are to rebuild the foundations we must make His written word our great political textbook.

Like the founders, we must be *Scripturists* with His word as our textbook for all of life!